NOC

NORTHERN
Oklahoma College
TONKAWA | ENID | STILLWATER

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY POLICY

2026-2027

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY POLICY

Northern Oklahoma College (the "College") is committed to providing an environment where issues can be openly discussed and explored. The freedom to exchange views is essential to the mission of the College. This policy is in place to provide a community environment where open discussion can occur without disrupting the academic mission or daily functions of the College, subject to constitutional time, place, and manner limitations, and without unconstitutionally interfering with the rights of other members of the College community.

I. Disclaimers regarding Expression

A. Members of the College community enjoy significant free speech protections guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. This policy is primarily intended to protect members of the College community from discrimination, not to regulate protected speech. No provision of this policy shall be interpreted to prohibit conduct that is legitimately related to course content, teaching methods, scholarship, or public commentary of an individual or faculty member or the educational, political, artistic, or literary expression of students in classrooms and on campus. However, freedom of speech and academic freedom are not limitless and do not protect speech or expressive conduct that violates federal or state anti-discrimination laws.

B. The fact that certain content-based limitations on expression have been established as legally permissible does not create an obligation or responsibility on the College or any of its officials or employees to exercise any form of limitation or control of expression. Rather, because of its educational mission, it the responsibility of the College and its officials to actively encourage free and open inquiry by avoiding and resisting limitations of expression.

C. As a corollary to the College's commitment to protect and promote free expression, members of the College community must also act in conformity with the principle of free expression. Although members of the College community are free to criticize and contest the views expressed on campus, and to criticize and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not obstruct or otherwise interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, the College has a solemn responsibility not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.

D. Given the wide diversity of expression that occurs at higher education institutions, the use of any College-controlled facility, area, or medium for any expression shall not constitute or suggest endorsement of the content of that expression, or any proponent thereof, by the Board of Regents, the College, its administration, staff, faculty, student body, or any individual member of those constituencies.

E. Presenters of expression shall assume full responsibility for any violation of law or College policy and procedure that they commit while on College property.

II. Members of the College Community

A. All members of the Northern Oklahoma College community - which includes students, faculty, and staff of the College - are encouraged to exercise the right of assembly, free speech, and expression throughout the campus, when doing so does not disrupt the academic mission or daily functions of the College. Expressive activities shall not be limited to any specific location on campus. However, the right of assembly and expression does not include unlawful activity that endangers the safety of the campus community or

that destroys College property. Expressive activities are also not to unduly disrupt traffic, either vehicular or pedestrian, or violate other time, place, and manner parameters specified in this policy. Forums, rallies, demonstrations, and other similar expressive activities are not to occur within academic, administrative or other College buildings, including residence halls.

B. Any College community individual or small group (10 or fewer) may use, without prior notification or request, on any day of the week during daylight hours, any publicly accessible outdoor area of the College's campus to collect signatures, distribute materials, and/or speak spontaneously (without amplification equipment), so long as they do not disrupt the academic mission or daily functions of the College.

C. All College community individuals and groups (more than 10) wishing to participate in forums, rallies, demonstrations and other similar expressive activities should make a request in advance to the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee (580-628-6240). A request should contain the name of the requestor and how he/she can be contacted; the proposed date, time, and location for the contemplated activity; the expected size of the audience; the topic(s) or subject(s) to be addressed; and any other information which may be necessary to accommodate the needs associated with the activity. The request should be made as far in advance as possible, but in no event less than three (3) working days prior to the activity.

D. The Heilman Gazebo area in Tonkawa, located south of the Student Union and The Clock Tower area in Enid, located north of the Administration Building are locations conducive to expressive activity, including forums, rallies, and demonstrations. While members of the College community are not restricted to this designated public forum to engage in expressive activities, any College community individual or small group (less than 10) may use the Gazebo or Clock Tower areas without prior notification or request on a first come, first served basis. An individual or group who requests and reserves the Gazebo or Clock Tower areas, though, shall have priority over any other individual or group. Once a request is received and granted by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee, the Gazebo or Clock Tower areas may be reserved through the Administrative Assistant of the Vice President for Student Affairs (580-628-6240).

E. Should the Gazebo or Clock Tower areas be unsuitable or otherwise unavailable on the date and time requested, a limited public forum (excluding academic, administrative or other College buildings, including residence halls), as determined by the College, may be made available to College community individuals and groups for purposes of expressive activity. Once a request is received and granted by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee, a reservation may be made through the Administrative Assistant of the Vice President for Student Affairs (580-628-6240). To ensure priority use and to avoid possible conflict with scheduled College activities, reservations are highly recommended. Use of amplification equipment is not permitted, except in exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from the Vice President for Student Affairs.

F. Denial of any request made by a College community individual or group by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee shall be in writing and will be subject to final review by the President of the College in consultation with legal counsel. Final review should in most cases be completed within twenty-four (24) hours of denial of the request by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee. If more time is required based on the particular facts and circumstances, the requestor shall be so notified.

III. Non-Members of the College Community

A. All individuals, groups, and organizations who are not members of the Northern Oklahoma College community (those who are not students, faculty, or staff) shall submit a written request to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (Vineyard Administration Building, 1220 E. Grand Tonkawa, OK 74653) for purposes of expressive activity on campus. Once a request is received and approved by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee, non-members of the College community will contact the Administrative Assistant of the Vice President for Student Affairs (580-628-6240) to reserve the Gazebo in Tonkawa and The Clock Tower area in Enid, or, a limited public forum as determined by the College if the non-member individual, group or organization is sponsored by a member of the College community. Requests made by individual or group members of the College community shall have priority over any requests made by non-members of the College community.

B. The written request shall contain the name of the requestor and how he/she can be contacted; the proposed date, time, the expected size of the audience; the topic(s) or subject(s) to be addressed; and any other information which may be necessary to accommodate the needs associated with the activity. The request should be made as far in advance as possible, but in no event less than five (5) working days prior to the activity.

C. Denial of any request made by a non-member of the College community by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee shall be in writing and will be subject to final review by the President of the College in consultation with legal counsel. Final review should in most cases be completed within forty-eight (48) hours of denial of the request by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee. If more time is required based on the particular facts and circumstances, the requestor shall be so be notified.

IV. Time, Place, and Manner Parameters

A. Expression may be limited or restricted with respect to time, place, or manner only as provided for in this policy statement and other related statements of policy such as the Code of Student Conduct and the Student and Employee Handbooks. Such limitations shall be narrowly tailored to serve a significant interest (such as avoiding disruption of regular classes, avoiding the scheduling of two events at the same time in the same facility, and the protection of the public order) and to assure compliance with applicable local, state and federal laws. Any limitations must be both reasonable and content-neutral, the latter term meaning that the limitations shall be applied without regard to the content of the expression for the purpose of the assembly.

B. Limitations may include requiring (a) scheduling and planning with the appropriate authorized designee, (b) restricting or prohibiting the use of certain areas, (c) limiting certain forms of expression in specific areas, and (d) reimbursing the College any cost associated with the use of a facility, area, or medium.

C. In addition to those stated elsewhere in this policy, the following time, place, and manner parameters apply to expressive activities of both members of the College community and non-members alike:

- The activity must not violate local, state or federal laws, or College policies and procedures;
- The activity must not unduly disrupt traffic, either vehicular or pedestrian;
- The activity must not create unreasonable safety risks;
- The activity must not result in defacement or destruction of College property;

- The activity must not make use of amplification equipment, which is only permitted in exceptional circumstances and with prior approval from the Vice President of Student Affairs or his/her designee;
- The activity must not exceed two (2) hours in length within a 24-hour period;
- The location must be left in its original condition at the conclusion of the event, and reasonable charges or deposits may be imposed to enforce this requirement;
- Unless sponsored by a member of the College community, a non-member individual, group, or organization shall be limited to engaging in expressive activity in the Commons Area, following receipt of a written request and approval by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee; and
- Campus police, in consultation with the College President, are authorized to immediately cancel any campus event if, in their judgment, an unacceptable risk of harm or disturbance, damage, or injury to any facilities, property, participants, or spectators has been reached.

V. Unprotected Speech

The following forms of expression are not entitled to First Amendment protection and are not permitted on the campus of Northern Oklahoma College. Speech or expression that is:

Obscene – where a description or depiction of sexual conduct, taken as a whole by the average person, applying contemporary community standards, portrays sex in a patently offensive way, appeals to the prurient interest of individuals, and lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value;

Defamatory - oral or written falsehoods, which are not merely a statement of the speaker's opinion, that are communicated to a third party, or parties, and would harm another's reputation;

Incitement of imminent lawless action - where the speaker intends to incite unlawful activity, uses provocative words likely to produce such action, and openly encourages such incitement;

Fighting words - confrontational words or threats that provoke immediate violence, words which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace;

Harassment constituting a hostile environment - unwelcomed speech based on a protected characteristic that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it effectively bars the victim's access to an educational opportunity or benefit; or

True threats - words which communicate a serious expression of intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group of individuals that places the victim(s) in fear of bodily harm or death.

VI. File a grievance

Students and employees may file a complaint of a free speech violation with Northern Oklahoma College at https://www.noc.edu/students/future-students/student-affairs/expressive-activity-policy/.

Students and employees may file a complaint of a free speech violation to the Oklahoma Regents for Higher Education at https://okhighered.org/state-system/free-speech/free-speech-violation-complaint-form/