

Freedom of Inquiry and Expression Policy

A. Freedom of Inquiry and Expression

The University of Evansville considers freedom of inquiry and expression essential to a student's educational development. Accordingly, the University upholds the value of all students and employees engaging in discussion; exchanging thought and opinion; and speaking, writing, or publishing freely. This broad principle is cornerstone of education in a democracy. Further, the University endeavors to develop in all members of the campus community a realization that all citizens not only have the ability, but also the responsibility to inform themselves regarding various issues, to formulate views regarding these issues, and to express them in a public forum. However, the University may regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to prevent any unreasonable interference with the University's educational, teaching, research, outreach, or operational functions and the normal or scheduled uses of University property by the campus community. These regulations also serve to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

For Purposes of this Policy:

A demonstration is defined as: A public expression, meeting, or march in favor or against a topic, matter, decision, or position or expressing views on a local, national, global, or campus issue.

A display is defined as: A public showcase of materials or information (information tables, signs, flags, symbols, etc.) intended to raise awareness or express a particular view on a specific topic.

The Campus Community is defined as: currently enrolled students and employees of the University of Evansville

Time, Place, and Manner of Demonstrations and Displays

The University has designated a single location, the lawn south of Olmsted Administration Hall, also referred to as the Sesquicentennial Oval, as the assembly area for organized meetings, peaceful demonstrations, and displays for members of the Campus Community. The Clifford Circle, pathways leading through the Sesquicentennial Oval, or lawn within 20 feet of the designated area for parked vehicles along the Oval are not part of the designated assembly area. Use of the Sesquicentennial Oval for demonstrations and displays is not permitted during reading study days, finals week, or finals weekend, and may be limited during other times when demonstrations and displays could interfere with reasonable university functions.

No activity in the designated assembly area may disturb or disrupt the university's educational, teaching, research, outreach, or operational functions, or the normal or scheduled uses of University property by the Campus Community, or negatively impact public health, safety, or welfare. Such prohibited activities include, but are not limited to, disrupting classes, negatively impacting University operations, or interfering with, blocking, or impeding pedestrian or vehicular traffic. The use of loudspeakers, megaphones, or other sound amplification systems of any kind is not permitted.

The following guidelines also apply to demonstrations and displays and the use of the designated assembly area:

1. All activity in the designated assembly area is limited to scheduling between sun-up and sun-down.
2. All demonstrations must be peaceful and orderly.
3. All displays must be staffed at all times by those coordinating the activity and must be removed at the end of each day.
4. Only members of the Campus Community (students and employees) may organize or lead a demonstration in the designated assembly area.
5. Campus participants must conduct themselves respectfully and with civility at all times.
6. The content of any displays must reflect respect and civility.
7. Demonstrations and displays must respect and preserve University property, including returning the space to its original condition and removing all trash, props, etc.
8. No display or demonstration shall be advertised or promoted in such a way as to suggest that it is sponsored or endorsed by the University.
9. No individual may engage in physical abuse including but not limited to sexual assault, sex offenses, and other physical assault; threats of physical abuse or assault; threats of violence; or other conduct that threatens the health or safety of any person.
10. Weapons or objects intended to be used as weapons (i.e., sticks, clubs, etc.) are strictly forbidden.
11. All activity related to displays and demonstrations shall comply with all University policies.

Security for Demonstrations and Displays

Consistent with this policy, the University may respond to situations which may create a hostile environment and/or threaten the health, safety, and welfare of the Campus Community.

There are certain types of demonstrations and activities which historically have brought unrest to campus environments or the community or may lead to unrest to campus environments or the community. To minimize the risk to the Campus Community and to maintain an environment that supports the University's educational mission, the University may require security for the duration of the event.

Policy and Procedure on Disruption of University Activities or Threats to Public Health, Safety, or Welfare

Any individual or group participating in conduct which, in the reasonable judgment of the president of the University or the president's delegate(s), restrains free expression or freedom of others, threatens public health, safety, or welfare, or disturbs University operations will be ordered to discontinue such activities and to do so within a reasonable time. The following guidelines also will apply in those circumstances:

- a. If the order of the president of the University or the president's delegate(s) is followed, the University may review the case and make appropriate recommendations consistent with University policies.
- b. If this order is disregarded, the University may take any or all of the following steps as deemed necessary under the particular circumstances:
 - (1) University students or the officers of a University organization participating in such conduct would be subject to the appropriate policies and procedures for student conduct and institutional equity.
 - (2) University employees would be subject to the appropriate policies and procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook and Staff or Faculty Manuals.
 - (3) Appropriate legal actions, civil or criminal, including the seeking of a court injunction, may be initiated.
 - (4) The Office of Public Safety of the University or appropriate police authority may be called to respond.
 - (5) Any other remedy that the University deems prudent under the circumstances may be implemented.

In the event of an emergency, the University will take necessary actions to ensure the safety of individuals, uphold the law, protect property, maintain discipline on campus, and prevent any incidents from escalating into community-wide disturbances.