

[REDACTED]

From: Lantz, Susan L. [REDACTED] >
Sent: Friday, October 30, 2020 1:56:19 PM
To: Tang, Thomas [REDACTED]
Cc: Stone, Alexander D. [REDACTED]; Dengler, Derek J. [REDACTED]; Green, Jonathan D. [REDACTED]; Sowers, Natalie [REDACTED]; Dubbs, Morgan A. [REDACTED]; Ramsaran, Dave [REDACTED]; Coyne, Michael A. [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Political Signs

Thomas

Thank you for sharing this with us. Members of the senior leadership team met to discuss your concerns. Our executive vice president, Mike Coyne, was especially helpful in processing this policy. The policy on political activity, including displaying political signs on campus is related to our status as a nonprofit institution

There is a fairly wide range of practices adopted by colleges and universities in response to the prohibition of tax exempt organizations from directly or indirectly participating in partisan political activities. For example, the law school of Georgetown University prohibits all political activity including the passing of pamphlets or the display of any political signs. Conversely, Liberty University held what some thought amounted to rallies for a presidential candidate and had an employee publicly working for political campaigns

Susquehanna University wants its students and employees to participate in the political process, but we are drawing the line at allowing students, or employees of the university who reside in university owned residences, including the president, from outwardly displaying partisan political signs We believe that allowing such a practice in confusing to the public and can imply that the university is endorsing a candidate or political party. Our grounds and buildings were purchased with or built with donations exempted from taxation or financed with bonds that also enjoyed tax-exempt status. The tradeoff is that by using the benefits of tax exemption, we are prohibited from being involved in political activity

Following is some verbiage from the website of the IRS

Under the Internal Revenue Code all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes.

Certain activities or expenditures may not be prohibited depending on the facts and circumstances For example certain voter education activities (including presenting public forums and publishing voter education guides) conducted in a non-partisan manner do not constitute prohibited political campaign activity. In addition, other activities intended to encourage people to participate in the electoral process, such as voter registration and get-out the vote drives would not be prohibited political campaign activity if conducted in a non partisan manner

On the other hand, voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another (b) oppose a candidate in some manner or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.

I am thankful for the conversations you and the other members of the student political groups are having about this. I welcome the opportunity to engage in dialogue about our policy and will reach out to find a time for us to connect.

Sincerely,
Susan

Susan Little Lantz, Ed.D.
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From: Tang, Thomas [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 1:10 PM
To: Green, Jonathan D. [REDACTED]; Lantz, Susan L. [REDACTED]; Sowers, Natalie [REDACTED]; Ramsaran, Dave [REDACTED]; Dubbs, Morgan A. [REDACTED]
Cc: Stone, Alexander D. [REDACTED]; Dengler, Derek J. [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Political Signs

Here is the attached formal statement

Thomas Tang
Susquehanna University Class of 2020
Political Science and Economics (BA) Major
Environmental Studies Minor
SU Dems President
Presidential Fellows (2018-2019)

From: Tang, Thomas
Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 1 04 PM
To: Green, Jonathan D [REDACTED]; Lantz, Susan L [REDACTED]; Sowers, Natalie [REDACTED]; Ramsaran, Dave [REDACTED]; Dubbs, Morgan A [REDACTED]
Cc: Stone, Alexander D [REDACTED]; Dengler, Derek J [REDACTED]
Subject: Political Signs

Good afternoon,

With regards to the recent message about political signs, all SU political groups have a formal statement about political signs

Thomas Tang

Susquehanna University Class of 2020

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