

Augusta University

Policy Library

Freedom of Expression

Policy Manager: Dean of Students

POLICY STATEMENT

Augusta University holds the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and the right to assemble peaceably as an essential cornerstone to the advancement of knowledge and the right of a free people. The University is committed to affording everyone the opportunity to engage in peaceful and orderly exercise of these rights in a manner that does not disrupt University operations and University-sponsored activities.

Individuals enrolled at or employed by Augusta University (“members of the University community”) and their invited guest (provided such guests are in the company of the inviting party) may engage in First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of expression across campus. Non-University affiliated individuals must reserve and remain within one of the Designated Public Forum Areas. Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted as limiting the expression of members of the University community provided the expressive activities or related conduct do not violate any other applicable University policies or applicable laws. By placing reasonable limitations on time, place, and manner of expression, Augusta University does not take a position on the content or viewpoint of the expression, but rather provides for reasonable regulations of use of campus facilities so that a diversity of viewpoints may be expressed in an academic setting.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other:

DEFINITIONS

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PROCESS & PROCEDURES

Designated Public Forum Areas: To facilitate robust debate and the free exchange of ideas, the University has designated visible areas on campus as “Designated Public Forum Areas.” Designated Public Forum Areas are generally available for reservation, except during scheduled University holidays, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12 midnight, Sunday through Saturday and include:

- a) Teardrop in the Grove area on the Summerville campus,
- b) South Side of the Jaguar Student Activity Center (JSAC), and
- c) East Side of the Student Center on the Health Sciences campus.

Office of Legal Affairs Use Only

Executive Sponsor: Executive Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs

Next Review: 8/2029

The Designated Public Forum Areas are generally available and may be used by any person including non-university affiliated individuals, as long as the areas have not been previously reserved or scheduled for a particular function and the participants do not violate other University policies or applicable laws.

Non-university affiliated individuals must reserve the Designated Public Forum Areas prior to use of the space. If an individual or group plans to use the space, they should contact the University as soon as possible to minimize scheduling conflicts, accommodate all interested users, provide for campus safety, and ensure that the academic and other operations of the University are not disrupted.

Individuals interested in reserving the Designated Public Forum Areas should contact the Office of the Dean of Students. Reservations of the Designated Public Forum Areas will be granted by the University unless the reservation request implicates one of the following situations: (1) the reservation request contains a material falsehood or misrepresentation; (2) the Designated Public Forum areas have already been reserved; (3) the use or activity planned by the applicant would conflict with or disturb previously planned programs organized and conducted by the University or would present a danger to the health or safety of any individual; or, (4) the use or activity intended by the applicant is prohibited by law, Augusta University policy, or Board of Regents policy.

University officials will respond to all reservation requests within two University business days. Any denial of a reservation request may be appealed to the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Student Affairs who will respond to the appeal within two University business days.

Written Materials: Members of the University community may distribute non-commercial written materials on a person-to-person basis in open outdoor areas of the campus. An individual who is not a member of the University community may only distribute non-commercial written materials within one of the Designated Public Forum Areas and only during the time in which the individual has reserved the Designated Public Forum Area.

Designated building coordinators, or other University officials may designate areas in classrooms and or in or around University buildings for students or student organizations who wish to post handbills, posters, flyers, banners, signs, and other similar items on campus. However, the University prohibits the posting or display of these items by students or student organizations outside of these designated areas, including on the exterior of any University building, telephone/utility pole, tree, sidewalk, window, trash can, fence, or any other exterior surface located on the campus, including vehicles, or on a free-standing pole or structure, or with use of ropes or wire. For information about where material may be posted, please call the Office of the Dean of Students at 706-737-1411.

Requests to post fliers within on-campus housing must be submitted to the Department of Housing and Residence Life. Requesters should provide an appropriate number of flyers to be posted on bulletin boards within the residence halls. Housing staff are responsible for posting the flyers and removing them after the event or noted expiration date. Solicitation or advertising for non-university sponsored functions is not allowed.

Temporary signage such as banners, large posters, or yard signs that are affixed or free standing are prohibited unless approved by the appropriate building manager or posted by a University department or other registered organization of the University.

General Provisions: In addition to the requirements set forth above, all individuals expressing themselves on Augusta University's campus must comply with the following provisions:

- No interference with the free flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic, including the ingress and egress to buildings on campus, is permitted.
- No disruption of the orderly conduct of classroom instruction or other University activities is permitted. If a demonstration or other expressive behavior by any individual or group, regardless of the size of the group, disrupts any University-sponsored event, including class or clinic, or poses a threat to the health or safety of any individual, the University reserves the right to direct the individual or group to one of the Designated Public Forum Areas or to another suitable location where the individual or group may continue the demonstration, if such an area exists on campus, or to end the event.
- Buildings, grounds, University property, and property belonging to others may not be defaced, damaged, or destroyed.
- Camping, including the placing or use of tents, raised tarps, or other temporary shelters or structures for the purpose of temporarily inhabiting an area is prohibited.
- Temporary structures may not remain in any area of campus for longer than eight (8) consecutive hours or after 12:00 p.m. midnight.
- Sidewalk chalk is permitted; however, the use of chalk may be used only on concrete sidewalks where the chalking can be washed away easily by rain, and at least 10 feet from the entrance to any University building.
- Persons expressing themselves on Augusta University's campus must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, Board of Regents' policies, and Augusta University policies, rules, and regulations.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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RELATED POLICIES

Board of Regents Policy 6.5 Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom

APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 8/1/2024

President, Augusta University

Date: 8/1/2024