


Revised Policy

Since the vital function of free speech and expression is to protect the voices of those with unpopular opinions, or those with opinions disliked by people with power, this policy sets forth NC A&T's commitment to free speech and expression subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions.

	<p>NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY</p> <p>CHAPTER 1100 - GENERAL POLICIES</p> <p>UNIVERSITY POLICY 1103, FREE SPEECH AND EXPRESSION (INTERIM)</p>
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SECTION 1103.1 POLICY STATEMENT

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (“NC A&T” or “University”) affirms its commitment to fostering a learning environment where the free exchange of ideas—particularly those that are controversial or unpopular—is protected and encouraged. Consistent with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Constitution of the State of North Carolina, UNC Policies 1300.8 and 700.4.4, and applicable state law, the University protects the rights of students, faculty, staff, and visitors to engage in free speech and expression.

Expression protected by this Policy does not represent the views or endorsement of the University. The University retains the authority to establish reasonable, content-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions to ensure campus safety, operational continuity, and respect for the rights of others. This policy supersedes any conflicting provisions in University policies, regulations, or practices.

SECTION 1103.2 PURPOSE

This policy implements the requirements of Article 36 of Chapter 116 of the North Carolina General Statutes and UNC Policy 1300.8. Its purpose is to provide clear standards and guidance to protect freedom of speech and expression on NC A&T's campus.

SECTION 1103.3 SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and all visitors engaging in expressive conduct on University property.

SECTION 1103.4 DEFINITIONS

(1) *Demonstration*: Any rally, protest, march, or gathering where individuals express support for or opposition to a cause.

(2) *External Group*: Individuals or entities that are not University groups, including non-profit or for-profit organizations, alumni, or unaffiliated individuals.

(3) *Sponsor*: The responsible party (individual or group) organizing an event and accountable for compliance, costs, and conduct.

(4) *Student*: A person currently enrolled in any NC A&T course (credit or non-credit).

(5) *Student Organization*: A student-led, student-run organization officially recognized by the Office of Student Activities.

(6) *University Event*: An activity officially recognized and scheduled by the University in furtherance of its academic mission.

(7) *University Facility or Space*: Any University-owned or controlled building, room, outdoor space, or structure.

(8) *University Group*: Any University-affiliated student, department, unit, employee, or officially recognized organization.

(9) *University-Related Event*: Events involving a University group that may also involve external co-sponsors but are not formally sanctioned.

SECTION 1103.5 UNIVERSITY NEUTRALITY

This policy shall be applied in a viewpoint-neutral manner. The University does not endorse the content of protected speech and will not discriminate based on the viewpoint expressed.

SECTION 1103.6 DEMONSTRATIONS AND PICKETING

(1) Demonstrations and picketing are allowed on campus provided they do not disrupt University operations, threaten safety, or infringe on others' rights.

(2) Demonstrators must:

- Remain peaceful and orderly
- Not block access to buildings or interfere with movement
- Avoid disruption of academic and administrative activities

(3) Groups are encouraged to provide advance notice to the Office of Student Activities or University Events Center when demonstrations are planned.

(4) Violators may face removal, disciplinary action, or legal consequences.

SECTION 1103.7 SPEAKERS

(1) University groups may invite speakers to campus, subject to space use policies and security planning.

(2) Speakers' rights to speak and audience members' rights to listen shall be protected.

(3) Counter-speech is allowed but must not materially disrupt events.

SECTION 1103.8 DISTRIBUTION AND POSTING OF MATERIALS

- (1) Flyers, signs, and petitions may be distributed or posted in designated areas. Materials must clearly identify the sponsor and comply with applicable time, place, and manner restrictions.
- (2) No posting is permitted on unauthorized surfaces or structures.
- (3) Individuals and groups are responsible for cleanup and any resulting damage.

SECTION 1103.9 STRUCTURES

- (1) Temporary structures for expressive purposes require prior approval from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety.
- (2) Structures must not obstruct access, damage property, or pose safety risks.
- (3) Permits may be issued for up to 30 days and renewed if requirements are met.

SECTION 1103.10 SOUND AMPLIFICATION

- (1) Use of amplified sound requires prior approval (except low-power battery-operated devices).
- (2) Electrically amplified sound must be coordinated with Facilities and Event Services.
- (3) Volume and time restrictions apply to prevent disruption of academic and administrative activities.

SECTION 1103.16 PROHIBITED CONDUCT AND ITEMS DURING EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY

To ensure the safety, security, and orderly operation of the University, the following items and behaviors are prohibited during expressive activities, including demonstrations, picketing, and public assemblies, on University property:

- 1. **Alcohol and Illicit Drugs**
The possession, use, or distribution of alcohol or illicit drugs is strictly prohibited.
- 2. **Weapons and Dangerous Items**
The possession of firearms, knives, blunt objects, explosives, fireworks, or any item that may be construed as a weapon or safety hazard is prohibited, unless specifically authorized by law or University policy.
- 3. **Fires and Open Flames**
The use of open flames, including candles, torches, or any ignition devices, is not permitted without prior written approval from the University.
- 4. **Motorized and Electric Vehicles**
Unauthorized use of motorized or electric conveyances—including scooters, mopeds, and drones—is prohibited, except in areas designated for such use or as part of a reasonable accommodation approved by the University.
- 5. **Facial Concealment**
Except as required for health, safety, or religious observance, individuals may not

wear masks, hoods, or other items intended to conceal identity in public spaces, in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 14-12.8.

6. Camping and Overnight Occupation

Camping is prohibited unless expressly approved by the University for a scheduled event or emergency response. Prohibited conduct includes:

- Sleeping outdoors with or without bedding or enclosures
- Erecting tents, hammocks, or temporary shelters without approval
- Cooking or storing personal belongings in public outdoor areas
- Using any University property as a living space or makeshift residence

7. Unauthorized Posting and Attaching of Materials

Attaching posters, banners, flyers, or signage to University buildings, trees, signs, fences, or other infrastructure is prohibited without prior approval.

8. Throwing Objects or Climbing Structures

Throwing projectiles, climbing trees, statues, fences, or barricades is strictly prohibited.

9. Destruction or Defacement of Property

Vandalism, graffiti, or damage to University or personal property is not permitted and will be subject to disciplinary and legal consequences.

10. Sound and Image Amplification

The use of amplified sound or visual projection devices (e.g., megaphones, speakers, projectors) is prohibited without prior approval from the appropriate University office.

11. Obstruction of Access

Blocking or impeding ingress or egress to any University building, walkway, or space is prohibited.

12. Unauthorized Entry to Restricted Areas

Entry into laboratories, health care facilities, mechanical rooms, or other restricted-access areas without proper authorization is prohibited.

13. After-Hours Occupation of Outdoor Spaces

Demonstrations in designated outdoor spaces may occur between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. for University-affiliated individuals and organizations. Activities outside of these hours require prior approval.

14. Unauthorized Sales and Solicitation

The sale of merchandise or solicitation of funds is not permitted without compliance with University solicitation policies.

15. Material Disruption of University Operations

Expressive activity that substantially interferes with instruction, research, public service, administrative functions, or another person's right to free expression is prohibited.

16. Noncompliance and Trespassing

Failure to comply with instructions from University officials, including directives to disperse, vacate buildings, or relocate, may result in trespass warnings, disciplinary action, or arrest.

SECTION 1103.11 FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

- (1) Students may form organizations for lawful purposes.
- (2) Campus assemblies must comply with all applicable laws and policies.

SECTION 1103.12 PRESS

Campus publications and broadcasts are protected by the First Amendment. Reasonable content-neutral rules may be adopted to govern campus media operations.

SECTION 1103.13 PROHIBITED EXPRESSION

This policy does not protect speech that is:

1. Defamatory
2. Threatening or harassing
3. Obscene or unlawfully discriminatory
4. Substantially disruptive to University functions
5. In violation of applicable laws (e.g., compelled speech bans)

SECTION 1103.14 COMPLIANCE AND SANCTIONS

- (1) Violators may face discipline, removal, or legal action.
- (2) University-affiliated sponsors may be held responsible for the conduct of their guests.
- (3) Unaffiliated individuals may be subject to trespass orders or referral to law enforcement.

SECTION 1103.15 RESPONSIBLE OFFICER AND COMPLAINT PROCESS

- (1) NC A&T shall designate a responsible officer for oversight and compliance with this policy.
- (2) Concerns or complaints may be submitted via a designated online form (e.g., Maxient).
- (3) The Office of Legal Affairs and the Responsible Officer are available to provide guidance.

POLICY HISTORY

Revised, Interim Eff. July 7, 2025

AUTHORITY: Chancellor

POLICY OWNER: Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs, Risk and Compliance

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Office of Legal Affairs

RESOURCES:

UNC Policy Manual 1300.8 – Free Speech and Free Expression

UNC Policy Manual 700.4.4 – Disruption Policy and Student Discipline

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 116-300 through 116-304 – Campus Free Speech

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 126-14.5 – Compelled Speech Prohibited

N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-12.8 – Prohibition on Facial Concealment in Public Places

University Policy 409 – Trespass

University Policy 1009 – Use of University Facilities and Space

Student Handbook and Student Organization Handbook

Code of Student Conduct

UNC Code Chapter 100.1, Section VI