

HIGHLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICY

SUBJECT: Expressive Activity/Free Speech Policy
BOARD OF TRUSTEE APPROVAL: 8/26/26

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EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/27/26

Applicability:

This policy applies to Highland Community College's ("HCC" or the "College") campus communities, including students, personnel, and visitors.

Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to preserve an environment of open inquiry, spirited debate, and the free exchange of ideas while supporting the educational mission of Highland Community College.

Definitions:

"Expressive Activity" means non-commercial expression protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, including peaceful assembly, speeches, protests, picketing, literature distribution, and similar expressive communications and activities. Expressive Activity does not include expression that constitutes a true threat, incitement to imminent lawless action, obscenity, defamation, fighting words, unlawful harassment, or conduct that materially and substantially disrupts College operations.

"Participants" means any member of the campus community, including students, employees, and visitors, who engages in Expressive Activity on an HCC campus.

General Statement

Freedom of expression is essential to the College's educational mission and the pursuit of knowledge. Highland Community College supports the right of all members of the campus community to exercise their First Amendment rights on campus. The College encourages participants to engage in respectful and constructive dialogue consistent with the College's educational mission.

The College will enforce this Policy in a content – and viewpoint-neutral manner. The College will not retaliate against any individual or organization for engaging in protected Expressive Activity. Expressive Activity by Participants does not constitute endorsement by Highland Community College.

This Policy does not preclude the application of other College policies, procedures, or applicable federal, state, or local laws and regulations. Participants who materially and substantially disrupt College operations, obstruct access, threaten safety, damage property, or otherwise violate applicable laws or College policies may be subject to disciplinary action, removal from campus, and/or referral to law enforcement.

I. Scheduled Expressive Activity

The College recognizes that campuses serve as a marketplace for ideas. Scheduled Expressive Activity allows the College to assist organizers in conducting events safely and efficiently while minimizing disruption to College operations.

Expressive Activity that is promoted in advance or reasonably expected to draw a crowd of at least ten (10) persons is encouraged to register in advance, preferably at least 48 hours prior to the requested activity, by contacting the President's Office and providing the following information:

1. Date and time of the activity
2. Purpose of the activity; and
3. Requested location.

Advance registration is encouraged for logistical and safety purposes but is not required for lawful spontaneous expressive activity.

If use of a College facility is requested, a Facility/Event Reservation Request form should be submitted through the President's Office in accordance with standard College facility-use procedures.

No reservation request will be denied based on the content or viewpoint of the proposed Expressive Activity or organizer. Any denial shall include a written explanation. Appeals may be submitted in writing within ten (10) business days to the President or designee.

For events occurring on public sidewalks or streets adjacent to the College, organizers are responsible for complying with applicable municipal ordinances and securing any required permits.

II. Unscheduled Expressive Activity

Unscheduled Expressive Activity may generally occur in accessible outdoor areas of campus or in publicly accessible, non-academic areas traditionally available for student expression, including the HCC Library.

Unscheduled Expressive Activity may be relocated or limited when:

1. The activity does not meet the definition of protected Expressive Activity;
2. The activity conflicts with a previously scheduled event in the same location; or
3. The activity violates reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions established by the College.

When multiple Expressive Activities occur simultaneously and create safety concerns or material disruption, the College may establish reasonable perimeters or relocate activities to protect public safety and maintain orderly operations.

III. Location

In accordance with *Kansas House Bill 2333 (KIRK Act)*, outdoor areas of HCC campuses that are generally accessible to the public are available for Expressive Activity. These areas include:

- Grassy areas
- Walkways
- Common outdoor areas

Certain indoor facilities customarily available for public or student use may also be reserved in accordance with standard College procedures during normal operating hours.

Blocking entrances or exits to buildings is prohibited.

Participants are responsible for leaving any location used for Expressive Activity in its original condition. Individuals or organizations causing damage to College property may be assessed reasonable repair or cleaning costs.

IV. Reasonable Restrictions

The College reserves the right to impose reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions necessary to protect public safety, preserve College property, and maintain the orderly operation of the institution.

A. Disruptive Activity:

The College may prohibit or restrict conduct that materially and substantially disrupts College operations, including teaching, study, administration, meetings, or other authorized uses of College facilities. The College may also prohibit conduct that:

1. Obstructs the free movement of persons or access to buildings;
2. Infringes on the rights of others;
3. Endangers the physical safety of any person;
4. Causes damage to property; or
5. Violates applicable federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or College policies.

B. Noise Level:

The College reserves the right to regulate the use of amplified sound devices on campus. Noise levels associated with Expressive Activity may not materially disrupt College operations or violate applicable local ordinances.

C. Duration:

Expressive Activity may be reasonably limited based on the nature of the event, available College resources, campus operating hours, and public safety considerations.