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Procedure Statement

Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M - Texarkana) focuses on the higher education needs of its students. Priority for facility use at the university will be primarily for functions consistent with the mission of the institution. Use of university facilities by recognized university groups, or organizations outside of the classroom setting may be granted, with no bias towards the content of the use, with accordance with university rules and procedures, Texas A&M University System policies or regulations, and other state of Texas requirements.

Reason for Procedure

This procedure sets consistent standards and requirements for the use of A&M-Texarkana facilities by members of recognized university groups or organizations.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 Traditional Public Forums – This includes the University’s public streets, sidewalks, parks, and similar common areas. These areas are generally available for expressive activity, planned or spontaneous, for the individual or small groups (generally where a crowd of 25 or less will be present, and/or where an event is not promoted in advance, and/or when an event is not sponsored by a student organization) at any time without the need for reservation, or prior approval. (Obstructing or impeding the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic is prohibited).
- 1.2 Designated Public Forums – This includes other parts of campus that may become temporarily available for expressive activity as designated by the university. These temporary locations, while in existence, will be treated similar to public streets, sidewalks, and parks in terms of access and availability for expressive activity. (Obstructing or impeding the flow of vehicular or pedestrian traffic is prohibited).
- 1.3 Limited Public Forums – Will have limited open access for public expression, or they may be limited to particular groups or to particular topics. Creation of, and access to limited public forums for Student publications, may be requested through the Office of Student Life.

- 1.4 Political Activities - As a state institution of higher education, A&M - Texarkana is required to remain neutral in partisan political activities and will adhere to all requirements contained within [University Rule 07.03.01.H1 Political Campaign Events and Partisan Political Activities on University Property](#).
- 1.5 Free Speech - Faculty, staff, students, and visitors enjoy all constitutional rights and privileges concerning freedom of speech and participation in political events. However, on the A&M - Texarkana campus, free speech activities and space usage are subject to safety restrictions and may not be disruptive to instructional and academic activities. In the case an event is expecting a crowd of 25 or more, the group is required to reserve space.
- 1.6 Rescheduling - Once events are scheduled, they are generally not rescheduled or moved unless there are extenuating circumstances. A&M - Texarkana reserves the right to move any function to another facility or to reschedule a function.
- 1.7 Events Open to Public - Refers to those events where there is a reasonable assumption that people not affiliated with the university will attend. University events open to the public require notification of the event details by submission of the Facilities Request Form to the Contracts Office
- 1.8 Non-University Group – a group or organization, that may include some members or participants who are university personnel, alumni or students, but the university does not have control over their activities, nor do they exist for the primary purpose of supporting the university’s mission. Examples include but are not limited to individuals, for profit groups, non-profit groups including professional organizations or societies, governmental organizations, other universities, and political groups.
- 1.9 University Student Group – a group or organization that the university has some control over their activities and that exist for the purpose of supporting the university’s mission. Examples include, but are not limited to, recognized student organizations, recognized affiliate groups such as Alumni Association or other groups that function to support the university, and educational initiatives not specifically associated with a specific educational course.

2. USE OF UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

- 2.1 All university physical spaces, including buildings, grounds, and parking areas will be used for purposes for which they were designed. In those cases where a request is outside the original design purpose, the university president may allow an exception.
- 2.2 For most facilities, priority for scheduling will first accommodate all academic functions. Other uses of facilities or physical space must not interfere with academic activities.
- 2.3 If a classroom is requested, the current classroom setup cannot be changed. Furniture from the classrooms cannot be removed from the classrooms during the academic school year.

- 2.4 Service animals, as defined under applicable law, are allowed in the facilities and on grounds of the campus. All other animals are prohibited unless part of an approved university program or activity.
- 2.5 Destruction, damage, unauthorized possession or misuse of university property (including keys, library materials, and laboratory supplies) is prohibited. Costs will be recovered from the party using the facility in the event of damage.

3. STUDENT ORGANIZATIONAL EVENTS

- 3.1 All scheduling of University Facilities for use by Student Organizations must be handled through the Office of Student Life. No other university employees, including the Organization's sponsor, may reserve spaces on behalf of a Student Organization.
- 3.2 The university will not discriminate when making facilities available for use to Student Organizations. See University Rule 08.02.01.H1.01 *Expressive Activity on Campus*.
- 3.3 Facilities use charges are not typically assessed for use of facilities by Student Organizations. However, organizations may be charge the typical fees for janitorial support, IT support, equipment use or other accommodations or tangible expenses associated with the use of the space.
- 3.4 Student Organizations may engage in political activity but must ensure that any use of university facilities for political activity is in accordance with [University Rule 07.03.01.H1 *Political Campaign Events and Partisan Political Activities on University Property*](#).

4. EMPLOYEE USE OF UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

- 4.1 Employees may reserve university facilities for use in activities that further the university mission only.
 - 4.1.1 Employees may NOT reserve facilities on behalf of Student Organizations, even those that they sponsor. All reservations for Student Organizations must be arranged through Student Life.
 - 4.1.2 Employees may NOT reserve facilities on behalf of Non-University organizations. The employee's membership and participation of such group alone is not enough to construe the use on behalf of the university mission. All reservations on behalf of Non-University organizations must be arranged through the Contracts Office. See [University Rule 41.99.99.H0.01. *Rental of University Facilities by Non-University Groups*](#)
- 4.2 The university will not discriminate when making facilities available for use to Employees for activities that further the university mission. See University Rule 08.02.01.H1 *Expressive Activity on Campus*. Faculty are free to present programs and invite speakers without bias in accordance with [University Procedure 12.01.99.H1.01 *Academic Freedom and Responsibility*](#).

- 4.3 Any employee seeking to use university facilities for candidates for political office or current political officeholders to speak on campus must adhere to [University Rule 07.03.01.H1 Political Campaign Events and Partisan Political Activities on University Property](#).
- 4.4 Facilities use charges are not typically assessed for use of facilities by employee activities that further the university mission. However, fees may be charged the typical fees for set-up/tear-down, janitorial support, IT support, equipment use or other accommodations or tangible expenses associated with the use of the space.

5. AFTER HOURS/WEEKEND USE

- 5.1 Events that occur outside normal business hours Monday through Friday are considered after hours and weekends.
- 5.2 Whenever use of academic buildings is requested outside of regular operating hours, arrangements for additional services such as HVAC, custodial, University Police unlocking/locking building and rooms will be necessary.
- 5.3 There is no cost-recovery for these additional services for use of facilities for Student Organizations and Employee use for activities that advance university missions.
- 5.4 In order to provide good stewardship of university resources, after hour and weekend use of academic buildings may be limited. It may not be possible to honor a specific request.

6. EVENTS INVOLVING FOOD AND BEVERAGES USE

- 6.1 The University food contractor does not have exclusive rights in providing catering services. Any use of catering services by the contractor is a separately negotiated contract between the renter and the contractor. If an event includes food and beverage items, the appropriate custodial arrangements must be made through the Contracts Office.
- 6.2 Student Organizations may not serve alcohol when using university facilities.
- 6.3 If alcohol is to be served at an employee sponsored event, prior approval by the University President must be documented before the event and prior to the purchase of the alcohol, if using University funds.
 - 6.3.1 The event must have a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission licensed bartender and the Contracts Office must have a copy of their valid license on file before the event date.
 - 6.3.2 The event sponsor will be required to submit written procedures to prevent underage guests from being served alcohol.

7. SECURITY COSTS

The university may only require security costs (including a pre-event security deposit) to be paid by the sponsoring organization / employee when a proposed event or activity presents a specific, substantial, and objectively identifiable risk to the health and safety of the applicant, the University community or the public. In determining whether such costs shall be imposed, the university shall objectively consider, in consultation with the event sponsor, the following factors:

- The facility or outdoor space to be used
- The number of anticipated participants
- Any anticipated need for campus security
- Any necessary accommodations
- Maximum occupancy of the location
- Whether the event is open to the entire university community or restricted to guests of the sponsor
- Time of day the event will occur
- Whether the proposed event involves activity that poses an inherent risk of personal injury or property damage
- Whether alcoholic beverages will be served
- Duration of the event
- Presence of mechanical devices or vehicles at the event
- Whether sales or cash transactions are conducted on site.

In determining whether security costs shall be imposed, and the amount of any such costs, the university may not consider the content or viewpoint of the speech expressed or intended to be expressed by the event sponsor, speakers, guests, or attendees. Costs associated with or incurred as a result of anticipated or actual reactions to the event by non-participants shall not be imposed on the event sponsor.

The university shall notify the event sponsor of any decision to impose security costs for an event in writing. The notification must clearly state and explain the reasons that such costs have been imposed.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[University Rule 07.03.01.H1 *Political Campaign Events and Partisan Political Activities on University Property.*](#)

[University Procedure 12.01.99.H1.01 *Academic Freedom and Responsibility.*](#)

[University Rule 41.99.99.H0.01. *Rental of University Facilities by Non-University Groups*](#)

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