

Gubernatorial Primary Debates To Take Place At Stockton University

One Democratic and one Republican primary will be held at the university.

By Anthony Bellano (Patch Staff) - (<http://patch.com/users/anthony-bellano>) March 28, 2017 2:24 pm ET
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Voters in South Jersey will get a close look at the candidates for governor on both the Democratic and Republican sides early in the election process.

Stockton University will host one Democratic and one Republican primary debate in this year's gubernatorial race, the university announced on Tuesday.

The debates will take place in the university's Campus Center Theatre, which seats 254, with overflow seating available in the adjacent Campus Center Event Room, which can seat up to 500 additional community members. Stockton will also live-stream the debate using Facebook Live.

The university's William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy applied to the state's Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC) to host a gubernatorial primary debate on Stockton's main campus, located at 101 Vera King Farris Drive in Galloway.

NJTV in Newark and Ocean County College in Toms River also applied to host the debates, which must take place between April 13 and May 23, according to ELEC.

Specific dates for the debates at Stockton have not yet been set by the commission.

Primary Day is June 6 and the General Election takes place Nov. 7.

"Since its founding, Stockton has emphasized the importance of political education and dialogue, the role of civic activism and voters' rights and responsibilities," Stockton University President Harvey Kesselman said. "The Hughes Center's stated mission is 'to enable the citizens of southern New Jersey to connect with their leaders on the local, state and national levels.' Holding two primary debates here will provide residents with an exceptional opportunity to assess the candidates for themselves, which fits into the university's commitment to promoting engaged citizenship and helping democracy to thrive."

"Stockton is a public institution that is inherently dedicated to civic and political engagement, and the Hughes Center has made hosting debates part of its mission in its nine years of existence," William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy Executive Director Sharon Schulman said. "Hosting the primary debates at Stockton University is a way for the people of South Jersey to hear what our future policy makers have to say. The debates will also serve as an opportunity for the candidates to reach the southern region of our state."

The frontrunner in this year's Democratic Primary appears to be former Goldman Sachs executive and U.S. Ambassador to Germany Phil Murphy. Other contenders include Assemblyman John Wisniewski (D-19) and State Sen. Ray Lesniak (D-20).

On the Republican side, the favorites appear to be Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno and Assemblyman Jack Ciattarelli (R-16).

Previously, Stockton University has hosted several debates including legislative, congressional and senatorial debates.

Most recently, the Hughes Center sponsored a District 2 legislative debate with Republican Assemblyman Chris Brown and running mate Freeholder Will Pauls and Democratic Assemblyman Vince Mazzeo and running mate Freeholder Colin Bell.