

# Demonstrations and Free Expression

## Wellesley College Policy on Demonstrations and Free Expression

### Fundamental principles

- 1.** Wellesley is a community of learners. As such, we recognize and affirm that freedom of expression and free intellectual inquiry and debate are vital to our academic mission and must be protected, even when the views expressed are unpopular or controversial.
- 2.** Freedom of expression on the Wellesley College campus necessitates the ability of students, faculty, and staff to engage in peaceful protests and demonstrations. Freedom of expression does not include the right to engage in conduct that threatens safety, suppresses others' right to speech, or disrupts the education of Wellesley students.

*The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for demonstrations and protests, including considerations of time, place, and manner.*

# Successful demonstrations require planning and accountability

To ensure that demonstrations do not threaten the safety of others, suppress others' right to speech, or disrupt the education of students, Wellesley College community members (current students, faculty, and staff) are expected to notify the College via the Office of the Dean of Students, the Office of the Provost, or the Office of Human Resources two days in advance of the demonstration, if possible.<sup>1</sup> The College will respond to the demonstration organizers with respect to reasonable time, place, and manner considerations within 24 hours of notification.

Demonstration organizers should provide the following information when they notify the College or [submit the notification form](#):

- 1.** Nature of the demonstration.
- 2.** Location of the demonstration.
- 3.** Security needs of the demonstration.
- 4.** Time of the demonstration.
- 5.** Plans for managing disruptive behavior should it occur.
- 6.** Any other necessary considerations. For example, if the demonstration opposes or otherwise relates to another approved Wellesley event, the location of a demonstration will be discussed with organizers to allow them to be as proximate to the other event as deemed safe.
- 7.** Contact information for organizers.

## Considerations of time, place, and manner

Demonstrations for which adequate notification is provided will be approved as long as considerations of time, place, and manner have been addressed. The College reserves the right to modify the time, place, or manner of a demonstration when there is a reasonable expectation that it may threaten safety, suppress others' right to speech, or disrupt the education of students, such as by interfering with the ability of others to see, hear, or participate in another event, class or academic activity.

Examples of conduct that will require modification of time, place, or manner or (if they do occur) would constitute violations of this policy include:

- 1.** Blocking access to campus facilities or activities or impeding traffic, including to the venue in which another event is being held.
- 2.** Utilizing signs constructed of hard materials other than cloth or cardboard, or large items.
- 3.** Using bullhorns or other loud or amplified sound-making devices inside of buildings.

## Examples of conduct that is expressly prohibited by other College policies include:

- 1.** Introducing torches or other dangerous or hazardous items or weapons on campus.
- 2.** Coercing members of the community to accept promotional materials or leaflets.
- 3.** Using chalk on campus buildings or otherwise causing damage to any structures or causing injury to individuals.
- 4.** Engaging in theft or vandalism or other property damage.
- 5.** Using intimidating tactics or unwelcome physical contact between demonstrators, counter-demonstrators, audience members, speakers or performers, or College officials, per our workplace violence and Honor Code policies.

## Response to violations of the policy

If there is conduct that violates College policy, demonstration organizers/participants will be advised to stop the offensive conduct. A designated College official (e.g. in the case of a student demonstration, the Dean of Students or her designee in Student Life) will inform the organizers of the need to address the conduct. Behavior that continues to be in violation of College policy will be addressed as appropriate.

Demonstration organizers should be aware that the use of public streets for parades or demonstrations is subject to Town of Wellesley ordinances and may require a town permit.

Demonstration organizers should also be aware that Campus Police has the authority to respond to threats of violence and acts of violence without first contacting demonstration organizers or Wellesley College administrators.

Wellesley College policies that are relevant to demonstrations include:

- [Solicitation policy](#)
- [Poster policy](#)
- [Honor Code](#)
- [Business Conduct Policy for Employees](#)

## Demonstrations involving members of the public

Wellesley College is a private institution, and as such may require members of the public who are not current faculty, staff, or students to leave Wellesley College property. Failure to comply may result in arrest for unlawful trespass or other criminal violations. Members of the Wellesley College community who invite members of the public onto the campus are responsible for the conduct of their guests.

<sup>1</sup>There may be circumstances in which it is not possible to meet this expectation, for example in the case of a spontaneous demonstration or a demonstration held in response to an unanticipated event. In such cases, organizers are responsible for ensuring that the demonstration is in compliance with all the other provisions of this policy and for contacting the College as soon as possible.



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