



## **FREE SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY POLICY**

### **POLICY**

Alcorn State University recognizes that in the community of scholars there are certain indisputable rights to freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression. The university encourages the search for truth and knowledge and does not abridge searchers' rights to reveal their findings, by both spoken and written word, even if in so doing they might find themselves at variance with their peers as well as the lay community. To dissent, to disagree with generally accepted truth and knowledge is acceptable. The university also stands for the right of all the university community to pursue their legitimate activities without interference, intimidation, coercion, or disruption. The university will protect the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly and affirms all rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.

### **PROCEDURE**

Reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions will be enforced. However, the enforcement will not depend, in any way, on the subject matter involved in an expressive activity.

Alcorn State University provides forums for the expression of ideas and opinions, such as the following:

- 1) Traditional public forums include the university's public streets, sidewalks, parks, and similar common areas such as the Fountain Plaza (between the Campus Union and the Library) and the Grassy Knoll on the west side of the Clinton Bristow Dining Hall. These areas are generally available for non-amplified expressive activity, planned or spontaneous, for the individual or small group at any time without the need for reservation or prior approval, unless the space is already scheduled.
- 2) Designated public forums include other parts of the campus that may become temporarily available for non-amplified expressive activity as designated by the university. Examples of designated forums include parking lots and athletic fields.
- 3) Non-public forums are areas that are not traditional public forums or designated public forums. These locations will be restricted to use for their intended purpose and are typically not available for public expressive activity. Examples include, but are not limited to, classrooms, residence halls, faculty and staff offices, academic buildings, administration buildings, medical treatment facilities, libraries, research and computer labs, and private residential housing on campus.
- 4) Additionally, security considerations may affect the availability of spaces that would otherwise be available.

Disruptive activities will not be allowed. The university has defined a disruptive activity as any action by an individual, group, or organization to impede, interrupt, interfere with or disturb the holding of classes, the conduct of the university business, or the authorized scheduled events and

activities of any and all segments of the university. Furthermore, any activity that incites imminent lawless action or that triggers an automatic violent response will be considered disruptive. In addition to any potential criminal penalties, students engaging in disruptive activities will be referred to the Office of Student Affairs and employees will be referred to Human Resources.

**GUIDELINES**

- 1) Registered university organizations and university departments may display signs and banners at designated locations on campus. For information regarding these designated locations and sign policies, contact the Office of Student Activities and Engagement located in the James L. Bolden Student Union Building.
- 2) Literature can be distributed in public forums. However, the party distributing the literature is responsible for cleaning up any discarded materials and restoring the campus to its previous condition. Literature may not be distributed in non-public forums.
- 3) No amplification equipment may be used.
- 4) Use of campus land is on a temporary basis.
- 5) Flyers may be placed on open bulletin boards inside or outside university buildings.
- 6) No activity will be permitted that blocks access to university buildings, streets, sidewalks, or facilities, defaces property, injures individuals, unreasonably interferes with regular or authorized university activities or functions, or disrupts the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- 7) Private business, political electioneering campaigns or commercial solicitation on campus is generally prohibited. (Refer to Campus Solicitation Policy.)

**REVIEW**

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this operating policy every four years or as needed.

Reviewed and approved by the University Cabinet on January 29, 2019.

Approved by:    
Donzell Lee, Interim President Date