

Texas State University Student Government Supreme Court

Advisory Opinion

Residential Halls Door Displays & Academic Buildings

Opinion No: 26 - 02

Syllabus

Request Received - March 9th, 2026.

Opinion Issued-March 11th, 2026

The Supreme Court has received two requests to advise on displaying campaign paraphernalia within residence halls and if specific buildings classify as academic.

The requests presented to the court were:

1. Are campaign materials allowed to be displayed on the room doors within residence halls if the residents willingly do so, and are candidates allowed to encourage it?
2. Does the LBJ Student Center, the Alkek Library, the Student Recreation Center, and the Campus Dining Halls count as “academic buildings,” in that we cannot campaign within them?

For these questions, the court holds that:

1.
 - A. Campaign materials, such as literature, etc., are allowed to be displayed on the doors in residence halls if the residents willingly display them and have the respective authorization to do so.
 - a. If the door belongs to a room in which more than one resident resides, such as a double occupancy room, then all residents must agree to display the campaign materials on the door.
 - b. Residents should speak to their Resident Assistant to ensure that the campaign materials are allowed to be placed.
 - B. Candidates are allowed to inform residents that if they get the necessary permission, then they may voluntarily display campaign materials; however, candidates are not allowed to encourage this and may only inform others that it is allowed if given authorization by the proper entities.
- 2.

- A. The LBJ Student Center shall be considered an academic building due to the presence of university classes and instructional spaces; therefore, campaigning within twenty-five (25) feet is prohibited.
- B. Alkek Library shall be considered an academic building due to its function as a student's study and academic work environment which hosts classes; campaigning could disrupt this environment and is therefore prohibited.
- C. The Student Recreation Center shall be treated as a restricted academic facility because it hosts instructional classes and requires keycard access, meaning it is not openly accessible to the public.
- D. Dining halls shall be considered restricted access facilities due to required student identification or card access; therefore, they are not open to the public, and campaigning within them is prohibited.

A detailed explanation and reasoning of how the court came to this decision is in the opinion below.

Associate Justices Pickle and Ramon delivered the majority opinion for a unanimous court in which justices Downey, Hernandez, and Smith joined.

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Associate Justices Pickle and Ramon delivered the majority opinion of the court.

The court received four questions via email from a candidate and voted unanimously to separate the four questions into two separate advisory opinions. The other two questions presented to the court for advisory request can be found in opinion 26-01.

The first request regards whether students are allowed to display campaign materials on the doors of their on-campus residence halls and if candidates are allowed to encourage them to do so.

The second request regards if the LBJ Student Center, the Alkek Library, the Student Recreation Center, and the Campus Dining Halls are academic buildings and therefore cannot be campaigned inside or nearby.

Before the Court can decide on any matter, it must first determine whether it has jurisdiction to rule on the matter. Under Article IV, Provisions B of the Student Government Code of Laws, the Supreme Court has the authority to determine the validity of situations not explicitly addressed within governing documents and to interpret election provisions accordingly.

The Court therefore holds that it has jurisdiction to issue this advisory opinion regarding campaigning regulations and the classification of campus facilities.

I

Residence Hall Doors Campaign Materials Displays & Candidate Encouragement

The Student Government Code of Laws defines Campaign Materials as “*all materials and literature of any kind, including electronic or virtual, concerning any candidate that has or is intended to have the effect of soliciting votes, support, or interest for a candidate.*”

Students living in on-campus residence halls are able to, at their own discretion and with free will, display a student government’s candidate campaign materials on their room door. Although they may do so, they are required to get permission before they take action from roommates, if they have any, and from their Resident Assistant. If a resident does not have a shared door, then they should just seek approval from their Resident Assistant.

Candidates can inform students that they can display their campaign materials on their room doors but must clarify that they need permission from the appropriate parties before they do so. Additionally, candidates are only able to inform the students that they can display the campaign materials but are not allowed to encourage them to do so; this includes the candidate and any student organizations offering or facilitating incentives. Furthermore, if a resident freely displays the campaign materials, the candidate is still accountable to Article VI of the Student Government Election Code.

II – Campaigning and Building Restrictions

The Student Government Election Code defines campaigning as: “Statements, literature, activities, or deliberate uses or distribution of materials of any kind, including electronic or virtual, that have or are intended to have the effect of soliciting votes, support, or interest for a candidate.” The Election Code further states that: “No one shall campaign within twenty-five feet of any academic building or residence hall during elections.”

The Court must therefore determine whether the facilities in question fall under the classification of academic buildings or restrict access to the public.

The first facility to be addressed is the LBJ Student Center. Because formal academic instruction occurs within the LBJ Student Center, the Court determines that it functions in part as an academic building. Therefore, the Court holds that the LBJ Student Center shall be treated as an academic building for the purposes of campaigning restrictions.

Next, the Court considers the Student Recreation Center. While primarily a fitness and recreational facility, the building hosts wellness classes, certifications, and practices offered by the university. Article VII of the Election Code seeks to protect environments where academic instruction occurs and where student access may be restricted. Because the Recreation Center hosts certification courses and private practices, the Court determines that campaigning near or within the building could interfere with instructional activities. Therefore, the Court holds that the Student Recreation Center shall be treated as an academic building for purposes of campaign regulation.

Next, the Court considers the Alkek Library. The library is a central academic facility intended for research, studying, and scholarly work by students and faculty. Although classes may not be formally scheduled in library spaces, the primary function of the library is academic study and intellectual work. Interruptions caused by campaigning could disrupt the academic environment and the ability of students to focus on coursework and research. Given its academic purpose and its role as a designated study space, the Court determines that Alkek Library must be treated as an academic building under the campaigning restrictions of the Election Code.

Finally, the Court addresses campus dining halls. Many dining facilities require the use of student identification cards or meal plans for access to enter. This access requirement restricts entry to students and authorized individuals rather than the general public. Because these facilities are not universally open to the public and require card access for entry, they fall under the category of spaces that do not allow open access to all individuals. For these reasons, the Court holds that dining halls shall be treated as restricted-access facilities where campaigning is not permitted.

It is so ordered . . .