

Public Forum Policy
(Revised January, 2009)

INTRODUCTION

As a publicly-supported institution within the University of Louisiana System, McNeese State University values the publicly accessible nature of its campus and facilities and embraces the free and open exchange of ideas in the context of a diverse community of teachers and learners. The University also recognizes its responsibility to maintain focus on its primary educational objectives. As such, the University strongly encourages its students, faculty, and staff to engage in vigorous and collegial debate and discussion within the context of classroom instruction, formal and informal interactions with others, and in social interactions throughout the campus. University students and employees may freely communicate their ideas through the exchange of verbal and written communications and through formal and informal gatherings on the campus at any time and are encouraged to do so in a manner that does not interfere with the University's capacity to administer its core values of teaching and learning, research, public service, and student success.

Persons unaffiliated with the University by virtue of enrollment or employment who wish to conduct activities on the campus which, by their nature, involve engaging in public speech, public demonstrations, political campaigning, and distribution of literature in an effort to appeal to wide audiences and attract interest from internal and external constituents of the campus community, must adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy. This policy addresses public forum activities conducted by individuals and groups not affiliated with the University that generally fall into the following categories:

- Public Speech
- Public Demonstrations
- Distribution of Literature
- Political Campaigning for Public Office

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

The Dean of Student Services is the administrative officer charged by the University President with oversight of Public Forum activities. Contact the Dean at the Holbrook Student Services Center, Suite 108, located at 375 Beauregard Drive, or by telephone at (337)-475-5706 for information regarding use of Public Forum areas by individuals and groups not affiliated with the University.

POLICY

Distribution of Literature

The University recognizes the right of individuals and groups to distribute literature regarding social, cultural, political, religious, and other ideological issues on the campus. To assure distribution activities do not disrupt normal campus processes and operations, the following regulations regarding time, place, and manner of such distribution will apply to individuals and groups not affiliated with the University:

- **Distribution Zones.** The following locations shall be deemed Distribution Zones:
 - **Zone A**
 - **Zone B**
- **Calendar.** Individuals or groups may distribute literature on campus three times per year (once each Fall, Spring, and Summer term) in the assigned distribution zone(s) only.
- **Length.** Distribution of literature may occur for up to four hours on three consecutive business days for each distribution period. The distribution activity shall be deemed to have begun at the time and date indicated on the application.

Political Campaigns

The University recognizes the right of candidates for public office and their official and unofficial spokespersons to campaign. To assure campaign activities do not disrupt normal campus processes and operations, the following regulations regarding time, place, and manner of such campaign activities will apply to individuals and groups not affiliated with the University:

- **Campaign Zones.** The following locations shall be deemed Campaign Zones:
 - **Zone A**
 - **Zone B**
 - **Zone C**
 - **Zone D**
- **Calendar.** Individuals may campaign on campus once per month in the 90-day period leading up to a scheduled election date in the assigned campaign zone only.
- **Length.** Campaign activities may occur for up to two hours on three consecutive business days. The campaign activity shall be deemed to have begun at the time and date indicated on the application.
- **Political Signs.** Political signs may not be mounted, posted, or affixed anywhere on University property in order to ensure state laws pertaining to electioneering and ethics are upheld at all times.
- **Candidate Speeches.** Candidates for public office, upon approval by the Dean of Student Services, may offer campaign speeches in the first floor common area of the Student Union Annex. Such speeches are limited to 30 minutes and may occur only once per day on days where campaign activities have been approved.
- **Public Appearances by Candidates for Statewide Office.** Statewide, elected officials may participate in public activities, such as half-time presentations at athletic events, by request to and upon approval of the President of the University and as coordinated through the Athletic Director or his designee. The University respectfully asks that such requests be made only in non-election years.

Public Demonstrations

The University recognizes the right of individuals and groups to conduct peaceful demonstrations. To assure demonstrations do not disrupt normal campus processes and operations, the following regulations regarding time, place, and manner will apply to individuals and groups not affiliated with the University:

- **Public Demonstration Zones.** The following locations shall be deemed Public Demonstration Zones:
 - **Zone A**
 - **Zone B**
- **Calendar.** Organized groups may demonstrate on campus once during each Fall, Spring, and Summer term in the assigned demonstration zone only.
- **Length.** Demonstrations may occur for up to four hours on three consecutive days. The demonstration shall be deemed to have begun at the time and date indicated on the application.

Public Speech

The University recognizes the right of individuals to participate in the free and unfettered exchange of ideas on University property. Persons traversing public sidewalks and streets and common areas on University property may exercise their individual free speech rights at any time as long as they do not block the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic, do not interfere with normal University operations, and do not create a disturbance. Public speech occurring in contexts other than normal traversing of public sidewalks and streets and common areas by individuals and groups not affiliated with the University is subject to the following regulations regarding time, place, and manner:

- **Public Speech Zones.** The following locations shall be deemed Public Speech Zones:
 - **Zone A**
 - **Zone B**
- **Calendar.** Individuals may speak on campus one time per week in the assigned public speech zones.
- **Length.** Speeches may last for up to two hours. The speeches shall be deemed to have begun at the time and date indicated on the application.

GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES

Application and Approval

Application to utilize Public Forum areas must be received and approved at least 72 hours in advance (three business days, excluding weekends, holidays, and closures) through the Dean of Student Services to ensure adequate review. Persons or groups wishing to utilize Public Forum areas are strongly urged to make application seven to ten days prior to the desired event. The application must occur on the prescribed form (available through the Office of Student Services) and must contain the date and starting time of the proposed activity, the name and appropriate contact information (address, telephone number, email address, etc.) of the reserving party, identification of the specific proposed activity (public speech, public demonstration, political campaign, literature distribution), and signature of the person making application. The University may deny requests for use of Public Forum areas if the event is deemed to require substantial planning and preparation beyond what can reasonably be accomplished within 72 hours in light of normal daily operations of the campus.

Cancellations

Cancellation of reservations of Public Forum areas must occur in advance of the event start time. Events not properly cancelled shall be deemed to have occurred at the date and time indicated on the original application.

Concurrent Events

Due to the relatively small and intimate nature of the McNeese campus, it is not unusual for multiple events to occur in close proximity to one another, particularly in central areas such as the campus Quadrangle, Student Union complex, and the athletics complex. Persons reserving public forum areas do so with the understanding that previously scheduled events and activities of the University may be ongoing in close proximity to public forum zones even during periods when such areas are reserved for use by individuals and groups not affiliated with the University.

Continuity of University Operations

The University's primary educational objectives relate to teaching, research, public service, and student success. Individuals and groups not affiliated with the University who exercise their right to utilize the Public Forum will conduct their activities in a manner that complements the University's educational mission, does not interfere with normal operations, and that conforms to University regulations regarding time, place, and manner. Threats to passersby, impeding or blocking the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic, committing acts leading to unsafe and/or unhealthy conditions, and posting or affixing signs or materials on walls, windows, grounds, doors, trees, sidewalks, benches, poles, fixtures, or any other equipment or surface, except where specifically authorized, or violations of time, place, and manner restrictions are strictly prohibited and will result in cessation of Public Forum activities by appropriate University authorities.

Hours of Operation

Authorized use of the Public Forum by individuals and groups not affiliated with the University is permitted only between dawn and dusk during periods of normal University operations (Monday through Friday, excluding holidays and closures).

Inclement Weather

The University does not provide alternative locations for Public Forum events interrupted by inclement weather, but does provide for events to be rescheduled to a later date according to the same procedure under which the original event date was booked.

Literature Distribution

Literature (fliers, brochures, information sheets, push cards) may be made available to interested persons during Public Forum activities. Forcing literature onto observers or passersby or affixing literature to automobiles, trees, grounds, fixtures, or other stationary objects on the campus shall constitute a violation of University regulations and will result in cessation of the Public Forum activity by appropriate University authorities.

Maintenance of the Physical Environment

Persons utilizing the Public Forum will conduct their activities in a manner that does not deface, litter, or otherwise damage the physical environment of the campus. Individuals and groups responsible for littering, vandalizing, defacing, or otherwise damaging University property are subject to restitution and criminal prosecution.

Official University Events

Events sponsored by the University and auxiliary groups officially recognized by the University may occasionally render designated public forum areas temporarily unavailable for use by persons and groups unaffiliated with the University. In circumstances where a public forum area is reserved in advance of the University's need for such space, the University may request the reserving party consider utilizing an alternate venue mutually agreeable to the reserving party and University. In such cases where a mutually agreeable alternate venue is not available, the reserving party's use of the public forum area will be honored.

Prohibited Activities

Activities that incite illegal conduct and/or disrupt University operations are strictly prohibited at all times.

Penalties for Non-Compliance with University Regulations

Individuals and groups not affiliated with the University are subject to civil law as well as University regulations regarding personal conduct for employees and students. Individuals and groups not complying with University regulations regarding use of the Public Forum, or any other policy of the University, are subject to immediate removal from the campus, may be barred from future access to the campus, and may be charged for criminal acts, where appropriate.

Physical Descriptions of Zones

- **Zone A:** The grassy lawn area, surrounded by pavement on all sides, located in the southeast section of the Quad between the Student Union Annex and the East-West sidewalk, east of center, of the Quad. This area consists of approximately 14,000 square feet.
- **Zone B:** The grassy lawn area, surrounded by pavement or building walls, located south of the Holbrook Student Services Building between the Office of Student Services and Beauregard Drive. This area consists of approximately 3,000 square feet.
- **Zone C:** The grassy area outside of the football stadium complex bordered by pavement (Blue & Gold Drive, East Stadium Drive, West Stadium Drive, and Cowboy Drive). This area exceeds 15,000 square feet.
- **Zone D:** The common area of the ground level floor of the Student Union Annex. This area consists of approximately 3,300 square feet.

Posting Bills

Informational posters, fliers, and leaflets may be posted only on common information boards around the campus by contacting the appropriate facility coordinator for each building in order to obtain approval. Posters, fliers, leaflets, and other printed and related promotional materials may not be affixed upon automobiles or other motor vehicles, trees, poles, doors, benches, sidewalks, walls, windows, ceilings, trash receptacles, streets, steps, or other fixtures or surfaces. Contact the Office of Facilities and Plant Operations at (337)-475-5887 for a current list of building coordinators. The Dean of Student Services may be contacted at (337)-475-5706 consider requests for approval of bills for posting on common bulletin boards throughout the campus. Postings are permitted under the following general conditions:

- The material contained on the poster does not incite illegal conduct, point ridicule at particular groups leading to disruption of University operations, and/or contains libelous, obscene, copyrighted, or defamatory content.
- The material does not reference the use of alcohol, tobacco or illicit drugs.
- The posted material contains the written authorization of the Dean of Student Services, his designee, or the appropriate building coordinator and expiration/removal date (typically 30 days or less).
- The posted material is affixed where designated by the appropriate building coordinator or Dean of Student Services.

Premises Restoration

Applicants for use of the Public Forum are responsible for removal of personal effects and literature and restoration of the physical environment of the premises at the conclusion of the activity.

Public Address and Sound Amplification Systems

Use of sound amplification systems or devices (artificial, electronic, instrumental, or otherwise) of any type is strictly prohibited on University property except where authorized by appropriate administrative authorities for University-sponsored events only.

Rental of Facilities

Individuals or groups may apply to rent University facilities, subject to availability and University policy, for events and activities with special or substantial facility, equipment, and security needs. Rental cost is based upon established facility use guidelines and requests for use are considered on a case by case basis. Contact the Office of Facilities and Plant Operations at (337)-475-5887 or the Dean of Student Services at (337)-475-5706 for information regarding facility rental.

Security

The Director of University Police is the exclusive provider of security for events and activities occurring on University property and is the sole authority for determining need and quantity of officers required for an event. Contact the Director of University Police at (337)-475-5708 for general information regarding rates and terms for event security.

Unauthorized Meetings

Individuals or groups not affiliated with the University who, whether as active participants or as spectators, participate in an unauthorized activity, create a disturbance, cause destruction of University or the personal property of others, or bring discredit to the University, shall be subject to removal, arrest, prosecution, and restitution and may face University disciplinary proceedings, if applicable.

**McNeese State University
Application for Use of Public Forum**

Contact Information

Sponsoring Organization Name: _____

Sponsoring Organization Contact Person: _____

Contact Person Phone: (_____) _____ Alternate Phone: (_____) _____

Proposed Activity Description

_____ Public Speech _____ Public Demonstration

_____ Distribution of Literature _____ Political Campaign

Requested Date and Time:

Monday, _____ am/pm
 Month Day Year Begin Time

Tuesday, _____ am/pm
 Month Day Year Begin Time

Wednesday, _____ am/pm
 Month Day Year Begin Time

Thursday, _____ am/pm
 Month Day Year Begin Time

Friday, _____ am/pm
 Month Day Year Begin Time

I certify that I have received a copy of the University's Public Forum Regulations and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I accept responsibility for ensuring that all persons affiliated with my organization comply with University regulations. I further understand that violations of University regulations pertaining to public forum activities may result in cessation of the event and removal from University property.

 Sponsoring Organization Contact Person Signature/Date

 Dean of Student Services (or designee)/Date

Office Use Only	
Date/Time Received: _____	Received by: _____
Approved/Not Approved by: _____ Date: _____	Routed FYI to: _____ Facilities
Notes:	_____ University Police
	_____ Admin/SA
	Union 01/2009