



Approving University Official(s): Provost, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Office(s): Provost, Student Affairs, Human Resources
Effective date: September 5, 2024
Next review date: August 2027

DISPLAY AND SOLICITATION POLICY

Policy Statement

The University is committed to open discourse, academic freedom, and the free expression of viewpoints and beliefs. This Policy addresses the parameters for expression through displays and/or solicitation on University property by members of the Northwestern community, as defined below, and third parties. For purposes of this Policy, the terms *display* and *solicitation* have the meanings stated in “Definitions” below.

Purpose

Northwestern welcomes expressive activity through displays. Displays allow members of the Northwestern community to express viewpoints, communicate with one another, and promote learning and engagement opportunities, among other purposes. Community members and third parties should remember that displays represent only the viewpoints and expressions of the individual or group that posted the display. Accordingly, a display at the University should not be interpreted to mean that the University endorses, supports, refutes, or disagrees with its subject matter or content.

In order to protect public safety and University property, allow the free movement of people and vehicles, and ensure the safe and effective operations of the University, this Policy establishes parameters for displays and solicitation across all three Northwestern campuses. In addition to this Policy, displays and solicitation must comply with all applicable University Policies and local policies, and with facility rules and regulations, including but not limited to fire codes and hours of operation. Displays and solicitation on Northwestern property must also adhere to all local, state, and federal laws and may not encourage violations of such laws.

Audience

All members of the Northwestern community as defined below and third parties.

Definitions

Community member: Members of the Northwestern community, including faculty, students, staff, and trainees.

Display: Any sign, flyer, installation, or other material, including but not limited to advertising or informational signs or posters, affixed to or placed on Northwestern's property. Other examples include banners; chalking; painting; leaflets/handbills; tabling on campus property; and tents, art installations, flags, and other 3D materials with a physical footprint on campus property. Displays also include projection of light onto a campus building and amplification of sound on campus property (e.g., using bullhorns and similar devices, loudspeakers, etc.).

Solicitation: Commercial solicitation includes selling or offering goods and services, distributing promotional materials (including but not limited to product samples), or engaging in any other conduct relating to any outside business interests or for-profit or personal economic benefit on Northwestern's property. Noncommercial solicitation includes requests for action on Northwestern's property including, but not limited to, petitioning, opinion polling, membership drives, proselytizing, political activity (see the [Policy on Use of University Facilities for Political Activities](#)), and charitable fundraising for the benefit of University-recognized groups and organizations or other nonprofit organizations.

Policy Implementation

I. *Display Types and Locations*

- A. *Flyers.* Flyers can be posted to bulletin boards made available by most academic and other campus buildings. Individuals and groups should consult with relevant schools, departments, or facilities offices for additional guidance and/or restrictions before adding a display to a board that is managed by a specific office.

Permitted outdoor locations for flyers are University-provided bulletin boards and kiosks. Flyers may not be affixed to other outdoor locations, including but not limited to trees, benches, fences, lampposts, exteriors of campus buildings, campus sidewalks, and roadways.

Every flyer must include the date on which it was posted and/or, if applicable, the date of an upcoming event being promoted.

- B. *Banners.* Banners to be attached or affixed to University property must be approved and consistent with rules for the specific building or space (e.g., academic department, Residential Services, etc.) or Northwestern University Facilities.

[Norris Event Management](#) facilitates reservation of banner space between Weber Arch and the Rock. Individuals and/or groups must obtain a reservation from Norris Event Management before displaying a banner at the Arch or trees near the Arch.

The banners hung on Weber Arch and affixed to the top of light poles on the Evanston and Chicago campuses are managed by the Office of Global Marketing and Communications. These fixtures are only for official use by University departments.

On the Chicago campus, banners hung on light poles must be approved through the [City of Chicago](#).

For other banner locations on campus, community members seeking to display a banner must consult with the administrators responsible for the individual location or facility.

- C. *Chalking*. Chalking is permitted on Evanston campus sidewalks that are not covered by any overhangs. Chalking on campus property other than the sidewalk is not permitted, including on building exteriors or other vertical surfaces and on horizontal surfaces covered by permanent structures such as covered walkways, tented entryways, and covered terraces.
- D. *Painting*. Painting any campus property—other than the Rock, the short wall around the Rock, and lakefront rocks— including any part of the sidewalks, trees, benches, and/or plaza around the Rock, is strictly prohibited. The Rock is an Outdoor Event Space. For more information on painting the Rock, contact [Norris Event Management](#)
- E. *Tabling*. All outdoor tabling activities on campus require a confirmed reservation through the [Outdoor Event Request Process](#). For spaces not included in this process, community members must consult with the administrators responsible for the location or facility and ensure they have documented approval available at the table. More information is available on the [Norris Events website](#).
- F. *Installations*. Any installation of a 3D display on University property must be reserved through the [Outdoor Event Request Process](#), whether the installation is meant for art, advertisement, viewpoint expression, demonstration, or another purpose. Outside of University-sponsored events, installation of tents is prohibited. One small camping tent at the Rock will continue to be permitted for guarding and painting it. In addition to reserving space through the [Outdoor Event Request Process](#), students and/or student groups must also provide advance notice to [Student Organizations and Activities](#), or the relevant Student Affairs office in Chicago, for any 3D display. Installations meant for demonstration must comply with the Demonstration Policy.
- G. *Light Projections*. The University owns and controls the lighting in and on its buildings and properties. Only authorized University officials are permitted to alter or project light onto University buildings or properties. Requests to alter or project lighting will not be considered.
- H. *Outdoor Sound Amplification*. The University prohibits sound amplification using any device including bullhorns, loudspeakers, and similar devices that would disrupt operations of the University, including but not limited to classes. Amplified sound is prohibited on weekdays before 5:00 pm at the Rock. At all other times, sound amplification on the Evanston campus requires a space reservation through the [Outdoor Event Request Process](#).

In some instances, sound permits may be required from the [City of Evanston](#). While the City of Evanston does not require a permit for bullhorns, their use must adhere to this and other University Policies and cannot disrupt University operations.

In Chicago, sound must comply with the Chicago Municipal Code.

- I. *Prohibited Outdoor Locations*. Displays are not allowed on Rebecca Crown Plaza, Technological Institute Plaza, or under the overhangs of any buildings, including but not limited to the Jacobs Center, the Henry Crown Sports Pavilion, any part of Weber Arch, and the west main and south ground entrances to Norris Center.

- J. *Unit Spaces*. Individual schools, units, and certain University facilities may have additional display policies that are more restrictive than the Policy set forth here, in which case the more restrictive display policy will apply. Individuals should consult with relevant schools, units, or facilities offices before adding a display in a space that may be under the control of a specific unit (e.g., classroom, residence hall, whiteboard/chalkboard, hallway, door).

II. *Content*

- A. *University Trademark*. All displays must comply with the [University's Trademark Licensing Policy](#).
- B. *Prohibited Content*. Display content that is deemed by the University to be in violation of University Policies, including [Use of University Facilities for Political Activities](#), [the Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Policy on Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct](#), is prohibited and may subject the group or individual to disciplinary action.

III. *Display Removal*

The University reserves the right to remove displays, including but not limited to between academic terms, in advance of major University events (e.g., Reunion, Commencement), and when they contain prohibited content and/or violate this and other University Policies. Securing a reservation for a display does not indicate that a display is compliant.

A Northwestern student organization, unit, or individual should remove their own displays in a timely fashion. The University may remove flyers after an event has passed and/or after a week from the date of posting. In addition, individuals whose displays damage University property may face disciplinary consequences, including restitution, to restore the property to its normal condition.

Northwestern community members may remove or cover a display under certain circumstances:

1. If an event being promoted has passed, then displays may be removed or covered.
2. If multiple displays for the same event, organization, or subject are in the same location, then some (but not all) may be removed or covered to make way for others.
3. If a display meets the conditions of unapproved solicitation (as discussed below), then displays may be removed or covered.

IV. *Third Parties and Solicitation*

- A. *Third Parties*. Northwestern University is a private institution and the University's property is private property. Persons or groups that are not community members as defined above have no right or privilege to post, engage in, or remove displays on University property as outlined in this Policy, unless they receive the proper sponsorship from a recognized student organization, campus unit, or University official. Violators may be reported to Northwestern University Police.
- B. *Solicitation*. Any community member or third party must obtain permission to solicit on campus. Permission must come from the appropriate unit officer or University official

responsible for the area or building where the solicitation occurs, as well as observe applicable solicitation policy for that building.

Notwithstanding anything in this Policy to the contrary, University employees may engage in protected activity under the National Labor Relations Act, except that no employee should: engage in solicitation of any kind during work time or engage in solicitation of any kind targeted at an employee during that employee's working time. Distribution of materials by employees must only be engaged in during non-working time and in non-working areas.

Commercial solicitation is prohibited at the Rock, door to door within University buildings, or in residence halls. Northwestern community members and third parties must comply with the [Policy on Use of University Facilities for Political Activities](#).

Violations

Any displays in violation of this Policy will be removed regardless of content. Concerns that a student organization display does not comply with this Policy should be brought to the attention of [Student Organizations and Activities](#) and the [Office of Community Standards](#). Violations of this Policy may result in disciplinary action against the individual or group responsible for the displays in question and could range from a warning or restitution to suspension, expulsion, or termination.

Concerns about the content of a display can also be reported to the [Bias Incident Response Team \(BIRT\)](#), [Behavioral Consultation Team \(BCT\)](#), or [EthicsPoint](#) hotline. Concerns that a group or individual's right to display an event advertisement or viewpoint has been violated can be reported to the [EthicsPoint](#) hotline.

Related Information

[Demonstration Policy](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

[Global Marketing and Communications](#)

[Northwestern Outdoor Event Request Portal](#)

[Staff Handbook](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Student Handbook](#)

[Student Organizations and Activities home page](#)

[Norris Event Management](#)

[Feinberg School of Medicine Signage and Flyer Policies](#)

[Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law Advertising Policies](#)

Contacts

The following individuals or offices can address questions regarding this Policy:

Required reservations for displays on the Evanston campus can be completed through the [Norris Event Planning Office](#) or via email at Norris-events@northwestern.edu.

For questions about banners hung on Weber Arch and affixed to the top of light poles on the Evanston and Chicago campuses, contact Global Marketing and Communications, at (847) 491-5001 or global-marketing@northwestern.edu.

For questions about use of Northwestern's name and trademarks, contact the Trademark Licensing Manager listed on the Auxiliary Services [Trademark Licensing](#) webpage.

For faculty issues: Associate Provost for Faculty, at (847) 491-8543 or assoc-prov-faculty@northwestern.edu.

For student issues: Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students, at (847) 491-8430 or dos@northwestern.edu.

For staff issues: Human Resources, at (847) 491-7507 or hrmis@northwestern.edu.

Chicago Campus

Feinberg School of Medicine Vice Dean for Education (12th floor Arthur J. Rubloff Building, 420 E. Superior St.), at (312) 503-9443 or dme@northwestern.edu.

Feinberg School of Medicine Office of Finance & Administration (12th floor Arthur J. Rubloff Building, 420 E. Superior St.), at FinanceandAdministration@northwestern.edu.

Pritzker School of Law Student Services (McCormick Hall, Rm. 166, 375 East Chicago Ave.), at (312) 503-0785 or law-student-services@northwestern.edu.

Pritzker School of Law Facilities Management (Levy Mayer, Rm. M 88, 375 East Chicago Ave.), at (312) 503-5753.

Kellogg School of Management Evening and Weekend MBA Program Office (Student Life, 340 E. Superior St.), at 312-503-8385 or eveningweekend@kellogg.northwestern.edu.

Kellogg School of Management Wieboldt Facilities (340 E. Superior St.), at (312) 503-0021 or facilities-chicago@kellogg.northwestern.edu.

History

The Display and Solicitation Policy was first published in September 2024.

Policy URL:

<https://policies.northwestern.edu/docs/display-and-solicitation.pdf>