



503.1 - Speech, Expression, and Assembly

Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to operationalize BSC Policy 503.1 Speech, Expression, and Assembly.

Procedure:

Introduction

BSC values and encourages the free exchange of ideas while maintaining the safety of the campus community and the orderly operations of the institution. BSC is committed to ensuring the freedom to speak, write, listen, challenge, learn, and discuss any issue, subject to reasonable and constitutionally recognized limitations. As part of this commitment, BSC is dedicated to promoting free speech and expression while providing a safe and non-discriminatory College community that supports diversity of thought and people.

BSC's procedures define the spaces available for exercising the rights of free speech and expression, communicates the parameters of any such expressive activity, ensures the safety of campus, and minimizes disruption to BSC's educational mission.

This procedure establishes certain standards of conduct that must be observed by demonstrators and groups and applies to all individuals while using property owned or controlled by BSC for exercising the rights of free speech and assembly.

Categories of Speakers and Users:

- **Academic or administrative unit** means any office or department of Bismarck State College.
- **Bismarck State College person or organization** includes academic and administrative units, student, faculty, and staff organizations, and individual students, faculty members, and staff members; this phrase describes the most inclusive category of potential speakers on campus; every person and organization of any kind is either an "off-campus person or organization" or a "Bismarck State College person or organization."
- **Bismarck State College Employee** means any person acting on behalf of Bismarck State College in an official capacity, temporarily or permanently, with or without compensation. The term does not include an independent contractor.



- **Guest Speaker** means a speaker or performer who is not a student, faculty member, or staff member, but who is invited to speak by a Bismarck State College person or organization outside of the classroom.
- **Off-campus person or organization** means any person, organization, or business that is not an academic or administrative unit, a student, faculty, or staff organization, or a student, faculty member, or staff member.

General Provisions:

1. BSC will not engage in viewpoint- or content-based discrimination or suppression of speech, and will, to the greatest extent possible, permit and facilitate the open discussion and debate of ideas and issues, regardless of the content of those issues.
2. BSC will not use the concept of civility or mutual respect as a basis to suppress or limit the discussion of ideas, regardless of content, except as reasonably necessary to an educational activity.
3. BSC and its faculty and employees will not seek to shield individuals from the free speech or expression of others, except as reasonably necessary to an educational activity.

Free Speech Areas:

1. Except as set forth elsewhere in this procedure, the generally accessible, open, outdoor areas of the campus are open public forums for free speech by both BSC and off-campus persons and organizations, and are subject to reasonable and constitutional time, place, and manner restrictions.
2. BSC designates the following areas as restricted forums:
 - a. those areas inside buildings which have not otherwise been treated as traditional public forums;
 - b. areas within a one hundred (100) foot radius from residential buildings are restricted from 10 am-10 pm and closed from 10 pm-10 am. Any sound production must not constitute Disruptive Conduct;
 - c. areas within a one hundred (100) foot radius from academic buildings during times when classes are held in that building;



- d. areas which must be restricted due to reasonable safety and security concerns, designated by BSC's Safety and Security Manager;
- e. areas which must be restricted to enable the flow of pedestrian or vehicle traffic, as designated by BSC's Safety and Security Manager;
- f. areas within a one hundred (100) foot radius from building entrances and exits to provide for safe and convenient ingress and egress from those buildings.

Public Assemblies and Guest Speakers:

1. Any public assembly or guest speaker taking place in an Open Public Forum with an expected attendance of more than 25 participants, including counter demonstrators, requires a reservation.
2. Any public assembly or guest speaker taking place in an Open Public Forum utilizing Amplified Sound requires a reservation.
3. When organizing a public assembly taking place in an Open Public Forum with an expected attendance less than 25 participants, including counter demonstrators, or without the use of Amplified Sound, organizers are encouraged to consult the Safety and Security Manager. The Safety and Security Manager will assist in the event taking place in an effective and safe manner that does not disrupt the normal functioning of the College.
4. Reservations for public assemblies and Guest Speakers are not required for academic or administrative units engaged in classroom activities.

Prohibited Items at Assemblies:

1. Dangerous weapons, as defined by N.D.C.C. § 62.1-01-01(1).
2. Firearms, except as permitted by law. See N.D.C.C. § 62.1-02-05.
3. Body-armor or makeshift body-armor, helmets, masks, hood or other device that covers, hides or attempts to conceal any portion of an individual's identity, and other garments, such as sporting protective gear, that alone or in combination could be reasonably construed as body-armor, without written permission from BSC's Safety and Security Manager.
4. Open flame, unless approved in advance by BSC's Safety and Security Manager.

General Rules on Means of Expression:



1. Disruption

- a. No speech, expression, or assembly may be conducted in a way that disrupts or interferes with any teaching, research, administration, or other authorized activities on the campus; free and unimpeded flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the campus; or signs, tables, exhibits, public assemblies, distribution of literature, guest speakers, or use of amplified sound by another person or organization acting under the rules in this procedure.
 - b. Except in the most extreme cases, interference and disruption are unavoidably contextual. Intentional physical interference with other persons is nearly always disruptive in any context. Interfering with traffic depends on the relation between the volume of traffic and the size of the passageway left open. Disruptive noise is the most contextual of all, because it depends on the activity disrupted. Any distracting sound may disrupt a memorial service. Any sound sufficiently loud or persistent to make concentration difficult may disrupt a class or library. Occasional heckling in the speaker's pauses may not disrupt a political speech, but persistent heckling that prevents listeners from hearing the speaker does disrupt a political speech. These illustrations may be helpful, but none of them includes enough context to be taken as a rule. We cannot escape relying on the judgment and fairness of BSC authorities in particular cases. In this context where difficult enforcement judgments are unavoidable, it is especially important for administrators to remember that their judgments must not be influenced by the viewpoint of those claiming disruption or of those allegedly disrupting.
2. Potentially disruptive events can often proceed without disruption if participants and administrators cooperate to avoid disruption without stopping the event. In cases of marginal or unintentional disruption, administrators should clearly state what they consider disruptive and seek voluntary compliance before stopping the event or resorting to disciplinary charges.

Damage to Property:

No speech, expression, or assembly may be conducted in a way that damages, defaces, marks, discolors, or alters in any way property of BSC or of any person who has not authorized the speaker to damage or deface their property.

Reservation of Space and Fees:

To reserve exclusive use of indoor spaces, organizers must make arrangements with BSC's Facilities Scheduling Office, who manages facility usage for the college's students, faculty, staff



and the community. BSC's Facilities Usage Policy outlines facilities scheduling procedures and fees.

To reserve exclusive use of outdoor spaces, an event, protest, assembly, or demonstration, organizers are encouraged to make arrangements in advance with the Safety and Security Office. Advance notification enables the College to assist in the event taking place in a constructive and peaceful manner. Additionally, with appropriate advance notice, the appropriate administration representative (e.g., student group advisor, College Police, etc.) will engage with participants during the event to help ensure that the event is effective and safe, and to assist organizers in seeing that the event does not disrupt the normal functioning of the College.

1. Most routine events can be approved within 72 business hours; however, the scope of an event may impact how long it takes to process a request. The Safety and Security Office will determine whether an event can be executed as requested and in accordance with this procedure. To request a reservation of space, organizers should contact the Safety and Security Office at (701-224-2700). Some events may also require the submission of a Facility Use Agreement and/or coordination with specific buildings, offices, or departments. Reservations must be made following the process in place for each particular space.
2. If multiple requests are made for the same space during the same time, reservation requests will be processed in the order in which they were received.
3. A space reservation affords the group the right to the reserved space for the time covered by the reservation. Any person or organization using or occupying the reserved space without a reservation must yield control of the reserved space in time to allow for the reservation and any time that may be needed to setup the space for the reservation.

Fees:

Facility rental fees shall be based on the actual expenses incurred by the campus in making the space available which includes local market rates, wear and tear, janitorial and maintenance costs.

The current pricing schedule is available on the [BSC Website](#).

Questions can be directed to the facilities scheduling office (701-224-5686). The College may waive any applicable fee for an assembly contributing to the educational mission of the institution or engaging in charitable work.



Academic and administrative units are not subject to the fee schedule.

Distribution of Literature

For distribution of literature refer to the General policy – Solicitations and Posting Materials

References:

[State Board of Higher Education Policy 503.1, Student Free Speech and Expression](#)

[State Board of Higher Education Policy 605.1, Academic Freedom and Tenure; Academic Appointments](#)

[North Dakota Century Code Chapter 15-10.4 Campus Free Speech Policy](#)

[BSC Facilities Usage Policy](#)

History of This Policy:

First policy: draft approved by the Faculty Senate on August 22, 2019, the Staff Senate on August 20, 2019; reviewed by the Operations Council on August 16, 2019 and approved by the Executive Council on August 26, 2019.

Revisions - Revised policy approved by Faculty Senate on November 5, 2020.

Revised policy reviewed by the Campus Council on July 28, 2021 and approved by the Executive Council on July 29, 2021. Approved by the North Dakota University System Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs on August 10, 2021; reviewed by Campus Council on August 31st, 2022 and reviewed by the Executive Council on September 23rd, 2022 and approved by the President on January 4th, 2023.