

Emory University

Freedom of Expression Policy

Freedom of expression, dissension and others forms of protest

As members of a community, it is imperative that we recognize the right of all individuals to share their opinions, even if we disagree with those opinions. As a community, we must strike a balance between the right to share one's opinion and the right to disagree with that opinion. We must also use our rights responsibly, for there are consequences for both the use of one's words and one's reaction to those words.

There is room for disagreement in any functional community. Forms of acceptable peaceful dissent or protest include: picketing, orderly demonstrations, distribution of leaflets, or peaceful assembly. Expressing one's opinions or viewpoints must be viewed from the perspective of the Sponsor (the person, or group holding an event), as well as the perspective of the Dissenter or Protestor (the persons or group who hold an opposing viewpoint than might be expressed at an event organized by the Sponsor.)

The following will apply to all Emory University students, faculty and staff members. All forms of peaceful dissent will be subject to the approval of the appropriate University official. These forms of dissent will be permitted unless such an event interferes with the normal functioning or operation of the university, or significantly impede the rights of other individuals to participate in an event (such as a lecture, ceremony, interview or public event), or the acts of violence or harassment occur.

- **Encountering dissent in the process of program planning:**
 - Accept that individuals have a right to disagree with the position of your organization/department or sponsored guest. All forms of dissent must be nonviolent. Such events are not to be abhorred, but are to be viewed as opportunities for expression, discussion and understanding.
 - If you know, or are concerned, that your event may create controversy or a strong reaction on the part of other community members, please contact Lieutenant Finley of the Emory Police department (404-727-8005) to make sure that your security needs are met.
 - For student organizations, it is also important that the group work closely with a staff member from the Office of Student Leadership & Service and follow the appropriate event checklist.
 - If your event will involve a lecturer or guest, it is strongly advised that your organization/department reserve a large room and designate that room a "Free Speech Area." With such an accommodation, individuals who oppose the viewpoints shared at your event will have a space, which is separate from your event, to express themselves and react to the event. Their expression will not interfere with any other individual's ability to participate in your event.

- Consider holding a moderated event with the individuals who oppose your position or viewpoint to further explore the issue. Such an event should not occur at the same time as the event in question. The goal of such an interaction would simply be to further understanding of multiple perspectives- not to convince another individual that your opinion is the only, or more, correct opinion.
- **Protesting or dissenting to a program, speakers, or event:**
 - From time to time, a member of the Emory community may have a position on a topic that creates a strong reaction. Such events are not to be abhorred, but are to be viewed as opportunities for expression, discussion and understanding. All forms of dissent must be nonviolent.
 - If your dissent is strong that you do not wish to attend the event, consider working with the Sponsor to reserve a large room and designate that room a “Free Speech Area.” With such an accommodation, individuals who oppose the viewpoints shared at the sponsored event will have a space, which is separate from the event, to express themselves and react. This expression will not interfere with any other individual’s ability to participate in the sponsored event.
 - Consider holding a moderated event with the individuals who oppose your position or viewpoint to further explore the issue. Such an event should not occur at the same time as the event in question. The goal of such an interaction would simply be to further understanding of multiple perspectives- not to convince another individual that your opinion is the only, or more, correct opinion.
 - All forms of peaceful dissent will be subject to the approval of the appropriate University official. Forms of dissent will be permitted unless such an event interferes with the normal functioning or operation of the university, or significantly impede the rights of other individuals to participate in an event or the acts of violence or harassment occur.
 - There are specific areas on the Atlanta campus of Emory University which can be used for peaceful freedom of expression. Such areas will be designated as “Free Speech Areas.”
 - Emory University reserves the right to refuse permission to use a particular area for dissention activities. When this does occur, all relevant reasons and rationale will be shared with the organizers.
 - Protest or demonstration activities must not:
 - Prevent the orderly presentation of a University function, activity or program such as a lecture, ceremony, meeting, public event, or program.
 - Interfere with the ability of a person to move about the campus for legitimate purposes. This includes inside and outside of any campus buildings
 - If any of the requirements are not complied with, students or attendees will be subject to arrest and or disciplinary action.

Free Speech Areas

If you would like to plan an event involving the peaceful dissent or protest of an event, speaker, etc. at Emory, the following areas are the best suited for such activities.

- The terraces of the Dobbs University Center
- The Asbury Circle traffic circle
- The Quadrangle (in front of Candler Library)*
- Candler Library (the side facing Asbury Circle)*
- Patterson Green between the Schwartz Center and Goizueta School of Business*
- The lawn between Gambrell Hall and N. Decatur Rd*
- Rudolph Courtyard
- The lawn between Dowman Drive and Atwood Chemistry Center*
- The lawn between WHSCAB and the parking lot next to WHSCAB*
- Grace Crumb Rollins Garden (along Clifton Road)

Many of these spaces may be reserved through different administrative offices. The first point of recommended contact to reserve a space appropriate for your activity would be the Dobbs University Center, Meeting Services Office at 404-727-6157. Student organizations may refer to the *Eagle Source: A Guide for Student Organizations* for additional information on space reservations. The Eagle Source is produced by the Student Government Association (404-727-6179).

Locations with an asterisk (*) denote the following:

Demonstrations of a more quiet nature would be more suited for these locations since there are academic classrooms nearby. Amplified sound is not permitted before 5:00 pm.