



# Free Expression and Assembly

## 1. Policy Statement

Valdosta State University (VSU) affirms First Amendment rights of free speech, expression, religion, and assembly. VSU will manage expressive activity consistently within the law and institutional values of civility, integrity, and respect.

## 2. Scope of Policy and Definitions

This policy applies to the campus community, defined as students, faculty, staff, and their invited guests. Limited access may be provided to non-affiliated individuals and groups, consistent with University System of Georgia (USG) [Policy 06.05 Freedom of Expression](#).

## 3. Outdoor Public Forums

All unrestricted outdoor areas of campus are public forums for the campus community. Expressive activity in these areas does not require prior registration, subject to reasonable time, place, and manner (TPM) restrictions in Section IV. To facilitate scheduling and safety, VSU designates specific space within Palms Quadrangle as the primary Public Forum Venue.

### Registered Student Organizations

While individual students or groups may engage in spontaneous outdoor expression without being RSOs, Registered Student Organizations must follow University reservation procedures when planning events or activities, including those involving amplified sound, food service, large crowds, or coordination with campus services. This requirement is consistent and viewpoint neutral and ensures safety, orderly scheduling, and proper support.

## 4. Time, Place, and Manner Restrictions

The University may impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of expression to serve significant institutional interests such as safety, campus operations, and the protection of property. The following restrictions apply:

1. No interference with the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
2. No obstruction of building entrances/exits.
3. No interruption of classes, University programs, or business operations.
4. Use of amplified sound must comply with university noise regulations and requires advance approval.
5. No unauthorized commercial solicitation, sales, or fundraising.
6. Activities must conclude by posted building closing times; overnight camping is prohibited.
7. Spaces must be left clean and free of damage; sponsoring parties are financially responsible for cleanup or repair.

The Public Forum Venue is generally available for expression activities from 8:30am until 4:30pm Monday through Friday provided the area has not been previously reserved.

## 5. Spontaneous Expression

Members of the campus community may engage in spontaneous expressive activity or distribution of literature in outdoor forums without reservation, provided the activity complies with this policy and does not materially disrupt University functions. If spontaneous activity attracts 30+ participants, VSU may



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relocate the activity to the Public Forum Venue or another suitable site for safety and continuity, without regard to content or viewpoint.

## 6. Reservations (Organized Activity & External Users)

The [Public Forum Venue may be reserved](#) through the Campus Reservations and Facilities Office with at least four (4) business days' notice; VSU will confirm or deny in writing within two (2) business days. Denials will state reasons and may be appealed in writing to the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Affairs, who will respond within two (2) business days, who will issue a final decision within three (3) business days. Non-affiliated individuals or groups may use designated outdoor areas by reservation, subject to applicable requirements.

## 7. Unprotected Expression

VSU will not regulate expression based on content or viewpoint. However, expression not protected by law: true threats, incitement to imminent lawless action, defamation, obscenity, or unlawful harassment, is prohibited.

## 8. Publication, Orientation, and Training

This policy will be published on the University website and in the Student Handbook, presented during student orientation, and supported by faculty/staff training. Orientation and training will not include ideological tests, affirmations, or oaths, consistent with USG policy.

## 9. Emergencies

VSU may temporarily relocate, limit, or postpone expressive activity during emergencies (e.g., severe weather, campus safety incidents). When feasible, alternative opportunities will be offered.

## 10. Enforcement

Violations may result in action under the Student Code of Conduct or applicable employee procedures. Individuals/groups may be financially responsible for cleanup or damage.

## 11. Neutral Administration

VSU will administer this policy in a content-neutral and viewpoint-neutral manner. No individual or group will be advantaged or disadvantaged because of the message expressed.

## 12. Affected Stakeholders

Indicate all entities and persons within the university affected by this policy:

- Alumni       Graduate Students       Undergraduate Students
- Staff       Faculty       Student Employees
- Visitors       Vendors/Contractors       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## 13. Policy Attributes

<i>Responsible Office(s)</i>	Student Affairs, Student Union, 3rd Floor, Suite 3106, 229-333-5941, studentaffairs@valdosta.edu
<i>Approving Officer or Body</i>	University Council



## Free Expression and Assembly

<i>Date Approved</i>	10/09/2019
<i>Revisions</i>	10/16/2025: Revised this policy to adhere to Board of Regents update to USG Policy 6.5.2 Institutional Freedom of Expression Policies, approved by the BOR 11/12/2024. 02/03/2026: revised URL to USG Policy Manual
<i>Next Review Date</i>	10/16/2028