



02.360 Policy On Displays

This policy establishes standards and requirements for displays, including but not limited to banners, postings/posters, fliers, bulletin boards, spirit rocks, chalking, and other temporary displays in and on University grounds and facilities.

Authority:

Chancellor

History

Updated October 3, 2025; Updated March 11, 2025; Created August 13, 2024; Repeals and replaces UNCW Policy 02.350 and Code of Student Life V-3

Source of Authority:

UNC Policy 1300.8 Policy on Free Speech and Free Expression Within the North Carolina System; UNC Code, Section 502

Related Links:

- [CAIC Resources](#)
- [02.340 Freedom of Expression By Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups](#);
- [02.140 Facilities Use Policy](#)
- [05.303 Alcohol Policy](#)
- [UNCW Freedom of Expression Website](#)
- [Code of Student Life, Solicitation Policy](#)

Responsible Offices:

Division of Student Affairs, Office of General Counsel, and Academic Affairs

Policy Details:

I. Purpose

This policy establishes standards and requirements for displays, including but not limited to banners, postings/posters, fliers, bulletin boards, spirit rocks, chalking, and other temporary displays in and on University grounds and facilities.

II. Scope and Definitions

This policy applies to all University students, faculty, and staff, as well as Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups. As required by N.C.G.S. 116-300, the University, shall remain neutral on the political controversies of the day. No displays shall be operated or organized to speak/express on behalf of the university regarding matters of contemporary debate or social action as those terms are used or defined in Section 300.5.1 of the UNC Policy Manual; any prescribed “view of social policy” or “political controversies of the day” as those terms are used in N.C.G.S. 116-300 or in furtherance of concepts listed in N.C.G.S. 126-14.6(c)(1)-(13). Per Section 300.8.5 of the UNC Policy Manual regarding Equality Within the University of North Carolina, these content-neutral standards and requirements enable the University to protect its constituents’ rights to freedom of expression, provide a safe environment, and preserve campus aesthetics. University community members and constituents shall abide by University policies, procedures, and/or practices applicable to them, and are defined as follows:

- A. Students and Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) are subject to the provisions of the *Code of Student Life*, in addition to this Policy which governs the use of Displays. The Campus Activities and Involvement Center provides numerous resources and guidance for the creation and approval of displays.
- B. In keeping with the policy on institutional neutrality, academic units may post or display temporary signage pertaining to specific academic initiatives/events on the interior or exteriors of appropriate academic buildings and surrounding grounds, in consultation with the Office of Facilities (for outdoor displays) and upon approval by the relevant dean/designee. Banners/large signage on academic buildings must be approved by each respective dean/designee and the Provost.
- C. Athletics and other divisions and administrative units may post or display temporary signage consistent with the respective missions of those units, in consultation with the Office of Facilities and upon approval by the relevant vice chancellor/designee/Cabinet member.
- D. Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups consist of individuals or groups, not-for-profit or for-profit organization, or other bodies (however formally or informally associated or organized) that are:
 1. Not sponsored or approved by an academic or administrative unit or RSO (see II above);
and are,
 2. either unaffiliated with the university, or if affiliated with the university via staff, faculty, student, or alumni status, on their personal time, not within their official capacity, or not within the scope of their job duties.

III. Conditions and Approvals for Temporary Postings and Displays

Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups are permitted to display banners, posters, lawn signs, and other temporary signage during their reserved speaking time(s) in accordance with Policy 02.340 Freedom of Expression By Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups.

Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups may not otherwise display banners or other large temporary signage on campus unless:

1. the display will occur in a permissible Location, as detailed in Section III-D; and,
2. the display promotes an activity or event on campus for which space has been reserved in accordance with the university’s Facilities Use Policy (02.140); and is,
3. approved by Campus Life in accordance with procedures and standards established by that office for facilities it manages.

Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups may utilize small posters, notices, and other small signs in accordance with the requirements below. Projected displays and images and use of drones are prohibited.

A. Prohibited Content

No signs, banners, chalking, spirit rock messages, posters, or other temporary signage shall contain obscene or libelous material, nor should any material be posted or displayed that contains information in violation of any federal, state or local law or seeks unauthorized solicitation.

Posted or displayed materials or information involving alcohol must be in accordance with UNCW [Alcohol Policy \(05.303\)](#).

All signage must follow all local, state, and federal laws and all pertinent UNCW policies such as, but not limited to, UNCW's [Freedom of Expression \(02.340\)](#) policy and [UNC Policy 1300.8 Policy on Free Speech and Free Expression Within the North Carolina System](#). Use of outdoor spaces requires care not to cause damage to the university's property or leave behind trash/debris. If this occurs, clean-up and damage costs may be assessed to the responsible individuals/groups.

B. Partisan Political Activities

Each member of the University community has the right to express their views on any subject, including advocacy for/against political candidates or positions. However, in exercising these rights, neither an employee's position nor University resources can be used. In addition to employment obligations, reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions apply to all political activity (e.g., complying with the university's [Facilities Use Policy \(02.140\)](#) and applicable State Human Resource Policies found in the [UNC Policy Manual](#)). All postings and displays must comply with North Carolina law, UNC System policy, and University guidance on partisan political activities on campus. A full description can be found on the university's [Freedom of Expression website](#).

Posting and displays of temporary signage related to the University's role as host of a polling location may be governed by separate requirements established jointly by UNCW and the New Hanover County Board of Elections that supersede, or must be adhered to in addition to, this Policy on Displays.

C. Date and Duration

Written displays (banners, postings and other temporary signs) must be dated with the day of posting and normally should not remain beyond 14 days or within 24 hours after the event, whichever comes first. Postings should not be placed over existing postings; however, outdated material (over 14 days old) may be removed by the university to make room for upcoming events or following final exam weeks.

D. Locations

1. Posters and other small signage

Posters, notices, and other posted signs must be placed on bulletin boards located throughout campus designated for that purpose. All bulletin boards or other means of posting materials are under the jurisdiction of the college, school, department or administrative office that maintains them, which may enforce size limitations for posted materials.

a. A sign may not be:

- i. attached to a shrub, plant or tree; a permanent sign installed for another purpose; a fence or chain or its supporting structure; a brick, concrete or masonry structure; a sanctuary, monument or similar structure;
- ii. placed on campus landscaping/lawns, except as approved by the university;
- iii. posted on or adjacent to a fire hydrant; on or between a curb and sidewalk; or in a university building, except on bulletin boards in approved locations;
- iv. placed on windshields of vehicles on campus.

b. Locations for Non-University Sponsored Individuals or Groups to post small signage:

- i. Fisher Student Center – on boards adjacent to the Information Desk at the west, main entrance of the building;
- ii. UNCW Library – bulletin boards in entrance lobby;
- iii. Warwick Center – hallway across from the Cashiers' window;

iv. Distributed in registered student organizations' mailboxes.

2. Banners and Temporary Large Signage

a. Permissible locations for posting banners and other temporary large signage for RSOs:

- i. Fisher University Union – outside – north side poles; inside – designated locations;
- ii. Fisher Student Center – designated locations inside;
- iii. Chancellor's Walk – near Sartarelli Hall;
- iv. Wagoner Dining Hall outside – west entrance poles;

In locations where poles are designated, the poles must be used.

b. Banners and other temporary large signage may not be:

- i. hung or affixed on the water tower;
- ii. hung or affixed to the clock tower;
- iii. hung, fixed, or attached to buildings without consultation with the Office of Facilities.

All banners/large signage on non-academic buildings shall be approved by Campus Life or the respective administrative unit head (i.e., Athletic Director for athletics facilities; Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs for dining facilities), and banners/large signage on academic buildings must be approved by each respective dean/designee and the Provost. If banners/large signage are not properly approved or displayed, they will be removed. Banners/large signage must be removed within 24 hours after the event or after 14 days of posting, whichever comes first.

IV. Distribution of Materials

Distributors of materials must not obstruct traffic, harass or interfere with passersby, block entrances, disturb others with excessive noise, litter premises or disturb or interfere with academic or institutional activities.

Generally, the distribution of materials in accordance with this section does not require advance registration, with the exception that RSOs and other university-related groups should reserve a booth or table prior to distributing materials in or around any of the Campus Life facilities. Booths/tables can be reserved through the Campus Life Events & Reservations office.

Individual students who wish to distribute materials that do not involve the use of a booth/table do not need prior approval.

Any activity or distribution of material that qualifies as a "solicitation" must comply with the Solicitation Policy within the *Code of Student Life*.

V. Temporary Expressions

I. Chalking

1. Locations: Chalking is permitted on campus concrete such as horizontal sidewalks that are exposed to rain (no chalking on any brick, asphalt or other surface).

Chalking is NOT permitted:

- i. on any vertical surfaces (including buildings or any structures) or under any porch coverings that would block exposure to rain;
- ii. in the Commons Amphitheater (as this is a reservable space);
- iii. in the Student Recreation Center Courtyard (front entrance);
- iv. on campus benches;
- v. on the sidewalks or parking areas around the Hoggard Lawn area, including all sides of James, Alderman and Hoggard halls.

2. Approval

Chalking areas are not reservable spaces, and messages do not need to be pre-approved. These spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Out of courtesy, individuals who chalk messages are asked not to chalk over or erase other existing messages, though the university does not monitor such compliance.

Only washable chalk is permitted; aerosol "spray-on" chalk is not allowed anywhere on campus. Adhesives and/or sealants (e.g., spray adhesive, hairspray, etc.) may not be used on chalking. Removal of any prohibited substances, and any costs incurred by the university to remove such substances, shall be the responsibility of the person or group who used them.

II. Spirit Rocks

There are two Spirit Rocks on campus: (1) near the Student Recreation Center on Walton Drive; and (2) in front of the Fisher University Union. These are available for registered student organizations, university departments and individual UNCW students, faculty, and staff to share their messages.

All students, registered student organizations, campus departments, faculty, and staff can reserve a Spirit Rock via the online [Campus Reservation System](#). Requests will be processed by Conferences, Events, and Reservations staff.

Reservation requests for the Spirit Rock must be made via the Campus Reservation System at least 48 hours before the requested date. Reservations can be made seven days a week, except when the University is fully closed and facilities are not in operation. Once a request is processed, the 24-hour reservation window for the Spirit Rock is from 9:00 a.m. to 8:59 a.m. the following day

Painting may begin no earlier than 9:00 a.m. on the first day of the reservation and must be completed within the 24-hour reservation window. Student organizations can check out paint and materials from the Campus Activities and Involvement Center (CAIC). Spray paint is permitted on the rocks; however, protective measures such as tarps or cardboard should be used to prevent damage to surrounding areas. In cases of inclement weather that prevent painting, the reserving group may request to reschedule within seven days, subject to availability.

UNCW students, faculty, staff, or departments/student organizations may reserve a Spirit Rock for the 24-hour period. In addition, each Spirit Rock may only be reserved 2 times in a seven-day period by the same student, staff member, or department/student organization. If available, each Spirit Rock can be reserved simultaneously.

If a subsequent 24-hour reservation is not made, the last reserved message will stay up until a new reservation is made. If a Spirit Rock is painted over during a reserved time period by an unapproved party, campus personnel will return the rock to a blank slate at their earliest convenience. If there is no reservation, the university may paint the spirit rock(s) with university messaging.

VI. Prohibitions and Violations of Policy

Per this Policy on Displays, no signs, banners, chalking, spirit rock messages, posters, or other temporary signage shall contain obscene or libelous material, nor should any material be posted or displayed that contains information in violation of any federal, state or local law or seeks unauthorized solicitation.

Violators of this Policy on Displays may be responsible for any clean-up and restoration costs. Violations that result in the defacement of public property may be criminally charged pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 14-132(a)(2), and/or via the *Code of Student Life*.

Any member of the University community found in violation of this Policy on Displays may be subject to disciplinary action, depending on the nature and severity of the violation and in accordance with established procedures, including but not limited to loss of Spirit Rock reservation privileges.