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September 2, 2010

TO: University of Alaska Students and Employees

FROM: Michael Hostina, Associate General Counsel &  
Designated Ethics Supervisor

RE: Partisan Political Activities

The political campaign season is upon us again, and questions will come up regarding candidate appearances and political communications.

By law, University employees may not use **or permit the use** of email or other University property or resources for **partisan** political purposes. Partisan political purpose is defined by law: anything done with the purpose of **differentially benefiting or harming a candidate or potential candidate, political party or group**. (See AS 39.52.120(b)(6).)

The following are some general guidelines. However, because the Ethics Act and other applicable law is 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 case.

#### **Generally Impermissible activities:**

- Students or employees using University networks to send bulk email supporting a candidate or party;
- Employees hosting partisan gatherings using University facilities or resources without payment for the use;
- Students or employees using University resources to reproduce or distribute partisan campaign materials;
- Displaying or distributing partisan political material while engaged on official business. (AS 39.25.178(3))

#### **Activities Generally Not Considered Partisan Use of University Resources**

- Hosting an **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 **using their funds** to host a partisan gathering on campus or participate in a partisan event;
- University spokespersons, students or UA advocates informing legislators, candidates and the public about University priorities, requested budgets, positions, programs, and/or research activities;
- Employees standing at a corner on campus during lunch waving a partisan sign.

The University encourages and respects **personal** participation in political activity, including partisan activity. Please, however, do not use resources entrusted to us by the public for *partisan* purposes. At the same time, bear in mind that it is not feasible or in the University's interests to attempt to regulate minor personal use of phone or email. Potential violations should be addressed after careful consideration of the circumstances and consultation with your supervisor, Human Resources and the General Counsel's office.