



Manual of Policy and Procedures

Title POLITICAL ACTIVITY	Number 501	Page 1 of 2
	Date 12/7/07	

PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to balance the conflicting public policies of promoting and protecting robust political discourse within the Vermont State Colleges (“VSC”) with the need to preserve the tax-exempt status granted to the VSC. The VSC supports and protects the freedoms of speech, peaceable assembly and association and encourages its students, faculty and employees to fully exercise the rights of citizenship by participating in the political life of their communities.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The VSC shall not, through its officials, colleges or programs, participate or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. No VSC official, faculty member or employee is authorized in his or her official capacity to make public statements in support of, or in opposition to, a political campaign or candidate for public office. Any statements made by a VSC official, student, faculty member or employee in his or her personal capacity in support of, or in opposition to, any campaign or candidate shall clearly indicate that he or she is not representing or speaking for the VSC.

PROCEDURES AND ILLUSTRATIVE GUIDANCE

The Chancellor shall develop and, as needed, update procedures and illustrative guidance for matters involving political activities within the VSC system.

INTERPRETATION

1. Any questions or disputes arising under Policy 501 or the Chancellor’s procedures or illustrative guidance shall be referred to the office of the VSC General Counsel.

2. Nothing herein or in the Chancellor's procedures or illustrative guidance shall be construed to be inconsistent with the provisions of any collective bargaining agreement unless such contrary interpretation is required by law.
3. Nothing herein or in the Chancellor's procedures or illustrative guidance shall be construed to limit the rights of trustees, students, faculty and employees to express personal opinions or to engage in political activity in their capacity as private citizens.

Cross References: Policy 402 Use of College Facilities by Non-College Organizations
 Policy 307 Recognition of Student Organizations
 Policy 205 Public Office Campaigning and Service
 Academic Freedom (Collective Bargaining Agreement Article)
 Policy 309 Student Publications
 Policy 310 Broadcasting

Signed by: Robert G. Clarke Chancellor
