



## University Policy: Guidelines for Freedom of Expression and Dissent

**Policy Category:** Student Policies; Academic/Research Policies; Employment, Benefits, and Workplace Policies

**Subject:** Freedom of Expression and Dissent in the University Community

**Office Responsible for Review of this Policy:** Office of Campus Life; Office of the Provost; Office of Finance and Treasurer; Office of Human Resources

**Procedures:** Academic Freedom at American University, found in Faculty Manual

**Related University Policies:** Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy, Lobbying and Political Activities Policy, Policy on Posting Materials, Social Media Guidelines, Student Conduct Code, Staff Personnel Policies, Faculty Manuals

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### I. SCOPE

This policy establishes protections for freedom of expression and dissent for all members of the University community - students, faculty, staff and hosted visitors.

### II. POLICY STATEMENT

American University defends the right to free expression, including the freedom to express dissent, within the context of the law and responsibility for one's actions. The university also reserves the right to specify time, manner and place for the exercise of these freedoms, guided by factors that include safety, the rights of others and the normal functioning of the university.

### III. POLICY

The University fosters and protects freedom of expression and dissent for all members of the University community. The only limits on free expression are those dictated by law, limits necessary to protect the safety and rights of others, and limits to ensure the normal functioning of the University.

For example, freedom of expression and dissent, in any form, regardless of medium, must not:

- A. threaten or endanger the health or safety of any person in the University community
- B. deny or infringe upon the rights of other students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University community;
- C. disrupt or interfere with educational and other activities of the University community;
- D. create a volume of sound that prevents members of the University from conducting their normal activities;
- E. obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic on campus;

- F. obstruct or restrict the free movement of persons in any part of property owned or leased by the University;
- G. obstruct or interfere with the normal use of offices, classrooms and other facilities by students, faculty, staff and guests of the University;
- H. obstruct the orderly operations of the University;
- I. damage University property, or contribute to property damage;
- J. violate University policies.

Consistent with the rights and responsibilities outlined in this policy, AU community members must follow all applicable policies related to posting materials, tabling, space reservation and use, and campus safety and security.

#### **IV. EFFECTIVE DATE(S)**

This Policy was effective October 26, 1982, and was last reviewed and revised in January 2016.

#### **V. SIGNATURE, TITLE AND DATE OF APPROVAL**

**This document was approved and signed by**

**Cornelius Kerwin**  
**President**

**Scott Bass**  
**Provost**

**Doug Kudravetz**  
**CFO, Vice President and Treasurer**

**Gail Hanson**  
**Vice President of Campus Life**

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