

Protocols for Campaigning, Use of University Social Media Platforms and Use of Alumni Records

Nominations are currently being accepted for individuals interested in becoming candidates for election to membership on Penn State's Board of Trustees. Below is some information on campaigning, use of university social media platforms and the policies governing how the Alumni Association and its affiliate groups may participate in the Board of Trustees elections. These policies cover both traditional print publications as well as electronic media (including email, listservs, social media, and websites). Full details of policies are available in the Alumni Association's [Sourcebook](#).

- Per University policy, alumni data—including addresses and email addresses—can be shared only for bona fide alumni- or student-related purposes and cannot be used for commercial or political purposes. Examples of acceptable uses include mailing alumni publications, planning class reunions, and raising funds for the University, among others. Alumni data sent to affiliate groups, such as chapters, Alumni Interest Groups, Affiliate Program Groups, and college and campus alumni societies, shall not be provided to anyone running for any University, public, or other office. Additionally, data shall not be provided to colleges, campuses, departments, or outside organizations for commercial purposes, such as soliciting memberships in another organization, or direct mail selling of projects or services.
- The Alumni Association takes steps to encourage alumni participation in the Board of Trustees election process. However, per its policy, the Alumni Association does not endorse, contribute to, work for, or otherwise support or oppose any electoral candidates or advocacy groups; rather, its stance has been to encourage broad participation, to treat all candidates with equal respect, and to avoid influencing voters' choices. Such neutrality is also important for preserving the Alumni Association's status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the Federal Tax Code. This neutrality extends to social media as well; any posts that support or criticize specific candidates or advocacy groups on official Alumni Association social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram are strongly discouraged and are subject to removal by site administrators. Similarly, it is not appropriate to use any University or Alumni Association listservs, mailing lists or Alumni Directory communication services to distribute information concerning an individual's candidacy.
- Because affiliate groups—including chapters, college and campus constituent societies, and Alumni Interest Groups are chartered by the general Alumni Association and receive a portion of their budgets and other forms of support from the Alumni Association, the Alumni Association's policy of political neutrality also extends to these groups. Affiliate Program Groups, chartered by Alumni Societies, are treated likewise.
- The Alumni Association encourages its affiliate groups to publicize the Trustee and Alumni Council elections, in an effort to raise voter awareness and turnout. The following rules shall be observed: (1) inform alumni of nomination and election dates and procedures; (2) introduce all candidates, not just the ones from their constituency; (3) encourage alumni to participate in the election process; (4) give equal space and treatment to all candidates so as not to appear to be campaigning as an organization for any one nominee.
- All candidates are required to add disclaimer language indicating ***“This posting is made in my individual capacity and does not necessarily reflect the position of The Pennsylvania State University or the Board of Trustees.”*** to all social media postings on Penn State University or University-affiliated sites.
- Candidates will not be invited to speak or be specifically recognized or introduced at any University or University-affiliated events or activities from the time of nomination through election.
- All campaign materials (yard signs, flyers, etc.) should be removed from public spaces in a timely manner at the conclusion of the election.

Shannon S. Harvey
Assistant Vice President/University Secretary
Office of the Board of Trustees
The Pennsylvania State University 201 Old Main
University Park, PA 16802