As you may know, nominations are currently being accepted for individuals interested in becoming candidates for election to membership on Penn State's Board of Trustees. It is always reassuring to know that there is strong interest and willingness of the alumni to seek election to this responsible position.

Embedded in the text below are the policies governing how the Alumni Association and its affiliate groups may participate in the Board of Trustees elections. Please note that these policies cover both traditional print publications as well as electronic media (including e-mail, listservs, and Web sites). Therefore, it is not appropriate to use any listservs and/or mailing lists to distribute information concerning an individual's candidacy.

The Alumni Association has established a LinkedIn discussion group (https://lnkd.in/dd2SUkv), where discussions about the 2015 trustee election are permitted. In addition, The Penn Stater magazine will again host a League of Women Voters-style election guide this year, based on the “Three Questions for the Candidates” project it started in 2012. That site (pennstatermag.com/bot2015/) will go live in late March.

USE OF ALUMNI RECORDS

It is the responsibility of the Alumni Association to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of alumni—both members and nonmembers of the Alumni Association.

The Executive Director of the Alumni Association is charged with the responsibility for administering the Executive Board’s policy of sharing lists of alumni only for bona fide alumni- or student-related purposes and not for commercial or political purposes. Among the acceptable uses are mailing alumni publications, planning class reunions, raising funds for the University, assisting with appropriate research projects, and communicating with alumni about University and alumni affairs. In addition, lists are made available to the Alumni Association’s official corporate partners, such as Bank of America and Liberty Mutual Insurance, who administer revenue-generating programs that benefit the Alumni Association.

The following guidelines are stated to assist the Executive Director in handling requests for lists of alumni:

1. Alumni lists sent to groups, such as chapters, shall be accompanied by a notice that the list shall be used only for the management and operation of the chapter. The list shall not be used for commercial purposes, for fundraising beyond which benefits Penn State and the Penn State Alumni Association, nor shall it be provided to anyone running for any University, public, or other office.

2. Requests for lists from any source for University fundraising purposes shall be referred to the Office of University Development. That office shall be responsible to see that the lists are used only for that purpose.

3. Occasionally, researchers ask for lists for the purpose of making studies. In such cases, the Executive Director shall review a copy of the research design (instrument samples must be included) and determine that the research project is appropriate. Costs for use of the list(s) shall be determined by the Executive Director. Consideration should be given to providing a sample population list (every 10th person for example) in such cases.
4. Lists may be provided to University agencies, if in the judgment of the Executive Director, the purpose is to serve the University’s general best interest. (For example, a list of employers to solicit summer employment opportunities for students.)

5. Lists shall not be provided to colleges, campuses, departments, or outside organizations for commercial purposes, such as sending out sales catalogs, soliciting memberships in another organization, direct mail selling of projects or services, or the selling of subscriptions.

6. Requests for non-alumni (friend) records, which are maintained jointly by the Alumni Association and the Office of University Development, should be referred to the Office of University Development for approval and/or handling.

**ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

**General Statement of Policy**
The Penn State Alumni Association, as a part of The Pennsylvania State University, must abide by and obey general University policy as it applies to the web and Internet access. If any of the policies herein conflict with adopted University policy, the University policy takes precedence. It can be assumed that anything not specifically addressed here conforms to the published and approved University policy. The website shall also comply with all federal, state, and local laws, especially those that pertain to electronic communication, privacy, and copyright.

**Online Service Policy Agreement**
The Penn State Alumni Association is the owner of the online Alumni Directory (“Service”). It is an online directory intended to promote and enhance communication of a personal nature between participants in the service. The Service is available to all members of the Alumni Association and is subject to the terms and conditions of the Service Policy.

**Privacy**
Areas of the website containing private information are located on a separate, secure server utilizing secure sockets layer (SSL) protection. Also, any areas of the website containing private information can be accessed only by members of the Alumni Association and are password protected. Alumni can access and update their personal information, and only members of the Alumni Association can view Alumni Directory information. Through the “Hide Information” option, users can limit what, if any, of their information appears to other alumni in the online directory.

**Outside Links**
It is the policy of the University to limit commercial links to those sites that have a direct connection to the functions of the University and to prohibit commercial links that are unrelated to the operations of the University.

**USE OF EMAIL ADDRESSES**

Lists of Alumni/Development database information should be used only for bona fide Alumni/Development or official University-related purposes and not for commercial or political purposes. Among acceptable uses are mailing alumni publications, planning class reunions, raising funds for the University under the direction of the Office of University Development, and communicating with alumni and friends about the University. In addition, lists are made available to the Alumni Association’s official corporate partners, such as Bank of America and Liberty Mutual Insurance, who administer revenue-generating programs that benefit the Alumni Association.
Any individual (faculty, staff, volunteer) receiving information is responsible for safeguarding the use of such data. This information shall be used solely for legitimate University business.

**Misuse**
Any posting of obscene, illegal, copyrighted, or offensive words, images, sounds, or videos is considered misuse and is considered grounds for temporary or permanent banning from the site. In the event of illegal activity, the appropriate authorities will be notified promptly on the first offense.

**POLICIES FOR ELECTIONS**

Alumni Association policy, reaffirmed over the years in periodic evaluations, is to refrain from publicly endorsing, supporting, or campaigning to elect individual candidates in any election, including the University’s Board of Trustees or Alumni Council. Such policy is in keeping with the philosophy of the Alumni Association’s Executive Board and is consistent with the Alumni Association’s status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Individual political activity by employees is not prohibited, but it may not be done in the name of the Alumni Association or any of its constituent groups.

Regarding Board of Trustees elections, the Alumni Association does take positive steps to encourage greater alumni participation in the election process. It also makes alumni aware of when the elections occur and the process to vote.

For the Alumni Council elections, the Alumni Association affords all alumni members of the Alumni Association the opportunity to be nominated for Council and vote in elections. The Alumni Association actively pursues and encourages alumni from diverse backgrounds to seek election. Elections are promoted through various publications (both print and electronic).

Beyond those activities, 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 nonprofit status 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, and Twitter are strongly discouraged and are subject to removal by site administrators.

Because affiliate groups—including chapters, college and campus constituent societies, Alumni Interest Groups, and Affiliate Program Groups—are chartered by the general Alumni Association and receive a portion of their budgets and other forms of support from the Association, the Alumni Association’s policy of political neutrality also extends to these groups.

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.
If you have any questions, please let me know.

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