

University Policies

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Freedom of Expression

POLICY TITLE:	Carnegie Mellon University Policy on Freedom of Expression
DATE OF ISSUANCE:	This Policy was originally adopted on March 3, 1988, as <i>Free Speech and Assembly and Controversial Speakers</i> . The most recent revision was approved by the President's Council on February 2, 2007. It is issued in the Faculty Handbook and Student Handbook.
ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENT/UNIT:	Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. Questions on Policy content should be directed to the vice president and dean, Office of Student Affairs, 412-268-2075 .
ABSTRACT:	Distribution of printed material, petitions for signature, speeches and other similar activities are permitted outside university buildings. No actions that harm individuals, damage/deface property, block access to buildings, or disrupt classes are permitted.

Note: *In early September, 2017, the university convened a group to review this Policy in light of recent events on campuses around the country. Pending the outcome of that formal review later this semester, and in order to enhance the environment for free expression at the university and ensure the safety of the community, the university is instituting an interim change to this Policy. Effective immediately, individuals and organizations who are not Carnegie Mellon students, faculty or staff who wish to distribute printed material, offer petitions for signature, make speeches or hold protests or demonstrations outside University buildings, are required to meet the same standards for outdoor events as are already applied to events inside campus buildings, including the requirements that events must have sponsorship from a member of the university community and must meet registration requirements. These interim changes will assure that events are planned thoughtfully, with the safety and security of members of our campus community being paramount concerns. Students, faculty, and staff will still enjoy normal use of outdoor campus spaces according to university policy. Questions should be directed to Gina Casalegno, Vice President for Student Affairs.*

Policy Statement

Carnegie Mellon University values the freedoms of speech, thought, expression and assembly - in themselves and as part of our core educational and intellectual mission. If individuals are to cherish freedom, they must experience it. The very concept of freedom assumes that people usually choose wisely from a range of available ideas and that the range and implications of ideas cannot be fully understood unless we hold vital our rights to know, to express, and to choose. The university must be a place where all ideas may be expressed freely and where no alternative is withheld from consideration. The only limits on these freedoms are those dictated by law and those necessary to protect the rights of other members of the University community and to ensure the normal functioning of the University.

Rights

On Carnegie Mellon's campus, anyone may distribute printed material, offer petitions for signature, make speeches, and hold protests or demonstrations outside university buildings. All such activities must be peaceful, avoiding acts or credible threats of violence and preserving the normal operation of the university. No event shall infringe upon the rights or privileges of anyone not in sympathy with it, and no one will be permitted to harm others, damage or deface property, block access to university buildings or disrupt classes. The enforcement of these conditions will not depend in any way on the message or sponsorship of the act or event. When guests are invited by a recognized campus organization, they may express their ideas not because they have a right to do so, but because members of the campus community have a right to hear, see, and experience diverse intellectual and creative inquiry. Defending that right is a fundamental obligation of the university. Controversy cannot be permitted to abridge the freedoms of speech, thought, expression or assembly. They are not matters of convenience, but of necessity.

Responsibilities

Freedom of expression must be at once fiercely guarded and genuinely embraced. Those who exercise it serve the Carnegie Mellon community by accepting the responsibilities attendant to free expression. University organizations that sponsor invited guests to campus are expected to uphold Carnegie Mellon's educational mission by planning carefully to create safe and thoughtful experiences for those involved. Hosts are responsible for the behavior of their guests and should exercise due care to ensure that all participants abide by relevant university policies.

Considerations for Planning Campus Events

Consistent with the rights and responsibilities outlined in the university's policy on Freedom of Expression, university hosts must follow all applicable policies related to space reservation, use, safety and security, keeping in mind the responsibility to have campus police present for any event with 100 or more persons in attendance.

Hosts should consider the items below as guidance in planning campus events, recognizing that not all of the items below will apply to all events:

1. A public declaration of the event, its purpose, the identification of sponsors and co-sponsors, and contact information for those seeking further information.
2. A plan for advertising the event, including advance notice to relevant members of the community who may wish to co-sponsor, protest, or host other events in

response to the planned activity.

3. Where appropriate, a clear and detailed contract with outside speakers, artists, or suppliers of services to ensure continuity of purpose and the ability of the host to reasonably control the event, consistent with the host's intent.
4. A plan for access to the event, including notifying the community of reserved seats, ticketing, queuing protocol, or other relevant details or restrictions well in advance of the activity.
5. A provision for security before, during, and after events, managed in coordination with the University Police. Specifically, non-university security personnel must have their allowable duties clearly delineated, in partnership with the University Police, with their role generally limited to personal security and not space management.
6. A plan for participant engagement at the event, such as through a question and answer session, if relevant, with a clear delineation of the planned ground rules for the event set out well in advance.
7. A strategy for hosting of additional events, discussions, or town meetings before or after a principal event to help provide a context in which the principal event may be best experienced.

The Office of Student Activities and the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs may assist in, or directly coordinate, some aspects of campus events, such as fostering discussions preceding or following an event, or accommodating an opposing view at an alternative event. It is assumed that the spirit of community, both among people and groups with opposing views, as well as between event sponsors and the Student Activities and Student Affairs staffs, will foster communication and cooperation in the planning of campus events. Whenever possible, Student Affairs will work in concert with University Police to notify occupants of buildings in advance of any potential disruption caused by such events.

Security Personnel Statement

At times, members of the campus community or their invited guests may have a legitimate basis for being accompanied by independent security personnel. It is incumbent upon the host of such an individual to ensure that the University Police approve in advance the presence and scope of involvement of any such security personnel.

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