



Guidelines and Procedures for WSSU Board of Trustees Public Comment Session

The WSSU Board of Trustees encourages members of the university community and the general public to participate in regular public comment sessions provided by the Board. The Board will determine and publish in advance the dates for public comment sessions. The public comment session will occur once per academic calendar year at a regularly scheduled board meeting. To ensure fair access for a diversity of voices and to promote open dialogue on university issues, these sessions will follow longstanding guidelines for public meetings and democratic forums. All members of the public are welcome to attend, but speakers will need to register prior to the start of the meeting. This allows the Board to set aside appropriate time for public comment, and allows speakers adequate notice to prepare public remarks. Comment sessions may be limited due to overall time constraints, but every reasonable effort will be made to facilitate full discussion of university issues.

Guidelines for Public Comment Session:

Individuals who wish to speak during the public comment session must register in advance using the [web form](#) or by calling 336-750-2041 for assistance with sign up. Additional information can be found at: <https://www.wssu.edu/about/chancellors-office/chief-of-staff/board-of-trustees/index.html>. Speakers are asked to address topics relevant to Winston-Salem State University.

Each session will accommodate a maximum of 5 speakers during the 30 minute public comment session. Speakers will be scheduled in the order of sign-up on a first-come, first-served basis. If more than 5 speakers register, preference will be given to first-time speakers. Each speaker will be allocated a maximum of three (3) minutes. The public comment session will begin 15 minutes after the BOT meeting adjourns. The time remaining for each speaker's remarks will be clearly displayed by a timing device within the meeting room. A University staff member will indicate when a speaker's time has expired, and the next speaker will be invited to begin.

Only one speaker will be permitted to speak at a time and speakers may not combine or transfer their time allocations. Unused portions of individual allotted time may not be yielded to other speakers. Speakers must be physically present to address the board and will not be permitted by telephone or videoconferencing technology. Speakers will not be provided use of audio/visual presentation equipment during their remarks. However, they may submit printed copies of their remarks to the Board for future reference.

Decorum for Public Comment Session:

The board welcomes differing viewpoints, and meeting guidelines will be observed in order to ensure that speakers can share their comments. Speakers will be given a set period of time to address the Board, ensuring that all registered speakers are afforded equal access. Speakers may not threaten or defame anyone in the course of their remarks, nor engage in profane or vulgar speech. Robust presentation of issues is encouraged, but personal attacks will not be permitted. Freedom of speech is a cherished right, but intentional disruption of public business is not. Public comment sessions will respect that fundamental distinction.

Any attendee who fails to abide by these basic rules of public gatherings, by depriving others of the opportunity to speak, obstructing public business, or otherwise preventing a fair and orderly comment session, is subject to arrest and prosecution under North Carolina law. Reserved seating will be provided within the meeting room for up to 5 speakers. Meeting attendees other than selected speakers may occupy additional seating within the room as available. WSSU will allocate and reserve space for the news media to observe and record the public comment session. Attendees may not occupy seating that is reserved for Board members, staff, special meeting attendees, or members of the news media.