

TITLE: CAMPUS FREE EXPRESSION

EFFECTIVE: Fall 2018

LAST REVISION: November

Policy No: 2.010.0

Introduction

SOWELA Technical Community College (SOWELA) deems the free and open inquiry into all matters fundamental to the mission of higher education and is committed to the preservation of the lawful, free expression of ideas at all of its campuses, subject only to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions. All campuses or locations of SOWELA shall allow and protect non-commercial expressive activities by students, administrators, faculty members, staff members, and invited guests in accordance with all applicable laws and this policy.

Policy Statement

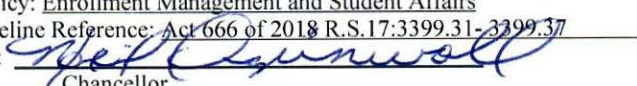
In accordance with Act 666 of the 2018 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, codified at R.S. 17:3399.31 through 3399.37 (“Louisiana Campus Free Expression Law”), SOWELA hereby adopts this policy on Campus Free Expression (“Policy”). This Policy applies to all campuses/locations under the management of SOWELA. For the purposes of this Policy, the definition of key terms and other mandatory provisions shall remain consistent with those in Act 666 of 2018, codified at R.S. 17:3399:31 through 3399.37. SOWELA will amend this policy to reflect any subsequent changes to these statutes. In cases of any inconsistency, the statutory provisions shall supersede any such inconsistent provision in this policy.

In accordance with Louisiana Revised Statutes 17:3399.31 through 3399.37, relative to free expression on college campuses, SOWELA will uphold the following provisions:

1. SOWELA will strive to ensure the fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression, allowing for all forms of expression which are protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and Article I, Section 7, of the Constitution of Louisiana.
2. It is not the proper role of SOWELA to shield individuals from speech protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution of Louisiana, and other applicable laws, including, without limitation, ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.
3. Students and faculty have the freedom to discuss any topic that presents itself, as provided under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution of Louisiana and other applicable laws within the limits on time, place, and manner of expression.

Source of Policy: Enrollment Management and Student Affairs

LCTCS Guideline Reference: Act 666 of 2018 R.S.17:3399.31-3399.37

Approved by: 
Chancellor

LCTCS Policy Reference: #2.018

Related Policy: N/A

Date: 11-8-18

4. Any limitations on time, place, and manner shall be those that are necessary to achieve a significant institutional interest only, and that provide ample alternative means of expression. All expressive activities, protests, or demonstrations must be held during normal working hours of the College. Such activities are not permitted when the College is closed.
5. Students and faculty may assemble and engage in spontaneous and contemporaneous expressive activity as long as such activity is not unlawful and does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the institution.
6. Any person lawfully present on a campus may protest or demonstrate there.
7. Protests and demonstrations that infringe upon the constitutional rights of others to engage in or listen to expressive activity by creating a substantial and material disruption to the functioning of the institution or to someone's expressive activity shall not be permitted.
8. The public areas of all campuses/locations of SOWELA are traditional public forums that are open on the same terms to any speaker. Public areas are outdoor areas of the College and are considered traditional public forums and are open to expressive activities. These public areas include grassy areas, walkways, or other similar common areas, so long as the forum or activity does not reduce or obstruct designated pedestrian passageways. This does not include areas where access is restricted including but not limited to classrooms, faculty and staff offices, administrative offices, service area offices, Library, Student Success Center, or any areas where students are engaging in learning activities, or faculty, staff, and administration are performing their official duties.
9. The policy supersedes and nullifies any provision in the policies and regulations of SOWELA that restricts speech on campus and that any such provision is therefore inconsistent with this policy on free expression.

Publication and Dissemination

SOWELA'S policy on campus free expression will be made public in the Colleges Catalog/handbook, on its website, and through student orientation programs. They will be incorporated in the materials, programs, and procedures provided to all employees and students. Students who feel aggrieved by a violation of this policy should complete the student grievance form online at www.sowela.edu or with the Director of Student Support Services. Faculty or staff who feel aggrieved by a violation of this policy should contact the Director of Human Resources.

Compliance

Failure to comply with any applicable laws and regulations, including those listed above, shall constitute a failure to comply with this policy. SOWELA shall make all due diligence efforts to comply with applicable laws and regulations, including those listed above.