

WGTC 5.22

Free Speech

- I. **PURPOSE:** Students at West Georgia Technical College are free and encouraged to express themselves in a manner that is consistent with the guidelines applicable to members of the public at large, as well as in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

The College maintains a position of neutrality as the content of expression and any written materials distributed on campus under this procedure.

II. RELATED AUTHORITY:

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 – Powers of Board.

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-14 – TCSG Established; Powers and Duties.

O.C.G.A. § 20-4-39 – Powers of Campus Police.

TCSG State Board Policy 3.3.3. – Use of Campus Facilities.

- II. **APPLICABILITY:** All work departments at West Georgia Technical College.
- III. **IV. DEFINITIONS:** The outdoor areas of our college have been deemed a traditional public forum. Therefore, public members are free to exercise express activities outdoors as long as they do not interfere with the college's operations. Free speech and expressive activities must not:
 - a. Attract a crowd more significant than the location of the spontaneous expressive activity can safely be contained.
 - b. Significantly disrupt college activities inside or outside buildings (including classes); must not significantly disrupt previously scheduled campus events.
 - c. Utilize any amplification devices.
 - d. Obstruct entrances or exits to buildings and must remain 20 feet from any entrances or exits.
 - e. Obstruct vehicular or pedestrian traffic.
 - f. Include camping or using temporary shelters (e.g., tents).
 - g. Affix items to any permanent structure or grounds (i.e., railings, buildings, greenways, 2 trees, etc.).
 - h. Light any material on fire except for hand-held candles, which may be used with special.

- i. Involve selling or promotion of commercial enterprises.
- j. Represent a threat to public safety or violate the policies or procedures approved by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia or others under the authority of the State Board, according to the discretion of college police.

IV. ATTACHMENTS:

a1- Freedom of Expression Request Form (<https://westgatech.iotform.com/242184581461053>)

The Freedom of Expression Request Form should be completed by individuals or organizations wishing to come on a West Georgia Technical College Campus to articulate their opinions and ideas. A request can be made once per semester for one campus. The available hours are Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am to 6 pm in 1-4-hour time blocks unless specifically granted extended hours. The application should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the proposed date of the event. Once the form has been completed and received, the reservation will be reviewed by administration.

West Georgia maintains a position of neutrality as the content and any written materials distributed on campus under this policy and procedure. Any approved activity should not disrupt the daily activities of the West Georgia Technical College personnel and/or student body, and not interfere with the learning environment.

VI. PROCEDURE: The following provisions apply to both reservation requests by application and spontaneous expressive activities:

A. Non-commercial pamphlets, handbills, circulars, newspapers, magazines, and other written materials may be distributed person-to-person in open areas outside buildings. All parties must adhere to college policies related to the use of facilities, including solicitation or sales.

B. Expressive activity and expression covered under this policy must comply with all applicable state and federal laws and the Technical College System of Georgia policies, rules, and regulations.

C. Activities that damage or destroy property owned or operated by the college or property belonging to students, faculty, staff, or guests of the college are prohibited. Persons or organizations causing such damage may be held financially responsible.

D. Persons or organizations responsible for an activity covered under this policy must remove all signs and litter from the area at the end of the event. Otherwise, persons or organizations responsible for the event may be held financially responsible for any cleaning costs. In addition, any item left behind or unattended (including memorials) may be removed after the event.

E. When assessing a reservation request or informed of spontaneous expressive activities on campus, college personnel must not consider the content or viewpoint of the expression or possible reaction to that expression, except to the extent such factors are relevant to assessing appropriate security measures.

F. College personnel may not impose restrictions on individuals or organizations engaged in expressive activities due to the content or viewpoint of their expression or the possible reaction to that expression. However, if other persons react negatively to this expression, college personnel shall take all necessary steps to ensure safety while allowing the expressive activity to continue.

G. College Police maintain ultimate discretion to end any activity and may, in addition, expel from public buildings, campuses, and grounds persons violating the policies and procedures that the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia or others under the authority of the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia may prescribe.

VII. RECORD RETENTION: N/A

VIII. Freedom of Expression Application Form

<https://westgatech.jotform.com/242184581461053>

Reference: State Board Policy 6.8.4.
State Board Policy 6.8.4p.
<https://tcsգ.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/policymanual/overview>

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