

## **Campus Expression Policy**

As a public institution, USAO has spaces and facilities that may be used or leased by faculty, staff, students, registered student organizations, and non-college outside groups. There are different requirements based on which spaces and facilities are being requested, which entity is requesting, and for what purpose.

Oklahoma statute has defined “Campus Community” as USAO students, administrators, faculty, staff, and their invited guests.

“Expressive Activity” protected under Oklahoma statute include but are not limited to the participation of the *Campus Community* in any lawful verbal, written, audio-visual or electronic means by which individuals may communicate ideas to one another, including peaceful assembly, protests, speeches, guest speakers, distribution of literature, carrying signs, and circulating petitions.

For the purposes of this policy and procedures, the term “public” shall mean all persons and organizations who are not members of the *Campus Community*, as defined above.

### **Policy Statement**

The University will not interfere with the rights of individuals and groups to the free expression of their views or impermissibly regulate their speech based on its content or viewpoint. USAO may establish reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on Expressive Activity. Such restrictions shall be content-neutral, narrowly tailored to serve a significant governmental interest, and allow ample alternative channels for communication of the information. No event or Expressive Activity shall be permitted to substantially disrupt normal University operations.

Oklahoma statute identifies that the outdoor areas of the USAO campus are deemed public forums for the *Campus Community*. Outdoor areas of campus are the generally accessible outdoor areas where members of the *Campus Community* are commonly allowed, such as grassy areas, walkways, and common areas. Outdoor areas where access is restricted from the majority of the *Campus Community* are not included.

The University designates the following indoor facilities as unavailable for Expressive Activity: administrative offices, laboratories, and (during instructional hours) classrooms. Classrooms are available for use during non-instructional hours by members of the *Campus Community* only. Rooms can only be reconfigured in a limited fashion and the sponsoring organization is responsible for clean-up, damages to property, and other costs associated with use. Restrictions on Expressive Activities occurring in indoor facilities will apply equally to all individuals and organizations and not depend upon the content or viewpoint of the expression or the possible reaction to that expression.

### **USAO Indoor Facilities Use for Faculty, Staff, Students, Registered Student Organizations**

College rooms are rooms that can be reserved for shared academic use and are administered through the office of Academic Affairs. First and foremost, USAO classrooms are for accommodating University classes, therefore class scheduling takes precedence over any other event. Please contact the office of Academic Affairs to schedule a classroom.

## Unscheduled Expressive Outdoor Facilities Use

The right to free speech in order to express opinion, and the right to petition and assemble for this purpose, is recognized by the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO). Such expression, petitions, or assemblies must take place in an orderly manner to avoid in any way curtailing the legal operation of the University, interfering with the employees or the University in the normal performance of their assigned duties in a manner that would substantially hinder or prevent them from performing those duties, and/or violating the right of other students to pursue any part of their University life.

USAO embraces the sharing of knowledge and ideas through public discourse and free speech. As part of this community devoted to learning, USAO students, faculty, staff, and visitors are encouraged to engage in respectful dialogue.

Any member of the campus community or the public may use unrestricted generally accessible outdoor areas for non-commercial expressive activities on a first come, first served basis without giving prior notice if:

- The activity does not materially and substantially disrupt the function of the University, as defined by state law, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. engaging in fighting, violent, or other unlawful behavior;
  - b. violating state or federal law;
  - c. committing any act likely to create a health or safety hazard;
  - d. engaging in destruction of University or personal property or in the physical harm to others;
  - e. physically blocking or using threats of violence to prevent any person from attending, listening to, viewing or otherwise participating in an expressive activity;
  - f. interfering or impeding the institution's scheduled classes, events, ceremonies, or normal and essential operations; or,
  - g. interfering or blocking the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or the entrance or exit of any building.
- Use of unscheduled expressive outdoor space may occur when the University is open. All use of unscheduled expressive outdoor space must be held at least 20 feet away from buildings that normally hold classes.
- When an unscheduled activity conflicts with an event which was previously scheduled for the same time and space, the unscheduled activity shall be allowed to continue in its existing location until it needs to be relocated to allow for the prior scheduled activity or preparations for it. When relocation is necessary or desired by those engaging in the unscheduled activity, upon request, the appropriate University official will assist in relocating it to a space where the activity can continue or in scheduling it for a different time.
- With an unscheduled activity, participants may not use sound amplification equipment or equipment requiring use of electrical power connections. Due to the proximity of offices and classrooms, the University does not permit excessive noise during any event. The sound level should not disturb the occupants of buildings or interfere with normal University activities. Hand-held megaphones may be used after 5pm and must be used so

as to direct the sound away from nearby buildings where classes might be held. Sound volumes must be at or below 90dB inside the surrounding buildings.

- Signs or banners will be carried or personally attended at all times by at least one participant. Unattended displays may not be used.
- Vehicles and heavy equipment may not be used in unscheduled expressive outdoor space.
- No items (e.g., signs, equipment, décor, etc.) may be attached in any manner to trees, bushes, benches, light poles, buildings, or permanent signs.
- No free-standing structure may be constructed for any event not specifically sponsored by the University. Freestanding removable displays are permitted as long as the display occupies a space of less than 200 cubic feet, has a footprint of not more than 100 square feet, weighs less than 300 pounds, is accompanied at all times by an individual responsible for the display, and is removed in its entirety daily. If a group chooses to secure its display to the ground, it must only be affixed using a water ballast system, no stakes or other affixtures or bases are allowed.
- Non-commercial pamphlets, handbills, circulars, newspapers, leaflets, magazines, fliers, and other written materials may be distributed on a person-to-person basis in open areas outside of buildings if done in a way to avoid substantial littering on the campus.
- Access to any standing water, fenced areas, the exterior, roof, and sides of campus buildings is prohibited, except by authorized personnel. Rappelling off, climbing on, and the dropping of objects from campus buildings are expressly prohibited.

The following outdoor areas are especially conducive to non-commercial expressive activities because they are located centrally and in high-traffic areas. These areas are located at:

- Te Ata Statue located in front of Troutt Hall
- Flag Plaza located on the Oval

For more information about conducive areas or questions regarding the above time, place, and manner restrictions for unscheduled expressive outdoor space please contact one of the following offices:

- Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs: (405)574-1225
- Dean of Students: (405)574-1330