



College Events Policy

Approved by the SUNY WCC Board of Trustees: **November 20, 2024**

SUNY WCC supports a vibrant, dynamic, and engaging campus environment for all community members. This policy is designed to provide guidelines for successful, effective, and authorized events and is applicable to all students, employees, and visitors to the College.

RECOGNIZED STUDENT CLUB & ORGANIZATION POLICIES

In addition to the policies in this document, recognized student clubs and organizations are subject to the *Student Club & Organization Policies & Procedures Manual*. This includes policies on event registration, contracts for performances/speakers, purchasing, reserving space, catering/refreshments, media requests, and more.

USE OF FACILITIES BY THIRD PARTIES FOR FREE SPEECH RIGHTS

The College policy titled *Use of Facilities by Third Parties for Free Speech Rights* applies to all third parties who want to use the College's designated public forum for free speech purposes.

DEFINITIONS

- **Authorized Person:** a person acting within their official duties or responsibilities who is employed by the College or a College-related Organization.
- **Campus(es):** any College owned, leased, licensed or operated space, facility, property, grounds or building.
- **Club & Organization:** Includes student organizations recognized by the Department of Student Involvement or student clubs recognized by the Student Government Association.
- **College:** is SUNY Westchester Community College (SUNY WCC).
- **College-related Organization or Organization(s):** includes, but is not limited to, the following entities associated with the College: the Westchester Community College Foundation and the Westchester Community College Faculty Student Association.
- **Third Party or Parties:** any person, organization, group or entity not legally affiliated with the College including, but not limited to the general public, contractors, vendors, guests and visitors to the College, those using College facilities or property under a College revocable permit, and volunteers not enrolled as such on College systems.
- **College Event or Events:** is any gathering, whether planned or spontaneous, including College Sponsored Events at College Campuses and Third Party uses of the Campus.
- **Faculty and Staff:** any faculty member of the College or staff employed by the College or a College-related Organization and its subcontractors who are issued College identification cards.
- **Fireworks:** any "pyrotechnic device" as defined under NYS Penal Law Section 405.10.1.r, and "fireworks" and "dangerous fireworks" as defined in NYS Penal Law Section 270.00.1 (including "sparkling devices").
- **Open Fire:** defined in 6 NYCRR 215.1 and includes any device that produces and maintains an open flame. Open Fire includes, but is not limited to, camp fires and the use of outdoor cooking devices that produce heat via combustion (e.g., charcoal or gas grills), as well as items such as candles, torches, and oil lanterns.
- **Student:** any person registered for courses, either full time or part time, pursuing undergraduate studies as well as non-degree seeking students; individuals who confirm their intent to enroll in programs; those attending orientation sessions; individuals who are term active but are between academic terms; individuals taking online classes; individuals auditing classes; individuals that were enrolled on the date of an alleged incident; and persons who are term active but not enrolled at the College.

PROHIBITED ITEMS AT COLLEGE SPONSORED EVENTS

The following items are prohibited at events, both on and off-campus, at all times:

1. Weapons, meaning any object or substance designed to inflict a wound, cause injury, or incapacitate, including, but not limited to: all firearms (including pellet guns, air guns, rifles, shotguns, handguns, multiple firing weapons and any weapon capable of firing a shot), switchblade knives, explosives, or dangerous chemicals (except as authorized for use in class, or in connection with College-sponsored research or other approved activities).
2. Fireworks.
3. Open Fires/Flames.
4. Tobacco & Vaping Products, including, but not limited to: cigarettes (e.g. cloves, bidis, kreteks), cigars, cigarillos, hookah smoked products, pipes and oral tobacco (e.g. spit, spitless, smokeless, chew, snus, and snuff), nasal tobacco, electronic cigarettes, vapes, vaping devices, and any other product that contains tobacco flavoring or is intended to mimic tobacco products or deliver nicotine for any purpose other than that of cessation by nicotine patches or nicotine gum.
5. Alcoholic beverages and other drugs.
6. Poles, including flag poles, bats and other similar athletic items, clubs, sticks (including sticks used to hold signs), unless the individual is participating in an instructional, performance, or athletic activity, the Pole is required as part of that activity, and the individual is using the item for its intended purpose.
7. Animals, not including service animals or those pre-approved by the College for a performance or for an educational or instructional activity.
8. Drones or other unmanned aircraft systems, other than for official College use and operated by or under the supervision of Authorized Persons.

The College reserves the right, through Authorized Persons, to prohibit any or all of the following items in addition to items listed above, at any event, that is deemed to pose a risk to safety or to potentially disrupt College business, activities, or operations.

1. Glass or other heavy metal containers
2. Signage of any kind or those made of anything other than cloth, paper, foam core, or cardboard
3. Backpacks and bags, other than purses, fanny-packs, and diaper bags which may be subject to search
4. Aerosol and spray cans
5. Noisemakers of any kind: including air horns, thunderstix, whistles, cowbells, etc.
6. Chains, padlocks, bicycle locks
7. Umbrellas
8. Laser pointers
9. Megaphones or other amplified sound devices
10. Video cameras, tripods and selfie sticks
11. Any other items determined by Authorized Persons to pose a risk to safety or to potentially disrupt College business.

The College has identified the following exemptions to the above:

1. Fireworks may be used at College Sponsored Events when specifically authorized by the College, permitted under law, and overseen by a licensed and approved pyrotechnic operator. The College reserves the right to authorize the use of fireworks for events other than College Sponsored Events at its sole discretion.
2. Open Fires are permitted:
 - a. When used as part of a recognized course of instruction.
 - b. When engaged in authorized construction, maintenance, and repair activities (e.g., cutting and welding torches).
 - c. When expressly authorized as part of a College Sponsored Event (i.e., candles during a candle-lighting ceremony, etc.).
3. Alcoholic beverages are permitted at College sponsored events with appropriate prior College approval as well as proper licenses and oversight per the policies and procedures in the SUNY WCC Policy on Drugs & Alcohol.
4. Other exemptions as established by Authorized Persons.

SUNY WCC reserves the right to prohibit other items and activities determined by Authorized Persons that may pose a risk to safety or to potentially disrupt College business, activities, or operations for any event taking place on a college campus at any time. The authority to determine a prohibited item or activity lies solely with the College and is not subject to appeal.

CAMPING ON CAMPUS

Camping, as defined in the bullets below, is prohibited on any SUNY WCC campus:

- The establishment of, or attempt to establish, temporary or permanent living quarters at any location, indoors or outdoors, on College property, this includes the establishment of any indoor and/or outdoor encampment erected in connection with any lawful assembly of individuals pursuant to SUNY WCC policies;
- Sleeping outdoors with or without bedding, tent, hammock, or similar device, structure, protection or equipment between the hours of 10:00pm and 8:00am and/or during times when a campus is closed;
- Sleeping overnight in or under any parked vehicle;
- Establishing or maintaining indoors or outdoors, or in or under, any structure not designated for human occupancy, at any time during the day or night, a temporary or permanent place for cooking, storing of personal belongings, or sleeping by setting up any bedding, sleeping bag, mattress, tent, hammock or other sleeping equipment, or by setting up any cooking equipment.
- Exemptions
 - Actions that constitute “camping” as defined above may be permitted in the following special circumstances by the Director of Security or designee(s):
 - By artists or actors who participate in College authorized and approved artistic performances that require such actions as part of the artistic production and only so long as it relates to their performance.
 - In extraordinary circumstances, such as times of natural disaster, when approved in writing in advance by the President of the College or their designee.

SOUND

Music, speech, or orchestrated sound components, amplified or not, is subject to the following stipulations:

- Amplified sound or music associated with an event or gathering in outdoor spaces on campus are not permitted while classes are in session in order to preserve the academic mission of the College, unless as part of a recognized course of instruction. Exemptions may be made by the Director of Student Involvement, Director of Athletics or designee(s).
- Requests for amplified sound or music will be granted only if there are no previously scheduled events that may be negatively affected by sound or music.
 - All student clubs and organizations wishing to present events with amplified sound or music of any type need to approve events with Student Involvement. Additional information about registering a student event can be found in the Student Club & Organization Policies & Procedures Manual.
- Events may be monitored and the college reserves the right to make any and all determinations regarding the sound level of an event. Organizers may be required to lower the sound level or discontinue the use of sound in respect for other College functions.
- Individual students may not play amplified music, live or recorded, or engage in musical performances on-campus unless part of an approved event sponsored by Student Involvement, a student club or student organization.
- Groups that reserve tables may not use sound or music without prior approval.

COLLEGE OPERATING HOURS, CLOSURES & BLACKOUT PERIODS

Operating Hours

Events are only permissible during normal operating hours of a campus and may not be scheduled overnight (between the hours of 10:00PM and 8:00AM) or times when a campus is closed. Exemptions may be made to Student Involvement, student club, or student organization events with advanced approval by the Director of Student Involvement in consultation with the Director of Security or their respective designees.

Inclement Weather or College Closings

Inclement weather or other emergency situations may require parts or all of the college to close out of public safety concerns. During these circumstances, all college events at affected locations will be cancelled. Event organizers are expected to make proper notification to their attendees announcing the cancellation/postponement of the event.

Black Out Periods

The College has identified certain days on the College's calendar where the use of the campus and its facilities, including outdoor spaces, are reserved exclusively for College related activities at the very core of its educational mission periods. These days, known as Blackout Periods, include the following:

- A. During New Student Orientation Sessions.
- B. During major recruitment events, including, but not limited to: Accepted Students Day and Open Houses.
- C. During reading periods and examination periods as set forth on the then current academic calendar.
- D. During graduation-related activities and events, including completion ceremonies and commencement.

Exemptions may be made for student events or athletic competitions with advanced approval by the Director of Student Involvement or Director of Athletics in consultation with the Director of Security or their designees.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES AT COLLEGE SPONSORED EVENTS

The following activities are prohibited at all SUNY WCC events:

- Activity listed under Prohibited Conduct in the SUNY WCC Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order policy;
- Entry into any private office of an administrative officer, member of faculty, or staff member, or entry into any other college area that is not authorized, without permission;
- Occupation of a building after it is normally closed;
- Obstruction of any roadways running through or adjoining the campus grounds;
- Activities determined by Authorized Persons to pose a safety risk or to potentially disrupt College business; and
- Activities specifically prohibited by College policies, rules and regulations.

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

SUNY WCC, as a public institution, encourages the exchange of ideas and opinions and serves as a forum for the public expression of views. Some of the expressions may be counter to commonly held or popular values, theories, and beliefs. SUNY WCC has a special obligation to protect the First Amendment rights of free speech. Community members must recognize that the presentation of a balanced program of speakers and topics is essential for a true and exhaustive analysis of critical issues. While some may support certain tenets, the opportunity to hear opposing views is vital if an informed student body and campus community is to result.

Student clubs and organizations are free to invite speakers to the campus to speak on any topic chosen by the students. College facilities may be utilized for speakers invited to campus by a student club or organization. Student clubs and organizations must follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Club & Organization Policies & Procedures Manual when inviting speakers to a SUNY WCC campus.

Speakers invited to campus by student clubs and organizations and other speakers who may be legitimately present on campus, will be given the utmost protection to communicate their messages without disruptive harassment or interference. Opponents to those speakers enjoy the same protections for expressing their dissent. All members of the College community share the duty to support, protect, and extend the commitment to the principle of freedom of expression, and to discuss this commitment with groups or individuals who seek to take part in the community. While all persons may seek to peacefully discourage speech that may be unnecessarily offensive to individuals or groups, speech that may be antithetical to the College's values, those persons must support the legal right of free speech.

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves appropriately and within the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct and other college policies. Students whose conduct disrupts authorized events will be required to leave the event and will be subject to disciplinary action. Organizers should work to ensure that prohibited conduct does not take place at their program and ensure the group maintains the *SUNY WCC Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order*.

The College maintains the right to deny use of facilities for speakers when there is evidence that serious disruption and/or threat to welfare could result.

STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, PICKETING, AND ASSEMBLY INFORMATION

The College's Freedom of Expression Statement details SUNY WCC's commitment to open, free, and thoughtful expression. In addition, the College has rules and regulations designed to prevent substantial disruption of educational activities, protect lawful access to campus programs and facilities, avoid unsafe behavior, and prevent the destruction of property. Their application does not vary according to the cause or content of a particular demonstration, assembly, speech, or other form of expression, and the rules and regulations are designed to enable opportunity for expressive activity. These rules are outlined in the *SUNY WCC Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order*.

The College will not interfere with orderly demonstrations, picketing, assemblies, or other free speech activities organized by students and/or student clubs or organizations on campus property in public areas of grounds and buildings unless participants:

- Violate provisions of the College Events Policy or other College policies and procedures
- Violate the provisions of *SUNY WCC Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order*, which includes, but is not limited to the following prohibited conduct:
 - deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of College functions or activities, such as classes, lectures, meetings, interviews, ceremonies, and other public events.
 - Obstruct the free movement of vehicles or of persons, including, but not limited to in any building or facility, inclusive of blocking hallways and doors. If a protest area is established by a College official(s), protesters are required to comply with these physical boundaries.
 - Willfully cause physical injury to another person, or threaten to do so
 - Willfully damage or destroy property of the campus or property under its care.
- Jeopardize the safety and security of others, including, but not limited to, the presence of sticks, poles, or torches, which are prohibited.
- Utilize picket signs inside College facilities.
- Willfully operate audio amplification equipment.
- Construct structures, inclusive of objects requiring penetration in concrete or grass, or camp on campus (see *Camping on Campus* above for more information.)

Assemblies lasting more than one day, duration not to exceed 12 hours in a one-day period, and assemblies between the hours of 10:00PM and 8:00AM are prohibited.

SUNY WCC designates the Student Center Patio as a public area for the purpose of peaceful and orderly assemblies.

All individuals participating in protests and demonstrations are required to provide a form of College issued or government issued identification upon request from a College official.

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves appropriately and within the requirements of the Student Code of Conduct and other college policies. Students whose conduct disrupts authorized events will be required to leave the event and will be subject to disciplinary action. Organizers should work to ensure that prohibited conduct does not take place at their program and ensure the group maintains the *SUNY WCC Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order*.

Student organizers should give reasonable advance notice to the College, through the Department of Student Involvement, of any planned campus assembly, picketing or demonstration, its proposed locale, and intended purpose. Following College procedure will ensure a safe and effective assembly activity. The College will make every effort to respond affirmatively to all requests to engage in assembly activity. However, content-neutral consideration must be given to the time, place, and manner of the assembly activity to ensure the health and safety of the participants and the noninterference with authorized College business, activities, or events.

To ensure the safety of participants and the protection of the rights of all community members, the College may provide services to registered student clubs and organizations through the Department of Student Involvement such as: location, implement crowd control, site preparation, and/or other such services (“Services”) following the normal event registration procedures detailed in the Club & Organization Policies & Procedures.

Student assemblies requiring no Services, or for which the need for Services is not reasonably foreseeable or necessary as described above, may take place without any prior notification by the sponsors and/or organizers. However, conformity with the specific campus rules noted above is required. Organizers who are unsure of whether their planned assembly requires Services are encouraged to contact the Department of Student Involvement for guidance. Event organizers who do not request necessary services that were reasonably foreseeable as being needed may be subject to discipline.

Individuals and/or groups not associated with the college (i.e. third parties) should refer to the Use of Facilities by Third Parties for Free Speech Policy for such related activities.

PENALTIES

- If a trespasser or visitor without specific license or invitation, be subject to ejection.
- if a student, be subject to expulsion or such lesser disciplinary action as the facts of the case may warrant, including suspension, probation, loss of privileges, or warning as determined per policies and procedures in the Student Code of Conduct.
- If an employee, be subject to disciplinary action per the appropriate collective bargaining agreement or College Policy.
- If a licensee or invitee, have their authorization to remain upon the campus or other property withdrawn and shall be directed to leave the premises. In the event of their failure or refusal to do so, they shall be subject to ejection.

Failure to abide by these regulations may also affect a group or individual’s ability to utilize campus facilities for future events.