



Interim Campus Use Procedures for Unrestricted Outdoor Areas

1. Introduction

As one of its [strategic guiding values](#), the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) safeguards freedom of inquiry and expression. As such, we protect the freedom of all members of our community to ask questions, seek truth, and express their views. We cherish diversity of ideas as necessary for learning, discovery, scholarship, and creativity. In living this value every day, we strive to protect the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, including the right to free speech, free expression, free exercise of religion, and the right to assemble.

Georgia Tech adopts these procedures to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the campus community; to ensure the excellence, effectiveness, and efficiency of the learning environment and of the workplace; and to further mission-supportive activities and objectives of Georgia Tech.

Georgia Tech is a forum for the open exchange of ideas and opinions. To that end, the unrestricted outdoor areas of campus are deemed public forums for Georgia Tech's campus community. Georgia Tech will only limit or regulate the content of speech as minimally necessary to achieve a compelling Institute interest, including preserving the safety and welfare of individuals, or ensuring the delivery of our educational mission. However, **the Institute may impose reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on the use of campus facilities to ensure that speech activities do not disrupt the educational and administrative functions of the Institute or interfere with the rights of others.** These restrictions will be applied on a content-neutral and viewpoint neutral basis.

This guidance relates only to the unrestricted outdoor areas on campus.

2. Definitions

- A. **Campus Community** – means students, administrators, faculty, and staff at the Institute and their invited guests.
- B. **Expressive Activity or Expression** – means communicative conduct or activity protected by the First Amendment, such as public speeches, demonstrations, marches, protests and picketing, and the distribution of literature, as well as other forms of symbolic expressive activity, including signs and banners; however, expressive activity does not include ordinary, day-to-day conversations among members of the campus community or commercial speech/activity.
- C. **Materially and Substantially Disruption** – means when a person intentionally engages in conduct or expressive activity which such person knew or reasonably should have known would significantly hinder another person's or group's expressive activity, prevent the communication of the person's or group's message, or prevent the transaction of the business of a meeting, gathering or procession by:
 - i. Engaging in fighting, violent, or other unlawful behavior; or
 - ii. Physically blocking, using threats of violence, or creating loud or sustained noise or vocalization intended to prevent any person from attending, listening to, viewing, or otherwise participating in an expressive activity.

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- iii. This does not include minor, brief, or fleeting nonviolent disruptions of events that are isolated and short in duration.

D. Unrestricted Outdoor Areas of Campus – means any outdoor areas of campus that are generally accessible to members of the campus community, including, but not limited to, grassy areas, plazas, seating areas, or other common areas, and does not include outdoor areas that are intended for specific uses or require special maintenance, nor does it include outdoor areas when and where access to members of the campus community is lawfully restricted. Restricted outdoor areas include, but are not limited to, Intercollegiate Athletics facilities, Campus Recreation Center fields, and academic building interior quads, as well as residence hall courtyards, patios, and quads.

3. Use of Outdoor Unrestricted Space for Expression

A. **Provisions for the Campus Community**

- i. **Planned Expressive Activity.** Georgia Tech recommends that community members engaging in planned expressive activity make a reservation prior to use so that Georgia Tech may minimize scheduling conflicts and accommodate all interested users.
- ii. **Spontaneous Expression.** Georgia Tech reserves the right to direct individuals and/or groups to another available area of campus to ensure the safety of campus members, to provide proper crowd control, and/or to limit disruption of the academic and other operations of the Institute. The Institute must not consider or impose restrictions based on the content or viewpoint of the expression when relocating or redirecting any expression.

B. **Provisions for the Non-Campus Community**

- i. Non-campus community members may engage in expressive activity on Georgia Tech's campus with a prior reservation; the expressive activity must be consistent with the general provisions outlined below.
- ii. Reservations are generally required to ensure availability of space and for the safety of the campus and individuals who will be participating in the expressive activity.
- iii. Without a reservation, non-campus community members may be required to relocate to another area on campus to accommodate those who did reserve the space.

C. **Reservations**

- i. **Reservation Requests.** Faculty, staff, and officers of registered student organizations may access the Events Management System at <https://gtevents.gatech.edu/emswebapp/>. Individual students and non-Georgia Tech community members may reserve a space by completing this [form](#). Additional information on reservation procedures can be found by visiting the [Student and Campus Event Centers website](#).
- ii. **Content-Neutrality.** When processing a reservation request or in responding when they become aware of spontaneous expressive activities, Institute personnel shall not consider the content or viewpoint of the expression or the possible reaction to that expression other than as permitted by law. Such reasons may include but are not limited to the following: threats, obscenity, "fighting words," defamation, discriminatory harassment, and/or incitement to imminent lawless action.

4. General Time, Place & Manner Provisions

- A. **Promotion of Safety and Welfare.** Interference with the free flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic on campus, or with the ingress/egress of campus facilities is prohibited; expressive activities may not block the rights of

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other individuals to freely move about the campus. Motor vehicles may not be used except on roads and in parking lots. Safety and welfare also include concerns related to hazards, criminal behavior, and unsanitary or unhealthy conditions. Georgia Tech Police Department will make safety and welfare determinations based on a content and viewpoint neutral basis and may consult with the Vice President for Student Engagement & Well-Being or designee as needed.

- B. **Prohibition of Disruption.** Speech activities that substantially disrupt the functioning of the Institute or interfere with the rights of others will not be allowed. Disruption includes, but is not limited to, blocking entrances or exits to buildings, interfering with classes, and preventing others from carrying out their normal activities on campus.
- C. **Sound Amplification.** Noise levels must be at a reasonable level so as not to impede instructional activities, administrative functions, or student and employee services. Use of items that are intended to amplify sounds, such as bullhorns, megaphones, microphones, speakers, etc., should not be used unless prior approved in writing by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement & Well-Being or designee. Upon receiving this request, the Office may consult with the Registrar's Office and other departments on campus to assess potential impacts of the anticipated noise levels.
- D. **Institute Functions and Operations.** Interruption of the Institute's instructional, educational, research, administrative, and other official functions, and operations, including Institute ceremonies and events, is prohibited.
- E. **Personal Responsibility.** The individual or organizational representative who makes the reservation shall be responsible for ensuring that the venue is left clean and as close to the condition in which it was prior to use the expressive activity. If this is not the case, individuals or organizations responsible for the event may be held financially responsible for cleanup costs for removal of signs, placards, litter, and other materials left by the representative's speaker or group.
- F. **Respect for Others' Expressive Rights.** Expressive activities may not take place in a location that has already been reserved for another activity or event by an individual or organization. Protests in response to a speaker or event on campus are allowed, but such protests must not disrupt the speaker's ability to communicate or the ability of others to hear the speaker. Protesters may not use physical force or intimidation to prevent others from expressing their views. Similarly, banners, posters, placards and/or other signage may not interfere with the ability of others to observe or view the expressive activity.
- G. **Respect for Property.** Damage or destruction of property owned or operated by Georgia Tech, or property belonging to students, faculty, staff, or invited guests of the Institute is prohibited. Individuals or organizations causing such damage may be held financially and/or criminally responsible; additionally, students may be subject to discipline in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.
- H. **Compliance with Applicable Laws and Policies.** Individuals and groups expressing themselves on Georgia Tech's campus must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws; Board of Regents' policies; and Georgia Tech policies, rules, and regulations.
- I. **Refusal to Comply.** The Institute reserves the right to refuse to permit individuals or groups to assemble, demonstrate, protest, or otherwise express themselves if the individual or group refuses to abide by these content-neutral procedures and guidelines. Speakers or organizations failing to comply may be asked to leave and/or Institute disciplinary action or judicial action may be pursued.

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5. Other Expressive Activities

Flyers, placards, posters, signs, and other written/visual communications should be placed in a manner so as not to impede the ability to view expressive content posted by other members of the Georgia Tech community, guests, or visitors.

If any member of the Georgia Tech community believes that written/visual expressive activity is taking place in violation of these time, place and manner restrictions, this may be reported to any of the following offices:

- College Dean's Office
- Dean of Students Office
- Georgia Tech Police Department
- Provost's Office

These offices will in turn inform and confer with the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement & Well-Being, who will consult with the Office of General Counsel before proceeding with any removal or erasure of these communications.

- A. **Chalking.** Chalking is permitted on campus sidewalks. Chalking is prohibited on buildings, stairways, walls, fountains, or other surfaces not designated for this purpose. All chalking must be at least 20' from entryways of buildings and not under any overhead obstruction that would prevent rain from washing away. Chalk sprays, markers, stencils, or paint of any kind are not permitted.
- B. **Flyers, Placards, Posters, and Signs.**
- Flyers, placards, posters, signs, and other written/visual communications should be placed only on public bulletin boards or other locations clearly designated for posting. Items may not be posted on bulletin boards reserved for the specific use of cabinet areas, colleges, divisions, or departments without the written permission of the building manager who oversees that bulletin board.
 - Items including, but not limited to banners, billboards, and large posters, may not be affixed to any permanent structure (e.g., buildings, fences, trees, etc.) without prior approval from the building manager or other appropriate Georgia Tech administrative office.
- C. **Distribution of Written Material.** Non-commercial pamphlets, handbills, circulars, newspapers, magazines, and other written materials may be distributed on a person-to-person basis in outdoor unrestricted areas of campus.
- D. **Displays/Exhibits.**
- If individuals or groups host displays or exhibits that require interaction with the public, they are responsible to ensure that a Georgia Tech community member is present at all times. Georgia Tech student groups, schools, or departments that are co-sponsoring an event, display, or exhibit with a non-Georgia Tech organization shall be responsible for the event. A Georgia Tech student, faculty, or staff member must remain with the display at all times, along with a representative of the co-sponsoring organization.
 - For safety-related reasons, any exhibit over 10'0" tall must be reviewed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement & Well-Being or designee prior to being installed.

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- E. **Camping or Temporary Shelters.** Activities that involve the use of temporary shelters (e.g., tents, boxes, etc.) are prohibited on Institute property unless prior written approval has been provided. This includes but is not limited to camping.

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