Use of Indoor Spaces

A. Scope and Overview

This policy establishes rules for the use of indoor spaces on the university’s campuses, including the Athens campus, regional campuses, centers, and extension campuses.

University indoor spaces are dedicated primarily for use by the university community for purposes consistent with the institution’s mission and related teaching, learning, studying, research, academic, extracurricular and student life, administrative, and other supporting activities. These are spaces where our community primarily learns, teaches, works, and lives, and this policy is meant to ensure that those core activities can take place productively and safely.

University indoor spaces may be used by the university community and the public in accordance with this policy.

Uses may be subject to additional rules for particular locations and/or during certain times, which are too numerous to cross-reference in this policy. For example, such rules may include those governing noise levels in Alden Library and other study spaces and safety-related use restrictions in laboratories and rooms housing sensitive equipment.

B. Management of Indoor Spaces

University indoor spaces are managed by different units depending on the facility. Those responsible for management of a facility may coordinate room and space reservations, determine reservation fees and charges, and establish specific rules, such as building operating hours. For a given facility, these responsibilities may be shared among the academic and business units residing in the facility, the corresponding office of the academic dean or regional campus dean, the registrar’s office, facilities management, culinary services, housing and residence life, and central administration. Several university policies address these responsibilities for certain facilities:

- Policy No. 01.024 (Classroom and laboratory scheduling);
- Policy No. 14.101 (Departmental Libraries: Guidelines and Requirements);
- Policy No. 19.057 (Animal Facilities Visitors);
- Policy No. 24.003 (Baker Center Reservations);
- Policy No. 24.012 (Use of Athletics Department-Controlled Facilities);
- Policy No. 24.020 (Use of Templeton-Blackburn Alumni Memorial Auditorium); and
- Policy No. 24.030 (Membership and Use Eligibility for Campus Recreation Facilities);
Questions regarding the appropriate contacts for reservations and management-related issues may be directed to the Office of University Planning and Space Management.

C. General Rules for Use of Indoor Spaces

In addition to facility-specific rules, the following rules govern use of indoor spaces on university campuses:

1. Priority of University-Related Uses

The University’s indoor spaces are to be used primarily for purposes related to the institution’s mission and related teaching, learning, studying, research, academic, extracurricular and student life, administrative, and other supporting activities.

Many indoor spaces are available for use by only appropriate university employees and students, invited guests and others having business in those spaces and are not available for general community or public reservation. These include ordinary office suites and internal conference rooms, laboratories and other research space, medical office waiting rooms, and residence halls.

2. Reservations

Users wishing to secure reserved use of an indoor space may contact the unit responsible for managing the corresponding facility.

A user who has reserved an indoor space is entitled to exclusive use of that space during the reservation time. Unscheduled or conflicting uses of space during a reservation time may not be permitted, and individuals whose use conflicts with a scheduled use may be required to leave that area.

Additional reservation-related requirements may apply, such as reservation fees.

3. Amplified Sound

Amplified sound devices such as microphones, speakers, and bullhorns may be used in indoor spaces only with the advance permission of the unit responsible for managing the facility.

4. Distribution and Posting of Literature

For rules regarding distribution and posting of literature, flyers and other written material within buildings, see the following policies:

- Policy No. 23.050 (Posting of Material for Advertisement or Notification);
- Policy No. 24.002 (Baker University Center Advertising and Announcements); and
- Policy No. 42.550 (Solicitation).
5. Demonstrations, Protests, and Similar Assemblies

a. Scope and Definition

This section addresses demonstrations, rallies, public speech-making, picketing, sit-ins, protests, and similar assemblies in indoor spaces.

These activities are defined as one or more persons engaging in public expression who are standing, sitting, or otherwise occupying and remaining in a space. For purposes of this section, these activities will be referred to collectively as “demonstrations.”

For example, demonstrations include both large gatherings and sit-ins and smaller groups – or even a single individual – making a speech, holding a sign, or otherwise engaging in public expression while occupying and remaining within an indoor space. Here, the act of occupying and remaining in a space is itself an expressive activity.

Other acts of public expression are not considered demonstrations for purposes of this section. For example, walking within a building, transient pauses (including for private conversation), or wearing clothing or symbols representing political or ideological views within spaces generally are not demonstrations as defined in this section. Such activities are permitted so long as they are not disruptive, as defined below.

b. Demonstrations as Protected Speech

Demonstrations are protected speech and may occur in indoor spaces, regardless whether they are spontaneous or an advance reservation has been made, when they:

(i) Occur in the Baker Center atrium spaces (discussed below), otherwise empty classrooms, and publicly-reserveable conference rooms and meeting rooms in Baker Center when, at the time of the activity, the participants are permitted to be present (e.g., during building hours); and

(ii) Do not conflict with an existing reservation for the space; and

(iii) Are not disruptive, as defined below.

These activities are appropriate in those spaces because they typically are designed and safe for assembly. For example, a demonstration in a room or reserveable area within the Baker Center, during operating hours, generally is permitted, so long as it is not disruptive and does not conflict with a reservation. Specifically, demonstrations are permitted within the reserveable rectangular
Baker Center atrium spaces located on the south end of the third, fourth, and fifth floors of the building. Spontaneous demonstrations in the Baker Center atrium spaces are available only to students, faculty, and employees of the university. Demonstrations in these atrium spaces by non-university affiliated individuals must be reserved.

Demonstrations also are permitted in indoor spaces by users who have reserved those spaces according to the building’s reservation procedure, so long as those demonstrations are not disruptive as defined below.

A demonstration in other types of indoor spaces—including hallways and building lobbies within academic and administrative buildings—is not permitted. This is because those spaces generally are not designed and safe for assembly. For example, demonstrations are not permitted within individual offices or office suites, or in lobbies or hallways of academic or administrative buildings, such as Chubb Hall, Cutler Hall, Wilson Hall, and the Baker Center rotunda (entryway on the north side of the fourth floor).

Expression by audience members at public events, including dissenting expression, is entirely permissible, provided it does not prevent the event from continuing (e.g., holding signs or wearing shirts expressing an alternate view at a public lecture is permissible, but exercising a “heckler’s veto” is not).

University officials should maintain protocols for responding to demonstrations and engaging constructively with participants when safe and appropriate, including students. These officials may include representatives of academic units, the Division of Student Affairs, and Event Services.

6. Disruption

Activities in indoor spaces that substantially and materially disrupt or interfere with university activities and operations are not permitted.

For example, prohibited activities may include blocking doors and hallways, sustained loud noise directly outside a classroom or office during business and class hours, and expression during a class that impedes course-related teaching, learning and discussion.

In general, disruption is defined as conduct that results in, or imminently threatens, the following:

- Substantial and material interference with the ability of students, faculty, and staff to engage in university activities and operations, including teaching, learning, studying, research, academic, extracurricular and student life, administrative, and other supporting activities;
• Substantial hindering or impeding of pedestrian traffic, including by blocking building doors, hallways, stairs, escalators, and lobbies; and

• Substantial and material interference with a scheduled event or activity conducted in university spaces, including expressive activities permitted under this policy.

In addition, disruption includes behavior that is not protected speech, including actual or imminent threat of violence, physical harm to individuals, or violation of an occupancy limit, building code requirement, or other statute, regulation, ordinance, or legal requirement, and damage to university or other personal property.

The determination whether an activity has become disruptive as defined above generally will be made among the academic or administrative manager responsible for the space, the Ohio University Police Department (“OUPD”), and other appropriate university officials depending on the facility and circumstances at issue. OUPD is legally obligated to make the final determination in resolving issues of public safety.

Determinations regarding disruption must be made without reference to the content of any expression associated with the activity.

7. Clean-Up and Damage Fees

Users of indoor spaces must take care not to cause damage to the university’s property or leave behind trash and other items. If this occurs, clean-up and damage fees and costs may be assessed on the responsible individuals and groups.

8. Food and Alcohol

All food uses by university departments, offices and student organizations must comply with relevant office of environmental health and safety regulations and with policies 47.010 and 47.015.

Use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited in outdoor university spaces, except in accordance with policy 24.001.

9. Commercial Use

Any proposed commercial activity (i) will be limited to Baker University Center and be consistent with policy 24.002 and 24.003; or (ii) will follow the rules set forth in policy 42.550.

10. Major Events

Users who intend to sponsor events on the Athens campus that are expected to draw 200 or more people are encouraged to review Policy 01.030 and to contact the University’s Major Events Committee to facilitate the event. “Major Events” typically include concerts, charity races, and other produced events.
D. Exceptions

In extraordinary circumstances, appropriate university leadership, including administrators responsible for management of particular facilities, may grant exceptions to any provisions of this policy. Such exceptions must not be based on the expressive content, message or viewpoints of a proposed activity.

E. University’s Official Use of Spaces

This policy does not apply to the university’s official use of its indoor spaces for university programs and events.

F. Enforcement

Any person who violates this policy may be subject to an order to leave the property or area, institutional discipline (for employees and students), and/or arrest and prosecution.