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Demonstration Guidelines

Demonstrations by Students

Introduction

The University of Massachusetts Amherst upholds the values of freedom of speech, thought, inquiry, and artistic expression for all community members. Protest and demonstrations are recognized as legitimate forms of self-expression, but the university reserves the right to limit events that pose a danger or disrupt campus activities. Students planning demonstrations are encouraged to be aware of their rights, university policies, and available resources.



Summary and Expectations

Demonstration Guidelines:

- All students have the right to demonstrate on campus.
- The university's policies regarding demonstrations are content-neutral, but the university can intervene if there is a clear danger or disruption.
- Certain restrictions apply to entering campus buildings for demonstrations.
- Safety and security reasons may restrict access to specific areas on campus.
- Legal activities that do not violate rights or harm property are allowed.
- Counter-demonstrations are permitted but should respect others' rights.
- Off-campus student protests are subject to the same laws and the Code of Student Conduct.

Examples of conduct that is not permitted, including, but not limited to:

- Blocking access to campus facilities or activities
- Obstructing pedestrian or vehicular traffic or restricting free movement of persons on university property.
- Using bullhorns or other loud or amplified sound-making devices in a way that disrupts academic or administrative activities of the university.
- Engaging in theft, vandalism, loitering, or property damage.
- Obstructing the passage into or out of buildings by blocking doorways.
- Refusing to leave a building or area that is closed or after receiving a directive from a university official acting in good faith performance of their duties.
- Preventing members of a class from being able to hear the lecture or take an exam.
- Preventing an instructor from giving a lecture by means of significant interruptions.

Counter-Protests:

Protest, demonstrations, or other acts of free expression on campus may prompt a counter-protest or other forms of expression. When these arise, the expression of all parties will be supported in accordance with university policies and this guidance. On occasion, a separate area may be designated for those seeking to counter-protest.

Civil Disobedience:

Some groups use civil disobedience—nonviolent unlawful conduct engaged in intentionally—as a form of protest. The First Amendment does not protect civil disobedience. If you choose to use this as a tactic to draw attention to your cause, be prepared for the consequences, which may include arrest and punishment through your school's disciplinary process.

Safety and Guidance**Ensuring a Productive Demonstration:**

- Students should consult with [Student Engagement and Leadership](#) staff.
- [UMPD](#) (University of Massachusetts Police Department) can assist with safety and security procedures.
- Organizers should inform attendees of [university policies](#) including, but not limited to, the Code of Student Conduct and Picketing Code prior to demonstrations.

- Non-university organizations may use campus property at the university's discretion.

During Demonstrations:

- Stay aware of your surroundings and prioritize your safety.
- Avoid physical contact.
- Have a plan in place and communicate it to someone not attending.

Relevant Policies and Guidelines

- [Code of Student Conduct](#)
- [Picketing Code](#)
- [Use of University Property \(land use\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect](#)

Resources

- [Student Legal Services](#)
- [Center for Education Policy & Advocacy](#)
- [Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Conduct and Community Standards Office](#)

 [Printer-friendly version](#)

Fraternities and Sororities

Registered Student Organizations

SACL Finance Support for RSOs and GSOs

Student Governance

Center for Student Business

Mass Impact Day of Service

Arts and Media Agencies

Message From the Chancellor

[Update on Important Work and Dialogue](#)

Policies

[Resolution in Support of Pluralism](#)

[UMass Amherst Picketing Code](#)

[Code of Student Conduct](#)

[Campus Center/Student Union Complex Facilities Use Policies](#)

[University of Massachusetts Policy Against Intolerance](#)

[Key Policies: Equity](#)

Resources

[Student Activities and Involvement](#) – The Student Organization Resource Center (SORC): [\(413\) 545-3600](#)
| email: sorc@sacl.umass.edu

[Physical Plant Outdoor Event/Land Use Planning Guide](#)

[10 Things to Know About the First Amendment](#)

[Campus Center Scheduling Office](#)

[SACL Student E-Newsletter & Digital Signage Submissions](#)

[University Police Community Outreach Unit](#)

[Student Legal Services Office](#)

[Center for Education Policy & Advocacy](#)

[Student Government Association](#)

[UMatter Campus Support Resources](#)

[Request Assistance](#)



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