

URP: I.03.a.01 Free Speech Areas

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Texas Woman's University is committed to protecting the freedom of speech, expression, and the right to assemble as fundamental rights for all.

Designated free speech areas are available to TWU students, faculty, staff and members of the community. The designated areas may be used for, but are not limited to, the expression of personal politics, philosophy, religious viewpoints, surveys, or announcements.

An important goal for TWU is to provide a comfortable and hospitable environment for the entire University community. At the same time, the University is strongly committed to freedom of expression. In the exercise of first amendment rights, members of the community are encouraged to demonstrate a concern for the promotion of tolerance, civility, and trust.

Those who choose to observe and/or listen to expressive activities, bear the responsibility of recognizing and honoring the right of free speech. Any acts that are disruptive to the normal operations of the university, including classes and university business, or that invade the rights of others will not be tolerated. Faculty, staff, and students engaging in a disruptive activity may be subject to disciplinary action. Any participant in a disruptive activity may face criminal charges.

Individuals or groups of individuals engaging in disruptive activities or failing to comply with University policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws may face immediate removal from the campus and/or other appropriate actions by University officials and University police.

This URP is applicable to any non-curriculum related expressive activities (as defined herein) at locations on University grounds (as defined herein). This policy does not apply to official

University activities.

APPLICABILITY

TWU Students, Faculty, Staff, and Guest

PROCEDURES

Free Speech Areas:

Those who wish to engage in an expressive activity (including literature distribution) may engage in such expressive activity in the University's Free Speech area without prior registration or approval.

In order to provide an area that will support the climate and conditions for teaching, research, and community service, the University has designated the following free speech areas:

DENTON CAMPUS

- Area between Student Union and ACT
- Grassy area between Library and Institutional Development
- Grassy area behind Library by the footbridge
- Grassy area south of the Fine Arts Building on the corner of Texas and Oakland
- Student Union Patio (only area to allow amplified sound on Denton Campus)

HOUSTON CAMPUS

- Sidewalk between West entrance stairwell and loading dock on Old Main Street

DALLAS CAMPUS

- Sidewalk area between Parking Garage and Main Entrance.

Designated free speech areas may be reserved in order to avoid scheduling conflicts and are otherwise available on a first to arrive bases. The accommodation of speakers does not imply endorsement by TWU of the views expressed. TWU reserves the right to remove those responsible for conduct that is impermissible disruptive.

Other areas on all campuses may also be utilized by departments or organizations for similar activities; however, reservations are required. Requests for other outdoor areas are made through Conference Services, University Housing, or the Student Union for the Denton campus; or the Student Life Offices on the Dallas and Houston Campus. A reservation is contingent upon the approval process.

Posting signs and literature on Campus:

In addition to the free speech areas, bulletin boards, which require no approval for posting, are provided on each campus. Materials, placed on the free speech boards will be removed on the first working day of each month. This removal will insure that all outdated materials are removed in a timely manner and that the board is kept free of clutter and up to date. Signage is located on each board that denotes the removal of all materials on a monthly basis.

For safety reasons, all signs must be hand held and not placed on sticks or poles. In addition, no open flames are permitted in the free speech areas.

Guidelines for Expression

Disruptive Activity—Obstruction, disruption or interference with classes, research, administrative functions or other university activities is not permitted. Likewise, infringement on the rights of others is prohibited.

Reasonable Access—It is important to provide reasonable access to, and exit from, any office, classroom, laboratory or building. Likewise, vehicular and pedestrian traffic should not be obstructed.

Literature may be distributed in traditional and designated free speech areas. Such activities should not become disruptive nor should they impede access.

Symbolic Protest—Displaying a sign, gesturing, wearing symbolic clothing or otherwise protesting silently is permissible unless it is a disruptive activity or impedes access. In addition, such acts should not block the audience's view or prevent the audience from being able to pay attention.

Noise—Making sustained or repeated noise in a manner that substantially interferes with a speaker's ability to communicate his/her message is not permitted. Noise levels should not interfere with classes, meetings or activities in progress or the privacy of residence hall students.

Force or Violence—Any attempt to prevent a university activity or other lawful assembly by the threat or use of force or violence is not permissible.

Presenting Identification—In accordance with the Texas Education Code it is unlawful for any person on any property either owned or controlled by the university to refuse to identify him/herself to a university official in response to a request. For the purpose of these rules a person identifies him/herself by presenting student or faculty/staff ID card or state issued ID card. Wearing a mask, facial covering, or disguise that conceals the identity of the wearer that is calculated to obstruct the enforcement of these rules or the law, or to intimidate, hinder or interrupt a University official, TWUPD officer, or other person in the lawful performance of their duty is prohibited.

Damage to Property—Any damage to university or personal property in the course of, or as a result of, an expressive activity is prohibited. Care should be taken to ensure that university and personal property is not damaged or destroyed. This includes the campus lawns, shrubs and trees.

Other University Rules—All applicable University Student Rules should be followed whenever engaging in activities on campus. Consult the University Student handbook for further information.

All individuals participating in expressive activity are expected to comply with state and federal law, municipal ordinances, TWU Student Rules and the above guidelines. Failure to do so may result in immediate removal from the campus and any other appropriate action by university officials and/or University Police.

EMERGENCY AUTHORITY

The President or designated University representatives shall have the authority to take such steps to prevent expressive activities that materially interfere with the educational mission of the University. Such activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Activities which are illegal.
- B. Activities that deny the rights of other students, faculty, and staff of the University.
- C. Activities that substantially obstruct or restrict the free movement of persons on any part of the University campus, including the free entry to or exit from University facilities.
- D. Activities that deny the use of offices or other facilities to the students, faculty, staff, or guests of the University.
- E. Activities that threaten or endanger the safety of any person on the University campus.
- F. Activities which are likely to result in damage to or destruction of University property.
- G. Activities that create a sustained or repeated noise disturbance that substantially interferes with a speaker's ability to communicate and/or rights of others to listen.
- H. Amplified sound, where permitted, that exceeds the decibel levels set forth above.
- I. Activities that attempt to prevent a University event or other lawful assembly by the threat or use of force or violence.

SPECIAL NOTES

Vending sales and overnight camping are prohibited in all free speech areas.

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