

Demonstration Guidelines and Procedures

The University is committed to the principles of academic freedom and deliberative discourse. All members of the campus community are encouraged to participate fully in the academic life and governance of the institution through various administrative and advisory committees, in the performance of their respective roles, and in all forums, formal and informal, for debate and deliberation. Recognizing that a healthy and productive climate for debate involves a provision for criticism and dissent, the University affirms the right of those including students, faculty, staff, and members of the public who dissent from conditions, issues, or proposed actions to express their views by whatever orderly means they deem appropriate, preserving the rights of others to their beliefs and opinions. Protest and dissent by verbal and other symbolic means are, therefore, protected. Protest and dissent which interfere with the freedom of speech, assembly, or ability to carry on normal activities among any individuals or groups exceed the bounds of protection. When, in the judgment of the President or his/her designee, dissent or protest interferes with the rights of others, actions will be taken by the President or his/her designee to rectify the situation by appropriate means.

It is the duty of the President and the administration, and the responsibility of all the members of the campus community, to affirm the rights of all protected expression and communication.

Procedures

For the purpose of enhancing the campus climate and preserving the rights of individuals and groups, the University institutes the following guidelines and procedures to assist members of the community in meeting these expectations.

A. Regarding organized demonstrations:

1. All persons or organizations intending to stage demonstrations on The William Paterson University campus or at events sponsored by the University at off-campus sites, must contact the Vice President of Student Development (or designee) one week prior to the event. The Vice President of Student Development will designate an appropriate area for the demonstration, i.e., one which will not restrict access to buildings or facilities or otherwise obstruct the conduct of normal activities. The Vice President of Student Development shall notify the individual or group of his/her decision regarding time, place, and manner of the event as soon as possible to allow for general notification.

A. Regarding spontaneous demonstrations

1. Because not all conditions, events, or actions that stimulate dissent may themselves be foreseeable, and because demonstrations may emerge under such circumstances, there is an expectation that spontaneous demonstrations occur from time to time.
2. Under these circumstances it is the responsibility of both the Vice President of Student Development (or designee) and the demonstrating parties to cooperate with the aim of supporting the rights of all and protecting the safety of all while enabling the expression of opinion.
3. The Vice President of Student Development and dissenting parties will therefore negotiate:
 - a. To seek to remedy the situation which gives rise to the demonstration, if possible or appropriate, or
 - b. To provide a forum for the expression of opinion and the continuation of debate and dialogue that seeks to resolve conflict, find remedy, or allow for meaningful expression of ideas.

Violations

Since the spirit of these guidelines and procedures is violated when any party abrogates the rights of individuals or groups as outlined above, it is the responsibility of all parties to avoid such abrogation in the following ways:

1. In the event that a demonstration or other expression of dissent becomes disruptive to the rights of others or poses a threat to health and safety, including that of the dissenting parties, the Vice President of Student Development or other designated representative of the administration in his/her absence shall assume responsibility, on behalf of the University, for presenting to the disruptive parties the concerns of the University and shall seek to provide alternative avenues for expression. In the event that accommodation is not reached, the Vice President of Student Development or other representative of the administration shall ask the disruptive parties to cease their activities.
2. The production of noise for instance through the use of loudspeakers but not only by electronic or other means or other annoying effects in the environment that disrupt the activities of others will be considered a violation of any agreement regarding a scheduled or spontaneous demonstration and will result in a request to cease disruption immediately.
3. In rare cases where activities are disruptive and the disruptive parties refuse to comply with a request to conduct alternative activities or to cease disruption, the University reserves the right and has the responsibility to the community, after due deliberation and consultation, to request the intervention of University Police to ensure the health and safety, access to facilities, and concurrence with the law.
4. If the demonstration causes disruption, destruction, or inconvenience, the demonstration leader will be informed by the Vice President of Student Development or his/her representative that the William Paterson University Police may be called to end the demonstration if there is no compliance with the directives or if the behavior causing the disruption, destruction, or inconvenience does not cease.

Adjudication and Appeal

1. Individuals or groups who believe that their rights have not been respected under these guidelines and procedures may seek remedy by written communication with the Vice President of Student Development.
2. Individuals or groups who deliberately violate this policy will face sanctions following a hearing by the Office of the Vice President of Student Development.
3. Appeal of decisions regarding complaints of the violation of rights or the imposition of sanctions shall be heard by the Vice President of Student Development.
4. In rare circumstances, when no other avenue is to be discovered for adjudication and appeal, the President or his/her designee shall appoint a mediating team to discover the facts of a situation and make recommendations regarding appropriate remedies or sanctions. The decision of the President or his/her delegated representative, following this review, shall be the final decision of the University.