



## **Candidate and Government Official Visits Procedure**

**Procedure Number:** 312P

**Responsible Office:** Office of Government Affairs and Community Relations

**Forms:** [Image Release Form 125-343](#)

**Effective Date:** 12/17/2024

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### **1. Purpose**

This policy outlines the responsibilities for managing and hosting candidate and government official visits on all NOVA campuses.

### **2. Definitions**

*Elected Officials:* Individuals who have been chosen by voters to hold a public office. This includes positions such as governors, senators, representatives, county executives, delegates, school board members, and county board representatives.

*Candidates:* Individuals who are running for a political office or position. They are often involved in campaigns to gain support from voters.

*Provosts:* A provost at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) is a senior administrative officer responsible for overseeing academic affairs and ensuring the effective operation of their respective campus. They play a key role in advancing the college's mission and strategic plan to enhance institutional effectiveness and improve student success.

*Nonpartisan:* This means not biased or affiliated with any political party, ensuring neutrality in political matters.

*Canvassing:* This involves soliciting votes or opinions from the public, often by going door-to-door or setting up information booths.

### **3. Procedure**

The Director of Governmental Affairs will manage and respond to inquiries regarding candidate and government officials visits subject to the procedure outlined below.

#### **A. Responsibilities**

- i. The Office of Strategic Partnerships and Workforce Innovations is responsible for managing official and candidate use of the Ernst Community Cultural Center, the Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center and the Regional Center for Workforce Education and Training.



- ii. Campus provosts are the signing authority for the use of all other campus spaces.
- iii. Brault building use is managed by the Office of Finance and Administration.
- iv. The Director of College Government Affairs is NOVA's point of contact for all official and candidate events, with the above offices responsible for the contractual details and final lease agreement process.
- v. Any campaign requesting to stage an event must provide a responsible point of contact who can authorize expenditures.

#### B. Fees

- i. Tuition dollars can never be used to pay for a candidate's event.
- ii. Campaigns must pay for both the lease of any College facility and for associated costs.
- iii. Both incumbent elected officials and candidates for office will be charged the internal customer rate for facility rental fees and any necessary labor, equipment and public safety related fees.
- iv. The College reserves the right to determine if fire and EMS services will be required and billable.

#### C. Forms

- i. Official/ campaign will complete the appropriate Facility Rental Application.
- ii. For all filming on campus, a Location Release is required.
- iii. If filming will include images of identifiable College students, staff, or visitors, an Image Release Form is also required.

#### D. Scheduling

- i. To limit conflict with classes and student parking, campaign events can only be scheduled on Friday evenings and weekends during the fall and spring semesters. Exceptions may be authorized by the president of the College.
- ii. During summer sessions, and in any period when classes are not in session (e.g., winter or spring breaks), event approval will be considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on conflicts with college operations.
- iii. The College requests seven (7) days' advance notice to allow staff time to prepare for a campaign event. If less notice than this is provided, the College reserves the right to reject the request and/or increase the billing rates to recover overtime and related expenditures.

#### E. Campus Visits

- i. The Director of College Government Affairs is responsible for coordinating campus visits or campaign stops by national, state and local officials and/or candidates including:

- ii. Presidential candidates or surrogates campaigning on their behalf (i.e. family members, other office holders, campaign staff).
- iii. Other national executive office holders (President, Vice President, Cabinet, etc.).
- iv. Governor or gubernatorial candidates.
- v. US Senator or US Senatorial candidates.
- vi. US Representative or US House of Representatives candidates.
- vii. Members of a state legislature traveling as a group (i.e. the Virginia Senate Finance Committee).
- viii. Other state level office holders and candidates.
- ix. Local office holders and candidates.

F. Student Organization Sponsored Events

- i. Recognized student organizations are encouraged to sponsor events that include visits by candidates or public officials. In planning such events, student organizations are required to contact the Director of College Government Relations and follow procedures established by the campus Office of Student Life for sponsoring events. Student organizations are responsible for any fees associated with events they sponsor, including public safety related fees. No individual student(s) or unrecognized student organization may sponsor an event.

G. Non-Campaign Cultural/Educational Events and Bi/multi-partisan Candidate Debates

- i. The NOVA Institute for Public Service is strictly nonpartisan and seeks to preserve its reputation for presenting multiple perspectives. The Institute can cosponsor events that are educational in nature or are events where a broad spectrum of viewpoints is discussed. Such events will be submitted to the Director of College Government Affairs for approval and coordination. The Institute for Public Service is encouraged to sponsor, subject to conditions below, public officials, candidates, or multi-candidate debates, forums, lectures, and discussions on issues of broad social concern.
- ii. Any other College office or department that wishes to host official or candidate visits must contact the Director of College Government Affairs for approval and coordination.

H. Guest Lecturers

- i. Individual faculty members may invite public officials to guest lecture in their classes in accord with procedures described in the Faculty Handbook. These appearances cannot offer a forum for campaign speeches but can provide students with an opportunity to interact with a public official. Such visits are encouraged for their educational value. As a general rule, these lectures will not be open to the public. Faculty members are encouraged to inform the Director of Government Affairs of such visits in case the Office of the President wishes to greet the office holder.



I. Invitations and Queries from Candidates

- i. *Invitations:* Invitations extended to candidates/officials to speak or to participate in multi-candidate debates should be approved through the Director of Government Affairs. In all cases, the event coordinator will notify the Campus Provost, the Director of Government Affairs, and Campus Police of pending visits as soon as invitations are accepted.
- ii. *Queries from Candidates or Public Officials:* A candidate or public official may approach a variety of offices or individuals to express interest in a campus appearance. Regardless of which office/individual is contacted, the request will be forwarded to the Director of Government Affairs.
- iii. *Declining an Appearance:* Northern Virginia Community College reserves the right to decline requests from individuals or groups at its discretion. Reasons for refusal include scheduling conflicts, lack of appropriate available space, and/or an inability to provide adequate security to individuals and/or property.
- iv. *Volunteer Recruitment, Canvassing or Other Campaign Activities:* Candidates or their campaigns may wish to conduct activities on campus that do not include a candidate visit. In these cases, the campaign should follow the College procedures for space use, including space reservations, sponsorship by campus departments or student groups, and fee payment, as appropriate. Such activities could include:
  - a. Tabling in dining facilities or designated student areas.
  - b. Publicizing volunteer or paid campaign opportunities.
  - c. Voter registration drives.
  - d. Book signings.
  - e. Internships (to be coordinated through appropriate department's internship coordinator or department chair).
- v. Such requests should be addressed in accord with the policy on Posting, Solicitation and Distribution of Materials on College Property, with notification to the Campus Provost, Police, and Director of College Government Affairs.

J. Communicating Institutional Neutrality

- i. Northern Virginia Community College will make every effort to communicate that, while it welcomes candidates and public officials to its campus in the spirit of civic and community engagement, it does not implicitly or explicitly endorse any candidate, party, or ideological perspective. To communicate this institutional neutrality, NOVA will take the following steps:
  - a. *Neutrality Statement:* Include a disclaimer on all news releases, posters, appropriate web sites, and other relevant documents. The following language is recommended: Northern Virginia Community College is a public institution dedicated to serving the Commonwealth of Virginia and to promoting the free exchange of ideas and informed citizenship. Northern Virginia Community College welcomes political

candidates, elected officials, and guest speakers from all partisan and ideological perspectives to visit campus and to present their ideas. These appearances do not constitute an endorsement of any party, candidate, or ideological perspective.

- b. NOVA employees who are attending the event in their official capacity will not participate in any solicitation of volunteers and will refrain from any activities (i.e. sign waving, cheering) that might imply endorsement of a candidate's/official's beliefs. This provision applies only to NOVA employees attending the event in their official capacity. NOVA employees attending as private citizens may participate in all of these activities as long as they are not wearing anything that would identify them as a NOVA official.
- c. NOVA students who are attending the event as paid College employees are subject to the same restrictions as other employees.
- d. If audience members are permitted on stage, every effort will be made to permit NOVA students to sit or stand on the stage behind the candidate/public official. This will enrich the students' experience at the event. Students will be permitted to sit on the stage without regard to whether they are wearing NOVA attire.

#### K. Facilities and Set Up

- i. **Venue:** Once a candidate/public official visit is confirmed, the sponsoring office must work with the candidate/official to select an appropriate facility in consultation with the Campus Provost and the Director of Government Affairs. Once the venue is confirmed, the candidate/official will complete the applicable Facility Rental Agreement and pay the applicable rental charges.
- ii. **Tabling:** Northern Virginia Community College can provide tables for sign in, volunteer sign-ups, or voter registration activities at the candidate's/official's request.
  - a. Any such tables will be plain and unadorned. They will not display NOVA logos or NOVA literature. They will not be staffed by NOVA employees. Instead, all tables must be staffed by campaign or office volunteers/staff who are prominently identified as such (i.e. with name tags, candidate/party t-shirts or uniforms, or signage).
- iii. **Staging:** Recognizing that national political figures, presidential candidates especially, may have their own preferences for staging, event coordinators should make every effort to present Northern Virginia Community College in a favorable manner. It is recommended that every effort be made to include the following in the staging and set up:
  - a. NOVA logo prominently displayed. Options include:
    1. A television backdrop with the NOVA name and/or logo.
    2. Podium with the NOVA name and logo displayed.
    3. NOVA banners.
    4. Table cloth or runner with NOVA name and logo.

- iv. Candidates and public officials who propose to install tents, temporary bleachers/grandstands, temporary stages/platforms, portable buildings, amusement devices, and other temporary structures need to provide enough lead time in their schedule so that these items can be approved, as required through Department of Engineering and Buildings.
- v. Designated Seating for NOVA VIPs: Northern Virginia Community College will negotiate with the candidate/official to reserve seating from College VIPs (i.e. College Board Members, senior College leadership, and the like) who wish to attend the event.

L. Media and College Relations

- i. College staff will assist with media credentials and designate a Public Information Officer (PIO) from the College's Media Relation's Office.
- ii. The College PIO will create a notice to all faculty and staff advising them of anticipated parking and traffic challenges.
- iii. The College will ask for VIP tickets should they be requested by College leadership. Campus leadership for the event location will be among those invited to attend.
- iv. The Director of College Government Affairs will be responsible for coordinating a list of College officials to be invited and screened in advance by the Secret Service (if applicable).
- v. Photography and Videography by College Personnel: Northern Virginia Community College will negotiate with the candidate/public official to permit NOVA personnel to photograph and/or videotape the event. These materials are the intellectual property of NOVA and may be used in College publications and posted on the Web site and/or social media for the College's own purposes.

M. Security and Parking Protocols

- i. Northern Virginia Community College is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and guests alike.
- ii. The College will defer to the needs of Secret Service, if applicable, but will be selective in responding to campaign staff requests.
- iii. To the extent that crowds impinge upon public safety (i.e., block entries and exits), trained NOVA staff will guide and assist campaign staff in de-escalating protest situations rather than using police as the first-line response for crowd control. College Police will respond, only if necessary, to relocate/manage the gathering.
- iv. The following provides an inventory of questions that should be reviewed and negotiated as necessary with candidates/officials who are visiting campus to ensure the College can provide a secure environment.

a. Personal Security

1. Does candidate have his/her own security detail?



2. Is the security detail public or private?
  3. Is the security detail armed or mainly crowd control?
  4. Who is the contact person for the personal security team?
  5. If a high profile candidate, has the Virginia Office of the United States Secret Service been notified? This will only be done for a high-profile, declared candidate.
  6. Are there special security needs?
  7. Ambulance on standby.
  8. Hospital location and route.
  9. Police escorts to and from campus.
  10. Type of vehicle they are traveling in and how many in caravan?
- b. Venue Security
1. Are there any special requests for security inside the venue?
  2. Will barriers between candidate and crowd be used?
  3. Are building diagrams needed?
  4. Do exits need to be known before visit?
  5. Do exit routes need to be established before visits?
  6. Is a meeting facility for candidate needed before appearance?
- c. Parking Needs
1. Is special parking necessary to accommodate buses? If so, how many buses and how big are they?
  2. Are special parking spaces needed for campaign staff? If so, how many spaces?
  3. Will all members of the candidate's campaign staff and the news media have visible credentials?
  4. What are the parking needs for the news media (if not included with the campaign buses), including unobstructed areas for satellite trucks?
- d. Time Line

1. Requests for campus visits must be made a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the visit to ensure proper personnel are available and scheduled.
2. Requests for Security Assistance must also be made a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the visit to ensure proper personnel are available and scheduled.

N. Community Participation

- i. Whenever possible, candidate/public official visits will be open to all NOVA students and to the public at large. Special invitations to community leaders, Board members, faculty and students at other area schools, colleges, and Universities; etc. may be issued by the sponsoring office (i.e. the Office of the President or the Institute for Public Service). In any case, every effort will be made to admit all persons to these events without regard to their partisan or ideological perspectives. However, admission may be limited by space considerations or other restrictions. Attendees may also be required to go through a security check point if required by the Secret Service or other security detail.

O. Vendors

- i. Campaigns will advise in advance if they intend to sell merchandise and provide exactly what will be sold and under what circumstances. The College retains the right to deny or alter the items and conditions.
- ii. The College will assign a point of contact for outside vendors who approach in advance or show up at the event.