

From: [DeRionne Pollard, Montgomery College President](#)
Subject: Political Activity and Events at the College
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MONTGOMERY COLLEGE
Office of the President

September 16, 2016

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery College Colleagues
From: Dr. DeRionne P. Pollard, President
Subject: Political Activity and Events at the College

With the presidential elections taking place in just a couple months —voting is Tuesday, November 8—it is important to remind ourselves of our rights and responsibilities during this exciting time.

As members of the Maryland community, each individual employee and student enjoys freedom of speech and has a right to express himself or herself with regard to candidates and issues. We are fortunate to live in a country where these rights are cherished and protected.

When exercising our expression, individuals also have a responsibility not to imply that Montgomery College supports or opposes any candidate or issue. In addition, public resources (employee time, computers, printed material, and rooms, among other resources) cannot be used by an individual to advance a candidate or issue with the College’s explicit or implied support. College-sponsored events should generally be structured so that all candidates or representatives on all sides of an issue have an opportunity to be heard. Please note that our student organizations are not bound by the same obligations and can organize information events according to their interests.

The classroom is and always has been a special place for the exploration of ideas, which include political issues. The academic freedom accorded to faculty provides for freedom of discussion and research; College Policy 58003 expresses our commitment to this value. As a faculty member myself, I value academic freedom dearly, and will always protect its tenets on behalf of my faculty colleagues.

Attached please find a more detailed memorandum from the Office of General Counsel summarizing existing College policies applicable to politically-related activities of College employees and including some specific, common scenarios developed by the American Council of Education in its memorandum, “Political Campaign-Related Activities of and at Colleges and Universities.”

Your attention to these matters is appreciated. Questions regarding any legal matter related to political activity should be directed to Tim Dietz in the Office of General Counsel. Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Sanjay Rai can address questions regarding academic

freedom.

I thank you for your civic engagement and your help in maintaining our institutional role as a steward of public resources that provides a fair environment for discussion, discourse, and debate.