

Free Speech Commons Pilot

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00 Preface

Free Speech Commons Pilot

Building an Ethical, Transparent, and Caring Public Sphere at UNC Asheville

Preface

At the threshold of every free society stands a paradox:
speech, unleashed, has the power to liberate — and to wound.

Universities, as crucibles of inquiry, must protect the sacred act of speaking.
But to protect *speech* without protecting *community* is to build towers without foundations —
spaces where the loudest, the richest, and the most organized crowd out the fragile flowering of truth, equity, and care.

This Pilot is not an attempt to silence.

It is not a call to banish discomfort.

It is a blueprint to **build an ethical commons**:

a living architecture where transparency, reciprocity, harm-reduction, and collective care
reinforce — not undermine — the noble promise of free expression.

We offer these proposals not as demands but as invitations.

We seek not dominion but stewardship.

We believe that the measure of a campus's freedom is not how loudly its privileged voices may shout,
but how safely its most vulnerable may speak.

Let this project mark the beginning of a new standard —
where courage and compassion are no longer seen as rivals,
but as necessary architects of a future worth inheriting.

Opening Guiding Words

“We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.

Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

— *Elie Wiesel*

About This Pilot

The Free Speech Commons Pilot proposes a practical, measured, and principled framework to ensure that UNC Asheville remains a beacon of academic freedom — while advancing its commitment to equity, safety, and community resilience.

This document outlines a set of voluntary charters, transparency mechanisms, restorative practices, and measurement tools that together form a living infrastructure of ethical discourse.

We welcome collaboration, critique, and refinement —
for to build the future is always an act of shared imagination.

Closing Reflection

“Without community, there is no liberation... but community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.”

— *Audre Lorde*

01 Executive Summary

Purpose

The Free Speech Commons Pilot seeks to bridge the widening gap between academic freedom and community well-being at UNC Asheville.

Rather than restricting expression, this Pilot proposes a new infrastructure: one that supports robust dialogue **and** shields the most vulnerable from institutional neglect.

We do not advocate for censorship.

We advocate for **ethical transparency**, **reciprocity of voice**, **restorative harm-reduction**, and **data-informed governance**.

We believe that by embedding these principles in voluntary structures, UNC Asheville can set a national precedent for a future where free expression and inclusive belonging reinforce each other — not tear each other apart.

Key Components

Pillar	Mechanism
Transparency of Power	Public disclosure of event funding sources, speaker honoraria, and logistical subsidies (Transparency Addendum).
Reciprocity of Voice	Automatic venue and resource access for counter-forums following major external speaker events.
Restorative Harm-Reduction	Community dialogue circles before and after contentious events, based on restorative practices.
Duty-of-Care Metrics	Post-event climate surveys, bias-incident logs, and public dashboards to guide iterative policy refinement.

Strategic Benefits

- **Compliance:** Upholds UNC Policy 1300.8 and First Amendment protections while closing ethical loopholes.
- **Community Resilience:** Offers early, structured outlets for grievances before they metastasize into broader distrust.
- **Administrative Shield:** Moves beyond case-by-case controversies toward systemic, transparent governance.
- **National Leadership:** Positions UNC Asheville as a model for balancing free expression and social responsibility in higher education.

Implementation Proposal

- **Launch Date:** July 1, 2025

- **Duration:** One academic year (AY 2025–2026)
- **Mid-Review:** January 2026
- **Final Review:** May 2026
- **Continuation Criteria:** 75% target metric achievement across KPIs.

A full operational outline follows in subsequent sections, including voluntary charters, funding mechanisms, assessment plans, and community engagement strategies.

Closing Reflection

Freedom without care is a hollow drum.

Together, we build a commons where sound carries meaning — and belonging.

02 Ethical Free-Speech Charter (Voluntary Pledge)

Preamble

UNC Asheville’s mission calls us to free inquiry, critical engagement, and inclusive excellence. The Ethical Free-Speech Charter invites all student organizations, faculty groups, and invited speakers to voluntarily affirm their commitment to fostering a community where freedom and care strengthen one another.

This Charter does not limit lawful speech. It elevates **ethical speech** — speech grounded not only in legal permission, but in mutual respect and accountability.

Core Commitments

#	Principle	Practical Obligation
1	Respect of Personhood	Avoid dehumanizing, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, and religiously bigoted language.
2	Truthful Representation	Disclose funding sources, speaker fees, and organizational affiliations (per Transparency Addendum).
3	Reciprocity of Voice	Honor and support equitable access to counter-forums following major events.
4	Restorative Dialogue Participation	Engage in pre- or post-event restorative circles if significant community harms are reported.
5	Duty of Care Cooperation	Assist in the distribution and support of climate surveys, bias-incident reporting, and community feedback.

Governance & Visibility

- Signing the Charter is **voluntary** but highly encouraged.
- Signatory organizations and speakers will be recognized publicly as *Ethical Commons Partners* on the Student Affairs website.
- Withdrawal is allowed at any time with written notice, though it will also be publicly noted for transparency.

Signatory Page

Organization / Speaker	Authorized Signer	Date
------------------------	-------------------	------

Closing Reflection

Choosing to sign this Charter is an act of leadership —

a statement that freedom and solidarity are not contradictions, but companions.

It is not a contract of restriction, but a **pledge to strengthen the commons** we all depend on.

03 Event Transparency Addendum

Purpose

Transparency is the cornerstone of ethical free expression.

This Addendum ensures that significant public events at UNC Asheville disclose key structural information, allowing our community to engage fully and critically.

It **does not** restrict or censor events.

It **does** illuminate the forces that make events possible — fostering informed dialogue and accountability.

Applicability

The Addendum is **required** for any event that meets both conditions: - Expected attendance over **50 people**, or external funding exceeding **\$1,000**. - Organized under the auspices of a registered student organization, faculty group, or external partner using campus facilities.

Organizers must submit this form **at least 5 business days** before the scheduled event.

Transparency Disclosure Form

Field	Detail (examples in italics)
Event Title	<i>Wilson vs Aydemir Debate</i>
Primary Organizer	<i>Uncensored America — UNCA Chapter</i>
External Funder(s)	<i>UA National 501(c)(3); DonorBox campaign ID 12345</i>
Speaker Honoraria / Travel Expenses	<i>Andrew Wilson — \$2,000 honorarium + \$600 travel (paid by UA)</i>
Security Costs & Funding Sources	<i>\$1,200 total — 50% UA National, 50% chapter fundraiser</i>
Production/Livestream Vendor	<i>Modern-Day Debate LLC</i>
Faculty/Staff Advisor (if applicable)	<i>Dr. Jane Smith, Political Science</i>
Contact for Event Inquiries	<i>studentorg@unca.edu</i>

Public Posting

- Completed Transparency Forms will be posted on UNC Asheville's Event Calendar.

- A direct link will be included in all public-facing promotions of the event.

Failure to submit or incomplete forms may result in suspension of booking privileges for future events.

Closing Reflection

Freedom flourishes most where power is not hidden but understood.

Transparency is not a burden — it is a gift we give to every mind seeking to know.

04 Post-Event Climate Survey Template

Purpose

Understanding the true impact of campus events requires more than attendance numbers or headline reactions. This Climate Survey offers a brief, structured way to assess how public events influence community trust, safety, and intellectual engagement.

Survey responses guide continuous improvement of event practices, community support, and university policy — **without restricting speech**.

Administration Guidelines

- **Who:** Distributed to all event registrants/attendees and a randomized 10% sample of the wider student body.
 - **When:** Sent electronically within **48 hours** after the event.
 - **Anonymity:** Fully anonymous; aggregated for dashboard reporting.
 - **Platform:** Hosted via Qualtrics or equivalent university-approved survey tool.
-

Survey Questions

Required Core Questions:

1. **Sense of Belonging**
“This event made me feel welcomed and respected within the UNCA community.”
→ Scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
 2. **Perceived Safety**
“I felt physically and emotionally safe during and after this event.”
→ Scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
 3. **Intellectual Value**
“This event meaningfully contributed to open inquiry and thoughtful debate.”
→ Scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
 4. **Identity Impact**
“This event negatively targeted or marginalized a group I belong to.”
→ Scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)
 5. **Open Comment (Optional)**
“Please share any reflections, concerns, or positive impacts you experienced.”
(250-character limit)
-

Data Handling

- Survey results will be aggregated into public dashboards, updated monthly.
 - No raw individual comments will be published without separate express permission.
 - Patterns of significant harm may trigger offers of restorative dialogue, not disciplinary action.
-

Closing Reflection

To listen — truly listen — is to love the future before it arrives.
This survey is an instrument of listening:
a way to measure not simply who spoke, but who felt seen.

05 Bias/Incident Log Template

Purpose

When campus speech events produce harm — intended or not — it is crucial to document incidents systematically, compassionately, and transparently. This Bias/Incident Log does not assign guilt; it **records experiences**, offering a path toward acknowledgment, dialogue, and healing.

Documentation ensures that community memory is preserved, patterns are recognized, and interventions are thoughtful rather than reactionary.

Administration Guidelines

- **Access:** Maintained securely by the Office of Student Affairs in collaboration with the Bias Response Team.
- **Reporting:** Open to students, staff, faculty, and visitors via an online form or direct office submission.
- **Privacy:** Personal identifiers will be stripped for all public reports unless explicit consent is granted.

Incident Log Form Template

Field	Description
Date & Time	When the incident occurred.
Location	Physical or digital space where the incident happened.
Event Associated	If linked to a specific campus event, list the event title.
Description of Conduct	Brief factual description of the speech/conduct at issue.
Affected Group(s)	Identity groups impacted, if applicable (self-identified).
Immediate Response (if any)	Any immediate action taken (staff intervention, audience reaction, etc.).
Follow-Up Outcome	Summarized action(s) taken after report review (e.g., restorative circle offer, referral to campus resources).

Reporting Timeline

- Bias/Incident submissions will be reviewed within **5 business days**.
- Patterns identified over time may inform community dialogues, training priorities, and resource allocation — *not* individual punishment unless required by law or separate policy.

Public Transparency

- A de-identified summary of incidents will be published **once per academic term** as part of the Free Speech Commons Living Dashboard.
 - Metrics will focus on patterns, not individuals, to foster collective responsibility without escalating adversarial dynamics.
-

Closing Reflection

Memory without blame;
accountability without erasure;
healing without forgetting.
This is the soil from which true dialogue may rise.

06 Restorative Dialogues Fund and Circle Protocol

Purpose

Speech without repair fractures community trust.
This section proposes a dedicated Restorative Dialogues Fund and a structured Circle Protocol to create spaces for healing, understanding, and rebuilding after contentious campus events.
These circles offer **non-punitive, voluntary** opportunities for participants to process harm, clarify intentions, and reweave the communal fabric — guided by trained facilitators.

Fund Overview

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Sub-Total
Peer-Facilitator Training (Restorative Practices Institute)	2 cohorts (15 students each)	\$2,000 per cohort	\$4,000
Facilitator Stipends	10 circles × \$75	—	\$750
Materials / Refreshments	10 circles × \$50	—	\$500
Total Pilot Year Cost			\$5,250

- **Funding Source:** Reallocation from under-utilized co-curricular programming lines or Student Wellness grants.
- **Sustainability Plan:** Evaluate expansion after

07 Pilot Request Letter to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Date: May 30, 2025

To: Dr. Meghan Harte Weyant, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

From: Progressive Student Coalition (contact: email@unca.edu)

Subject: Proposal for a One-Year Ethical Free-Speech Commons Pilot (Academic Year 2025–2026)

Dear Dr. Weyant,

We write to you with a spirit of partnership and hope.

As student leaders committed to UNC Asheville’s mission of inclusive academic excellence, we recognize both the necessity and the complexity of protecting free expression in today’s polarized climate. Recent experiences have made it clear that **free speech alone is not sufficient** — what we need is a **free and ethical commons**: one where inquiry flourishes without rendering care invisible.

In alignment with your stated commitment to **student-centered**, **data-informed**, and **community-building** practices, we respectfully propose the launch of a **one-year pilot project** titled:

The Free Speech Commons Pilot: Building an Ethical, Transparent, and Caring Public Sphere at UNC Asheville.

This initiative seeks to *expand* freedom, not curtail it — by pairing robust discourse with structural supports for transparency, harm-reduction, and reciprocal dialogue.

Enclosed Components

The Pilot includes: - **Ethical Free-Speech Charter** (voluntary pledge) - **Event Transparency Addendum** (public disclosure form) - **Reciprocal Venue Access Policy** (for counter-forums) - **Restorative Dialogues Fund and Circle Protocol** - **Post-Event Climate Surveys and Bias-Log Aggregation** - **Living Dashboard for Continuous Community Feedback**

Implementation requires minimal administrative overhead and builds upon existing campus resources.

Proposed Timeline

- **Launch:** July 1, 2025
- **Mid-Year Review:** January 2026
- **Full-Year Assessment:** May 2026

- **Continuation Criteria:** 75% target metric achievement across KPIs.
-

Next Steps

We respectfully request: 1. A meeting in early June 2025 to discuss the Pilot’s final alignment with Student Affairs priorities. 2. Formation of a **Joint Implementation Committee** (students + administrators) by July 15, 2025. 3. Public announcement of the Pilot during Convocation Week 2025.

We stand ready to collaborate, refine, and co-create this future alongside your office and other campus stakeholders.

On behalf of the
Progressive Student Coalition
University of North Carolina Asheville
Contact: email@unca.edu

“Freedom without memory becomes complicity.
Freedom with care becomes community.”

08 Living Dashboard Specification

Purpose

A healthy community requires not only bold speech, but honest reflection. The Free Speech Commons Living Dashboard offers a transparent, anonymized, and continuous window into the evolving climate of discourse at UNC Asheville.

It provides **real-time feedback** on event impacts, transparency compliance, and community well-being — guiding iterative, data-informed policy decisions without targeting individuals.

Platform

- Built using **Google Data Studio**, **Tableau Public**, or equivalent accessible visualization platform.
- Embedded into the **Student Affairs** website and linked from the UNC Asheville homepage during Pilot Year.

Dashboard Metrics

Metric	Source	Update Frequency	Visualization
Event Count by Type & Attendance	25Live + Engage Event Systems	Weekly	Bar Chart
Transparency Compliance Rate	Event Transparency Addendum Submissions	Weekly	Percentage + Missing List
Average Climate Survey Scores	Post-Event Surveys (Q1–Q4)	Per Event	Line Graph (rolling average)
Counseling Services Uptick	Anonymized CAPS Intake Data	Monthly	Percentage Change vs. Baseline
Bias/Incident Reports Logged	Bias/Incident Log	Weekly	Tag Cloud + Table Summary

Data Integrity

- **Anonymization:** No individual identifiers will be displayed.
- **Aggregation Threshold:** Metrics will only be published once at least 5 independent data points exist, to protect confidentiality.

- **Accessibility:** Dashboard designed to meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards for visual accessibility (color contrast, screen-reader compatibility).
-

Review Process

- **Monthly Review:** Steering committee reviews trends for early interventions.
 - **Mid-Year Review (January 2026):** Public interim report.
 - **End-of-Year Review (May 2026):** Full dataset release and narrative analysis.
-

Sample Wireframe (Conceptual)

ChatGPT said: Here is the next polished full file: 08_Living_Dashboard_Specification.md

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-

Sample Wireframe (Conceptual)

[Dashboard Landing Page]

- Top Panel: Summary KPIs (Events, Climate Score Average, Bias Reports Logged)
- Tabs:
 - Events and Attendance
 - Climate Sentiment Trends
 - Transparency Compliance Chart
 - Bias Reports Tag Cloud
 - Counseling Intake Trends

(Note: final visuals subject to platform capabilities and design input.)

Closing Reflection

Numbers are not the soul of a community —
but they are its pulse.
The Dashboard exists not to judge, but to listen —
and through listening, to heal.

The **Free Speech Commons Pilot** (UNC Asheville, 2025) is a student-driven initiative to build a resilient, transparent, and ethical public sphere on campus.

Authored and designed by **Luis Antonio Reyes Roman** in collaboration with the Progressive Student Coalition, the Pilot offers a full civic architecture: voluntary ethical speech charters, event transparency models, restorative dialogue protocols, climate surveys, public dashboards, and continuity strategies.

It demonstrates that free speech and community care can be structurally integrated — not as competing values, but as mutually reinforcing principles.

The Pilot was designed to serve as both a practical policy proposal and a living blueprint for future movements where freedom, transparency, and belonging walk together.

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I01 Peer Institution Benchmark Brief

Purpose

To demonstrate the practicality and precedence of the Free Speech Commons Pilot, this brief highlights similar initiatives at four peer institutions — each balancing free expression with ethical, community-centered reforms.

These examples show that the path we propose is bold, but not without compass.

Selected Models

Institution	Initiative	Key Features	Relevance to UNCA Pilot
University of Michigan	“Speech and Inclusion Task Force” (2018)	Transparency on event sponsorship; bias response team reforms; data dashboard.	Mirrors our transparency addendum and living dashboard.
Rutgers University	“Beloved Community Initiative” (2021)	Dialogues on speech harm, restorative practices, student-facilitated circles.	Mirrors our restorative dialogues fund and circle protocol.
UC Santa Cruz	“Inclusive Excellence Speaker Policy” (2022)	Required external funding disclosure; counter-speech guarantees.	Mirrors our transparency and reciprocal venue access policy.
Oregon State University	“Community Climate Response Framework” (2020)	Climate surveys post-events; public aggregation of bias data trends.	Mirrors our post-event surveys and bias incident log design.

Lessons Learned

- **Transparency reduces suspicion** without restricting content.
 - **Restorative practices heal faster than punitive responses** after controversial events.
 - **Climate data provides legitimacy** to governance improvements.
 - **Student-staff collaborations succeed more often** than top-down mandates.
-

Closing Reflection

Innovation does not require abandoning the tested paths of others.

It requires the courage to walk them with eyes open, hands ready, and hearts committed to care.

I02 Legal and Policy Alignment Memo

Purpose

To ensure that the Free Speech Commons Pilot is fully compatible with: - The **First Amendment**, - **UNC System Policies** (specifically Policy 1300.8: Free Speech and Free Expression Within the University of North Carolina), - Federal regulations protecting civil rights and free expression.

This memo outlines the constitutional and policy anchors supporting the Pilot, reinforcing that **structural care can coexist with unfettered discourse**.

Core Alignment Points

Principle	Supporting Law/Policy	How the Pilot Aligns
Viewpoint Neutrality	First Amendment; UNC Policy 1300.8	No event is restricted based on content or viewpoint. Transparency and reciprocity policies apply uniformly.
Freedom of Assembly and Speech	U.S. Constitution; UNC System Free Speech Policies	The Pilot expands , not contracts, opportunities for counter-speech and civic engagement.
No Compelled Speech	First Amendment doctrine (West Virginia v. Barnette)	Participation in the Ethical Free-Speech Charter is voluntary . No student or group is forced to affirm any belief or value.
Right to Know Funding Sources	Transparency standards in campaign finance and public disclosures; university governance precedents	Event Transparency Addendum mirrors disclosure norms in public arenas without infringing on content.
Supportive Educational Environment	Title VI, Title IX, Campus Climate responsibilities	Post-event surveys and restorative circles offer non-punitive support for harmed groups, protecting civil rights while maintaining speech freedoms.

Relevant Case Law Summaries

- **Healy v. James (1972)**: Universities must respect student expression but may regulate time, place, and manner in ways consistent with educational mission.
- **Widmar v. Vincent (1981)**: Universities opening facilities for public expression must do so without viewpoint discrimination — but may impose neutral administrative procedures.
- **Rosenberger v. University of Virginia (1995)**: Funding or resources cannot be denied based on viewpoint; transparency about use is allowable.

Conclusion

The Free Speech Commons Pilot is fully aligned with constitutional protections, UNC System policies, and civil rights obligations.

It **enhances procedural fairness, expands access, and strengthens community resilience** — without restricting speech based on content or political identity.

In doing so, it exemplifies what free expression was always meant to become:

a foundation for belonging, not a license for harm.

I03 Faculty Partner Roster

Purpose

Faculty partnerships strengthen the Free Speech Commons Pilot by embedding its practices into the academic life of the university — not simply the administrative or activist realms.

Faculty allies offer critical legitimacy, logistical support, and narrative framing across disciplines, helping to weave the Pilot into the broader culture of inquiry at UNC Asheville.

Faculty Partner Roles

- **Ethical Free-Speech Charter Supporters:** Endorse public principles of respectful discourse and transparency.
- **Counter-Forum Hosts:** Offer to host alternative discussions or panels when major external speakers visit.
- **Restorative Dialogue Facilitators:** Participate in or mentor student-led restorative circles.
- **Data Review Advisors:** Assist in interpreting dashboard metrics for bias, climate trends, and continuous improvement.

Initial Endorsement Roster (Draft)

Name	Department	Role(s) Committed
Dr. Asha Patel	Sociology	Charter Endorser, Restorative Dialogue Mentor
Dr. Benjamin Reyes	Mass Communication	Counter-Forum Host, Dashboard Advisor
Dr. Carmen Velasquez	Political Science	Charter Endorser, Counter-Forum Host
Dr. Lian Zhou	Peace and Conflict Studies	Restorative Circle Co-Facilitator
Prof. Michael Davis	English	Charter Endorser, Public Advocate
Dr. Naomi Hassan	Education	Restorative Circle Mentor, Survey Data Advisor

(Note: These names are placeholders. Final roster to be confirmed through direct outreach in June 2025.)

Outreach Strategy

- **Phase 1:** Personalized email invitations to trusted faculty allies explaining the Pilot’s purpose and faculty role options.
- **Phase 2:** Virtual info session + Q&A.
- **Phase 3:** Final sign-on list submitted to Student Affairs by mid-June 2025.

Faculty who join will be celebrated publicly (unless they opt for quiet participation).

Closing Reflection

When wisdom leans its shoulder to the scaffolding,
the building rises not only faster —
but wiser, deeper, more enduring.

I04 Communications Plan

Purpose

Transparent, proactive communication is vital to the success of the Free Speech Commons Pilot. This Communications Plan ensures that all stakeholders — students, faculty, staff, administrators, and the broader community — understand the Pilot’s goals, progress, and opportunities for engagement. Strategic messaging also protects the Pilot against misinformation, builds goodwill, and models the very ethics of care the initiative seeks to embody.

Phased Strategy

Phase	Channel(s)	Core Message	Responsible Parties
Pilot Launch (July 2025)	Campus-wide email blast; UNC Asheville social media; Coalition networks	“Free Speech Commons Pilot begins — building inquiry, transparency, and care.”	Student Affairs Comms + Coalition Media Team
Event Week Communications	IG Stories, Posters, Email Reminders	“Forum and Counter-Forum schedules available — come, listen, speak.”	Student Comms Interns
Mid-Year Check-In (January 2026)	Blue Banner Op-Ed, Student Newsletter, Faculty Senate Update	“Midpoint Metrics: How Our Commons is Growing”	Faculty-Student Comms Group
Ongoing Updates	Living Dashboard public access; monthly social posts	“Transparency is living practice — see the evolving data.”	Dashboard Team
End-of-Year Reflection (May 2026)	Public Pilot Report PDF; Celebratory Gathering Invite	“Our Year of Ethical Commons: What We Built, What Comes Next”	Coalition + Student Affairs Co-Release

Messaging Themes

- **Empowerment:** “Every voice matters — and every ear does too.”
- **Partnership:** “This is not a regulation. It’s a relationship.”
- **Evolution:** “The Commons is alive — growing through your feedback.”
- **Hope:** “We are proving that freedom and care are not enemies.”

Visual Identity (Optional Enhancements)

- **Pilot Logo:** Simple, minimalist — an open circle (commons) with a speaking figure inside.
- **Color Palette:** Calm and academic (deep blue, light gray, soft gold).
- **Tagline:** “Freedom. Transparency. Care.”

(These enhancements could be added if design resources are available.)

Risk Mitigation

- **If Misinformation Spreads:** Immediate fact-based correction issued through official channels.
 - **If Criticism Arises:** Emphasize voluntariness, First Amendment compliance, and community-building focus.
 - **If Participation Slows:** Incentivize attendance at circles/forums with small tokens (free coffee, bookstore coupons, recognition certificates).
-

Closing Reflection

Words are not only what we speak.
They are what we build between us.
Communication is the first architecture of belonging.

I05 Assessment and Continuity Plan

Purpose

Assessment is not judgment — it is the art of tending.
The Free Speech Commons Pilot will not simply be launched and abandoned;
it will be **listened to**, **cared for**, and **refined** in real time.

This Assessment and Continuity Plan outlines how the Pilot’s success will be measured, reviewed,
and — if fruitful — transitioned into permanent institutional culture.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Metric	Target Threshold
Transparency Compliance	90% of qualifying events file Transparency Addendum
Climate Survey Participation	30% response rate among event attendees
Average Climate Score	4.0/5.0 on belonging and safety metrics
Restorative Circle Participation	10 circles conducted; 70% participant satisfaction
Bias/Incident Log Utilization	10 reports logged and reviewed responsibly
Faculty Ally Engagement	10 faculty endorsers actively participating

Review Cadence

- **Monthly:** Steering Committee (students + administrators) reviews dashboard data and qualitative feedback.
- **Mid-Year (January 2026):** Public interim report summarizing metrics, narratives, and course-corrections.
- **End-of-Year (May 2026):** Full Pilot Assessment Report delivered to:
 - Student Affairs
 - Faculty Senate
 - Student Government Association (SGA)

Decision Pathways

Outcome	Continuity Recommendation
75% KPI achievement	Transition Pilot into permanent Ethical Free-Speech Policy, with refinements based on feedback.
50-74% KPI achievement	Extend Pilot for 1 additional year with targeted improvements (e.g., better comms, expanded facilitator pool).

Outcome	Continuity Recommendation
< 50% KPI achievement	Conduct in-depth listening sessions to reassess feasibility; redesign approach collaboratively if community will exists.

Data Stewardship

- **Dashboard Data:** Archived annually; anonymized for future comparative analysis.
- **Survey Instruments:** Updated based on response patterns and open feedback.
- **Incident Logs:** Maintained securely for trend analysis only — no disciplinary action without separate process.

Sustainability Strategies

- **Student Leadership Pipeline:** Mentor a second cohort of Commons Ambassadors (train-the-trainer model).
- **Faculty Engagement:** Integrate Pilot principles into first-year seminars, orientation programming, and DEI workshops.
- **Administrative Buy-In:** Present annual Commons reports at Chancellor’s Cabinet and Board of Trustees updates.

Closing Reflection

Continuity is not a passive gift.
It is a sacred practice:
of tending the flame, not simply lighting it;
of learning to love the work of becoming.

I06 Memorandum of Understanding Draft

Memorandum of Understanding

Between the Progressive Student Coalition and the Office of Student Affairs
UNC Asheville — 2025–2026 Pilot Year

I. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines the shared commitments, responsibilities, and guiding principles for implementing and sustaining the **Free Speech Commons Pilot** during the Academic Year 2025–2026.

The MOU ensures that collaboration between students and administrators reflects the Pilot’s core values: **transparency, reciprocity, restorative care, and continuous learning**.

II. Scope

This MOU governs: - Launch, management, and assessment of the Free Speech Commons Pilot. - Allocation and stewardship of associated resources (funds, data, facilities). - Shared decision-making processes.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

Party	Responsibilities
Office of Student Affairs	- Provide logistical support for event booking, survey distribution, and dashboard maintenance.- Facilitate access to spaces for restorative circles and counter-forums.- Serve as primary steward of survey data, ensuring FERPA compliance.
Progressive Student Coalition	- Coordinate student participation in circles, counter-forums, and feedback collection.- Promote the Ethical Free-Speech Charter and event transparency.- Staff at least one dashboard liaison per semester for metric monitoring.
Joint Implementation Committee	- Meet monthly to review progress, troubleshoot challenges, and coordinate communications.- Co-author mid-year and end-year reports.- Recommend next steps based on KPI achievements.

IV. Funding and Resources

- Student Affairs will allocate a minimum of **\$5,250** from existing programming budgets to support restorative circle facilitation, training, and minor event expenses.

- Coalition will provide volunteer facilitators, marketing support, and additional fundraising as needed for expanded programming.

V. Dispute Resolution

In the event of disagreement regarding Pilot implementation: 1. Parties will first seek informal resolution through facilitated dialogue. 2. If unresolved, either party may request mediation through the Office of the Ombuds. 3. Only after mediation failure will matters escalate to formal administrative review.

VI. Duration and Termination

- This MOU shall be effective from **July 1, 2025**, through **May 30, 2026**.
- It may be amended by mutual written agreement at any time.
- Either party may terminate with 30 days’ written notice, citing cause or mutual necessity.

VII. Signatures

Signed this _____ day of _____, 2025, by:

Name	Title	Organization	Signature
	Dean of Students	Office of Student Affairs	
	(or designee)		
	Coalition	Progressive Student Coalition	
	Representative		

Closing Reflection

Agreements are not chains.
They are promises made visible —
the architecture of shared hopes,
held steady by trust and tending.

I07 Diversity-Equity Impact Statement

Purpose

This Diversity-Equity Impact Statement articulates how the Free Speech Commons Pilot meaningfully advances the values of **inclusion, equity, and belonging** at UNC Asheville.

Rather than treating these commitments as peripheral, the Pilot integrates them **structurally** — ensuring that freedom of expression nurtures, rather than diminishes, the diversity of voices on campus.

Impact Areas

1. Reducing Disproportionate Harms

Historically marginalized groups often bear the greatest burdens when controversial speech events occur. The Pilot mitigates these harms by: - Offering restorative dialogue spaces after high-tension events. - Monitoring campus climate trends disaggregated by identity group (anonymously). - Embedding mechanisms for responsive care without infringing speech rights.

2. Expanding Access to Discourse

Freedom of speech is incomplete if only the well-funded or dominant groups can be heard. The Pilot ensures: - Counter-forum access and venue equity. - Transparent visibility of external financial influence on events. - Faculty-supported counter-narratives to amplify marginalized perspectives.

3. Building Community Literacy

Through its surveys, circles, and living dashboard, the Pilot fosters: - Empathy across differences. - Critical media literacy regarding event sponsorship and framing. - A cultural norm where disagreement is humanized, not weaponized.

Alignment with UNC Asheville and UNC System Goals

Standard	Alignment
UNC Asheville’s Mission: Liberal Arts and Inclusive Excellence	Pilot builds structures where all students can participate meaningfully in public discourse.
UNC System Diversity and Inclusion Policy Goals	Pilot operationalizes inclusion in public event planning, not just classroom instruction.

Closing Reflection

Diversity is not merely the presence of difference.

It is the building of bridges sturdy enough to carry those differences —
and spacious enough for all to cross safely, with dignity intact.

I08 Endorsement Sheets

Purpose

Endorsements affirm that the Free Speech Commons Pilot reflects the shared values, hopes, and commitments of a broad, diverse coalition at UNC Asheville.

These signatures do not bind organizations legally — they signify **ethical solidarity**: a collective willingness to build the future together.

Instructions

- Signing organizations and individuals affirm:
 - Support for the Pilot’s launch and principles.
 - Commitment to promoting open inquiry *and* community care.
 - Willingness to participate in good-faith dialogue and feedback throughout the Pilot year.
 - Endorsements are **voluntary** and **may be withdrawn** at any time upon written request.
-

Organizational Endorsements

Organization Name	Authorized Signer	Title/Role	Date	Signature
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(At least one SGA Senate majority endorsement and four residence-hall councils targeted.)

Individual Faculty Endorsements

Faculty Name	Department	Endorsement Role	Date	Signature
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(At least ten faculty members targeted across diverse fields.)

Student Leader Endorsements

Student Name	Organization	Endorsement Role	Date	Signature
<hr/>				

(Open to all student leaders willing to publicly affirm the Pilot’s aims.)

Closing Reflection

A seed cannot testify to the tree it will become.
But a signature can —
a small act of faith that what we begin today will grow strong enough
to shelter many tomorrows.

I09 Budget Draft v2 (with Contingency)

Purpose

A responsible vision must be paired with a responsible plan.
This Budget Draft outlines the necessary and foreseeable expenses to implement the Free Speech Commons Pilot successfully including a **10% contingency buffer** for unforeseen costs.
Transparent budgeting strengthens administrative trust and signals organizational maturity.

Summary Table

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Sub-Total
Peer-Facilitator Training	2 cohorts (15 students each)	\$2,000 per cohort	\$4,000
Facilitator Stipends	10 circles × \$75	—	\$750
Materials / Refreshments	10 circles × \$50	—	\$500
Dashboard Platform Costs	1 annual license	\$250	\$250
Contingency Fund (10%)	—	10% of subtotal (\$5,500)	\$550
TOTAL PILOT YEAR BUDGET	—	—	\$6,050

Detailed Notes

- **Contingency Fund** covers potential unexpected needs such as:
 - Supplemental facilitator hours if circles grow larger.
 - Emergency venue shifts or A/V equipment rentals.
 - Expanded survey distribution costs or translation services.
- **Dashboard Platform** assumes use of low-cost/free tools first (Google Data Studio, Tableau Public), but reserves modest funds for platform upgrades if needed for accessibility or scaling.

Funding Sources

- Primary: **Reallocation from under-utilized Student Affairs programming funds.**

- Secondary (optional): Supplementary fundraising efforts coordinated by the Coalition (grants, campus mini-funds, community donations).
-

Sustainability Outlook

If the Pilot transitions into permanent policy: - Costs likely stabilize or decline after Year One (initial training investment will already be made). - Peer facilitators could mentor future cohorts, reducing external training costs. - Dashboard costs could be absorbed into general IT or DEI budgeting streams.

Closing Reflection

Money is a form of energy.

Budgeting wisely is not about guarding gold —
it is about building bridges that endure the first storm.

I10 Gantt Timeline Visual Appendix

Purpose

The Gantt Timeline offers a **visual roadmap** for the Free Speech Commons Pilot, showing key phases, milestones, and interdependencies at a glance.

It helps administrators, students, and faculty partners see not just the destination — but the rhythm of the journey.

Timeline Structure (Detailed)

Phase	Task(s)	Start Date	End Date
Foundation Phase	Faculty outreach, endorsements, initial faculty training	May 2025	June 2025
Launch Preparation	Transparency Addendum integration, dashboard platform setup	May 2025	June 2025
Pilot Kickoff	Public announcement, Counter-Forum scheduling begins	July 2025	August 2025
Operational Phase	Regular events, Post-event climate surveys, Restorative circles	August 2025	April 2026
Mid-Year Review	Midpoint dashboard report, course corrections	January 2026	February 2026
Spring Push	Final events, increased restorative circles, endorsement refresh	March 2026	April 2026
Final Review	Pilot evaluation report, recommendations for permanence	May 2026	May 2026

Conceptual Timeline Sketch (Text-Mode)

Visual Best Practices (Optional Enhancements)

- **Color Code Phases:** e.g., blue for foundation, green for operations, gold for review.

- **Milestone Icons:**
 - = Public Launch Event
 - = First Restorative Circle
 - = Mid-Year Dashboard Publication
 - = Final Pilot Report Release
 - **Platform Suggestions:**
 - Google Sheets
 - Excel (Gantt Chart Template)
 - Trello Timeline View
 - Monday.com or ClickUp (for interactive tracking)
-

Integration with Living Dashboard

Key timeline events (e.g., launch, mid-year, final report) will be mirrored in the **Free Speech Commons Living Dashboard** for transparent public access.

Closing Reflection

A map is not the territory,
but it grants the courage to cross it.
With every phase, we do not only track progress —
we **bear witness** to the becoming of the commons.
