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TO: University of Alaska Students and Employees
FROM: Andy Harrington, Associate General Counsel & Designated Ethics Supervisor
RE: Partisan Political Activities
DATE: September 12, 2024

“One of the keys to the survival of free institutions is the relationship between private and public life, the way citizens do, or do not, participate in the public sphere.” —Robert N. Bellah

This is our annual reminder that, although as individuals we are encouraged to vote and to get as involved as we may care to in election campaigns, it is important that we refrain from utilizing for partisan political purposes those publicly funded UA resources to which we have access as members of the UA community.

By law (Alaska Statute 39.52.120(b)(6), part of the Executive Branch Ethics Act (EBEA)), UA employees may not use, or permit the use of, UA email or other UA property or resources for partisan political purposes. Partisan political purpose includes anything done with the purpose of differentially benefiting or harming a candidate or potential candidate, political party or group. This encompasses municipal elections (even though those are non-partisan for some purposes, they are partisan for EBEA purposes), as well as state and national elections, and groups supporting or opposing a ballot proposition.

The following are some general guidelines. Because the Ethics Act and other applicable law can be complex and some issues may involve constitutionally protected speech or matters of academic freedom under Board of Regents' policy, please seek advice through your supervisor, HR and the General Counsel's office if you have questions regarding a specific instance.

Generally **impermissible** activities:

- Students or employees using University networks to send bulk email supporting or opposing any candidate or group;
- Employees hosting partisan gatherings using University facilities or resources without payment for the use;
- Students or employees using University resources to reproduce or deliver partisan campaign materials;
- Displaying or distributing partisan political material while engaged on official business. (AS 39.25.178(3))
- Using UA emails or other resources to solicit campaign contributions, or to recruit volunteers or (except through approved Career Services postings) applicants for paid campaign employment positions

Generally **permissible** Activities (not considered partisan use of UA resources):

- Hosting a pro-and-con or all-candidate forum or debate as a public service;
- Faculty inviting a candidate to a class to address matters related to the class;
- Authorized student clubs (acting through their club officers) using club funds to host a partisan gathering on campus or participate in a partisan event;
- University spokespersons, students or UA advocates informing legislators and the public about University priorities, requested budgets, positions, programs, and/or research activities;
- Employees standing at a corner on campus during their lunch hours or leave time waving a partisan sign.

The University encourages and respects *personal* participation in political activity, including partisan activity. Please, however, respect the rule that resources entrusted to us by the public are not to be used for partisan purposes. Thank you!