

Title: Free Speech and Assembly
Originator: Vice President for Student Affairs
Approval Date: January 11, 2019
Effective Date: January 11, 2019
Purpose: To provide a policy that promotes speech and expression that will foster the maximum exchange of ideas and opinions in order to protect the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
Reviewer: Vice President for Student Affairs
Review Date: Every 5 years

Operating Details:

Mississippi University for Women is committed to promoting speech and expression that foster the maximum exchange of ideas and opinions. Mississippi University for Women will protect the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition, and assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

The right of free speech and assembly does not include unlawful activity or activity that endangers or imminently threatens to endanger the safety of any member of the community or any the community's physical facilities, or any activity that disrupts or obstructs the functions of the University or imminently threatens such disruption or obstruction.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted as limiting the right of student expression elsewhere on the campus so long as the expressive activities or related student conduct do not violate any other applicable University policies.

Persons are encouraged to freely examine and exchange diverse ideas both inside and outside the classroom. In doing so, however, all persons must comply with other, generally applicable, University policies.

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.

Non-public forum areas are campus locations that are not traditional public forums or designated public forums. These locations will be restricted to use for their intended purpose and are not available for public expressive activity. Examples include, but are

not limited to, classrooms, residence hall rooms, faculty and staff offices, academic buildings, administration buildings, medical treatment facilities, libraries, and research and computer labs. Additionally, security considerations may affect the availability of spaces that would otherwise be available.

Mississippi University for Women provides forums for the expression of ideas and opinions.

Speaker's Corners/Public Forum Areas

To facilitate robust debate and the free exchange of ideas, the University has determined high visibility areas on campus known as "Speaker's Corners" that may be used by any persons including non-students and other guests. Individuals and/or groups, however, may choose to assemble in other public forum areas on campus. The public forum areas may be used without permission from the University as long as the area has not been previously reserved or scheduled for a particular function or event. Designated Speaker's Corners include, but are not limited to:

- a) Bryan Green Gazebo and grass surrounding area
- b) Grass area adjacent to Cochran Hall
- c) Grass area adjacent to Hogarth Dining Center

Although it is not necessary for a person or group using one of the Speaker's Corners/Public Forum Areas to obtain prior permission from the University, the University encourages such persons to contact the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for scheduling purposes to minimize possible conflicts with space 48 hours in advance. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will work with the requesting individual(s) to meet the request or find a suitable time and location that balances the rights of the individual(s) with the rights of others and the University's educational mission. If the space is reserved, the person or group will not be able to use the space. Reservations will supersede any unreserved use of the space(s). If there is an assembly in progress, the host of the reserved space may contact the MUW Police to ask assembly to move to another location.

Guidelines

1. No amplification equipment may be used without advance permission from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.
2. Use of campus land is on a temporary basis.
3. 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.
4. No printed materials can be placed on motor vehicles parked on University property.
5. 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.

6. Expression cannot disrupt or interfere with the ability of a student to sleep or study in a University residence hall, or the ability of a student to study in the University library between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am during an academic term.
7. Persons may not damage or deface University property, including, but not limited to, grass, shrubs, trees, or other landscaping.
8. Violation of a federal, state, or local law, rule, regulation, or ordinance is prohibited.

Violations of the Free Speech and Assembly Policy

Violations of the policy and/or guidelines by students will be handled through the student conduct process. Violations of the policy and/or guidelines by non-students will be handled by the MUW Police Department.