Petitions and Handbills

Original Implementation: July 1980
Last Revision: July 23, 2019

These rules shall govern the circulation and distribution of all petitions (a document embodying a formal written request made to an official person or organization) and handbills (a printed sheet that is distributed by hand), on university property.

1. Students, employees, and their approved organizations may circulate and distribute petitions and handbills on university property, except in academic buildings unless otherwise authorized by law.
2. Visitors, defined as any persons who are not presently enrolled as a student nor are presently employed by the university, may circulate and distribute petitions and handbills as part of an assembly or demonstration. (See policy 16.4, Assembly and Demonstrations.)
3. Students, employees, and their approved organizations shall require no previous approval to circulate or distribute petitions and handbills on university property so long as the individual or group(s) sponsoring the petitions or handbills is clearly identified in writing on the material itself.
4. All persons or organizations seeking to distribute a petition or handbill without identifying information must complete a registration form with the Office of Student Engagement and deposit a true and correct copy of the petition or handbill to be circulated or distributed.
5. Areas and times of circulation and/or distribution are as follows:
   a. Students, employees, and their approved organizations may circulate and distribute properly registered (if required by this policy) petitions and handbills on university property at any time and in any location, except in academic buildings unless otherwise authorized by law.
   b. Visitors with an approved grounds form may circulate and distribute handbills in common outdoor areas between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The submission and approval of the grounds form is detailed in university policy 16.4, Assemblies and Demonstrations.
   c. Handbills may not be placed on parked vehicles or any other stationary object, (i.e., table, bench, etc.) as a means of distribution.
6. Circulation and distribution by all parties must be conducted in compliance with these rules and university policy and must not:
   a. result in a breach of peace or violation of law;
   b. interfere with the free and unimpeded flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic; or
   c. materially and substantially disrupt the normal activities of the university.
7. The person or organization circulating or distribution these materials shall clean and remove any litter which results from this activity.
8. No person or organization may circulate or distribute a petition or handbill that:
a. violates the university’s policy on solicitation;
b. contains material that is obscene or libelous; or
c. advocates the deliberate violation of law.

For the purposes of this section "advocacy" means preparing the group addressed for imminent action and directing it to such action with the likelihood of producing that action, as opposed to the abstract espousal of the moral propriety of a course of action.

All decisions regarding prohibition of a petition or handbill based on content would follow the procedures regarding removal of signs outlined in the signs and exhibit policy, 16.24.

9. In addition to these rules, petitions and handbills to be circulated and distributed by students, faculty, and staff, and their approved organizations, in:
   a. residence halls must comply with the rules governing residence halls; and
   b. the Baker Pattillo Student Center must comply with the rules governing this building.

10. These rules do not apply to:
    a. the university, and its agents, servants, or employees, acting in the course and scope of their agency or employment; and
    b. the Stephen F. Austin State University Alumni Association and the Stephen F. Austin State University Foundation.

Cross Reference: U.S. Const. amend. I; Signs and Exhibits (16.24); Assembly and Demonstrations (16.4)

Responsible for Implementation: Vice President for University Affairs

Contact for Revision: Dean of Student Affairs

Forms: Registration Form, Student Affairs/Student Engagement

Board Committee Assignment: Building and Grounds