

## **Expressive Activity and Use of Campus Grounds Guidelines and Procedures**

### **Purpose:**

Bowling Green State University (BGSU) exists to create and share knowledge, promote open debate and dialogue, and be a place where multiple views and perspectives can be weighed and considered. As a public university, we are committed to freedom of expression and the rights protected by the First Amendment.

To allow the university to conduct operations without disruption, and to protect the safety of the university community, BGSU may impose reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on expressive activities. These restrictions, however, will not discriminate on the content of the expressive activity.

These guidelines/procedures will provide additional context to visitors, students, faculty/staff, and other community members seeking to engage in expressive activities on any BGSU campus, and describe the university's administration of the following policies:

- **Freedom of Expression**
- **Reservations for Use of Campus Grounds**
- **Use of Amplified Sound on University Premises**

### **Outdoor Spaces Generally Available**

BGSU welcomes a robust exchange of ideas and acknowledges that this will include protests, marches, demonstrations, petitioning, leafletting, chalking, and other expressions that will take place in outdoor spaces.

#### 1. **Designated Outdoor Spaces:**

The following outdoor spaces have traditionally been accessed for expressive activities and have the capacity to host multiple groups within each location:

- **Bowen-Thompson Student Union Oval**
- **Carillon Park**
- **Bowen-Thompson Quadrangle**
- **Wolfe Center Terrance**
- **Alumni Gateway**

2. Reserving Outdoor Spaces:

These designated, and other non-designated outdoor spaces, may be reserved by submitting an application to the appropriate office, in writing, as described in **the Reservations for Use of Campus Grounds** policy.

3. Planned Events

BGSU leaves open multiple outdoor spaces which individuals and groups can engage in spontaneous expressive activities. In addition, for event planning purposes, outdoor spaces may be reserved pursuant to the **Reservations for Use of Campus Grounds** policy. All registered events, including protests and other forms of expressive activity, will take priority over non-scheduled events. BGSU may prevent other individuals or groups from accessing/disrupting any reserved outdoor spaces during the time of the registered event. Other designated outdoor spaces which have not been registered remain open for use.

4. Temporary Structures

All temporary structures are prohibited unless previously approved by the Director of the Bowen-Thompson Student Union or their designee. Temporary structures include, but are not limited to, stages, platforms, canopies, and tents. Stakes or other equipment used to secure temporary structures must also receive prior approval.

Temporary structures must not have more than three closed sides, or use/house generators, spaces heaters, cooking equipment, or any other appliances.

As an exception to these rules, individuals may use pop up canopy tents in designated athletic parking areas beginning three hours before an intercollegiate athletic competition without seeking prior written approval. Further, registered student organizations may use canopies and tents during any Student Organization Fair, without obtaining prior approval. However, these structures must be taken down promptly after the event has ended.

5. Overnight Habitation/Events

Camping and other overnight events/habitation are prohibited in all buildings and on all campus grounds unless previously approved by the Director of the Bowen-Thompson Student Union or their designee, in consultation with the Bowling Green Fire Division. Only university-sponsored events furthering the teaching, research, and service missions will be approved. Approved events must be confined to a single 24-hour period, and outside habitation must not be the primary focus of the event/activity.

## 6. Amplified Sound

Sound amplification devices are prohibited unless the individual/group submits an application at least 5 working days before the date of its planned use, and the application is approved by the appropriate individuals as designated by the **Use of Amplified Sound on University Premises** policy.

Sound amplification devices must not unreasonably interfere with academic activities, or university operations, and must not interfere with, detract, or hamper public safety. As such, these devices may not be used inside university buildings and must be portable in case BGSU Public Safety, law enforcement, or other university officials requires relocation or limitation on the use of approved sound amplification devices.

These use regulations do not apply to individual use of a personal stereo, radio or music player, provided that the music or sound is kept at a reasonable volume and does not disrupt any university operations. Such sound may not exceed 80 decibels.

### Signage

The use of signs, notices, posters, banners, and fliers (“signs”) must not impede university operations including the ability of faculty, staff, students, or the public to use sidewalks or streets, and must not block/interfere with university building entrances and exits. Signs must be made of paper, fabric, or plastic. No wood, metal, or similar material may be used to create, or reinforce the sign.

No signs may be attached or affixed to university furniture, trees, light poles, or buildings and messages/ images may not be drawn on or projected onto any university building (except in cases where prior approval is obtained). No sign causing ground penetration is permitted without prior approval.

Signs are not permitted in any indoor spaces (see below), except with prior approval.

### **Indoor Spaces Generally Unavailable**

Demonstrations, protests, marches, and speakers not invited by the university may not be in campus buildings or obstruct or disrupt any university operations. Certain indoor spaces may be reserved by contacting **Conference & Event Services** (C&ES) located in #231 Bowen-Thompson Student Union, 419-372-9000.

### **Prohibited Activities:**

The following activities are prohibited, unless specifically authorized by law, or prior approval is granted by the appropriate university official.

- Expressive activity cannot interfere with the operation of the university, destroy or damage university property, or endanger the health and safety of others.

- Expressive activity cannot violate federal or state law(s) or university policy/regulations.
- Expressive activity cannot block access to public sidewalks, roadways, building entries and exits, or prevent campus community members from being able to freely move about campus.
- Expressive activity that constitutes a true threat, incites violence, or would be considered harassment in violation of the **Freedom of Expression** policy is not protected speech and is prohibited. (See, **Frequently Asked Questions**, for more information about what kind of expressive activity is not protected by the First Amendment)
- Open flames (including fires) are not permitted anywhere on university property unless an individual is using a grill or other cooking equipment as part of an athletic event, or using University approved or installed grills/ fire pits.
- Weapons, including firearms, are not permitted on campus except as authorized by law or policy.
- Overnight habitation is prohibited unless done as part of a university-sponsored overnight event (see above).
- Bicycles, skateboards, and other motorized vehicles (e.g. motor scooters, mopeds, Segways, motorized skateboards, roller blades/skates), may not be used in university buildings or on university structures, unless used as a personal mobility device as defined by the ADA. (**Bicycles, Skateboards, and other Personal Conveyance Vehicles** policy).
- All other conveyance vehicles, which cannot be operated on sidewalks, cannot be used on BGSU property, other than on roads and in designated parking areas.
- Heavy equipment and machinery are prohibited.
- Individuals/groups may not use university utilities unless they receive prior written approval from the Director of the Bowen-Thompson Student Union or their designee.
- Farm, wildlife, and/or zoo animals are prohibited.

### **Rescheduling Events:**

Events/activities that are determined to pose a risk to personal safety, university property or facility security may be moved to another space or rescheduled.

### **Damage to Space:**

Individuals and groups are responsible for any damage they cause to university property, including outdoor spaces and university buildings. All damage must be repaired by the responsible party to the satisfaction of university.

### **Response to Violations of University Policy/Procedures**

All individuals using university property, including visitors, are required to comply with university policies/regulations and applicable laws. For students this includes conducting themselves in accordance with the BGSU **Code of Student Conduct**.

While BGSU is committed to upholding the rights and privileges granted by the First Amendment, including freedom of expression, university property is not a forum to disrupt university business. Failure to comply with the law or university policies/regulations, while engaging in expressive activity, is not protected by the First Amendment.

Consistent application and enforcement are important to maintaining an environment where everyone has the opportunity to share their perspectives and fosters a community where everyone feels valued and respected. Law enforcement and BGSU officials authorized to maintain order should first make reasonable attempts to persuade individuals/groups who are violating any law or university policy/regulation to cease the prohibited conduct. Individuals should be given an opportunity to comply with any lawful order, however, if an individual refuses, or if exigent circumstances justify immediate action, officials may take a reasonable action (including arrest) to maintain order to ensure compliance.

### **Reporting/Complaints of First Amendment Violations**

The **[Ohio Public Policy on Principles of Free Speech](#)** Policy reaffirmed BGSU commitment to campus free speech. Students, student groups, or faculty may submit a complaint to the **[See It. Hear It. Report It.](#)** portal if they believe a BGSU employee violated the policy. Complaints must be reported within thirty (30) calendar days of the alleged violation.