

Student Organizations Inviting Political Candidates or Political Officials to Campus to Speak FAQs

Q: Can student organizations bring a political candidate or a current political official to campus as a speaker?

A: Yes, recognized Ball State University student organizations have the privilege of inviting speakers, including political candidates or current political officials, to speak on campus. The student organization sponsoring the speaker has the responsibility of reserving a space on campus through the Student Center Reservations Office and helping ensure the event is conducted in an orderly fashion and that the speaker is accorded an opportunity to speak and be heard.

Q: Will there be a charge for use of university space for a political speaker?

A: Student organizations may host political candidates and/or political officials at private organization events with no charge for use of the space. However, if the event is public (open to the Ball State community and/or members of the general public), it will be subject to a charge for use of the space. Public events hosted by a student organization involving a speaker that is a political candidate or political official are limited to the L.A. Pittenger Student Center.

Q: What is considered a “private” event of a student organization?

A: A private event is only open to the current members of the student organization. It is not open to the rest of the Ball State community and/or members of the general public.

Q: What if the event is “private” but is later opened to the public?

A: If the event is at any point is opened to the Ball State community and/or members of the general public, the event must be held in the L.A. Pittenger Student Center pursuant to a reservation through the Student Center Reservations Office and will be subject to a rental fee. Such a situation may result in the student organization needing to reschedule the formerly-private event in order to go through the reservation process.

Q: Is an event considered “private” if the student organization livestreams it?

A: Livestreaming an event for anyone other than current members of the student organization will make it a public event subject to reservation requirements and a rental fee.

Q: If a rental fee is required, who pays it?

A: The speaker or the student organization can pay the rental fee for the event. The rental fee must be paid before the event date.

Q: What is the process for bringing a political candidate or current political official to campus as a speaker?

A: Review Section 113 of the Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook- [Selection and Presentation of Lecturers or Speakers by Student Organizations](#) and the [Non-Commercial Expressive Activity and Assembly on University Property](#) policy to understand the organization's responsibility when hosting a speaker. Determine if the event will be private or public. Reserve a space by contacting the Student Center Reservations Office.

Q: Why do I have to meet with a committee if I am hosting a public event sponsored by a student organization?

A: The committee includes representatives from several areas that can help you plan, coordinate, and host a successful event. Committee members will assist you in ensuring you have considered all aspects of event planning. Members of the committee include but are not limited to the reservations staff who can respond to questions about the reservation including any associated rental fees. The Office of Student Life also has a representative to help clarify university policies related to recognized student organizations and event planning.

Q: What should the student organization communicate to the political candidate/official before the speaking event?

A: It's important to communicate with the individual to ensure they understand that a public speaking event at Ball State requires a reservation and rental fee. You should also ensure there is an understanding of who will be paying the rental fee. In addition, the speaker should be informed of the University's commitment to freedom of expression, as stated in the [Freedom of Expression Statement](#), as well as the [Selection and Presentation of Lecturers or Speakers by](#)

[Student Organizations](#) (Section 113 of the Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook) and the [Non-Commercial Expressive Activity and Assembly on University Property](#) policy.

Q: Why is there a rental fee for use of the space if the event is public?

A: The University is a tax-exempt state educational institution. In order to maintain this status, the university may not participate or intervene in any political campaign or permit its resources to be used in a manner that suggests institutional support for any political party or candidate. Because of this reality, Ball State regulates political activity on campus, and it does so in part by charging rental fees for the use of space for public events involving a political speaker as it would for other outside speakers seeking to host an event on campus.

Q: What safety measures should the student organization consider when inviting a political figure to campus for a speaking event?

A: Political candidates and current political officials may require additional security when visiting campus. It is important to inquire about their security needs and connect them to the University Police Department if necessary.