



OP 91.304: FREE SPEECH AND ASSEMBLY

POLICY

Mississippi State University recognizes that in the community of scholars there are certain indisputable rights to freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought, and freedom of expression. The university encourages the search for truth and knowledge and does not abridge searchers' rights to reveal their findings, by both spoken and written word, even if in so doing they might find themselves at variance with their peers as well as the lay community. To dissent, to disagree with generally accepted truth and knowledge is acceptable. The university also stands for the right of all the university community to pursue their legitimate activities without interference, intimidation, coercion, or disruption. The university will protect the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and peaceful assembly and affirms all rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.

PROCEDURE

Reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions will be enforced. However, the enforcement will not depend, in any way, on the subject matter involved in an expressive activity. It is strongly suggested that all activities be registered with the Dean of Students' office 48 hours in advance in order to make adequate arrangements for safety and security and to insure the space desired is available. Registration information can be obtained at the Dean of Students' office located in 608 Allen Hall.

Mississippi State University provides forums for the expression of ideas and opinions, such as the following:

1. Traditional public forums include the university's public streets, sidewalks, parks, and similar common areas such as the Drill Field and Junction. These areas are generally available for non-amplified expressive activity, planned or spontaneous, for the individual or small group at any time without the need for reservation or prior approval, unless the space is already scheduled.
2. Designated public forums include other parts of the campus that may become temporarily available for non-amplified expressive activity as designated by the university. Examples of designated forums include parking lots and athletic fields.
3. Non-public forums are areas that are not traditional public forums or designated public forums. These locations will be restricted to use for their intended purpose and are typically not available for public expressive activity. Examples include, but are not limited to, classrooms, residence halls, faculty and staff offices, academic buildings, administration buildings, medical treatment facilities, libraries, research and computer labs, and private residential housing on campus.

4. Additionally, security considerations may affect the availability of spaces that would otherwise be available.

Disruptive activities will not be allowed. The university has defined a disruptive activity as any action by an individual, group, or organization to impede, interrupt, interfere with or disturb the holding of classes, the conduct of the university business, or the authorized scheduled events and activities of any and all segments of the university. Furthermore, any activity that incites imminent lawless action or that triggers an automatic violent response will be considered disruptive. In addition to any potential criminal penalties, students engaging in disruptive activities will be referred to the Dean of Students' office, and employees will be referred to Human Resources.

GUIDELINES

1. Registered university organizations and university departments may display signs and banners at designated locations on campus. For information regarding these designated locations, contact the Dean of Students' office located in 608 Allen.
2. Literature can be distributed in public forums. However, the party distributing the literature is responsible for cleaning up any discarded paper and restoring the campus to its previous condition. Literature may not be distributed in non-public forums.
3. No amplification equipment may be used.
4. Use of campus land is on a temporary basis.
5. Flyers may be placed on open bulletin boards inside or outside university buildings.
6. No activity will be permitted that blocks access to university buildings, streets, sidewalks, or facilities, defaces property, injures individuals, unreasonably interferes with regular or authorized university activities or functions, or disrupts the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
7. Private business or commercial solicitation on campus is generally prohibited. (Refer to OP 91.110: Campus Solicitation.)

REVIEW

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this operating policy every four years or as needed.

REVIEWED BY:

/s/ Regina Hyatt
Vice President for Student Affairs

08/28/2017
Date

/s/ Timothy N. Chamblee
Assistant Vice President & Director
Institutional Research and Effectiveness

08/28/2017
Date

/s/ Joan Lucas
General Counsel

08/28/2017
Date

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Mark Keenum
President

08/30/2017
Date