

NCCC Board of Trustees Approved Policy

POLICY: Freedom of Expression and Assembly

DRAFTED: August 2024

ADOPTED: February 24, 2026

North Country Community College, sponsored by Essex County and Franklin County, is part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system. The establishment of policies is the responsibility of the North Country Community College Board of Trustees, while assisting in the application and compliance with those policies is the responsibility of the College administration. We maintain and affirm that the most equitable and fair policies are those that involve shared governance, and we are committed to engaging the College community in the development/modification of established policies wherever possible. This policy follows that process.

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The State University of New York (SUNY) respects and fully supports the rights of free speech guaranteed by the constitutions of the United States and the State of New York. SUNY values the free expression of ideas and supports individuals' right to assemble.

North Country Community College promulgates this policy to provide meaningful opportunities for members of our community to express their views and to ensure that the time, place, and manner of such expression does not interfere with the safety and security of our campus community or disrupt the regular operations of the campus.

II. SCOPE

This content-neutral policy is applicable to all North County Community College students.

III. POLICY

North County Community College students are guaranteed the rights of free inquiry and expression. Subject to applicable content-neutral policy, students are guaranteed the right to hold public meetings and engage in peaceful and orderly assemblies, including, but not limited to, protests, demonstrations, rallies, vigils, marches, and picketing, at and upon designated public areas of campus grounds.

North County Community College designates the following as public areas for the purpose of peaceful and orderly assemblies:

- Saranac Lake campus: the Sparks Athletic Field when athletic contests/practices are not taking place. An alternate location is the parking area between Clermont and Sparks on Dorchester Avenue.

- Malone campus: the grassy field between Ballard Mill and Reshetkina Hall parking lots.
- Ticonderoga campus: the grassy area west of the building facing downtown.

North County Community College will not interfere with orderly assemblies on the designated public areas of campus grounds, unless participants engage in any of the following:

1. Conduct that prevents the orderly administration of college business, classes, lectures, meetings, interviews, ceremonies, and other campus events or operations;
2. Conduct that obstructs the free movement of vehicles or of persons, including, but not limited to in any building or facility, inclusive of blocking hallways and doors;
3. Engage in conduct that could foreseeably cause injury or damage to persons or property;
4. Operation of audio amplification equipment in a manner that conflicts with normal College operations or that is deemed injurious to health and safety, or that is in violation of town, village, or state ordinances;
5. Constructing or erecting structures, whether or not they are anchored, inclusive of screens and/or objects requiring penetration of concrete or existing lawn areas, or camping on College grounds without authorization from the Superintendent for Facilities and Grounds, and indoor or outdoor encampment as is generally prohibited (see campus policies on tents/camping);
6. Possession and/or ignition of an open flame of any type, including, but not limited to, torches;
7. Assemblies lasting more than one day, duration not to exceed 12 hours in a one-day period, and all assemblies between the hours of 8:00 pm and 8:00 am are prohibited;
8. Activities that violate the provisions of SUNY Policy 3653, Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order; and
9. Activities that violate the provisions of any other applicable campus policy.

In addition, the following activities are strictly prohibited:

1. Entry into any private office of an administrative officer, member of the faculty, or staff member, or entry into any other college area that is not authorized, without prior permission;
2. Occupation of a building after it is normally closed; and
3. Obstruction of any roadways running through or adjoining the College's campus grounds.

All individuals participating in protests and demonstrations on College campus grounds are required to provide a form of College issued or government issued identification upon request from a College or law enforcement official.

North County Community College takes compliance with this policy very seriously. Students should expect that violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action under the College's Student Code of Conduct, up to and including interim suspension, suspension, and expulsion.

PROCEDURES

North County Community College respects and supports students' efforts to exercise their rights to free speech and assembly. The Office of Student Affairs is designated to provide the appropriate support for the successful implementation of these events. Following College procedure will ensure a safe and effective assembly activity. The College will make every effort to respond affirmatively to all requests to engage in assembly activity. However, content-neutral consideration must be given to the time, place, and manner of the assembly activity to ensure the health and safety of the participants and the noninterference with authorized College business, activities, or events.

Approved by President's Council: November 20, 2024

Approved by NCCC College Senate: December 13, 2024

Approved by the NCCC Board of Trustees: February 24, 2026