



UNIVERSITY OF DENVER  
POLICY MANUAL  
SPEAKER AND PUBLIC  
EVENTS

**Responsible Department:** Office of the Provost  
**Recommended By:** Provost  
**Approved By:** Chancellor

**Policy Number**  
2.30.080

**Effective Date**  
6/8/2018

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The mission of the University of Denver is to promote learning by engaging with students in advancing scholarly inquiry, cultivating critical and creative thought, and generating knowledge. Our active partnerships with local and global communities contribute to a sustainable common good.

**II. POLICY OVERVIEW**

The University of Denver Speaker and Public Events Policy provides a framework for hosting speakers and events on the University of Denver campus that is consistent with the mission of the University, and that promote a safe, robust learning environment for the University community and its guests.

**A. SCOPE**

The policy applies to hosting speakers and events on the entire University campus. Existing policies and procedures for hosting routine events on campus continue to apply, including securing necessary approvals and conducting events consistent with University guidelines.

**B. PLACE, ACTIVITY, AND APPLICABILITY**

1. **Classroom instruction** is a learning activity involving assigned instructors and registered students in a regular academic course. *Only in exceptional cases might the activity of a guest speaker in a regular academic course fall under the purview of this policy.*
2. **Public platform speaking** is an activity of guest speakers invited by course instructors opening their classrooms to a larger audience—including other members of the University community or the general public—to attend the class to hear the views of guest speakers. *When the classroom space is transformed into a public platform, the activity of the guest speaker becomes a public event and falls under the purview of this policy.*
3. **Public event speaking** is an activity of guest speakers hosted by members of the

University and open to the public. In addition to public lectures, conferences, expositions, fairs, festivals, entertainment, and cause-related fundraising are examples of a public event. *The activity of guest speakers at public events falls under the purview of this policy.*

### **C. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Nothing in this speaker and public events policy supersedes, substitutes for, or eliminates the functioning of:

1. *University of Denver Statement of Policy and Principles on Freedom of Expression*, approved by the University of Denver Faculty Senate on May 19, 2017, and affirmed by the Board of Trustees on January 19, 2018;
2. *Policies and Procedures Relating to Faculty Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure, Section 1.1, Academic Freedom*, approved by the Board of Trustees on January 15, 2016;
3. *Office of Equal Opportunity and Office of Title IX Procedures*;
4. *Employee Grievance Process*; or
5. *Student Conduct Policies*

### **III. PROCESS OVERVIEW**

The University of Denver uses a multi-step review process when considering requests to host speakers and events on campus. Requests to use University facilities to provide a public platform for invited speakers and hold events in conjunction with their visit should be directed to the *Conference, Events, and Special Programs* office. When considering such requests, Conference, Events, and Special Programs staff will review the application to determine:

1. If the purpose of the speaker and event is clearly stated in the request.
2. If the purpose of the speaker and event is consistent with the University's educational mission.
3. If ample time (six to eight weeks) has been afforded to plan the event and ensure that it will be conducted in a manner that ensures the safety and well-being of those attending the event.
4. If exigent circumstances exist, a minimum two-week advance notice period may be approved for events/speakers that are determined to be non-controversial. The Conference, Events, and Special Programs office will contact the University Committee on Freedom of Expression to determine if the event/speaker qualifies as non-controversial.

If the Conference, Events, and Special Programs staff determines that a request raises substantive concerns relative to the *University of Denver Statement of Policy and Principles on Freedom of Expression* it will refer the request to the *University Committee on Freedom of Expression*.

If a request to use campus facilities has been forwarded to the University Committee on Freedom of Expression, the committee will review the request to determine:

1. If the purpose of the speaker and the plans for the event are consistent with all federal and state laws and regulations.
2. If the purpose of the speaker and plans for the event are consistent with the *University of Denver Statement of Policy and Principles on Freedom of Expression*
3. If the plans for the event sufficiently ensure the safety and well-being of all attendees.
4. If the time, place and manner of the event can be designed so as to ensure freedom of expression while creating and maintaining an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of the campus community, as well for those members of the public who may attend the event.

Upon completing its review, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Chancellor and her or his designee concerning the request. The Chancellor retains sole discretion for approving the request.

University organizations may reserve University facilities to conduct meetings or to host public events. Fostering critical discussion and meaningful dialogue regarding important and controversial issues is central to the University's mission. The University satisfies this mission by providing appropriate venues for speakers and open forums for audience engagement. This policy is intended to protect the rights of all speakers and audiences, and to promote the robust exchange of opinion and the search for truth.

## **A. POLITICAL CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNING**

1. Use of University facilities to *raise funds* to benefit a *political party, campaign, or candidate for public office* is prohibited.
2. Use of the *name, seal or letterhead* of the University on letters, or other written materials, intended to *support or oppose a political party, campaign or candidate for public office* is prohibited. This does not include the use of the University's name or seal solely for the purpose of describing the location of an event.
3. Use of University *communication resources* (including mail distribution services, telephone lines, or computer networks) in service of a *political party, campaign, or candidate for public office* is prohibited.
4. Use of University *property* for the *placement of signage to support or oppose a political party, campaign, or candidate for public office* is prohibited, with the exception of postings by students in their own campus residence.

## **B. PROTECTING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

The *University of Denver Statement of Policy and Principles on Freedom of Expression* states: "An inevitable but necessary cost of protecting free speech is that speech that is hurtful, offensive, provocative, and even hateful sometimes must be permitted... The fact

that speech may sometimes be offensive or even emotionally hurtful is not sufficient, alone, to justify interfering with the speaker's right to engage in such expression (p. 4)... fully consistent with freedom of speech, the University may and should protect community members from physically harmful conduct, harassment, true threats, intimidation, incitement of others to imminent lawless conduct, or assault (words that place a reasonable person in imminent fear of immediate harm). These categories of conduct and speech have long been recognized to be outside First Amendment protection and need not be tolerated by the University. Thus, the University may prohibit these narrowly defined categories of expression without violating basic free speech principles. It is also permissible to place reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of speech while not regulating its content. (p. 5)."

### **C. LIMITS ON FREE EXPRESSION**

Limits on free expression are those dictated by law, those necessary to protect the safety and rights of others, and those that allow the normal functioning of the University. Freedom of expression at the University, in any form, regardless of medium, may not:

1. Threaten or endanger the health or safety of any person;
2. Deny or infringe on the rights of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University;
3. Obstruct or interfere with the normal use of offices, classrooms, and other University facilities;
4. Obstruct the orderly operations of the University;
5. Damage University property, or contribute to property damage;
6. Restrict the free movement of persons in any part of property owned or leased by the University;
7. Obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic on campus;
8. Create a volume of sound that prevents members of the University community from conducting their normal activities;
9. Violate University policies.

### **D. DISRUPTION**

The expression of diverse viewpoints is of the highest importance, not only for those who espouse and defend a cause or position, but also for those who listen to and assess the speaker's views. The belief that a viewpoint is false, pernicious or in any other way offensive does not justify attempts to disrupt events or silence speakers. When a speech, or other form of creative expression, is prevented by disruptive protest from taking place or concluding, the effect is as much a denial of freedom of speech as other forms of censorship. Therefore, within the confines of a lecture hall, a physical facility, or in the vicinity of a place in which a member of the University community or guest of the University is addressing an assembled audience, protesters must not interfere unduly with communication between an invited speaker with members of the audience.

This prohibition against undue interference does not include suppression of the usual range of reactions commonly displayed by an audience during a robust discussion of

controversial ideas. Indeed, acts of protests and vocal dissent are protected forms of speech.

Protesters are within their rights to express their opposition outside of the lecture hall, physical facility or area where a lecture, meeting or performance is being held. They also have a right to organize alternative forums. These actions may not violate limits on expression listed in Section II, B.

If any of the parties within the confines of the lecture hall or physical facility, or in the vicinity of a place in which a member of the University community or a guest of the University is addressing an assembled audience, interferes unduly with freedom of expression or communication, the organizers of the event or a University representative must:

1. If possible, place such parties on notice that they are interfering unduly with such rights.
2. If the notified parties do not stop their undue interference, proceed with those measures deemed necessary to stop it, which may include the physical removal of individuals from the area.

The overriding goal of the organizers or University representative during a disruption should be to reestablish with deliberate speed an atmosphere conducive to communication between the speaker and the audience, and fully to respect the rights of all parties.

## **E. EVENT COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING**

Any communication advertising or describing an approved University public event must clearly state: *“This event is sponsored by [name of sponsor]. The use of University of Denver facilities for this event does not constitute an endorsement by the University. The views of those invited to speak on campus are the views of the speaker and not of the University of Denver.”*

### **University of Denver Published Statement Concerning Disruptors:**

Statement will be placed on the University of Denver 25Live Website and/or on the Conference and Events Memo of Understanding if applicable and/or included in the event program or ticket.

- 1. General Statement:** The University of Denver is committed to a culture of robust debate, open dialogue, and facilitation of free expression on its campus. When speech or other forms of creative expression are disrupted, an unacceptable denial of freedom may result. Acts of protest or disagreement with a speaker on the University campus may not unduly interfere with communication between the speaker and the audience. If such interference ensues, the parties responsible for it shall be notified that this is unacceptable. If the parties continue to violate the right of free expression of the

speaker, event organizers will use measures to stop the interference, which may include physical removal from the area.

This prohibition against undue interference does not include suppression of the usual range of reactions commonly displayed by an audience during a robust discussion of controversial ideas.

For more information on the University's policies on Freedom of Expression and Speaker/Public Events, please see [web citations].

- 2. Shortened Version for Event Program:** The University of Denver is committed to a culture of robust debate, open dialogue, and facilitation of free expression on its campus. If possible, parties unduly interfering with free expression or communications at a University event will be notified that they are interfering with such rights. If the parties do not subsequently stop their interference, the event organizers will employ necessary measures to stop the interference, which may include physical removal of the parties from the area.

This prohibition against undue interference does not include suppression of the usual range of reactions commonly displayed by an audience during a robust discussion of controversial ideas.

For more information on the University's policies on Freedom of Expression and Speaker/Public Events, please see [web citations].

- 3. Shortened Version for Event Ticket:** The University of Denver is committed to a culture of robust debate, open dialogue, and facilitation of free expression on its campus. For information on the University's policies on Freedom of Expression and Speaker/Public Events, please see [web citations].

## **F. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Event Organizer:**

1. Responsible for ensuring that all event applicants review and understand the University Speaker and Public Events Policy and the Standard Practice Guidelines herein.
2. Responsible for notifying event participants and attendees of the University's Freedom of Expression Policy and Standard Practice Guidelines regarding:
  - a. Protection of and limits to free expression
  - b. Acceptable forms of protest
  - c. Authority of the University to remove parties who violate these policies and guidelines
3. Responsible for developing a plan, in conjunction with Campus Safety, on response to disruptive behavior by attendees.

**Campus Safety:**

1. Upon notification of an event is responsible for coordinating with the event organizer on a response plan for disruptive behavior to include:
  - a. Plan for interaction between attendees and speakers
  - b. Designated person at the event to make initial contact with disruptor(s)
  - c. Designated authority to request disruptor(s) be removed from event
  - d. Plan for removing speaker(s) from event
  - e. Designated authority to stop/cancel event
  
2. It is the responsibility of Campus Safety staff and/or the Event Organizer to determine whether there is a violation of the right of free expression of a member of the University community, invited speaker or invited guest, and to take appropriate measures, consistent with University policies and guidelines, to safeguard this right.

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

None