

Policies of the University of North Texas Health Science Center	Chapter 07 – Student Affairs, Education and Funding
07.141 Free Speech and Public Assembly on Campus Grounds	

Policy Statement.

This policy outlines the University of North Texas Health Science Center Free Speech and Public Assembly Guidelines on Campus Grounds. The University of North Texas Health Science Center recognizes that the freedom of expression and public assembly are fundamental rights of all persons and are essential components of the educational process. Such activities promote debate and the sharing of ideas, which are the foundation of educational institutions.

Application of Policy.

This policy applies to all UNTHSC students, employees, organizations and sponsored guests. This policy does not apply to official academic and administrative activities and functions of the University.

Definitions.

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy only:

1. Amplified Sound. “Amplified Sound” means sound that is increased or enhanced by any electric, electronic, or mechanical means, including handheld devices such as megaphones and sound trucks. Other sound, specifically individual shouting or group chanting/singing, is subject to general regulations concerning disruption of official University functions.
2. Campus Grounds. “Campus Grounds” means all outdoor areas owned, leased or controlled by the University (including UNT Health Clinics) that are common and accessible to all students and employees such as sidewalks, park-like areas and grassy areas.
3. Designated Areas. “Designated Areas” means outdoor areas of property owned, leased or controlled by the University that may be reserved by students and employees for expressive activity and used by sponsored guests for this purpose.
4. Employee. “Employee” means a person currently employed by the University on a full-time, part-time or hourly basis.
5. Expressive Activity. “Expressive Activity” means the verbal or symbolic expression of an idea, thought or opinion that may include speeches, assembly, marches, parades, rallies, picketing, distribution of literature, mass emails, graphic or pictorial displays and other similar activities intended to communicate an idea or an opinion. Expressive

activity does not include speech that is likely to incite or produce imminent lawless action, expression that consists of fighting words or threats of physical harm or expression that is defamatory, obscene or commercial in nature.

6. Literature. “Literature” means any printed material that is produced in multiple copies for distribution or publication to an audience, including but not limited to flyers, handbills, leaflets, placards, bulletins, newspapers and magazines, but does not include any official UNTHSC material.
7. Official University Function. “Official University Function” means all activities, events, and programs sponsored by an academic or administrative unit of the University and all activities and on-campus programs sponsored by student or employee organizations.
8. Sponsored Activity. “Sponsored Activity” means any expressive activity that is presented by a sponsored guest under this policy.
9. Sponsored Guest. “Sponsored Guest” means any person or organization invited to engage in expressive activity on campus grounds by a sponsoring organization in accordance with this policy.
10. Student. “Student” means any person who is currently enrolled and attending the University of North Texas Health Science Center.
11. Sponsoring Organization. “Sponsoring Organization” means a recognized student organization through the Office of Student Development, or a group comprised of UNTHSC students or employees who officially represent UNTHSC at activities sanctioned by UNTHSC.
12. University. “University” means the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

Procedures and Responsibilities.

1. Use of Campus Grounds

The facilities and campus grounds of the University are intended to be used first for instructional and research programs and administrative activities of the University and secondarily for programs sponsored and conducted by University academic and administrative departments or organizations affiliated with those departments, including student organizations.

Students and employees may engage in expressive activity on campus grounds without the need for prior reservation or registration except as set out in this and other applicable University policies. Expressive activity may not create a vehicular or other safety hazard or constitute disruptive activity, defamation, riotous conduct or obscenity

as those terms are defined by federal or state law and may not impede access to other expressive activity, such as blocking the audience's view or preventing the audience from hearing a speaker. Displaying a sign, gesturing, wearing symbolic clothing or otherwise protesting silently is permissible anywhere unless it is a disruptive activity as defined by federal or state law.

Students, employees and sponsoring organizations that wish to organize parades, marches or rallies in areas that cross thoroughfares or would stop or slow traffic must register with the Division of Student Affairs at least ten business days in advance of the activity in order to ensure that the proposed route does not substantially interrupt the safe and orderly movement of traffic or create a safety hazard.

University facilities and campus grounds may not be used by individuals or organizations not directly connected with the University except as permitted by this and the University Facilities Use policies.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs, Room Scheduler

2. Reservation of Campus Grounds for Expressive Activities

Campus grounds generally are open to students, employees and sponsoring organizations for expressive activity. However, these individuals and organizations are encouraged to reserve areas on campus that are designated for expressive activity when the activity is promoted in advance or when the activity may reasonably be anticipated to draw a crowd of 25 or more people. Designated areas may be reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis and are subject to the reservation procedures published by the Division of Student Affairs and set out in this policy. Only the individuals or sponsoring organization that reserves a designated space may use the area for expressive activity during the reserved period.

A reservation is required for use of amplified sound.

Sponsoring organizations are required to reserve a designated area for expressive activity by a sponsored guest. Only sponsoring organizations may invite sponsored guests to use campus grounds for expressive activity. A request to reserve space for use by a sponsored guest must be made no fewer than ten business days in advance of the sponsored activity.

In order to allow reasonable access to designated areas, students, employees and sponsoring organizations may reserve these locations a total of fifteen days and no more than five consecutive days each semester.

The Division of Student Affairs is responsible for administration of this policy, including:

- a. identifying locations and establishing times for use as designated areas and identifying locations and establishing times for use of amplified sound;
- b. managing requests for reservation of campus grounds under this policy;
- c. relocating expressive activities as allowed under this policy;
- d. developing procedures for reserving areas for expressive activity and use of amplified sound and for registering for parades, marches and rallies;
- e. creating forms for use in reserving designated areas, using amplified sound, and registering for parades, marches and rallies; and
- f. publishing the locations, times, procedures and forms required under this policy at the beginning of each academic year.

The Division of Student Affairs will act on requests to reserve designated areas and to register for a parade, march or rally no later than two business days after a properly submitted request is received in the Division of Student Affairs. If a request is denied, the Division of Student Affairs will, where feasible, propose measures to address any defects in the request. When the basis for denial is receipt of an earlier request for the same location and time, the Division of Student Affairs will inform the individual or organization whose request is denied of other dates, times and locations that are available for reservation.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs

3. Use of Amplified Sound in Outdoor Areas

Advance reservation is required before amplified sound may be used on campus grounds. Students, employees, organizations and sponsored guests may use amplified sound on campus grounds only at the locations and times published by the Division of Student Affairs. Amplified sound areas may be reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis and are subject to the reservation procedures published by the Division of Student Affairs and this policy.

For outdoor events, UNTHSC will apply the standards of all relevant Fort Worth ordinances including the noise ordinance which requires all amplified noise to cease between the hours of 10:00pm and 7:00am Monday through Saturday and all day on Sunday.

Amplification will not be approved for any time period during the seven calendar days preceding the final week of each fall and spring semester for each academic program and during exams in any academic building.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs

4. Reason for Denial of a Reservation/Permit

Requests to reserve a designated area, to use amplified sound, or to register a route for a parade, march or rally may not be denied based on the content of the proposed expressive activity. Requests may be denied only for the following reasons:

- a. an earlier request to reserve the same location and time has been made;
- b. the designated area or an adjacent area has been reserved for an official University function or the designated area is no longer suitable for use due to a conflict with a nearby official University function;
- c. the reservation or registration form is incomplete;
- d. the request exceeds more than fifteen days in a semester or is for more than five consecutive days;
- e. the proposed route of a march, parade or rally will cross space that has been
- f. reserved for an official University function or space that otherwise has been reserved in accordance with this policy or the proposed route will substantially interrupt the safe and orderly movement of traffic or create a safety hazard; or
- g. the request was submitted by an individual or organization that is not permitted to reserve space on campus under this policy.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs

5. Relocation of Expressive Activities

Individuals and organizations engaged in expressive activity on campus may be required to relocate to other areas by the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Division of Student Affairs or, when immediate action is necessary, the University police department, under the following circumstances:

- a. the noise generated by the activity disrupts an official University function or substantially interferes with academic activities (e.g. the activity is too close to an academic or administrative building);
- b. the location does not safely accommodate the number of participants;
- c. the number of individuals participating in or attending the activity creates unsafe conditions for vehicular or pedestrian traffic, parking, or blocks the ingress or egress to buildings or official university activities;

- d. the space has been reserved for an official University function, has been reserved in accordance with this policy, or a reserved location is needed for an official University function; or
- e. the activity creates a health or welfare hazard, such as interfering with fire, police or emergency services.

Responsible Party: Vice President for Student Affairs, Division of Student Affairs or Campus Police

6. Distribution of Literature

Students, employees and sponsoring organizations may distribute literature on campus grounds. Sponsored guests may distribute literature only in the designated area reserved for their use.

Students, employees, sponsoring organizations and sponsored guests who distribute literature should be considerate about collecting any litter that may be generated as a consequence of their distributions and are expected to collect literature that is left over or that is on the ground in the area in which it is distributed.

Literature distributed under this policy by a sponsoring organization that contains the name "University of North Texas Health Science Center" or "UNTHSC" in its name or that contains any reference to being affiliated with the University, must include the statement that the literature is not official university literature and does not represent the views or official position of the University.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs/Office of Student Development

7. Commercial Solicitation and Advertising

Individuals and organizations may engage in commercial solicitation and advertising only if a sponsoring organization takes responsibility for the content and message. Any academic-related organizations wishing to advertise on campus grounds should receive prior approval from the appropriate college or academic department in addition to having a sponsoring organization.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs, Academic departments, and Office of Student Development

8. Signs and Banners

Students and employees and members of student and employee organizations may display signs by holding them or otherwise attaching them to their persons. Otherwise, all displays of signs and banners, including displays on outdoor bulletin boards and displays by sponsored guests, must comply with the Advertising Policy for Student

Groups.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs

9. Outdoor Exhibits

Stationary exhibits and structures may be placed only in designated areas, except that individuals may place displays on easel-type supports on campus grounds that are open and accessible for expressive activity. Stationary exhibits and structures may not exceed twenty-five feet in length or width or fifteen feet in height, may not extend into or onto any sidewalks or walkways in such a way as to interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic or otherwise present an unreasonable threat to public safety.

Sponsored guests may set up exhibits only in accordance with this policy and Advertising Policy for Student Groups.

Exception to the dimension regulations shall be granted by the Division of Student Affairs upon a showing by the individual or organization seeking the exception that the exhibit will not present a safety hazard and will not interfere with pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Proof that the individual or organization has insurance to cover injury or damage to persons or property is not grounds for an exception to the dimension regulations.

Request for exception to the outdoor exhibit regulation must be made at least ten business days in advance of the desired display date.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs

10. Responsibilities of Individuals, Sponsoring Organizations and Sponsored Guests

Sponsoring organizations are responsible for ensuring that sponsored guests read and understand all obligations set out in this and all other applicable University policies. Members of the University community may be held individually responsible and sponsoring organizations may be held collectively accountable for any violations of University policies, including the Student Code of Conduct and personnel policies, as applicable.

Sponsored guests who do not comply with this or other applicable University policies automatically forfeit their reservations and must immediately vacate University property.

Responsible Party: Division of Student Affairs

11. Appeal of Decisions Related to Expressive Activity

Students, employees and organizations whose requests for use of campus grounds for expressive activity are denied may appeal the decision to the Vice President for Student Affairs no later than two business days after the decision that is being challenged was made.

The appeal must be made in writing and state the specific reason(s) the individual or organization disagrees with the decision. The appeal should include all information the individual or organization believes will assist the Vice President for Student Affairs in deciding the matter.

The Vice President for Student Affairs will issue a decision on the appeal within three business days of its receipt. The decision is final.

Responsible Party: Vice President for Student Affairs

References and Cross-references.

UNTHSC Policy 04.101 Internal Facilities Use

UNTHSC Policy 04.102 External Facilities Use

Student Organization Handbook

Forms and Tools.

Approved: November 2011

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Revised: