



WIREGRASS

GEORGIA TECHNICAL COLLEGE®

PROCEDURE: 6.8.4p.L1

WGTC Freedom of Expression

Approved: May 30, 2023

Last Reviewed/Revised: May 30, 2023, April 4, 2022

Adopted: April 4, 2022

Purpose

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College (WGTC) recognizes and upholds First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and the right to assemble peaceably. Demonstrations and assemblies can be valid expression for dissenting opinions provided they do not disrupt academic and administrative functions of the College.

The opinions expressed by organizations, groups, or individuals using Wiregrass Georgia Technical College facilities do not necessarily reflect the position of Wiregrass Georgia Technical College.

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College affirms its commitment to the freedom of speech, assembly and expression even though the language or ideas of those seeking a venue for free expression may contradict College ideals or the personal views of the College employees and students. WGTC expects members of the faculty, staff, student body, and community to refrain from and discourage behaviors that threaten the rights, freedoms, and the respect every individual deserves. WGTC maintains a position of neutrality as to the content of expression and any written materials distributed on campus under this procedure.

Scope

The outdoor areas of our colleges have been deemed a traditional public forum. Therefore, members of the public are free to exercise expressive activities outdoors, as long as they do not interfere with the college's operations.

Free speech and expressive activities must not:

- Attract a crowd more significant than the location of the spontaneous expressive activity can safely be contained.
- Obstruct, or aggressively confront, vehicular, pedestrian, or other traffic.
- Utilize sound amplifiers on the College campus
- Significantly disrupt classroom/lab instruction.
- Obstruct entrances or exits to the buildings.
- Interfere with educational activities inside or outside the buildings.
- Interfere with scheduled College ceremonies, events or activities.
- Include camping or using temporary shelters (e.g., tents).
- Affix items to any permanent structure or grounds (i.e., railings, buildings, greenways, trees, etc.).
- Light any material on fire except for hand-held candles, which may be used with special permission (other open flame devices and bonfires are strictly prohibited).
- Last longer than eight hours during a 24-hour period
- Involve solicitations or promotion of commercial enterprises
- Represent a threat to public safety or violate the policies or procedures approved by Wiregrass Georgia Technical College or the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia, according to the discretion of college police.
- Compliance with the WGTC student conduct regulations (see *WGTC Catalog & Handbook*), The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) State Board Policies and TCSG & WGTC Procedures Manual, state laws of Georgia, and federal laws is required.
- Public speech that is likely to incite or produce imminent lawless action or under the current legal standards is either defamatory or obscene is prohibited.
- A College staff member will be present during the activity.

Procedure

The following provisions apply to both reservation requests and spontaneous expressive activities:

- Non-commercial pamphlets, handbills, circulars, newspapers, magazines, and other written materials may be distributed person-to-person in open areas outside of buildings. All parties must adhere to college policies related to the use of facilities, including solicitation and sales.
- Expressive activity and expression covered under this policy must comply with all applicable state and federal laws and Wiregrass Georgia Technical College policies, rules and regulations.
- Malicious or unwarranted damage or destruction of property owned or operated by the College or property belonging to students, student organizations, faculty, staff or visitors of the College is prohibited. Persons or organizations causing such damage may be held financially responsible.
- Scatter marketing (throwing multiple copies of documents on the ground for them

to be seen and/or picked up) and other forms of marketing that violate *O.C.G.A 16-7-43* and *O.C.G.A 16-7-58* or any *applicable city or county littering ordinances* will not be allowed

- The individuals or groups are required to remove signs, placards, litter, and other materials when the approved activity period ends.
- Any item left behind or unattended (including memorials) may be removed after the event
- When assessing a reservation request or informed of spontaneous expressive activities on campus, college personnel must not consider the content or viewpoint of the expression or possible reaction to that expression, except to the extent such factors are relevant to assessing appropriate security measures.
- College personnel may not impose restrictions on individuals or organizations engaged in expressive activities due to the content or viewpoint of the expression or the possible reaction to the expression. However, if other persons react negatively to the expression, college personnel shall take all necessary steps to ensure safety while allowing the expressive activity to continue.
- College Police maintain ultimate discretion to end any activity and may, in addition, expel from public buildings, campuses, and grounds persons violating the policies and procedures that Wiregrass Georgia Technical College or the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia may prescribe.

Responsibility

The Director of Marketing and Public Relations has the overall responsibility of ensuring this procedure is implemented.

References

TCSG Policy 3.3.3 Use of Campus Facilities

TCSG Policy 6.8.4 Free Speech

TCSG Procedure 6.8.4p Free Speech



Freedom of Expression Request Form

Event Name: _____ Requestor Name: _____

Phone: _____ Number of Attendees: _____

Email Address: _____

Date and Time of Activity: _____

Campus Location: _____

Please specify products/materials you will distribute. Commercial sales are prohibited.

Statement of Compliance and Release: In consideration of authorized use of Wiregrass Georgia Technical College grounds and facilities as outlined in the procedure/guidelines, I agree to abide by the conditions set forth in the Wiregrass Georgia Technical College procedure/guidelines and to follow all local, state, and federal laws. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless Wiregrass Georgia Technical College and the Technical College System of Georgia from any and all claims, demands, liabilities, losses, costs or expenses for any loss including but not limited to bodily injury, personal injury, property damage, expenses, and attorney's fees, caused by, growing out of, or otherwise happening in connection with the use of Wiregrass Georgia Technical College property. I verify that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with guidelines set forth in the **Wiregrass Georgia Technical College Freedom of Expression Procedure**.

Signature Date

For Official Use Only:

Date Request Received: _____

Date: _____ [] Approved [] Denied - by DM&PR:

Signature of Director of Marketing and Public Relations

Date Director of Marketing and Public Relations Notification/Decision Sent To Requestor:

Date Director of Marketing and Public Relations Notification/Decision Sent To Police Chief:

If Denial Is Appealed in Writing Within (1) Business Day of Receipt of Denial

President's Decision: Date: _____ [] Approved [] Denied

Signature of President _____

Director of Marketing and Public Relations: Lydia Hubert * lydia.hubert@wiregrass.edu (229) 245-2460