



Information About University Policies, Investments, and Institutional Neutrality

Policy Information about Protests

Is sleeping in tents or camping overnight allowed on campus?

As discussed below, erecting tents and other structures may be permitted with appropriate advance reservations. However, UNC Charlotte will not approve requests to camp overnight on University property for non-University events due to safety concerns and to ensure compliance with the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code.

Where can protests take place on campus?

Almost all outdoor space on campus, including all of the quads, is considered to be a “public forum” and can be used for any kind of protected speech, including protests. Schools like UNC Charlotte are allowed to put reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on how that speech is expressed to ensure that there is no interference with University operations or safety concerns. These restrictions can be found in [University Policy 601.6, Scheduling University Facilities](#).

Do any protests require advance reservations?

Generally, protests do not require advance reservations unless they involve the restricted activities listed in University Policy 601.6. Those activities include (but are not limited to):

- Use of sound or light amplification
- The use of any structures (as that term is defined in University Policy 601.9, Sales, Solicitations, Distribution of Materials, and Campus Displays <https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-601.9>)
- The use of any signs larger than 3 feet by 4 feet
- Protests that are expected to bring more than 40 people from off campus
- Protests that are scheduled to take place when other major campus events are scheduled



Who can make advance reservations for protests?

Any person or group can make reservations for protests, but groups that are not affiliated with UNC Charlotte (e.g., are not registered student organizations) can only reserve space in the **West Quad** (the grassy area outside of Belk Gym) and **Belk Plaza** (the grassy area outside of Rowe near the April 30 memorial). Those reservations must normally be made ten days in advance with Conferences, Reservations and Events Services (CRES).

How is the current protest violating law and policy?

- The continuous and exclusive use of unreserved campus space is a violation of University Policy 601.6. It is also disorderly conduct under North Carolina General Statute 14-288.4, and a violation of University Policy 601.13, Interference with University Operations (<https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-601.13>). Staying in that space once directed to leave is considered criminal trespassing.
- The tents, fencing, and structures in the protest area are violations of University Policies 601.6 and 601.9. They are also violations of the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code.
- Defacing public property, including through driving stakes into the ground and tampering with statues and sprinkler systems, is considered disorderly conduct under North Carolina General Statute 14-132. It may also be considered vandalism and/or willful and wanton injury to real property.

For students, all of the above issues represent potentially serious violations of the Code of Student Responsibility (<https://legal.charlotte.edu/policies/up-406>), including but not limited to: (e) Disruption of Normal University Activities, (g) Failure to Comply with the reasonable directives of university officials, (n) Trespassing, (r) Violation of University Policies or Regulations and (p) Vandalism. Similarly, all faculty and staff agree to abide by UNC Charlotte policy as a condition of employment.

What other prohibited behaviors should protestors be mindful of?

Any actions that interfere with normal campus operations are prohibited. Those include (but are not limited to):

- The use of sound or light amplification



- Interference with activities that have been previously scheduled (the area outside of Cato and Fretwell in which the protest is currently occurring is reservable by affiliated groups, as is the quad between COED and CHHS)
- Noise or other activity that disrupts instructional activities, whether they take place inside or outside
- Noise or any other activity that disrupts people in campus classrooms and offices
- Impeding pedestrian or street traffic
- Driving or parking vehicles in non-designated areas (only authorized vehicles can drive onto interior portions of campus)
- Interfering with other permitted free speech activities, including counter protests that do not violate these same policies

If we are permitted to reserve space in the Belk Plaza or West Quad, can we erect structures?

Yes, but those structures need to be coordinated with CRES. There are specific rules related to tents and canopies mandated by the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code:

- All tents must be weighted securely in a fashion other than staking. That mechanism can be sandbags or discs, water barrels, or metal, concrete or other material that are specifically made to secure tents.
- Tents or canopies that exceed the following require a state permit:
 - Tents (with side walls) over 700 square feet
 - Canopy (without side walls) over 1,800 square feet
 - Any canopies that are placed side by side without a 20' break will be considered one structure.

Additionally, no group, whether affiliated or unaffiliated, is permitted to reserve space indefinitely. The reserved space would need to be vacated by the date established by CRES.

Investments

How are UNC Charlotte's Investments Managed?

UNC Charlotte's endowment investments are outsourced to UNC Management Company (UNCMC), which manages the endowment assets for UNC-Chapel Hill and



the majority of the other UNC institutions. We don't control or have visibility into UNCMC's underlying investment positions, but their annual report, which provides detailed information about their portfolio, can be downloaded at <https://uncmc.unc.edu/the-fund/>

Other helpful context can be found in this article (<https://www.qcnews.com/news/u-s/north-carolina/divesting-from-israel-not-a-simple-step-for-universities/>) or in the included PDF.

Institutional Neutrality

Can you provide more context to the provision in N.C. Senate Bill 195 (<https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2023/Bills/Senate/PDF/S195v4.pdf>) and what it means for universities, including UNC Charlotte, to maintain neutrality?

The bill implements a concept known as “institutional neutrality,” which requires the University—and University officials when speaking in their official capacities—to refrain from taking specific political stances on controversial issues.

How does this law affect an employee or student's ability to state their personal opinion on a topic or issue?

The law means that UNC Charlotte employees should refrain from making any statement that takes a position on a controversial issue on behalf of the University or through University social media accounts or the UNC Charlotte website.

However, the First Amendment protects the right of all students and employees to express their personal opinions. As has always been the case, when our faculty and staff express a personal opinion, they should make it clear they are speaking as citizens and not as representatives of UNC Charlotte, and take care that their speech doesn't compromise the neutrality, efficiency or integrity of the University or any University department or unit.



Faculty members are also entitled to academic freedom in the classroom when discussing issues related to their course, including controversial topics, but should be careful not to introduce controversial topics that are unrelated to the curriculum. Similarly, faculty members are entitled to academic freedom in their research, and research projects conducted by faculty members, like the archeological excavation at Mt. Zion, are not implicated by this law.

Because students rarely speak as official representatives of UNC Charlotte, the law should have little to no impact on our student body.

And, of course, all members of the University community should always strive to uphold UNC Charlotte's guiding commitments by ensuring what they say is accurate and shows appropriate respect for the opinions of others.

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