

**CAROLINAS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**SUBJECT:** FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND ASSEMBLY

**REVIEWER(S):** Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management\*

**POLICY**

Carolinas College believes freedom of thought and expression are essential to an open academic environment and is committed to open inquiry, debate and the collegial sharing of ideas. It is essential to create an environment where all faculty, staff and students can express themselves in a mutually respectful manner. It is not the responsibility of the institution to moderate the exchange of ideas by seeking to suppress thought and speech but for the members of the college community to engage in an effective and responsible dialogue on these ideas. Further, this open sharing of ideas may occur in a peaceable assembly that does not interfere with the ability of faculty, staff and students to teach, learn, study or perform other academic and administrative activities consistent with the mission of the college.

**PROCEDURE**

**A. Freedom of Expression**

1. The freedom of expression and the debate of competing ideas is not an open invitation for individuals to do and say whatever they wish. The college prohibits expression that violates college policy, violates the law, slanders or denigrates a specific individual, constitutes a genuine threat, or challenges the privacy or confidentiality of others.
2. The freedom of expression will be governed by the principles of academic inquiry, collegiality, and civility towards all people, although concerns about civility and academic respect will not necessarily be reasons for limiting debate.
3. In no way may members of the college community, in expression of their own thoughts and ideas, obstruct or interfere with the freedom of others to express their views.
4. To the extent that Atrium Health policies regulate speech or expression, they are not superseded by this policy. In all cases, Atrium Health policy will prevail. Additionally, any Water Ridge Office Park policies governing speech and expression will be considered.

**B. Assembly**

1. The college may reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the institution.
2. Generally, the college makes space available for peaceful assembly, in and around the building, including the front walk and parking lots.
3. Under no circumstance may those assembled obstruct or interfere with the normal operation of the college or members of the college community. The college reserves the right to relocate any assembly to ensure continuation of normal college operations.
4. To the extent that Atrium Health policies regulate assembly, they are not superseded by this policy. In all cases, Atrium Health policy will prevail. Additionally, any Water Ridge Office Park policies governing assembly will be considered.

**C. Registration and Regulations**

1. All groups or organizations seeking use of the college to exercise their rights of free speech and assembly must submit notice of intent at least 24 hours in advance to the dean of student affairs and enrollment management.
2. The college will assign use of a designated area to the person or organization that requests the area first; however, the College reserves the right to deny use of an area if necessary for public safety reasons.
3. Participants may not interfere with college operations and all activities must be consistent with the mission and values of the college and Atrium Health. Participants must comply with the college's Code of Student Conduct and/or policies governing teammates and may not obstruct, disrupt, or interfere with any event or activity sponsored by the College or by users authorized to

use college facilities. Participants shall comply with the directives of any college or Atrium Health official acting in the performance of his/her duty.

4. The right to dissent is the complement of the right to speak, but these rights need not occupy the same forum at the same time. A speaker is entitled to communicate his/her message to the audience during an allotted time, and the audience is entitled to hear the message and see the speaker during that time. A dissenter must not substantially interfere with the speaker's ability to communicate or the audience's ability to participate. Likewise, the audience must respect the right to dissent.
5. Participants may not use public address systems or amplified sound.
6. Participants may distribute printed informational, not commercial, materials within the area designated. Any signage may not be larger than 3' x 4' and participants are limited to no more than one sign per person.
7. Participants using college facilities shall conform to all city and county ordinances and fire regulations and must follow the Provision of Services policy.

D. The Freedom of Expression and Assembly policy and procedure will be reviewed bi-annually.

## **REFERENCES**

### **Related Policies to Consult**

#### **Carolinas College:**

ACADEMIC - [Academic Freedom](#)

[ADMINISTRATIVE – Provision of Services](#)

BOARD - [Academic Freedom](#)

STUDENT AFFAIRS - [Community Standards](#)

### **Additional Policy References**

- Central Piedmont Community College – Free Speech, Public Assembly, and Distribution/Petitioning Regulations
- Georgetown University – Freedom of Expression