During election and campaign periods, the Office of General Counsel (“OGC”) is faced with questions regarding political activity on campus. While the answers are dependent on the facts and circumstances of the specific inquiry, the OGC is issuing this general advisory to provide a brief overview of Federal and State law and Texas Southern University (“TSU”) policy, as well as permissible and prohibited activities on this subject.

As a public institution of higher education, TSU must follow the law as it relates to political election and campaign related activity. Failure to do so could result in criminal/civil penalties, TSU’s tax-exempt status being jeopardized, and/or termination of employees for violations. The guidance provided below is not intended to be exhaustive but provides general “do’s” and don’ts” for the University community.

**Permitted activities include such things as follows:**

- Non-Partisan voter education/voter registration
- Providing equal access to air time on a University-owned radio station (other limitations apply in this situation)
- Providing opportunities to speak at the University on an equal basis
- Providing advertising space in the student newspaper to all candidates at fair market value (other limitations apply in this situation)
- Voting records/legislative scorecards of office holders that cover a broad range of issues with no reference to election/candidacy and deal with officeholders (not candidates)
- Candidate questionnaires/voter guides that are unbiased; cover a broad range of issues and include all candidates for an office

**Prohibited activities include such things as follows:**

- Conducting voter registration in cooperation with or in opposition of the campaign of a specific candidate
- Use of University resources by students, employees or campus organizations (computer, copier, fax, phone, letterhead, etc) to send communications and messages soliciting support of a candidate or identifying a candidate to be opposed
- Use of funding to support campaign efforts for a specific candidate
- Soliciting funds or donations on behalf of a political party
- Use of the university name, logo, insignia or other identifying mark in announcement, in connection with political advertising by students, employees or campus organizations
- Use of official authority to interfere with or affect the result of an election or nomination of a candidate
- Engaging in political activities supporting or opposing a candidate during paid work time (unless accrued comp or vacation time is used)
- Establishing a link to a candidate’s website by students, employees or campus organizations

If you have questions regarding this specific advisory, please contact Ken McKanders or Tammye Curtis-Jones at extension 7950 or by email to mckanderska@tsu.edu or curtisjonest@tsu.edu

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OGC Legal Advisories are issued by the Office of General Counsel to provide general information and updates regarding important legal and regulatory matters that affect the University. It is not intended to provide specific legal advice for any specific situation. If you need additional information or assistance, please contact the Office of General Counsel.