

LAMAR UNIVERSITY

MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: University

AREA: General

Speech, Expression, and Assembly

I. POLICY

- A. Freedom of speech, expression, and assembly are central to Lamar University's mission as an institution of higher education. In accordance with this policy, students, faculty, and staff have the right to speak, assemble, attempt to attract the attention of others, hear the speech of others when they choose to listen, and ignore the speech of others when they choose not to listen, provided that these activities are lawful, do not derogate the rights of others, and do not disrupt the functioning of the institution.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. While the University encourages students and employees to speak and assemble on campus, such rights are not absolute and may be subject to reasonable restrictions on time, place, and manner. This policy is adopted consistent with the expectations and guidelines set forth in *Texas Education Code Section 51.9315* and *The Texas State University System Rules and Regulations, Chapter VII, paragraph 3*.
- B. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to deny any student or employee the right to speech, expression, or assembly protected by the *First Amendment to the United States Constitution* or by *Section 8, Article I of the Texas Constitution*.
- C. This policy applies to the Expressive Activities of students, employees, and recognized student and employee organization that occur in the Common Outdoor Areas or other designated spaces on campus. This policy also applies to outside individuals and groups who use Lamar University facilities for Expressive Activities and other forms of speech.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Amplified sound** means sound whose volume is increased by any electric, electronic, mechanical, or motor-powered means. Shouting, group chanting, and acoustic musical instruments are exempt from this definition and are not subject to the special rules on amplified sound but are subject to general rules on disruption.
- B. **Antisemitism** means a certain perception of Jews that may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. The term includes rhetorical and physical acts of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-

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Jewish individuals or their property or toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

- C. **Common Outdoor Areas** means the outdoor space is not regularly used for dedicated University business and its primary purpose is not an educational function or a research function. This space is generally open for use and enjoyment by University community members in the regular course of their days, pursuant to applicable rules. It does not include the outside surfaces of a University building, surfaces associated with or connected to a University building, a University structure, spaces dedicated to temporary outdoor banners, spaces dedicated to temporary outdoor exhibits, or any other designated areas.
- D. **Expressive Activities** means assemblies, protests, speeches, demonstrations, the distribution of written materials, the display or carrying of signs, and the circulation of petitions in the Common Outdoor Areas or other designated areas of campus. Expressive Activities does not include commercial speech; forms of speech or expression that are not protected by the *First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution* or *Section 8, Article I of the Texas Constitution*, including obscenity, defamation, incitement to imminent lawless action, true threats, and fighting words; or conduct that is unlawful, disrupts the functioning of the University, or violates University or TSUS policies.

IV. DESIGNATION OF FORUMS FOR EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITIES

- A. **Common Outdoor Areas.** Except for any area designated in this policy as a public forum, all Common Outdoor Areas of campus are limited public forums for the Expressive Activities of Lamar University students and employees consistent with the time, place, and manner restrictions set forth in this policy.
- B. **Designated Public Forum.** The Quad sits at the center of campus between the Archer building to the north, Wimberly building to the east, the Setzer Student Center to the west, and Lucas Engineering to the south. The Quad is designated as a public forum for the Expressive Activities of students, employees, and the general public subject to this policy.
- C. **Other University Property.** All University-owned or occupied facilities are nonpublic forums, unless they are Common Outdoor Areas or are otherwise designated as a public forum or limited public forum. Such nonpublic spaces include, by way of example and not limitation, residence halls, dining halls, academic and administrative buildings, athletics and recreational facilities, parking lots, etc.).

V. EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITY OF STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES, AND THE PUBLIC

- A. Students and employees may engage in Expressive Activities in the Common Outdoor Areas of campus subject to the content and viewpoint neutral time, place, and manner restrictions contained in this policy. Members of the public may engage in Expressive Activities in the designated public forum area (the Quad) subject to content and viewpoint neutral time, place, and manner restrictions contained in this policy.

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- B. Persons may not block or otherwise interfere with the free flow of vehicular, bicycle, or pedestrian traffic or entry into buildings, classes, or offices. The right of way of streets and sidewalks must be maintained.
- C. Persons may not obstruct, interrupt, or attempt to physically force the cancellation of any event or activity sponsored by or authorized by the University, including lawful assemblies consistent with this policy. An event or activity is disrupted when a person in attendance is rendered incapable of participating due to force or violence or a reasonable fear of force or violence.
- D. Persons may not seize control of an area of the campus or any building or portion of a building for the purpose of interfering with any administrative, educational, research, or other authorized activity.
- E. All students and employees must present valid identification upon request by a peace officer or authorized University official.
- F. A person engaged in Expressive Activities may not obstruct the enforcement of University rules, policies, or applicable laws by (1) avoiding identification, (2) intimidating others, or (3) interfering with a University employee's or peace officer's lawful performance of a duty.
- G. Camping on Lamar University campus is prohibited pursuant to *Texas Penal Code, Section 48.05* and this policy.
- H. Destruction, alteration, or appropriation of University property is strictly prohibited. For example, a person may not lower the U.S. or State flag and raise another flag in its place as doing so would constitute the unauthorized appropriation of University property.
- I. Expressive Activity between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. is not permitted if it can be heard from the campus residence halls.
- J. During the last two weeks of the Fall Semester, Spring Semester, Summer I Semester, and Summer II Semester, Expressive Activities that materially and substantially disrupt end of semester reading and exam activities of students, faculty, and staff, including inviting speakers to campus, using a device to amplify sound, or using drums or other percussive instruments, are prohibited.
- K. Notification for large assemblies. Prior to an outdoor assembly reasonably expected to include a large crowd (more than 100 persons) or the potential for violence, the event organizers must notify Event Services in the Setzer Student Center so the University may institute any necessary safety measures.
- L. Organizations and individuals who participate in Expressive Activities on campus are responsible for event clean up and any damage to University property or extraordinary clean-up costs associated with the event.

VI. POSTING AND DISTRIBUTION

- A. No group or person shall publicly display, distribute, or disseminate on the University campus any petition, handbill, or piece of literature, work, or material that is obscene, vulgar, or libelous, intended to incite others to unlawful action, or derogates the rights of others. Literature may not be distributed where the manner or form of the distribution constitutes disorderly conduct, disrupts classroom activities, impedes the maintenance of public order, or constitutes a danger to the person distributing or disseminating the material or to any group or individual.
- B. Materials used for an assembly must be for informational (not commercial) purposes.
- C. The University does not assume responsibility for the content of materials distributed in conjunction with Expressive Activities.
- D. For additional information regarding the approval of posted or distributed materials and permitted posting locations see [Lamar University Posting Policies](#).

VII. SOUND AMPLIFICATION

- A. Only registered student organizations, faculty, and staff at Lamar University may request the use of electricity for Amplified Sound for the purpose of a specific event.
- B. Approval of amplified sound requests is based upon the following factors:
 1. impact on surrounding classes;
 2. impact on facilities and operations;
 3. prior reservation of space;
 4. completion of necessary forms and receipt of approvals;
 5. risk management of the event.
- C. Facilities will determine costs, if any, for electrical service to amplify sound. The requesting student organization may pay costs for connection to University utilities.
- D. Commercial messages and advertising using Amplified Sound are prohibited.
- E. Amplified Sound may be used for Expressive Activities by registered student organizations, faculty, and staff in only the following locations on campus:
 1. Dining Hall Lawn (at least 100 feet from any building)
 2. Cardinal Park (at least 100 feet from any residence hall)
 3. Gray Pond (at least 100 feet from the Gray Center)
- F. The use of Amplified Sound will be allowed between 12:00 noon and 9:00 pm. The maximum duration for an event with Amplified Sound taking place Monday-Friday prior to 4:00 pm is one

hour. For events taking place between 4:00 pm Friday through 9:00 pm Sunday, events may be permitted to exceed two hours but still must conclude by 9:00 pm.

VIII. OUTSIDE SPEAKERS AND JOINTLY SPONSORED EVENTS

- A. These procedures apply to outside speakers or performers desiring to use designated campus facilities and students, faculty, and staff who wish to invite such speakers to campus. These procedures do not apply to outside speakers invited to campus as part of course instruction, an academic symposium or event organized by an academic or research unit, a guest speaker or performer invited by an administrative official or unit, or an outside organization renting a University facility through a facilities use agreement. Approvals for such speakers shall run through the appropriate academic or administrative unit.
- B. All outside speakers to campus must be sponsored by a recognized student or employee organization.
- C. Recognized organizations desiring to sponsor an outside speaker must submit a request in writing to the Office of Student Affairs on the form prescribed not later than six (6) business days prior to the date of the proposed speaking engagement. The written request must include the speaker's name; the proposed date, time, and location of the event; the expected size of the audience; and the topic of speech.
- D. In assigning space on campus for an invited speaker, the Office of Student Affairs shall consider the preference of the organization sponsoring the speaker; the availability of University facilities on the date and time of the event; the anticipated number of attendees; whether the facility can be adequately secured; and whether significant disruption to University functions can be reduced or prevented.
- E. The Office of Student Affairs may deny an outside speaker request if it determines, after reasonable inquiry, that the event is unlawful; that there is a likelihood that the speaker(s) will incite imminent unlawful action or willfully cause disruption to University functions; or holding the event will conflict with a time, place, or manner restriction contained in this policy. In determining whether a speaker is likely to incite imminent unlawful action or willfully cause disruption to University functions, the University may consider all relevant factors, including whether the speaker has, within the past five (5) years, invited violence, coercion, intimidation, or other invasion of lawful rights of an institution's students or employees; invited violence resulting in the seizure or destruction of property; or has willfully caused the forcible disruption of regularly scheduled classes or other functions at any institution.
- F. Where the request for an outside speaker is denied, the sponsoring organization may appeal to the President or an authorized designee in writing within three (3) business days of the denial. A hearing will be held within four (4) business days following the appeal before an impartial administrator appointed by the President. Such administrator shall make a recommendation to the President, whose decision shall be final.
- G. In advertising an outside speaker event, the sponsoring organization must clearly state that the organization, not Lamar University, is extending the invitation to speak and that any views the

speaker may express are the speaker's own and not necessarily those of the University or The Texas State University System.

- H. Speakers paid from state funds to speak on campus shall speak in a facility that is open to the public. This provision does not apply to classes, seminars, symposia, and conferences intended for the use and benefit of students, faculty, staff, and invited guests. The number of students, faculty, staff, and guests may be limited to prevent a hazard to the safety of the speaker or the audience.
- I. Where the request for an outside speaker is granted and the speaker accepts the invitation, the sponsoring organization shall inform the Office of Student Affairs immediately in writing of such acceptance. The Vice-president for Student Affairs, at his or her discretion, may require that the event be attended by a member of the University administration or faculty and/or that a statement be made at the event that the views presented are not necessarily those of the University or of the sponsoring organization. By acceptance of the invitation to speak, the speaker assumes full responsibility for any violation of law committed by the speaker while on campus.
- J. Recognized organizations seeking to sponsor political rallies or campaign-related events are subject the provisions of *TSUS Rules and Regulations, Chapter VII, paragraph 3.25*, including the requirement to lease or rent University facilities at fair market value.
- K. Registered organizations may not enter into joint sponsorship of any on-campus project or program which involves financial commitments or the scheduling or use of facilities with non-students without prior written approval of the Office of Student Affairs.

IX. USE OF UNIVERSITY FACILITIES BY OUTSIDE GROUPS

- A. Use of grounds and physical facilities of the University by outside individuals, groups, or associations ("Outside Groups") must be by (i) invitation and joint sponsorship by the University or (ii) by lease or rental agreement.
- B. Outside Groups may not have unrestricted use of any University facilities or grounds. The terms and limitations of such use shall be set via the terms of a joint sponsorship with the University and/or by lease or rental agreement.
- C. Joint sponsorship of any program or activity that is to result in private gain for the cooperating Outside Group or associated groups or individuals must be reviewed by the President or a designee and determined that such joint sponsorship serves a public purpose with adequate contractual control.
- D. Joint sponsorship must show educational implications or benefits and directly supplement the University's educational purposes. The University reserves the right to approve advertising and news releases.
- E. The University cannot be a joint sponsor with any Outside Group for political or sectarian activities or events. Such activities are subject to the provisions for outside speakers contained in this policy and/or the terms of any lease or rental agreement for the use of University facilities or property.

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F. Subject to University and TSUS policies, the University maintains sole discretion as to whether to enter into a joint sponsorship or rental agreement with an Outside Group. The University's needs and convenience shall take priority in scheduling facilities.

X. REPORT A VIOLATION

A. To report a violation of this policy, including by interfering with the Expressive Activity rights of others, submit a report to:

1. Report student or student organization actions to [Student Conduct & Care Services](#).
2. Report employee (faculty or staff) or outside group or participant actions to [Human Resources](#).

XI. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before the date the policy was last revised and/or approved.

Responsible Party: Vice President for Student Affairs
Dean of Students

XII. APPROVAL

Dr. Freddie Titus 12/02/2025
Vice President for Student Affairs Date

Dr. Jaime R. Taylor 01/05/2026
Lamar University President Date

POLICY LOG

Version	Date	Description of Changes
1	09/17/2025	Policy draft completed.
	01/05/2026	Policy approved by President.