Effective Date: **May 17, 2022** Revised: **December 10, 2024**

POLICY

ETHICS, SAFETY, STUDENT LIFE

Boston University Events and Demonstrations Policy

RESPONSIBLE OFFICES

Office of the Dean of Students, Office of the General Counsel, Office of the University Provost

Table of Contents

Purpose and Guiding Principles

Defined Terms

Covered Parties

Policy

I. Use of University Spaces

A. Registering Events

B. Use of University Space

C. Co-Sponsorship

D. Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

i. Signage

ii. Restrictions on Structures and Encampments

iii. Use of Amplified Sound

E. Public Safety

II. Guidelines for Demonstrations

A. Optional Registration

B. Locations

C. Counter-Demonstrations

III. Interference with the Speech of Others

IV. Enforcement

Purpose and Guiding Principles

As the Boston University Statement on Free Speech and Expression makes clear, providing opportunities for members of the University community to express themselves, including to dissent, to rally, to gather in vigil, to walkout, to sponsor speakers or performances, or to otherwise express themselves peaceably, is central to the educational mission of the University, as long as these activities do not unreasonably interfere with or disrupt University

events, programs, activities, academics, research, or operations. The University makes these opportunities for expression available while neither requiring that other members of the community condone particular messages or remain silent in the face of speech with which they disagree. This policy is intended to promote the responsible exercise of free expression; to allow free expression that does not violate University policies; to ensure the smooth and continued operation of University activities; and to protect the safety and security of all members of the BU community.

The University expects members of the community to be respectful of others, even those with whom they disagree, and to consider the impact of their presence, statements and behavior toward others when exercising free expression.

This Policy describes the requirements for Events as defined below that are to be held on the University's campus and that are organized by University Affiliates.

Reservation of University facilities by Non-Affiliate individuals or organizations is handled by Events and Conferences and is not covered by this Policy.

Defined Terms

***Affiliate*:** any Boston University department, recognized student organization, or current student, faculty or staff member (not including alumni).

Event: A gathering on the Boston University campus or other property controlled by the University sponsored by an Affiliate for the purpose of individual or collective speech or other expression. Examples include speakers, panels, concerts, performances, film screenings, conferences, and Demonstrations.

> Note: The following are not considered Events for purposes of this policy: regularly-scheduled University classes; routine meetings between groups of faculty, staff, or students; or gatherings for personal or professional celebrations, such as birthdays or holiday or retirement parties.

***Demonstration*:** An Event sponsored by an Affiliate involving an in-person assembly or march to protest or express views on an issue in view of others on campus or the public, which may

take the form of a vigil, rally, protest, picketing, leafletting, sit-in, or similar activities.

***Counter-Demonstration*:** A Demonstration sponsored by an Affiliate in response to another Event on campus.

Covered Parties

All Affiliates attending or organizing Events and all non-Affiliates attending Events are subject to and expected to know and comply with this Policy, as well as all other applicable University policies and procedures and applicable law.

Affiliates may invite non-Affiliates to participate in Events, but the inviting Affiliate will be responsible for informing non-Affiliates of this Policy and may be held accountable for a non-Affiliate's failure to comply.

The University may request identification from any participant attending an Event on campus to determine whether an individual is an Affiliate of the University. Any participant who does not comply with a directive to produce identification from a University official acting in the performance of their duties may face sanctions for violation of this Policy.

This Policy does not cover the following:

- assignment of space in University facilities for academic and administrative use;
- reservation of space in Agganis Arena;
- use of athletics venues when used for athletic practices and competitions (such as Case Center, Walter Brown Arena and Track and Tennis Center).

Policy

I. Use of University Spaces

A. Registering Events

All Events other than Demonstrations (as defined above) must be registered with the

relevant University office:

- For undergraduate students and student organizations: Student Activities Office
- For Charles River Campus graduate students: through their school or college or Events and Conferences, as applicable
- For faculty and staff: Events & Conferences
- For Medical Campus students and student organizations:
  - Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine
  - Graduate Medical Sciences
  - Goldman School of Dental Medicine
  - School of Public Health
- For Medical Campus faculty and staff: Reservations

B. Use of University Space

The use of University space is limited to lawful purposes consistent with the educational mission of the University and in accordance with University policies and procedures governing the use of campus spaces. Reasonable charges, including overhead for the use of space and equipment, facilities, security, and amenities, are the responsibility of Event organizers.

To reserve University space or check on its availability, please see Events & Conferences . Medical Campus inquiries can be made here.

C. Co-Sponsorship

Co-sponsorship of an event by an Affiliate with a non-BU or unrecognized student group or any other non-Affiliate is generally not permitted on campus, nor is sponsorship by proxy unless specific approval has been obtained to use the campus space in question.

D. Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

Boston University reserves the right to set forth reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions for Events. All Event organizers and attendees, both Affiliates and non-Affiliates, must comply with the directions of any University official acting in the performance of their duties.

The following restrictions apply to all Events:

Affiliates and non-Affiliates must comply with the law and all University policies, including those published separately from this Policy, while participating in Events. No unlawful harassment, violence or physical abuse, destruction of property, or threats toward another person or persons present will be tolerated. Further, Events may not:

- Incite imminent lawless action.
- Occur between 12:00 midnight and 8:00 a.m. Unauthorized overnight activities will be considered trespassing and addressed.
- Take place over successive days without express written approval from the Dean of Students Office (students/student organizations), or the Office of the Provost (faculty/staff). This ensures community spaces remain open and adaptable for all users.

No Event may unreasonably interfere with or disrupt University operations or activities, including:

- Blocking or otherwise interfering with the free flow of vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic on streets, sidewalks, and rights-of-way.
- Interfering with the free flow of movement in and out of, as well as within, campus buildings.
- Interfering with any class, event or activity sponsored by the University or by any persons authorized to use University facilities. This restriction is not intended to prohibit Counter-Demonstrations.
- University statues and sculptures may not be climbed upon or covered with any materials such as flags, flyers or other permanent or non-permanent materials.

i. Signage.

No unattended placards, banners, or other signs will be permitted, unless they are affixed securely to a location that has been approved for posting (e.g., a Free Expression Board). Any signage used by Event participants may not be affixed to any University-owned property, including walls, windows, or furniture.

ii. Restrictions on Structures and Encampments.

No temporary structures will be permitted without express written approval of the Dean of Students Office (students) or the Office of the Provost (faculty/staff). Any structure erected without permission is subject to immediate removal. Exceptions for religious accommodations will be considered upon requests made to either the Dean of Students Office or Office of the Provost.

No encampments (defined as temporary or semi-permanent settlement(s), tent(s), or other structure(s) that serve as individual or communal living or gathering spaces) will be permitted on University property.

iii. Use of Amplified Sound.

The use of a public address system or amplified sound is not permitted without prior written approval from the Dean of Students Office.

The University may restrict the use of public address systems or amplified sound, including bullhorns, at any time, even after prior approval, if its use disrupts University operations, including classes or another nearby Event. (i.e., amplified sound in Marsh Plaza is prohibited when Events are being held in the Main Chapel).

E. Public Safety

The University will strive to keep the campus community safe and will work with Event organizers to ensure that Events proceed safely. The Boston University Police

Department, Public Safety, Office of the Provost and/or the Dean of Students Office, utilizing an equitable, non-discriminatory, and content-neutral approach, have authority to determine the nature and extent of safety measures needed at an Event, which may include (but are not limited to) relocating an Event, changing its timing, employing safety equipment or protocols, or restricting the Event to Affiliates. In those rare instances in which the University concludes that an Event presents an insurmountable threat to public safety, or to event organizers or attendees, Boston University reserves the right to cancel the Event.

II. Guidelines for Demonstrations

A. Optional Registration

On-campus Demonstrations sponsored and/or organized by Affiliates are exempt from the event registration process described in Section I(A), though they are subject to the other provisions of this Policy as outlined in Section I(B-E). Nevertheless, the University invites and encourages Affiliates organizing Demonstrations on campus to register them as Events so that the University can provide event support. On-campus Demonstrations sponsored and/or organized by non-Affiliates are not permitted.

B. Locations

The University permits Demonstrations at the following locations, unless another party has previously reserved the space:

- Marsh Plaza
- George Sherman Union Plaza (outside Commonwealth Avenue entrance)
- Metcalf Science Plaza
- COM Lawn (640 Commonwealth Avenue)
- Harry Agganis Way (at Braves Way)
- CCDS pocket park (Corner of Bay State Road and Granby Street)
- Cummington Mall

- 715 Albany Street lawn
- Alpert Mall (BU Beach)
- Outside Booth Theatre (front outdoor plaza)

Demonstrations are prohibited in private offices, private residences, research laboratories and associated facilities, clinical areas and associated facilities, computer centers, and offices, museums, libraries, and other facilities that normally contain valuable or sensitive materials, collections, equipment, records protected by law or by existing University policy such as educational records, student-related or personnel-related records, medical records, or financial records.

The University reserves the right to cancel any Event or Demonstration that unreasonably interferes with another pre-scheduled Event on campus. The Dean of Students Office, or the Office of the Provost may also approve the use of other locations to accommodate particular circumstances associated with a Demonstration.

C. Counter-Demonstrations

Counter-Demonstrations are permitted under this Policy subject to the same rules and restrictions described herein. When an Event on campus prompts a Counter-Demonstration, in the interest of safety, the University may designate a separate area for the counter-demonstrators. To the extent practicable, the University will designate an area or areas within reasonable sight and sound of the Event and will determine the speaker's and the audience's entry into and exit from the Event. Counter-Demonstration organizers are strongly encouraged to engage with the appropriate University officials in advance to ensure the safety of any attendees.

III. Interference with the Speech of Others

Protecting free speech includes not interfering with the free speech rights of others, as well as protecting the rights of speakers and Event organizers. Community members may protest Events or speakers with whom they disagree, but they may not do so in a way that prevents

others from expressing their views or obstructs members of the community from hearing or experiencing the Event. Individuals or groups may not suppress the speech of another individual or group by a “heckler’s veto” over speech with which they disagree.

IV. Enforcement

Authorized Boston University personnel, including but not limited to members of the Boston University Police Department, Public Safety or Dean of Students Office, may intervene to address in real time any conduct that the University believes to be in violation of this Policy or any other University policies or procedures. Intervention may include instructions to Event participants to modify or terminate their behavior.

If a member of the BU community is believed to have violated any University policy or guidance during the course of their involvement in an Event, that individual (or organization) will be subject to University disciplinary policies, as applicable. Individuals who participate in behavior that constitutes a criminal infraction may be subject to law enforcement action.

- Students who are believed to have violated this Policy during an Event will be referred to the Dean of Students office, which will follow the normal disciplinary/restorative justice process, as appropriate.
- Faculty who are believed to have violated this Policy during an Event will be referred to the Dean of their school or college for further action.
- Staff who are believed to have violated this Policy during the course of an Event will be referred to Human Resources for follow up with their unit or department, in accordance with University policy and the terms of their collective bargaining agreement, if appropriate.
- Non-Affiliates who violate University policy during an Event are subject to removal from the premises and legal action, if appropriate.

END OF POLICY TEXT

Additional Resources Regarding This Policy

Related BU Policies

- Statement on Free Speech and Expression
- Publications & Publicity Policy
- Lifebook, Office of the Dean of Students
- Academic Freedom, Faculty Handbook

Related BU Websites and Information

- Registering Events
  - Student Activities Office- For students and student organizations
  - Events & Conferences- For students and student organizations
  - For Medical Campus students and student organizations:
    - Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine
    - Graduate Medical Sciences
    - Goldman School of Dental Medicine
    - School of Public Health
  - For Medical Campus faculty and staff: Reservations
- Community, Civility & Free Speech - https://www.bu.edu/communityvalues/ - BU website on building a campus culture of openness and civil discourse in which all people feel valued
- Presidential Memorandum, Ensuring an Open, Civil Campus Environment, September 17, 2024

History

The Boston University Events and Demonstrations Policy was drafted by the University Council Committee on Student Life and Policies and was approved by the University Council on 5/17/22. An Interim Policy was approved by the University president in August 2024. The most recent version of the Policy was approved by the University Council on December 10, 2024.

Categories: Ethics, Events or Demonstrations, Political Activities, Safety, Student Life, University Policies Affecting Student Life Keywords: activism, campus demonstration, campus protest, campus signs, campus speech, demonstration, demonstrations, encampment, encampments, expression, first amendment, free speech, gathering, gatherings, poster, posters, protect, protest, signs, speech, tent, tenting, tents, time place manner