

From: no_reply@massmail.unc.edu
Subject: [FORMAL NOTICE] Reminder on First Amendment and Free Speech Policies and Resources
Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:40:06 PM

Dear Carolina Community,

As we approach the second half of the fall semester, we are resharing information about demonstrations, events and safety resources as a reminder of Carolina's commitment to providing a safe environment for our community and guests, as well as protecting free speech.

The First Amendment at Carolina

At Carolina, you have the opportunity to hear a wide range of viewpoints from members of our campus community and from visiting speakers. Speakers may be invited by a school, department or student organization, among others. Those speakers may rent University facilities for events. Others may come more informally and speak in public areas of the campus.

Under the First Amendment, the University cannot prohibit a person from speaking on campus because some in our community may not agree with what that person has to say or because their speech is considered offensive or even hateful. However, our practice of upholding the law does not mean the University endorses or approves such speech in any way.

The principle of free speech is also enshrined in the North Carolina Constitution, which ordains that "freedom of speech and of the press are two of the great bulwarks of liberty and therefore shall never be restrained." As a public university, Carolina embraces these words along with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and we uphold the [North Carolina Restore and Preserve Free Speech Act](#) and the UNC System [Board of Governors Policy on Free Speech and Free Expression](#).

Demonstrations and Rallies Occur

As we have already seen this semester, demonstrations, rallies and other events occur on campus and in the local community. As a state institution, outdoor public spaces on campus are open to all, regardless of their views, as long as they follow the law and University policies. Permits are not required or given for gatherings in most of McCorkle Place but are needed to reserve space or bring equipment to other locations under our [Facilities Use Policy](#) and [Facilities Use Standard](#).

We respect and believe in the rights of peaceful protesters. While anyone — including students, faculty and staff — may gather and exercise their rights to free speech, state law and the Board of Governors policy prohibit significant disruption of University operations. The University's [Policy on Demonstrative Events](#) provides a list of prohibited items and actions for demonstrations, including rules regarding amplified sound, signs and posters and masks. We expect all campus community members to comply and we will address any noncompliant activity.

In addition, [Campus Advisories](#) are opt-in, mobile push notifications regarding an event or group coming to campus that may create traffic congestion or especially crowded conditions, necessitate increased security or involve messaging that may be perceived as hostile or disturbing for some community members. If you do not wish to participate in events on or near campus, plan to use caution and discretion before walking or traveling near those areas.

To receive these notifications, you need the CarolinaGO app, which is available for download, at no cost, on any [Android](#) or [Apple](#) device. In the CarolinaGO app, you can then choose to opt into the Campus Advisories channel. More details about the app and how to enable the notifications are available on the [Student Affairs website](#).

Supporting our Community

Your safety is the University's highest priority, and our police department is working hard to provide a presence across campus and coordinates closely with town officials and local law enforcement agencies to keep our community as safe as possible.

We understand that some messages and the presence of some visitors on campus may cause members of our community to feel unsafe — and can cause anxiety and fear. If you ever feel your physical safety is threatened, including on social media, you should call police immediately by dialing 911.

For support, students may contact the [Dean of Students](#) team at 919-966-4042, [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) at 919-966-3658 or [Student Wellness](#) at 919-962-9355. Faculty and staff may contact our [Employee Assistance Program](#) 24-hours-a-day at 877-314-5841. If you believe you've experienced conduct that goes beyond free speech to be discrimination or harassment based on protected status, please contact the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office at reportandresponse@unc.edu.

Sincerely,

J. Christopher Clemens, Provost
George Battle, Vice Chancellor for Institutional Integrity and Risk Management
Amy Johnson, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
Becci Menghini, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and Equal Opportunity and Compliance

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