

**Policy Number: 820**

**Policy Suffix:**

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# Campus Demonstrations, Protests and Organized Expressions of Opinion

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## I. General Policy

One of the University's functions is to provide its community of students, faculty and staff members a forum for the safe, non-disruptive expression and discussion of diverse points of view, even when those expressions or discussions are controversial. The University permits members of the Rice community, acting as individuals and not in the name of the University nor any of its component parts, to organize group expressions of opinion or hold demonstrations, protests or meetings on campus (including demonstrations or protests in opposition to another approved activity or protest) so long as these activities do not violate local, state, or federal laws, do not disrupt University functions nor impede access to any part of the campus, and comply with this policy and other applicable University policies and codes of conduct.

Interrupting a lecture, event, meeting, debate, class or forum on University property is considered an unacceptable form of protest, demonstration, or organized expression of opinion. As a private entity, Rice University reserves the right to decline to grant permission for activities on its property covered by this policy or to limit the time, location and methods of such activities.

## II. Roles and Responsibilities

Those wishing to organize or stage activities covered by this policy on any University property are required to contact the Rice University Police Department (RUPD) at least 48 hours in advance of the activity to request permission to hold the activity. Because RUPD is open at all hours and also plays a central role in safeguarding Rice's community and property, it is the office designated by this policy to consult other appropriate Rice offices to discuss an event request and communicate the University's decision on permission. Requests can be emailed to [rupd@rice.edu](mailto:rupd@rice.edu). In the event of extraordinary circumstances, organizers of an activity covered by this policy may request permission to hold the event within the 48-hour notice window, but failure to provide the required notice at least 48 hours in advance may increase the probability that the activity may not be approved due to lack of sufficient time for necessary planning.

## III. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the "Rice community" is defined as current students, faculty, and staff members of the University.

## IV. Elaboration of Policy

The University ordinarily approves demonstrations, protests, counter-protests and other organized expressions of opinion if Rice University determines the event does not pose a threat to safety or disruption of University operations. The University may, however, refuse approval for an event if the event's purpose is to make threats, intentionally harass an individual or group, incite unlawful action, or engage in obscenity. If an event is refused permission, organizers may appeal this determination to the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration.

Groups outside of the Rice community are generally not permitted to use the campus for demonstrations, protests, organized expressions of opinion, or meetings or similar activities; if a group from outside Rice seeks to participate in an event organized by a group within the Rice community, the outside group must request permission to participate at least 48 hours in advance, using the same procedure in section II. Appeals of these decisions are handled as described above.

Those holding unauthorized events that would otherwise be covered by this policy may be subject to university disciplinary action or legal action. Those holding unauthorized events will also be held responsible for the cost of any damages caused by the event or its participants. The University reserves the right to terminate any unauthorized event.

## V. Cross References to Related Policies

[Policy 427](#), Compliance with Law

[Policy 802](#), Use of University Facilities and Scheduling Campus Events

[Policy 807](#), Partisan Political Activities

Rice University [Code of Student Conduct](#)

## Responsible Official and Key Offices to Contact Regarding the Policy and its Implementation

Responsible Official: Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration

Key Offices: Rice University Police Department; Dean of Undergraduates; Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies; Crisis Management; Office of General Counsel

## Signatures

David W. Leebron, President

## Policy History

### Revised

April 6, 2018

### Clerical Changes

January 18, 2023

August 15, 2023

**Issued**

December 31, 1975