



THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC

Responsible University Official:
Chief, University Police Department
Responsible Office: University
Police Department
Origination Date: Not Available

DEMONSTRATIONS POLICY

Policy Statement

The University supports the rights of individual students, student organizations, faculty, and staff to dissent and demonstrate, providing that such demonstrations do not disrupt normal campus operations, obstruct free access to University buildings, facilities or spaces, or infringe upon the rights of others.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

To promote the rights of free speech, freedom of assembly, and lawful protest on campus in a manner that respects the rights and safety of others and does not disrupt normal campus operations.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

Faculty, staff and students

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DEMONSTRATIONS POLICY

Policy/Procedures

I. Introduction

The University is committed to the protection of free speech, freedom of assembly, and the right of lawful protest on campus. The University does not condone behavior that violates freedoms of speech, assembly, or movement of individuals or organizations.

Responsible dissent, however, carries with it sensitivity for the rights of others. Sponsorship of demonstrations, rallies, or picketing in no way relieves the individuals or organizations sponsoring and engaging in such activities of the responsibility for their conduct. Individuals and organizations participating in such activities are accountable for compliance with the provisions of this policy, as well as other University conduct policies and codes.

This policy supplements and should be read in conjunction with the rights and responsibilities pertaining specifically to students' rights of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and lawful protest on campus as set forth in the [Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), the [Code of Student Conduct](#), and the [Residential Community Conduct Guidelines](#).

II. University Support

In support of this policy the University will take whatever steps it deems necessary or prudent:

- To protect the right of any individual or organization to demonstrate on campus and publicly proclaim any view, however unpopular, providing that it does not impact upon the safety of the University community or unreasonably interfere with the normal functions of the University.
- To protect the freedom of speech, assembly, and movement of any individual or group that is the object of the demonstration.

III. Guidelines

A. General:

Demonstrators will be prohibited from attempting to force the cancellation or interruption of any event sponsored by a University office or by a faculty or student organization or by any organization authorized to use University facilities, and from disrupting normal campus operations in violation of the [Disruption of University Functions Policy](#).

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Entrances and exits to University buildings, facilities or spaces must not be blocked, and people seeking entry or exit thereto must not be delayed, intimidated or threatened by demonstrators. The right-of-way on public streets and sidewalks also must be maintained.

When an invited speaker is the object of protest, demonstrations may occur outside the University building, facility or space where the lecture takes place, subject to the requirements above. Demonstrators who wish to enter a building must do so as members of the audience, and must give the speaker a respectful hearing. Signs, placards, or other paraphernalia associated with a demonstration will not be carried into University buildings, facilities, or spaces.

The safety and well-being of members of the campus community, individually and collectively, must be protected at all times. Therefore, the University maintains the right to define the time, place and manner in which activities occur on campus. For demonstrations at the Foggy Bottom or Mount Vernon campuses, [Marvin Center and University Conferences](#) will identify appropriate spaces for all demonstrations so that normal campus activities are not disrupted. For demonstrations at the Ashburn campus this decision will be made by the Office of the Chief Academic Operating Officer/Virginia Campus. It is expected that the University Police Department, and the Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management, will be consulted and involved in this process.

University property must be protected at all times. This is the responsibility of the University Police Department and other law enforcement or security agencies, who will take all necessary and appropriate steps to protect University property.

The use of public address systems and loudspeakers will not be permitted without prior approval from [Marvin Center and University Conferences](#) or the Office of the Chief Academic Operating Officer/Virginia Campus, as appropriate.

[Marvin Center and University Conferences](#) or the Office of the Chief Academic Operating Officer/Virginia Campus, as appropriate, reserve the right to require the presence of University Police officers, and/or the Metropolitan Police Department or the Loudoun County Sheriff's Department at any demonstration. In certain circumstances, searches or metal detectors may be used for the purposes of safety. The costs for these officers are to be paid by the organization holding the demonstration.

Persons who are not members of the University community may participate in demonstrations, rallies, or equivalent activities on University campuses only upon invitation by a bona fide student, faculty or staff member unless otherwise specified by the University. All non-students are obligated to the terms of this policy during participation in such activities. Since organizations and persons who are not part of the University community are not subject to University discipline procedures, failure to comply with this policy may result in action under terms of District of Columbia, Commonwealth of Virginia, and/or federal law, as appropriate. Further, members of the

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University community involved in these activities may be held responsible for the actions of individuals or groups who are not members of the University community under existing University disciplinary processes.

It is important for those individuals involved in any type of protest, be it spontaneous or organized, that not all speech is protected by the First Amendment. Any speech that has the effect or is designed to inflict harm or cause a breach of the peace; incite an individual or individuals to commit a crime; threats to do harm; or speech that causes a panic is not considered protected speech. While the interpretation of these factors may be subjective, the University and its representatives must err on the side of caution in order to reasonably protect the University community members and property.

B. Registration/Scheduling/Location

Students, registered student organizations, faculty, or staff who wish to schedule a demonstration, rally, or equivalent activity at the Foggy Bottom or Mount Vernon campuses must do so utilizing the reservation procedure set forth by the [Marvin Center and University Conferences](#). Scheduling and reservation requests may be made through the regular reservation procedure up to 24 hours in advance. Demonstrations will be permitted in **Kogan Plaza**, the **Mid-campus quad** or the University Yard unless the space has previously been reserved by another University department or organization. Demonstrations may be held at other locations on these campuses with special permission by [Marvin Center and University Conferences](#).

Scheduling and reservation requests for demonstrations, rallies or equivalent activities at the Ashburn campus must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Academic Operating Officer/Virginia Campus.

Students and student organizations that plan a demonstration must also follow the outlined procedures set forth by the [Office of Student Judicial Services](#).

The Metropolitan Police Department has jurisdiction over demonstrations in the form of parades on public streets, and pre-approval of such demonstrations in the District of Columbia must be secured from the Metropolitan Police Department. Application for a street closure permit should be made through the DC Government by the organization holding the demonstration. Instructions for obtaining street closure permits are available from the District of Columbia Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency website at www.dcema.dc.gov.

C. Special Guidelines for Unscheduled Demonstrations

It is the intent of this policy to promote the conduct all demonstrations on University campuses with minimal threat to the safety and security of persons or facilities, and with minimal disruption to educational activities, through proper planning and scheduling. Occasionally, events occur that result in immediate public outcry, and it is not the intent of this policy to limit University community members' rights to protest such events.

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However, it is inappropriate for events which have been planned to circumvent policies by claiming to be spontaneous. Existence of the following at any demonstration may constitute evidence of a demonstration having been planned:

- Signs and placards which have been previously produced
- Amplification equipment
- Security alerted to provide protection
- Media contacted to cover event

Unscheduled demonstrations, rallies, or equivalent activities may be held by recognized University organizations, faculty, full or part-time students, and current employees of the University in the areas defined above provided that the activity does not interfere with any functions for which that University facility or space has been reserved in advance.

All activities in these areas must be conducted so as to avoid interference with the regularly scheduled functions of that facility or space, and in compliance with the provisions set forth for demonstrations in this policy.

D. Political Activity

The University is prohibited from directly or indirectly engaging in any political campaign activity on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. Faculty and staff are free to engage in political activities in their individual capacities, but must take care that their conduct is in no way attributed to the University and that such personal activities do not occur on University time or with University resources (such as e-mail, phone, fax, copiers, etc.). Please see the University's [Political Activity Policy](#) for more information.

E. Enforcement

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action. The decision to impose a particular sanction and the procedures therefore will be guided by:

1. In the case of Students, the [Code of Student Conduct](#).
2. In the case of Faculty, the [Faculty Code](#).
3. In the case of Staff, provisions of the [Employee Handbook](#) and/or the [On-line Guide for Supervisors at GW](#), as appropriate, unless superseded by provisions of an applicable collective bargaining agreement.

Website Addresses for This Policy

[GW University Policies](#)

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Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Email Address
Demonstrations	Marvin Center and University Conferences	(202) 994-7470	mcmail@gwu.edu
	Office of the Chief Academic Operating Officer/VA Campus	(703) 726-8220	
	Student Judicial Services	(202) 994-6757	sjs@gwu.edu
	Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management	(202) 994-6600	
	University Police	(202) 994-6110	upd@upd.gwu.edu

Related Information

[Code of Student Conduct](#)
[Disruption of University Functions Policy](#)
[Guide to Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)
[Marvin Center and University Conferences](#)
[Office of Student Judicial Services](#)
[Political Activity Policy](#)
[Residential Community Conduct Guidelines](#)

Who Approved This Policy

Robert A. Chernak, Senior Vice President for Student and Academic Support Services
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History/Revision Dates

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