

## STUDENT AFFAIRS OP 91.109: Dissent, Disruption, and Academic Freedom

**Date: July 1, 1990**

### Purpose

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 faculty, staff, and students to pursue their legitimate activities without interference, intimidation, coercion, or disruption. The university affirms all rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of the United States.

### Policy

The basic policy of the university demands the preservation of academic freedom. Therefore, the university cannot tolerate any effort or attempt by any individual, group, or organization to limit these freedoms by disrupting the legitimate activities of the university.

The university is an open institution and strives for open communication. All concerns, issues, and grievances should be pursued openly and thoroughly with the appropriate officers of the administration, student, or faculty government. Coercive negotiation is not acceptable, for it is in basic conflict with the openness of academic freedom.

### Procedure

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. If not withstanding efforts to maintain freedoms essential to the academic community, disruptive activities occur, the following actions will be initiated:

1. Those students found to be disruptive and who, upon being so found and notified by the Dean of Students' office and requested to cease such disruption, fail to do so, will be suspended from the university.
2. Those students who continue such disruptive activities after suspension will be expelled.
3. Those members of the faculty and staff who are found to be disruptive and who, upon being so found and notified by the President or his/her designee, fail to respond to a request to desist, will be subject to arrest and prosecution. The provisions of this policy are in addition to civil laws.

### Review

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

**DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS  
OPERATING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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**REVIEWED BY:**

/s/ William Kibler  
Vice President for Student Affairs

9/8/2011  
Date

/s/ Lesia Bryant  
Internal Auditor

9/19/2011  
Date

/s/ Joan L. Lucas  
General Counsel

9/21/2011  
Date

**APPROVED BY:**

/s/ Mark E. Keenum  
President

9/26/2011  
Date

**THIS POLICY HAS BEEN RESCINDED**