

# University Center, Student Programs & Events

## Policy and Procedures for Presentations Sponsored by Registered Student Organizations

### Preamble

Although the CUA president is charged by the trustees with ultimate responsibility for university policy with respect to presentations (films, speakers and performers invited to campus) sponsored by registered student organizations, it is important that he or she have the maximum benefit of meaningful faculty and student participation in those rare cases where the manner or subject matter of such a presentation is objected to by others in the university community. To achieve this goal, the following policy and procedures are hereby promulgated.

### Policy for Presentations and Balanced Programs

The Catholic University of America as a university is dedicated to the pursuit of truth wherever it can be found. Faculty and students enjoy the academic freedom essential for genuine scholarly study and research. Academic freedom applies to activities of faculty members in their writings, lecturing and teaching. Academic freedom applies to students in their access to all legitimate sources of information and in their participation in academic dialogue. Protection from governmental constraint on freedom of speech is ensured by the United States Constitution for all persons. This freedom to express oneself verbally, in writing, or by peaceful demonstration, even in significantly controversial matters, may be constrained in a private university by other values which are held to be equal to, greater than or prior to. The Catholic University of America, as a private institution, is not required to provide a forum for advocates whose values are counter to those of the university or the Roman Catholic Church. The university recognizes a distinction between objective explanation and advocacy in the presentation of issues. This means, therefore, that it may refuse permission to prospective speakers who in its judgment promote or advocate such counter values. This also means that balanced programs explaining positions on both sides of controversial societal, political, moral and/or ecclesiastical issues may be staged in the pursuit of a more complete educational experience and a greater understanding of the issues. Hence, in such matters, even in those in which the Roman Catholic Church has expressed clear and unambiguous official teaching, programs involving knowledgeable spokespersons representing opposing viewpoints may be considered to be appropriate within the university setting. Conversely, programs designed to promote action rather than understanding, while not necessarily inappropriate in themselves, are not clearly "educational" in a strict sense. The university refuses to allow advocacy programs judged by the administration to be inconsistent with the university's underlying value base and in so doing exercises its freedom as a private, value-based institution.

– Approved by Board of Trustees, June 5, 1990.

The university, operating within the framework of the foregoing, is committed to its various constituencies to avoid the following:

1. blasphemy: the act of expressing irreverence for God or those things held sacred;
2. pornography: explicit sex lacking any artistic merit, portrayed in a vulgar and exploitative manner;
3. calumny: false and malicious accusation;
4. advocacy: meaning the act of pleading for, supporting, inciting or recommending

active espousal of (as opposed to scholarly and abstract discourses), examining or questioning the legal, academic or moral propriety of the subject under discussion, constituting a clear and present danger of:

- a. the violent overthrow of the government of the United States or any political subdivision thereof;
- b. the destruction of, damage to, or the unlawful seizure or subversion of the university's buildings or other property;
- c. the disruption, impairment or interference with the university's regularly scheduled classes or other educational functions;
- d. coercion, threats, intimidations, defamation, physical harm or other invasions of the lawful rights of the members of the university community;
- e. any campus disorder of a violent nature;
- f. illegal acts constituting a deprivation of the civil or property rights of others.

#### Implementation and Enforcement

The Office of the University Center, Student Programs and Events (UCSPE) is routinely responsible for the implementation and enforcement of this policy. Any member of the university community should feel free to contact UCSPE with questions regarding the policy.

UCSPE will establish procedures for the implementation of the policy. Those procedures are published in the Student Organization Manual and on the UCSPE web site.

Advance approval must be obtained by all registered student organizations before program planning. It is suggested that student organizations solicit the input of students, staff and faculty before presenting a proposal to UCSPE. Student organizations should be aware of the intellectual and/or moral climate and the spirit of the times before planning a presentation. A controversial program during certain critical times may promote unnecessary or undesirable ill will from within and without the university community, with no resulting benefit to anyone.

With all presentations, it is understood that speakers, performers and/or films do not necessarily reflect the views and values of the university or of the Roman Catholic Church.

Approval for a presentation must be requested using the following procedures:

1. The on-line [Facility Request Worksheet](#) must be completed and submitted to UCSPE a minimum of twenty (20) working days in advance of the program date. Exceptions to this requirement will be considered by UCSPE on a limited basis.
2. The [Facility Request Worksheet](#) will request information UCSPE deems necessary for evaluating a program proposal.
3. UCSPE will review submitted worksheets to determine if the proposed program adheres to the Policy and Procedures for Presentations. This policy can be found in the Student Handbook, the Student Organization Manual or above. When deemed appropriate by the director or his or her designee, UCSPE will seek feedback from appropriate students, staff, faculty and administrators before making a determination.
4. UCSPE will provide the sponsoring student organization one of the following in writing once a determination is made:
  - a. notification that a program is approved and confirmation that

- the requested facility is reserved;
- b. notification that a program is approved conditionally; the notification will be accompanied by a written explanation of the required changes to the presentation and instructions for resubmitting the proposal;
- c. notification that the program is not approved (a detailed explanation for the decision will be included).

#### Program Confirmation and Advertising

Once a student organization is notified in writing that a presentation proposal has been approved and a facility reserved, that organization may invite the speaker(s) and/or performer(s), and/or secure the film that will be used in the presentation. The organization may also begin advertising the program using the customary vehicles for campus and community communication. When a program is approved, the program will be placed on the university calendar.

#### Challenges to Approved Programs

Once a program is advertised, any member of the university community may challenge that presentation. Challenges must be submitted to the director of UCSPE in writing no later than five (5) working days after a program is first advertised. The written challenge must include an explanation that includes references to the advertised program's alleged conflicts with the Policy and Procedures for Presentations. The director of UCSPE or his or her designee will notify the sponsoring organization in writing of the challenge.

The organization may continue to advertise the program and continue preparations unless and until the organization receives written notification from the director of UCSPE or his or her designee that the presentation is cancelled.

The director of UCSPE will address challenges to approved programs using the following procedures:

1. If he or she judges that substantive grounds exist for the challenge, he or she will meet with both parties and attempt to reach a mutually agreeable solution.
2. If a mutually agreeable solution is not reached, he or she may convene a program review board to hear the challenge to the approved program. A program review board may also be convened to review the Policy and Procedures for Presentations.
3. Both the sponsoring organization and challenging party will receive one of the following in writing once a decision has been made:
  - a. notification that a program is approved and confirmation that the requested facility is reserved;
  - b. notification that a program is approved conditionally; the notification will be accompanied by a written explanation of the required changes to the presentation and instructions for resubmitting the proposal;
  - c. notification that the program is not approved (a detailed explanation for the decision will be included).

[Return to Policy and Procedure page.](#)

**Last Revised** 15-Dec-03 03:16 PM.