

SECTION VI– PART VII

Freedom of Expression

Christopher Newport University is committed to free and open inquiry in all matters, and offers to its students, faculty and staff the broadest possible latitude to speak, write, listen, challenge and learn. Of course, the ideas of different members of the University community will often and quite naturally conflict. But it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable or even deeply offensive.

Members of the CNU community shall always exercise their freedom of expression in a manner that does not interfere with or disrupt the operation of the University or the activities of other members of the community. To ensure this, the University will reasonably regulate the time, place and manner of expression. But these are narrow exceptions to the general principle of freedom of expression, and it is vitally important that these exceptions never be used in a manner that is inconsistent with the University's commitment to a completely free and open discussion of ideas. Speech which violates the law – including speech or conduct intended to threaten, harass or intimidate – will not be tolerated.

Unlawful Expression

The University does not permit expression that is not protected by law. Such expression includes, but is not limited to, defamation, incitement to unlawful conduct, imminent threats of actual violence or harm, obscenity, fighting words, copyright or trademark violation, illegal harassment and false advertising.

Maintaining Orderly Operations

No person may engage in expressive conduct that has the effect of disrupting or preventing the orderly conduct of the University operations and activities. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: (1) blocking the legitimate activity of any person on the University campus or in any University building; (2) constituting or inciting a violation of law; (3) blocking the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic; and (4) conduct creating an unsafe or unhealthy condition.

Expressive Activity:

Any expression protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, including but not limited to speaking, silent protest, distributing literature such as leaflets or pamphlets, displaying signs, wearing certain clothing or accessory items, dancing, meetings, performances, demonstrations, rallies and vigils.

All outdoor spaces are available to students for expressive activities subject to the conditions established by this policy and any other reasonable time, place and manner restrictions as might be deemed necessary by the University. Such use of outdoor areas should be scheduled at least 24 hours in advance, if possible, in order to avoid interference with or disruption of ordinary, routine, or previously scheduled activities and to ensure safety and health. University services such as set up, technical assistance, catering and parking may not be available on short notice.

It is not the intent of this policy to censor or otherwise limit free expression. However, assemblies should be peaceable, orderly and comply with University standards of conduct.

[See University Policy 7000 Use of University Facilities by Members of the University Community Policy.](#)