

College Procedure: 307.5 – Campus Political Activities

Policy Reference: 307 – Use of College Facilities
Responsible Department: Facilities and Public Safety
Approval Authority: Cabinet
Procedure Owner: Vice President, Facilities and Public Safety
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Legal Reference(s): Info here
Scope: College-wide

Purpose

Kirkwood Community College is committed to fostering an environment that supports free expression, including political speech, while ensuring that such activities do not disrupt the College's educational mission. This policy outlines guidelines for political activities on campus in compliance with legal obligations, institutional policies, and the College's role in promoting civic engagement. This procedure is intended to protect lawful expressive activity consistent with the First Amendment and Iowa Code Chapter 261H governing expressive activity at public institutions of higher education while maintaining institutional neutrality and the orderly operation of College programs and services. This policy is subject to all other applicable College regulations, policies, procedures, requirements and standards.

Scope

This procedure applies to all Kirkwood Community College students, employees, registered clubs and organizations, departments, and any external groups or members of the public that utilizes any college facility or portion of campus. It governs political activities, including but not limited to, political campaigns, candidate appearances, the use of College resources for political purposes, solicitation, and voter registration on campus.

Institutional Neutrality and Advocacy

Kirkwood Community College maintains a general stance of institutional neutrality regarding political matters. However, the College may take positions on issues that directly affect its core functions, values, or operations. This exception applies when the institution's mission, autonomy, or essential activities are at risk. While generally neutral, Kirkwood reserves the right to advocate on matters of critical importance to the institution's well-being and role in higher education.

Free Expression and Political Activities

A. Individual Expression

1. **Students, Faculty, and Staff:** All members of the Kirkwood community have the right to express personal political views, provided such activities do not interfere with the performance of their duties, obstruct College operations, or imply endorsement by the College. Political speech, including the distribution of literature and peaceful assembly, is protected as long as it adheres to time, place, and manner restrictions.
2. **Classroom Discussions:** Faculty members may facilitate discussions of political topics relevant to the course content, encouraging a diversity of viewpoints. However, they must avoid using the classroom to promote personal political beliefs or solicit political support from students.

B. Sponsorship of Political Events

1. **Clubs and Organizations:** Only registered student clubs and organizations may sponsor political events.
2. **External Groups:** External groups may request to rent campus facilities for events, provided they adhere to the College's facility rental procedures and guidelines. Political activities by these groups must not interfere with academic or administrative functions.
3. **Departments and Offices:** College departments and offices may host or sponsor political events or discussions either for educational purposes or when related to issues that directly affect the institution. These events must maintain a nonpartisan atmosphere and follow the same rules regarding space reservations and resource use.

C. Use of College Resources

1. **Prohibited Use:** College funds, equipment, facilities, mailing lists, communication systems, or other institutional resources may not be used to support or oppose any political candidate or political campaign except as permitted through the standard facility reservation process available to all external organizations. Employees engaging in political activities in their personal capacity must make clear that their views are their own and do not represent the College.
2. **Space Reservations:** External political organizations may request the use of Kirkwood Community College facilities, provided they adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Facility use and rental procedure. All political activities must be conducted in a manner that does not interfere with the college's academic or administrative operations.

Political events hosted by these groups will be charged the non-profit room rental rate, along with any additional expenses incurred by the college.

Sitting political officials will not be charged a room rental fee unless the event involves active campaigning. Request can be made to room.scheduling@kirkwood.edu

Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

To ensure political activities do not disrupt the educational mission of the College, the following restrictions apply:

1. **Time:** Political activities must be scheduled during regular College hours unless otherwise approved. Events must not disrupt scheduled academic or administrative activities.
2. **Place:** Political activities must be confined to designated spaces as specified in the space reservation approval. Activities outside of designated spaces are prohibited. Political activities requiring reservations or organized events must occur in spaces approved through the College's space reservation process. Outdoor areas of campus that are generally accessible to the public may be used for lawful expressive activity provided that the activity does not disrupt College operations or interfere with access to facilities.
3. **Manner:** All political activities must be conducted peacefully and without solicitation or aggressive engagement with individuals. Participants may distribute literature and engage in voluntary conversations regarding political issues. Individuals must cease engagement if a person declines further interaction. Use of amplified sound may require prior approval to ensure that academic activities and scheduled events are not disrupted.

Political activities must not involve harassment, intimidation, threats, or conduct that interferes with another individual's ability to move freely through campus.

Activities may not block entrances, exits, walkways, or emergency access routes and may not materially disrupt classes, offices, or scheduled College operations.

Political activities may not use Kirkwood e-mail and branding to promote or solicit.

4. **Event Safety Coordination:** Where political events, demonstrations, or expressive activities are reasonably anticipated to involve large attendance, heightened public interest, or safety considerations, the College may require coordination with the Office of Public Safety to ensure appropriate safety planning.

Such coordination may include planning related to crowd management, event staffing, emergency access, and protection of participants and attendees.

Safety measures will be based on objective considerations such as anticipated attendance, venue capacity, and operational needs of the College and will not be based on the viewpoint or content of the expression.

Event organizers may be required to comply with reasonable safety instructions necessary to protect individuals and maintain access to campus facilities.

Enforcement and Violations

1. **Violations:** Violations of this policy—including the unauthorized use of College resources, failure to comply with event procedures, may result in disciplinary action, including suspension of event privileges or removal from campus.

2. **Reporting Violations:** Any concerns or violations of this policy should be reported to the Office of Public Safety. Reports will be reviewed, and appropriate actions will be taken.
3. **Enforcement actions:** Will be applied in a content neutral and viewpoint neutral manner consistent with the College's commitment to free expression.

Candidate Appearances:

Political candidates may appear on campus under the same facility use procedures applicable to other external speakers or organizations.

Candidate appearances may be sponsored by recognized student organizations or may occur through standard facility reservations by external organizations.

College departments may host educational forums involving political candidates when the purpose is instructional and the event is conducted in a balanced and nonpartisan manner.

The appearance of a political candidate on campus does not constitute endorsement by Kirkwood Community College.

When feasible, events organized by College departments that involve candidates should provide equal opportunity for participation by other candidates in the same race.

Signage and Posting:

Political signs and campaign materials must comply with the College's established posting and signage policies.

Signs may only be placed in approved locations and may not damage College property or create safety hazards.

Unauthorized signage may be removed by College staff.

Definitions

Designated Spaces: In certain circumstances, campus spaces may be designated as public, limited access and restricted access, depending on the activities taking place. This practice is intended to protect our students and preserve the integrity of instructional spaces. Public Safety will enforce these designations as situations arise.

External Groups: are individuals, organizations, or entities that are not affiliated with Kirkwood Community College as students, employees, registered student clubs or organizations, departments, or offices. This includes, but is not limited to, political organizations, advocacy groups, campaign committees, nonprofit organizations, and members of the general public.

Political Activities: refer to actions, events, or communications intended to influence, support, oppose, or engage in civic or governmental processes. Political activities include, but are not limited to:

- Political campaigns and campaign-related events
- Appearances, speeches, or forums involving political candidates or elected officials when related to campaigning or political advocacy
- Advocacy for or against political parties, ballot initiatives, legislation, or public policy issues
- Distribution of political literature or materials

- Solicitation of political support, donations, or signatures
- Voter registration and voter education efforts
- Use of campus space or facilities for political purposes

Political Candidate: An individual who has publicly declared or filed for nomination or election to a local, state, or federal public office.

Campaign Activity: Organized activity conducted for the purpose of advocating for or against a political candidate or political committee, including campaign events, rallies, fundraising activities, or distribution of campaign materials.

Campaign Materials: Printed or digital materials advocating for or against a political candidate, ballot initiative, or political party. These help when enforcing literature distribution or signage rules.

Expressive Activity: Lawful non-commercial speech including demonstrations, speeches, literature distribution, petition circulation, and other forms of protected expression.

Exceptions:

Requests for exceptions to this procedure must be submitted in writing to the Vice President, Operations. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure compliance with the College’s educational mission and legal obligations.

Revision Log

Table 1 Revision Log

Version Number	Date Approved	Approved by	Description of Change
1	04/01/2026	Cabinet	New Procedure