GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Free Speech at George Mason

At George Mason University we include and embrace a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do and protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views. Freedom of expression in an intellectually and culturally diverse environment provides all members of our community the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to our shared mission to create a more just, free, and prosperous world. George Mason University is committed to protecting free speech and free expression on its campus and in its education programs.

Being exposed to competing perspectives is essential for questioning our assumptions, testing our beliefs, and refining our knowledge. Our goal as a community must be to create an environment where we can engage in difficult and challenging conversations with civility and mutual respect, where confronting opposing ideas and perspectives becomes an opportunity to learn from and with each other.

Our commitment to freedom of expression is not incompatible with our commitment to diversity and to nurturing a positive and collaborative environment where everyone can thrive. On the contrary, it is by achieving the latter that freedom of expression becomes a powerful tool for personal learning and growth. But our efforts to build a civil and respectful environment cannot be used as reasons to limit the rights of others to express views that we may consider misguided or even offensive. As articulated by a 2014 report from the University of Chicago, we must hold a fundamental commitment to "the principle that debate or deliberation may not be suppressed because the ideas put forth are thought by some or even by most members of the University community to be offensive, unwise, immoral, or wrong-headed."

George Mason facilities are intended primarily for the use of its students, faculty, and employees in their efforts to advance the educational mission of the university. No use shall be permitted that is unlawful, threatens the safety of the George Mason community, or is inconsistent with the mission of the university. In maintaining a safe campus, in which its students, faculty, and employees can advance the educational mission of George Mason without disruption, the university may establish constitutionally permissible time, place and manner restrictions on the use of its facilities and property (e.g., registration requirements, times when use is permitted, limitations on amplified sound). These can be found in University Policies 1103, 1109, 1140, and other applicable policies and procedures (many of which are listed below). These policies and procedures ensure that Mason can focus on its educational mission, provide a safe environment for learning, and preserve the aesthetics of its campus.

The campus community is encouraged to participate in all University-sponsored programs and activities. Members of the George Mason community maintain the right to criticize and contest speech they disagree with, whether by members of the Mason community or outside speakers who are invited to the campus. But freedom of expression does not permit disrupting or preventing another person’s ability to speak or hindering the ability of others to

see or hear that speech. The First Amendment protects the right to peacefully protest, demonstrate, and speak in opposition to others' speech, as long as it does not impede the constitutionally protected speech of others.

Read the guidelines and policies for campus demonstrations, events, and gatherings

Read the 2023 Free Speech Report

All George Mason University community members enjoy the right to freedom of speech and expression. Individuals are encouraged to speak, write, listen, challenge, and demonstrate as a natural platform for intellectual engagement. This is the true spirit of Freedom and Learning.

If you believe your freedom of speech or expression has been disrupted, you may report an incident of disruption of constitutionally protected speech by submitting a report.

Related University Policies

- University Policy 1103: Space Utilization and Scheduling
- University Policy 1109: Poster Posting
- University Policy 1110: Vending Sales and Solicitations
- University Policy 1112: Outside Banner (and/or other Materials)
- University Policy 1126: Participation in Political Activities
- University Policy 1127: University Affiliated Social Media Sites
- University Policy 1128: Use of Amplified Sound on University Property
- University Policy 1132: Trespass Notices
- University Policy 1140: Utilization of Facilities by the General Public
- University Policy 1201: Non-Discrimination
- University Policy 1301: Responsible Use of Computing
- University Policy 48: Building Access and Entry
- Mason Space Use Regulation, 8 VAC 35-31

- University Policy 1408: Concealment of Identity

Report an Incident

If you believe your right to free speech has been infringed at George Mason, you may submit an incident report by clicking on the button below.

Submit a Report

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

ALL TOGETHER DIFFERENT

Sitemap

Contact

Title IX

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