

Auburn University Expression and Demonstration Policy

Responsible Office: Division of Student Affairs

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Auburn University recognizes and supports the university as a marketplace of ideas. The primary function of a university is to discover and disseminate knowledge by means of research and teaching. Accordingly, the university's spaces are dedicated primarily for use by the Auburn University community to further the institution's mission and related teaching, learning, studying, research, academic, extracurricular, student life, administrative, and other supporting activities.

By the same token, freedom of expression is vital to our community's shared pursuit of knowledge. Auburn University supports the right of students, employees, and visitors to speak in public and to engage in demonstrations and other expressive activities on the university campus according to the requirements and limitations contained in this policy and other applicable policies, including those found here: <http://www.auburn.edu/policies>.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

A. General Guidelines

Auburn University is committed to providing an educational environment that is conducive to the development of each individual. Auburn University students, employees, and invited guests of student organizations or employees may engage in demonstrations in generally accessible outdoor areas of the university campus without prior notice or reservation, subject to applicable laws and other university policies. Such demonstrations may not conflict with prior reservations, impede pedestrian and/or vehicular traffic, substantially disrupt or interfere with normal academic, administrative or student activities, or involve coercion. Events involving 100 or more people must be approved in advance as described in the [Campus Events Policy](#).

Demonstrations may not occur in indoor university spaces without prior permission.

B. Formal Forum Area: Open Air Forum

To facilitate robust debate and the free exchange of ideas, the university has established a high visibility area on campus as an "Open Air Forum," which may be used without prior notice or reservation for demonstrations by any individual or group. Visitors may engage in demonstrations only within an Open Air Forum and not elsewhere on campus, unless prior permission has been granted by the university. Such activities may not conflict with a prior reservation.

The Open Air Forums are located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Mell Street and Roosevelt Drive and at the northeast corner of the intersection of South Donahue Drive and the West Thach Concourse.

Although it is not necessary for a person using the designated Open Air Forum to obtain prior permission from the university, such persons are encouraged to contact the Student Center Reservations Office for scheduling purposes to minimize possible conflicts. That Office may be reached at: 334-844-1320 during the hours of 7:45 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. Monday-Friday.

C. Amplified Sound

Amplified sound devices, including microphones, speakers, and bullhorns, may not be used in connection with demonstrations anywhere on campus without prior permission from the university, as provided in the [Outdoor Amplified Sound Policy](#).

D. Guidelines for Organized Demonstrations

Freedom of expression for the university community includes organized demonstrations or events. At the same time, the university has long recognized that this right does not include the right to engage in conduct that disrupts the university's operations or endangers the safety of others. Accordingly, the university requires individuals or groups planning a large-scale event to contact the Student Center Reservations Office in advance of the activity as well as register the event in the Campus Event Planning System (<https://cws.auburn.edu/CEPS>). Large-scale events are events that include invited speakers, use of amplified sound, marches, parades and other events such as protests and demonstrations that are expected to attract 100 or more people. A representative of the Campus Events committee will work with the requesting person to either meet the request or find a suitable time and location.

The purpose of this policy is to promote and facilitate free expression while allowing the university to ensure such activities do not interfere with the university's mission and operations. The university may require the requesting party to provide a parade route, hire security, ensure egress to facilities, and take other steps to maintain the safety of campus. All participants must follow university policies as well as the guidelines outlined in Section II.A.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

September 2017

Revised March 2021

IV. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all students and employees of Auburn University and to campus visitors.

V. POLICY MANAGEMENT

Responsible Office: Division of Student Affairs

Responsible Executive: Senior Vice President for Student Affairs

Responsible Officer: Director of Student Conduct for activities involving Auburn University students. Director of Student Center for activities involving non-Auburn University students. Appropriate college, office or unit administrator for employees.

VI. DEFINITIONS

Campus includes the core Auburn University campus generally bounded by South College Street, West Magnolia Avenue, Wire Road, and Woodfield Drive.

Coercion is an attempt to intimidate or badger a person into viewing, listening to, or accepting a copy of communication; persistently requesting or demanding the attention of a person after that person has attempted to walk away or has clearly refused to attend to the speaker's communication.

Demonstration is a form of public expression by one or more persons that includes public speech-making or other verbal communication, protesting, marching, peaceful assembly, carrying signs, circulating petitions, or distributing literature.

Open Air Forum is a designated area on campus (two locations: at the northeast corner of the intersection of Mell Street and Roosevelt Drive and at the northeast corner of South Donahue Drive and West Thach Concourse) not confined by walls or a roof.

Visitors are individuals who are not Auburn University employees, currently enrolled Auburn University students, or guests of Auburn University employees or recognized Auburn University student organizations.

VII. POLICY PROCEDURES

See policy principles above.

VIII. SANCTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Visitors who violate university policies, including this policy, will be subject to immediate removal from the campus grounds, without prior warning, by appropriate university agents or officials and may be subject to appropriate legal action.

Auburn University students, student organizations, and employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action according to university policies and procedures.

IX. EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to Auburn University's official use of its spaces for university programs and activities.

X. INTERPRETATION

These regulations shall be interpreted, administered and enforced by the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs.