

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON CAMPUS INVOLVING CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

In addition to written policies that exist within Marquette University and within the Office of Student Affairs that apply solely to student organizations, activities involving appearances by or on behalf of candidates for public office raise issues related to the University's status as a tax-exempt institution under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to provide general guidance that is designed to prevent activities on campus that would jeopardize the University's tax-exempt status.

Subject to the University's written policies, student organizations are free to endorse political candidates and to invite political candidates, as well as surrogates and others who wish to make statements on behalf of or opposed to any political candidates, to appear at campaign events held on campus. Student organizations are also under no obligation to offer "equal time" to opposing candidates.

Marquette University as an institution is not permitted to sponsor campaign events for candidates for public office, on campus or elsewhere. A "campaign event" is any event at which individuals are solicited to support a candidate for public office, with financial contributions, endorsements, volunteer activities, or votes. A "candidate for public office" is anyone who has publicly announced an intention to run for public office, or is generally regarded by the public as running for public office, at the district, city, county, state, or federal level. It does not matter whether the candidacy is partisan or non-partisan or whether the office sought is executive, legislative, or judicial.

Subject to specific limitations, the University may sponsor speeches, forums, question-and-answer sessions, debates, and other similar activities in an academic setting on campus at which candidates for public office may offer their insights on issues of public importance and controversies that affect the electorate and society as a whole. The purpose of such activities must be to advance the educational mission of the University. When a candidate for public office or a surrogate is provided the opportunity to speak at University-sponsored speeches, forums, debates, and other similar activities on campus, the University is obligated under these circumstances to offer comparable opportunities on campus to opposing candidates to express their views.

In addition, whether such an appearance is sponsored by a student organization or by the University, and whether it is a "campaign appearance" or a speech, forum, question-and-answer session, debate, or similar activity in an academic setting, a disclaimer must be read, and its substantive requirements followed. Both immediately before and immediately after a candidate for public office is permitted to speak, and both immediately before and immediately after anyone makes a statement in support of or against a candidate for public office, the following should be read aloud: "The views expressed here today are those solely of the speaker and not of Marquette University. The use of Marquette's facilities does not constitute an endorsement of any candidate for public office or of the views expressed. No fundraising is permitted at this event."

Questions on who is a candidate for public office, or what constitutes participating in a political campaign, or what are comparable opportunities to express views, please contact the University Office of General Counsel at (414) 288-7343.