

## Demonstrations and Protests at Highsmith Union

Students, student organizations, faculty, and staff at UNC Asheville are free to examine and discuss all questions of interest to them and to express opinions publicly and privately. They should always be free to support causes by orderly means that do not disrupt the regular and essential operation of the Union, University or community. At the same time, it should be made clear to the academic and larger community that students or student organizations, and individual members of the faculty or staff, speak only for themselves, not for the University as an institution, in their public expressions or demonstrations.

UNC Asheville does not allow disruptive behavior at community events in the Union. Disruptions may include purposeful blocking the view of others at the event; banners or items that block the audience's view; noise or action that disrupts the ability of the audience to hear (e.g., shouting out or use of a bull horn).

If an event is disrupted by a group or individual, a representative of the University may request the action to stop or ask the person or group to leave the event and move to an approved location for protesting. Individuals or groups who disrupt an event or fail to leave when asked are in violation of the Community Code of Standards and may be in violation of cooperating with University Officials. These violations of University policy may result in University discipline. Disruption may also result in arrest and criminal charges such as disorderly conduct or trespass.

For specific events and during specific times of the year, UNC Asheville invites the public to join us at events and extends free speech and expression privileges during these events. Any individual or group who disrupts an event and is unwilling to respect University policy or to comply with the requests of University officials will be asked to leave UNC Asheville property. Failure to comply may result in arrest for unlawful trespass or other criminal violations.

### **Highsmith Union Demonstration Regulations**

Anyone who wishes to stage a demonstration or protest at any event at Highsmith Union should contact and arrange a meeting with Union Staff and Public Safety to discuss University policy, demonstration-specific regulations, and safety issues.

The Department of Public Safety should be consulted in the planning of all organized demonstrations, in order to register the demonstration with other pertinent University offices. The desire of UNC Asheville is to promote intellectual inquiry and exchange in a respectful and civil manner. The safety of all participants is of utmost importance to the University, and policies may be enacted to ensure safety during the demonstration.

Event planners in conjunction with the Operations Staff of Highsmith Union and Public Safety will determine the following for any demonstration approved in Highsmith.

### **Location**

The location of an approved demonstration in the Union will be determined following space and use guidelines of the Union and in accordance with this policy.

If the demonstration is against an issue at another approved event, the location of an approved demonstration will be as proximate to the other event as deemed appropriate considering the following:

- Nature of the other event
- Security needs of the other event
- Time of the other event
- Any other necessary considerations

The use of the Highsmith Bridge for demonstrations and protests is strictly prohibited as a matter of public safety and building egress and fire code regulations.

### **Time and Duration**

Demonstrations may not interfere with the academic and educational functions in the Union. The time and duration of the demonstration will be determined with regard to the following:

- Nature of the event and/or the demonstration
- Security needs of the event and/or the demonstration
- Time of the event and/or the demonstration
- Any other necessary considerations

### **Manner**

Demonstrations must occur in the approved defined location.

Demonstrations may not block access to the venue in which another event is being held.

Demonstrations utilizing pickets, large items, bullhorns, or other loud or amplified sound making devices are usually confined to the exterior of buildings so as not to disrupt regular and essential operation of the Union or create health and safety issues. The exception to this regarding outside space is the Highsmith Bridge. Demonstrations with a noise level that disrupts other authorized activities in the Union violate these policies. Connection to the University's utilities (power, etc.) must be approved in advance (during the weekday) by Union Staff.

Distribution of materials such as leaflets may not be confrontational and must allow people to decline to receive the materials.

Organizers must remove all items and materials at the end of the demonstration.

Demonstrators are not allowed to use intimidating tactics or unwelcome physical contact between demonstrators, counter demonstrators, the audience, the speaker or performers, or University officials.

The use of chalk on buildings or other structures, or within 10 feet of any door, is strictly prohibited to prevent damage to the structure and injury to anyone stopping at entrances or exits. Demonstrators may not mark or use trees or University structures to support or display signs, messages, materials, or equipment without prior approval.

*Note:* Any of these demonstration standards can be applied to any location including in and approved event space.

### **UNC Asheville Event Host**

Within the guidelines of this protocol, event hosts will determine the appropriate guidelines for entry to an event and will send an email announcement of these guidelines to the University community and will post the guidelines at the event entrance. (Examples of entry guidelines and information: time doors open, restricted items, tickets or ID if needed to control capacity, etc.) The event host(s) will monitor the entry to ensure that the guidelines are being followed and will address any issues or questions related to the entrance guidelines. When behavior at their event is being disruptive, the hosts should always attempt to gain cooperation by asking that the disruptive behavior stop prior to requesting that the person or persons leave the event. The hosts may also decide to contact Union Staff or Public Safety about the disturbance or behavior.

### **Public Safety**

Public Safety will locate the hosts at any event before handling any situation of non-violent behavior unless the disruption necessitates action to prevent greater confrontation. Public Safety has the authority to respond to acts of violence, threats of violence, or overcrowding without first contacting the event hosts. In all cases where time permits contacting the event hosts, Public Safety will contact the event hosts to determine if the behavior is in fact disruptive to the event. If Public Safety has been contacted by the hosts and asked to deal with a person or persons creating a non-violent disturbance, Public Safety will always start by asking the person or persons to stop the disruptive behavior prior to asking the person or persons to leave the event.