

Public Speech, Assembly, and Demonstrations Policy

Policy Statement

Southeastern Louisiana University recognizes the fundamental importance of freedom of speech and assembly to intellectual and social development. These freedoms, are in compliance with LSA R.S. 17:3399.34 as amended in Act 584 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session and guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, shall be enjoyed by the university community. It is not the role of Southeastern Louisiana University to shield individuals from speech protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States or Article I, Section 7 of the Louisiana Constitution; or, prohibit ideas or opinions that some may find unwelcome, disagreeable, or offensive.

Purpose of Policy

In accordance with these principles, Southeastern faculty, staff, and students have the freedom to assemble and engage in spontaneous expressive activity, including political views and freedom of association, provided it is lawful, does not disrupt the functioning of the institution, and participants do not violate other university policies. However, the faculty shall be prohibited from imposing the professor's political views on students in violation of R.S. 17:3399.39.

Applicability

This policy applies to all Southeastern students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Definitions

Expressive Activities

Include but are not limited to any lawful verbal or written means by which individuals or groups communicate ideas to one another, as provided by the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and by Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution of Louisiana, including all forms of peaceful assembly, protest, speech, distribution of literature, carrying signs, and circulating petitions. "Free speech and First Amendment protected expressive activities" expressly excludes commercial activities in which individuals or groups are being compensated or attempting to advertise, market, or accrue financial gain to any individual, corporation business or organization. Activities in which an individual or group is knowingly being monetarily funded or organized by any individual, corporation, business or organization that has been designated as a foreign terrorist organization or foreign adversary by the United States Department of State, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. 1189 or 15 CFR 7.4. Any criminal activity which is prohibited under Title 14 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 or any other provision of state law with criminal penalties.

Material and Substantial Disruption

When a person, with the intent and knowledge of doing so, significantly hinders free speech and First Amendment protected activities, prevents the communication of the message, or prevents the transaction of business of a lawful meeting, gathering or procession by either of the following: (a) Engaging in assault, battery attempted battery, violence, or similar behavior in violation of Title 14 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950 or any other provision of state law

with criminal penalties, (b) Physically blocking or using threats of violence to prevent any person from attending, listening to, viewing, or otherwise participating in a free speech and First Amendment protected expressive activity.

Outdoor Areas

Outside areas generally accessible to the majority of students, administrators, faculty, and staff, such as grassy areas, walkways, or other similar common areas, and do not include areas where access is restricted.

Student Organization

An officially recognized group at a public postsecondary education institution, or a group seeking official recognition, comprised of enrolled students.

Student on Student Discriminatory Harassment

Unwelcomed conduct that targets a victim in violation of this Part and is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive and so undermines and detracts from the victim's educational experience that the victim is effectively denied equal access to an institution's resources and opportunities.

Policy Procedure

Demonstration and Assembly Locations

Southeastern has designated the following sites as preferred locations for public discussion and/or peaceful public assembly or demonstration: (1) Student Union Annex; (2) Student Union Plaza; and, (3) the grassy area of Friendship Circle. Although other outdoor areas may be available for public speech and assemblies by students without prior administrative approval, these locations are recommended due to the high volume of student traffic.

Groups and organizations who choose to engage in expressive activity outside of one of the preferred locations may be asked to relocate should the expressive activity interfere with the normal operations of the university. Students, faculty, and staff may use these areas of campus without prior permission from the University as long as: (1) The area has not been previously reserved or scheduled for a particular activity; (2) No sound amplification is used; and, (3) Participants do not violate university policies.

Although faculty, staff, students, and student organizations are permitted to assemble and engage in expressive activity without obtaining prior permission, registration with the Office of the Dean of Students is encouraged to ensure adequate arrangements and minimize possible scheduling conflicts.

Outside Groups: Registration of Activities

Groups and organizations not affiliated with the university are required to register activities with the Office of the Dean of Students and/or Event and Conference Services at least two business days prior to the event date.

Office of the Dean of Students Phone: 985-549-3792

Email: deanofstudents@southeastern.edu

Office of Event and Conference Services Phone: 985-549-2094

Email: conf_services@southeastern.edu

Flash demonstrations (spontaneous gatherings) or demonstrations that have not been approved are prohibited. The Office of the Dean of Students will make every effort to approve applications quickly; however, applicants may not take action until an application is processed and approved. A requested event may not interfere with another approved event, interfere with University operations, be scheduled during other major university events, and must not have amplified sound.

Nothing in the above sections shall be interpreted as limiting the right of free expression elsewhere on campus as long as the expressive activities or related conduct do not violate any other applicable university policies.

Guidelines

The following will generally be considered to be disruptive of University activities and functions:

(1) The use of amplified sound and/or obstructing building entrances, walkways, and rights-of-way; (2) Obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic on or adjacent to campus; (3) Interfering with classes-scheduled activities; or (4) Interfering with other essential processes of the University. - Use of areas on campus shall not include activities that could constitute non-permissible solicitation; or, would be an infraction of the university [sign policy](#) in regards to indiscriminately handing out materials to passers-by.

Masks, Props, Disguise Material

As a reasonable restriction on the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure personal safety, the University reserves the right to prohibit the wearing of masks, personal disguises, or other means of concealing one's identity, as well as the possession of weapons, props, or items that may be used as weapons or protective gear on the University campus and/or at University events.

Sanctions

Students who interfere, disrupt, or attempt to intimidate others while exercising their First Amendment rights and/or engage in student on student discriminatory harassment will be subject to disciplinary action and sanctions as outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Disciplinary cases arising out of violations of the University policy on public speech, assembly, and demonstrations shall follow the normal disciplinary proceedings outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

Visitors, guests, and outside groups engaging in material or substantial disruptive action or disorderly conduct shall be subject to charges of violations of the law and subsequently barred from campus.

Reporting

Students who believe their First Amendment rights have been violated in any manner should file a grievance with the Office of the Dean of Students. Reports can be made online at www.southeastern.edu/reportit.

Non-endorsement / Non-Guarantee

All views expressed by any individual or organization are those of the speaker and not necessarily reflective of Southeastern Louisiana University. References made to any products and/or services are not guaranteed by the University.

Video / Audio Taping

Southeastern Louisiana University reserves the right to video and/or audio record any public speech, assembly, or demonstration held on its campus.

[End of Policy]