Public Speakers, Programs, & Events (Approved October 7, 2009; Amended August 17, 2011)

A. Purpose

As an academic institution committed to excellence and interested in both nurturing and challenging our students, faculty, staff, and visitors toward greater spiritual maturity, Oklahoma Christian University welcomes speakers, programs and events from across wide social, cultural, religious, and political spectra. In the spirit of a Christ-centered intellectual venue, the University seeks to offer events that inspire, inform, question, challenge, and transform audiences. Though the University's facilities are used by both on- and off-campus groups, this usage does not constitute an endorsement by the University of every speaker, program, or event on the campus.

All public programs and events, whether sponsored by the University or by others who have permission to use University facilities, must be conducted in a way that reflects the University's fervent desire to be a faithful, positive, and Christ-like witness to those about us and our community at large. We recognize that some speakers, programs and events, widely acclaimed and recognized as outstanding by a wider academic and professional community, may be unsuited for public performance or display at the University when they overtly contradict our stated Christian mission or reflect a non-Christian worldview.

This Policy contains three categories of guidelines:

A. Guidelines which apply to both University-sponsored events and events sponsored by others who use the University's services and facilities;

B. Guidelines which apply only to University-sponsored events; and

C. Guidelines which apply only to events sponsored by others who use the University's services or facilities.

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The presentation of ideas, materials, questions, and viewpoints must be done with integrity, exercise of due care in the selection of words and images, Christian charity, decorum, appropriateness, and respect for others and for the nature of this faith-based institution.

Non-Endorsement

The University does NOT ENDORSE every idea, image, speaker, event and program on the campus. In the interest of community service, fairness, and the search for truth, the University may allow third-party sponsored or
departmental-sponsored programs and activities with which it may not agree philosophically, politically, or religiously, but which must be consistent with this Policy and the principles of civil discourse in the University’s Statement of Academic Freedom and Responsibility.

**Program content**

The content must not be profane, pornographic, or treasonous; call for violence or the overthrow of governing authority in this nation; unduly inflammatory; or intended to undermine the Christian faith. Content of events must not include character attacks and assassinations, defamation of character, denigration of people or institutions, and other irrational or disrespectful comments – written, oral, or visual. Humor, satire, and storytelling that contain such material must be obvious as humor or intended to make an important point that does not violate the general intentions of this policy. If it is necessary for names to be mentioned, it should be done for identifying proponents or adherents, and not for the purpose of assigning motives.

Those approving speeches or activities on the campus and at University-sponsored events must be judicious in the use of controversial materials. The use of controversial materials must be done in a manner that will nurture faith even as it challenges thinking. Some matters are better discussed in private. Just because there is an academic purpose for a discussion or display does not alone mean it should be discussed or displayed publicly on the campus, particularly where there are more appropriate venues for the study and discussion of those materials. Events which contain elements that are potentially controversial or unduly provocative (as described below) must be approved in writing by University officials up to and including the vice president responsible for the sponsoring department, or by the President’s office if there is no sponsoring department.

The concepts of controversial or unduly provocative are matters of judgment on which reasonable people might disagree. The judgment to be made by the individual proposing an event or program is not whether he or she considers the matter controversial or unduly provocative, but whether a reasonable person should be aware that other reasonable people might consider a work or activity as controversial or unduly provocative in a Christian university environment. For example, most political discussions are certainly controversial, but many such discussions are commonplace and expected in a Christian university environment. However, if the discussion is about a lifestyle that many or most Christians from OC’s heritage would not consider consistent with Biblical principles, then it should be treated as
controversial or unduly provocative. Likewise, careful judgment should be exercised in the realm of works of art which are denigrating, sexually provocative, or appearing to illustrate or advance a cause contrary to Biblical principles. These few examples are not intended to be exhaustive nor definitive. Like Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart wrote in the obscenity case of *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964) hard-core pornography was hard to define, but that I know it when I see it.

University employees are on notice with this policy and are expected to know when something is controversial or unduly provocative when they see it or hear it, and thus to err on the side of safety and follow the requirements of this policy. Where either a third party or a department proposes to invite a speaker who (or conduct a program or event that) is perceived by University constituents to hold, or to represent an organization that holds a public position on a controversial issue, the President’s Advisory Council shall be asked to determine whether having the speaker, program, or event is in the best interests of the University.

For reasons previously stated in this policy, just because an event, program, or image is considered controversial or unduly provocative does not mean that it will be prohibited by this policy. The purposes and manner in which it is presented may contribute to learning and understanding consistent with the purposes of the University.

The University may provide a form to be used to obtain the signatures of the approving/disapproving officials in the event a potentially controversial or unduly provocative program is proposed.

**Venue**

Programs and events shall take place only in facilities that are appropriate for the program or event in question, as determined by the nature of the activity (e.g., staging requirements, anticipated audience). To reserve a venue, the sponsor must make arrangements with and comply with the requirements of the Events office.

**Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs**

The use or promotion of alcohol, tobacco products and illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on campus.

**Dress Code**

All dress or costuming should fall within the campus policy regarding modesty and appropriate dress.
**Religious Programs**

If the use is religious, it will not involve alter calls, sacraments, or other religious worship from non-affiliated churches (limited exceptions may be made in the case of disasters or other humanitarian crises.)

**Marketing**

All written and oral representations about the use will be clear that the University is not endorsing the program, any ideas espoused, or any candidates, unless endorsement is approved by appropriate senior officials of the University.

**Health and Safety**

The University reserves the right to cancel immediately any program or event if it is determined that damage to University facilities is or will likely result, or that activities are or may occur which endanger the health or safety of participants or others.

**Impact of Programs**

Programs and events may not interfere with the operation of the University or negatively impact the surrounding community.

**Legal Compliance**

All events must be conducted in a manner consistent with existing laws and University policies.

**Posters and Signs**

All posters and signs in University facilities or on University property are subject to the University’s policy regarding signage. That policy is available from the Office of Student Life.

**Public Address Systems**

No public address or amplifying system may be used outside without the approval of the Vice President of Operations.

**Cleanup**

Users are responsible for the cleanliness and order of all open spaces following their use. Users will be billed for cleanup they do not adequately and timely complete themselves.
**Political Activity**

The University recognizes that it is generally prohibited from participating in political activity. The University’s services and facilities may not be used in connection with political activity without the prior written approval of the President or the President’s delegate, who will often need sufficient time to consult with outside counsel regarding the permissibility of the proposed services or use of facilities. Failure to follow this policy and to refrain from using campus services or facilities in connection with political activity may compromise the University’s tax-exempt status under federal and/or state law.

**Dancing and Dance Programs**

Because there are so many different types of dance (ranging from the purely athletic and artistic to the highly sensual and debauchery), and because it is extremely difficult to monitor and control both costume and behavior in advance of or during the events, the University maintains a general prohibition against dancing and dance programs on campus and at sponsored events. The University does not consider that all such activities are bad, but as a practical matter does not want to be in the role of trying to predetermine whether such activities would or would not be acceptable. Therefore, the University’s services and facilities may not be used in connection with dancing or dance programs, including dance recitals, receptions, banquets, etc., regardless of the age of the participants. Limited exceptions may be allowed for cultural performances, theatrical choreography, etc. done in good taste and not offensive to the general mores of this campus community.

**C. Guidelines Which Apply Only to University-Sponsored Events**

For purposes of this Policy, a University-sponsored event is one sponsored or organized by:

A. A student group recognized by the University’s Office of Student Life; or
B. A group established by administrative officials, faculty or staff for purposes associated with the University’s mission.
C. A group other than those listed above whose specific event has been officially approved for University sponsorship by appropriate senior officials of the University.

**Limitations of the Policy**

This Policy specifically addresses only public speakers, programs and events. It does not address issues of speakers, programs or events within
the classroom setting. Policies and guidance regarding classroom setting are found in the Policy Manual as well as The OC Covenant and The OC Graduate.

Questions and issues regarding ‘academic freedom’ at the University shall be interpreted consistently with the University’s Statement of Academic Freedom and Responsibility. The University embraces deliberate and high standards of academic freedom and responsibility as outlined in its Statement of Academic Freedom and Responsibility. Therefore, subject to the limitations of that Statement and this Policy, it welcomes intellectual and respectful discourse and activities on nearly any subject as we seek to be a place where ideas are examined, challenged, and honed in the honest and humble search for truth. The University does not believe it or its leadership has found or understands all truth or that the University should be a place of indoctrination. Rather, it is affirmed that the truth has nothing to fear from inquiry.

**Exercise of Judgment**

In public programs and events, we will seek to respect the sensitivities of our core constituencies while maintaining the integrity of the work we are presenting or performing. At the same time, the University also recognizes the importance of allowing for diversity of public viewpoints, opposing ideas, and even questionable content when it can be intelligently used as a means of opening doors for conversations that ultimately create a more informed, more intellectual, and more faithful believer.

**Approval Process**

To insure the spirit of these guidelines is met, those who are proposing a program or event on the campus which might be considered controversial or unduly provocative in light of this Policy should (i) exercise sound judgment with respect to the speaker, event or program, (ii) seek to understand the nature of possible objections to a program or event and (iii) obtain approval from the appropriate Vice President before the invitation is extended or public announcements are made. For potentially controversial or unduly provocative events (as described in A.2 above) related to the University’s academic offerings, the written approval of the Department Chair, the appropriate Dean, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs must be obtained before the invitation is extended or public announcements are made.

If the potentially sensitive nature of the event is discovered after the invitation is issued and/or the public announcement is made, the Vice President, Dean and/or Department Chair shall be consulted promptly after
such discovery so that appropriate steps can be taken, which may include actions up to and including cancellation of the event.

D. Guidelines Which Apply Only to Events Sponsored by Others Who Use University Services or Facilities

Denial of Requests

Many of the decisions related to this Policy are judgment calls on which reasonable people might disagree. The University administration reserves the right to exercise its sole and unlimited discretion to deny or limit use or rental when the programs and/or activities are thought to be contrary to this Policy and/or the values of the institution, or when it is thought the potential harm to the University, members of the University community, visitors, or surrounding community may outweigh the good that would come from allowing the program or use.

Adequate Compensation

The University is mindful that allowing use of its facilities by individuals or groups for amounts that do not constitute adequate compensation or have a compensatory purpose may be viewed as a special arrangement which results in the increment of net earnings for the benefit of private individuals, or a violation of tax regulations related to political advocacy. Free use of University services or facilities requires the prior written approval of the President or the President’s delegate, who will often need sufficient time to consult with outside counsel regarding the permissibility of the proposed services or use of facilities. Failure to follow this policy and to refrain from allowing campus services or facilities to be used without adequate compensation may compromise the University's tax-exempt status under federal and/or state law.

Admissions Charges

University facilities and services may not be used for personal gain. Charging of admission or collection of money is generally not allowed unless fully disclosed and approved in writing by the University and the University is appropriately compensated.

Access

Access to campus roads and parking is subject to posted signs. Parking or driving on grass or sidewalks is not permitted. University grounds and facilities are generally open to the public, except as provided below:
Access to buildings or facilities is not allowed without authorization if the building or facility is locked or if signs indicate that the building or facility is closed for a specific event.

Without specific authorization, access is not permitted to:

- Dorms or apartments;
- Laboratories;
- Maintenance, utility and storage areas;
- Institutional food preparation areas;
- Private offices or work rooms;
- Studios, including art, radio and television studios;
- Theater program shops and facilities (e.g., costume shop, scene shop, lighting lofts, prop station, etc.)
- Athletic facilities; or
- Any other area indicating that access is restricted.

Existing furniture, furnishings, and equipment may not be moved or rearranged without specific authorization from the Director of Events.

**Insurance and Indemnification**

Any outside group using the University's facilities for a program or event must provide proof of at least $1 million in liability insurance and agree in writing to indemnify the University for any liability associated with the group's program or event. In limited circumstances, the University may accept adequate proof of financial responsibility in lieu of the liability insurance. All injuries, costs, and damages resulting from use of a facility shall be borne by the organization using the facility regardless of the cause or the person causing the injury, cost, or damage.

**Marketing**

When University services or facilities are made available to outside individuals or groups, the University's Marketing Department will be provided with all copy and images of messages that include the name of the University sufficiently in advance of the use so they can be changed if deemed necessary by the University. Unless waived in writing by the President or the President’s delegate, all publicity in connection with the event, program or speaker shall contain the following statement in at least 12 point type and in a visible location:

"An event of [sponsoring organization], held on the campus of, but not sponsored or endorsed by Oklahoma Christian University."
Event Limitations and Priorities

The University reserves the right to place restrictions on the time, place and manner or conduct of events. Further, the University reserves the right to move or terminate a scheduled event when necessary to meet University priorities. The University will avoid doing this other than where judged by the University administration to be necessary, and the University will provide an alternate venue or time, if possible, and will provide as much notice as possible of the change.

E. Violation of this Policy

Despite best intentions and precautions, problems and complaints may occur. It is understood, for example, there may be unanticipated behavior in connection with a public program or event.

Issues or concerns regarding compliance with this policy should be resolved at the appropriate level and in the spirit of intellectual discourse and open dialogue. If a University student, employee, alumnus, or other constituent or an attendee at programs or events hosted by the University has any concerns about whether the program or event complies with this Policy, he or she is encouraged to contact those responsible for hosting the program or event.

If the discussion with those responsible for hosting the program or event does not result in a peaceful, respectful and gentle conversation leading to a mutually acceptable solution, then the person having the concern shall follow the procedures outlined in the University’s Conflict Resolution Procedures.

Those who plan and host speakers, programs and events on campus may expect that this Policy and the University’s Conflict Resolution Procedures will be followed. Further, those who plan and host events on the campus may expect support from University administration, provided they have made reasonable efforts to follow the guidelines set forth in this Policy.

Forms required to be completed for Event Content, Venue Request, and Needs Request can be found on MyOC under University Services / Events or in the Office of Events.