

## Policy on Free Speech

Adopted by President's Cabinet 10-30-12

East Georgia State College affirms that no rights are more highly regarded than the first amendment guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and the right to assemble peaceably. East Georgia State College remains firmly committed to affording every member of the College community the opportunity to engage in peaceful and orderly protests and demonstrations which do not disrupt the operation of the College. However, such opportunities must be provided on an equal basis and adhere to the basic principle of the College's being neutral to the content of any public demonstration. In order to achieve this objective, while at the same time insuring that the College fulfills its educational mission, the College has the responsibility to regulate the time, place, and manner of expression. Through such regulation, the College can assure equal opportunity for all persons, preserve order within the College community, protect and preserve College property, and provide a secure environment to individuals exercising freedom of expression.

The following provisions and regulations shall apply to faculty, staff, students, student organizations, and visitors:

**A. Speeches and Demonstrations.** The areas designated as "Free Expression Areas" for speeches and demonstrations at the Swainsboro campus are the grassed area outside the Student Center (Richard L. Brown Hall entrance) and the grassed area in front of the Physical Education Building; for Statesboro, the "Free Expressions Area" is the grassy area between the sidewalks adjacent to the faculty entrance. The above areas are generally available for this purpose between 8:00 am and 9:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Use of these areas for speaking, demonstrating and other forms of expression must be scheduled through the Facilities Coordinator (478-289-2122) to best accommodate all interested users. Users must complete and submit a **Grounds Reservation Form** to the Facilities Coordinator at least 48 hours in advance of desired usage. Other areas of the campus are occasionally used for speeches and demonstrations.

**B. Distribution of Written Material.** Non-commercial pamphlets, handbills, circulars, newspapers, magazines and other written materials may be distributed on a person-to-person basis in open areas outside of buildings, so long as such distribution does not interfere with or operate to the detriment of the conduct of College affairs or the free flow of traffic. However, such materials must bear identification as to the publishing agency and distributing organization or individual and be attached to the **Grounds Reservation Form**. No materials may be distributed by a speaker unless and until said speaker's request to appear in the **Grounds Reservation Form** has been approved by the Facilities Coordinator. A speaker provided stand, table or booth may be used for material distribution upon prior approval of the Facilities Coordinator. The College maintains a position of neutrality as to the content of any written material distributed on the campus under this policy.

**C. Marches.** Marches may take place on streets and sidewalks of the campus. Requests for an event of this nature begin with completion of a **Grounds Reservation Form** submitted to the Facilities Coordinator at least 48 hours in advance. If approved, organizers, participants and bystanders must follow all provisions and regulations contained in this policy.

**D. Provisions.** In order that persons exercising freedom of expression not interfere with the operation of the College or the rights of others, the following will apply without exception to any form of expression and will be used to evaluate any plans requiring approval. Reasonable limitations may be placed on the time, place and manner of speeches, demonstrations, distribution of written material, and marches in order to serve the interest of health and safety, prevent disruption of the educational process, and protect against the invasion of the rights of others. A typical length of time for a speaker will be 1.5 hours. Frequency shall be no more than once a month under normal circumstances (members of the same group or organization dealing with the same general topic will be considered one speaker for the purpose of scheduling stipulation). Under no conditions will a non-campus speaker be allowed to sell items or solicit funds on campus.

1. Events which may obstruct vehicular, pedestrian or other traffic must be approved at least 48 hours in advance by the Facilities Coordinator.
2. No sound amplification on campus is allowed Monday – Friday 8AM -9PM or when any educational program is in session. Any amplification requests must be approved at least 48 hours in advance by the Facilities Coordinator.
3. There must be no obstruction of entrances or exits to buildings.
4. There must be no interference with educational activities inside or outside of buildings.
5. There must be no impediment of passersby or other disruptions of normal activities.

6. There must be no interference with scheduled College ceremonies, events or activities.
7. Malicious or unwarranted damage or destruction of property owned or operated by the College, or property belonging to students, faculty, staff or guests of the College, is prohibited. Persons or organizations causing such damage may be held financially responsible.
8. Persons or organizations responsible for a demonstration or other expressive event must remove all resulting structures, signs and litter from the area at the end of the event. If this is not accomplished, persons or organizations responsible for the event may be held financially responsible.
9. No camping is allowed and temporary structures (tents, etc.) are prohibited.
10. There must be compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and College policies, rules and regulations.

**E. Hearing Procedure.** A hearing may be held if it is determined that a speaker or speech will constitute or create a substantial likelihood of material interference with the normal orderly decisions and processes of the College or with the requirements of appropriate discipline. A hearing committee composed of two faculty members, two students appointed by the Student Government, and the Vice President of Student Affairs will convene to review the speaker's application. If the request is denied, the organization or the speaker may appeal to the President of the College, whose decision shall be final.

A hearing will be called if a speaker or speech advocates a call to action for any of the following:

- (a) The overthrow of the government;
- (b) The willful damage or destruction of property;
- (c) The disruption of the College's regularly scheduled functions;
- (d) The physical harm, coercion, or intimidation of the College's faculty, staff, or students;
- (e) Other campus disorder of a violent nature.

A speaker will be stopped and escorted off campus by Public Safety, if evidence of a call to action to accomplish any of the above become manifest during the speech. Failure to comply with any of these specified procedures will result in immediate removal from campus.

**Questions about this policy may be directed to:**

Facilities Coordinator,  
131 College Circle, Swainsboro, GA 30401.  
Phone: 478-289-2122

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For an up-to-date copy, go to the policies and procedures page on the EGSC website