



The University of Akron
Office of General Counsel
(ogc/)

(/)

Campus Free Speech and Reserving Outdoor Space on Campus

Campus Free Speech

The University passed Resolution 6-17-22 on June 15, 2022 adopting the public policy of the state of Ohio set out in Ohio Revised Code 3345.0215(B). The principles are:

- (1) Students have a fundamental constitutional right to free speech.
- (2) The University of Akron is committed to giving students broad latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge, learn, and discuss any issue, subject to Ohio Revised Code 3345.0215.
- (3) The University of Akron is committed to maintaining a campus as a marketplace of ideas for all students and all faculty in which the free exchange of ideas is not to be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University's community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed.
- (4) It is for University's students and faculty to make judgments about ideas for themselves, and to act on those judgments not by seeking to suppress free speech, but by openly and vigorously contesting the ideas that they oppose.
- (5) It is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from free speech, including ideas and opinions they find offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed.
- (6) Although the University greatly values civility and mutual respect, concerns about civility and mutual respect shall never be used by the University as a justification for closing off the discussion of ideas, however offensive, unwise, immoral, indecent, disagreeable, conservative, liberal, traditional, radical, or wrong-headed those ideas may be to some students or faculty.

(7) Although all students and all faculty are free to state their own views about and contest the views expressed on campus, and to state their own views about and contest speakers who are invited to express their views on campus, they may not substantially obstruct or otherwise substantially interfere with the freedom of others to express views they reject or even loathe. To this end, the University has a responsibility to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation and protect that freedom.

(8) The University is committed to providing an atmosphere that is most conducive to speculation, experimentation, and creation by all students and all faculty, who shall always remain free to inquire, to study and to evaluate, and to gain new understanding.

(9) The primary responsibility of faculty is to engage an honest, courageous, and persistent effort to search out and communicate the truth that lies in the areas of their competence.

Further, the University has created a process under which a student, student group, or faculty member may submit a complaint about an alleged violation by an employee of the University established under this section, including any penalty imposed on a student's grade for an assignment or coursework that is unrelated to ordinary academic standards of substance and relevance, including any legitimate pedagogical concerns, and is instead based on the contents of student's free speech.

A complaint can be submitted [here](#)

(https://akron.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3wpGpUyGROF0GNg) or to generalcounsel@uakron.edu

Under the process, the state institution of higher education will investigate the alleged violation and conduct a fair and impartial hearing regarding the alleged violation. If the hearing determines the state institution of higher education's policy was violated, the board of trustees shall determine a resolution to address the violation and prevent any further violation of the University policy.

Reserving Outdoor Space

The University process for reserving and/or using outdoor space on campus permits students and University community members (University faculty, employees, staff, and students) to reserve public spaces on campus to engage in expressive activities. However, the University does not require preregistration for University community members unless there is a significant concern for campus safety or a need for significant crowd control, noise amplification, or other characteristics which have a strong likelihood of disrupting the educational activities of the University. University community members do not need to register expressive activities that do not require crowd control or material support, or other activities that may impact the educational activities of the University.

If a University community member does not reserve space, their use will be subordinate to preregistered activities with the University. If you are a University community member and would like to reserve outdoor space, please complete the Campus Space Request form found on [RooConnect \(https://uakron.presence.io/form/campus-space-request-form\)](https://uakron.presence.io/form/campus-space-request-form).

Should you have any questions about reserving space outside, please contact a staff member at sueventplanning@uakron.edu or by calling 330-972-7373.

The current University Guidelines are located at: [Guidelines \(/ogc/outdoor-space-reservation/Guidelines 6.27.22.pdf\)](#).