

Procedure: 3.3.14.Lp.

Augusta Technical College Freedom of Expression

Revised:

Last Reviewed: November 1, 2020

Adopted: November 1, 2020



INTRODUCTION:

Augusta Technical College (ATC) 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 Augusta Technical College facilities do not necessarily reflect the position of Augusta Technical College.

Augusta Technical College affirms its commitment to the freedom of speech, assembly and expression even if 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. ATC 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. ATC maintains a position of neutrality as to the content or viewpoint of expression and any written materials distributed on campus under this procedure.

This procedure applies to visitors to campus, not to Augusta Technical College faculty, staff, students or student organizations. This procedure shall apply to all non-commercial speech on the Augusta Technical College campus and other ATC facilities.

II. SCOPE

Any visiting person or group who desires to use the designated campus area for an assembly or expression event must submit a completed ***Freedom of Expression Request Form*** at least five (5) business days in advance of the event. Request forms are available in the Student Affairs area of the Augusta campus and the Administrative office on the Burke, Thomson, and Grovetown campuses. The form must be submitted to the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA) for approval. The VPSA will contact the applicant for notification of approval or denial.

Any denied request can be appealed to the President of Augusta Technical College for final decision.

Upon approval of a request, applicants must agree to the following guidelines and provisions:

- The activities may be conducted on Monday through Thursday from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. in a designated **Free Expression Area** only.
 - o Consecutive day reservations are not permitted.
 - o No approvals will be granted for the **first full week of classes** and **Final Exam Week** of each semester.
- Reasonable limitations may be placed on the time, manner, and place of the event in order to serve the interests of health and safety, prevent disruption of the educational process, and protect against threats to the rights of others.
- Activities must not obstruct, or aggressively confront, vehicular, pedestrian, or other traffic.
- Use of sound amplifiers or unreasonable noise on the College campus is prohibited if it disrupts College activities.
 - o Failure to promptly comply with ATC directives to reduce sound levels may result in the immediate cancellation of the reservation and/or event.
- There must be no disruption to classroom/lab instruction.
- There must be no obstruction of entrances or exits to the buildings.
- There must be no interference with educational activities inside or outside the buildings.
- There must be no interference with scheduled College ceremonies, events or activities.
- 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 **Richmond County, Burke County, McDuffie County, or Columbia County anti-litter ordinances** are prohibited.
 - o The individuals or groups are required to remove signs, placards, litter, and other materials when the approved activity period ends.
- Compliance with the Augusta Technical College student conduct regulations (see **ATC Catalog & Handbook**), The Technical College System of Georgia State Board Policies and TCSG & ATC Procedures Manual, state laws of Georgia, and federal laws is required.

- Public speech that is likely to incite or produce imminent lawless action or is either defamatory or obscene under current legal standards is prohibited.

III. FREE EXPRESSION AREAS:

- **Augusta Campus:** Student quad area outside the 300 and 400 Buildings.
- **Burke Campus:** Student break area located behind the building near the Gazebo)
- **Thomson Campus:** Student break area located on the right side of the building
- **Grovetown Campus:** Student break area located in the back of the building.

IV. PROCEDURE:

1. Obtain ***Freedom of Expression Request Form***.
 - a. Forms are available from the office of Student Affairs. Email admission@augustatech.edu for a copy of the form.
2. Submit a completed ***Freedom of Expression Request Form*** at least five (5) business days in advance of the event to the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA).
 - a. Contact information is included on the form.
3. If **approved**, the VPSA will notify the applicant in writing within two (2) business days of receipt of the request.
 - a. The applicants must agree in writing to the guidelines and provisions stated above in the **Scope**.
 - b. The VPSA will also notify the ATC Administration and Director of Safety & Security of the approved request immediately so that appropriate precautions can be arranged.
4. If **denied**, the VPSA will notify the applicant in writing within two (2) business days of receipt of the request.
 - a. The applicant may appeal the denial in writing to the President of Augusta Technical College within one (1) business day of receipt of the denial.
 - i. Contact information is included on the form.
 - b. The ATC President will notify the applicant of his/her final decision in writing within one (1) business day of receipt of the appeal.
 - i. The President's decision is final.