



Origination 07/2012
Last Approved 06/2024
Effective 06/2024
Last Revised 06/2024
Next Review 06/2028

Owner Sirena Cantrell:
AVP & Dean of Students
Area Dean of Students

Free Speech, Demonstration and Protest Policy

Policy Statement

A policy has been established to facilitate free speech demonstrations and protests at The University of Southern Mississippi. This would include both campuses and other research sites.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

This policy is required for the effective communication of University policy regarding free speech, demonstrations and protests on campus.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community.

Definitions

N/A

Policy/Procedures

Free Speech Zones

1. The University has established high visibility areas on campus in order to facilitate robust debate and the free exchange of ideas. These Free Speech Zones may be used by any person, including non-students and other campus guests:

1. **Hattiesburg Campus:**

1. **Shoemaker Square Fountain** (Paved area immediately surrounding the

fountain and labeled as A on the attached map)

2. **Pedestrian Plaza** (area on the west end of Pedestrian Plaza and labeled as B on the attached map)
3. **Weathersby Lawn** (area on west quadrant of Weathersby Lawn and labeled as C on the attached map)
4. **Centennial Green** (area on the southwest corner of Centennial Green and labeled as D on the attached map)
5. **Union Plaza** (area east of the Hub and labeled as E on the attached map)

2. **Gulf Park Campus:**

1. **Admin Plaza** (Northeast of Hardy Hall) and labeled A on the attached map.
2. **Green Space** (South of Library) and labeled B on the attached map.

University Students, Faculty and Staff

Areas defined in Section 1.0 may be used without permission from the University by students, faculty or staff so long as they have not been previously reserved or scheduled for a particular function, no sound amplification is used, no structure is erected, and the participants do not violate other University policies. Any speaker may be denied or asked to leave if the speech constitutes an immediate and serious danger to the institution's orderly operation by the speaker's incitement of such actions by:

1. The willful damage or destruction or seizure and subversion of the institution's buildings or other property.
2. The forcible disruption or impairment or interference with the institution's regularly scheduled classes or other educational functions.
3. The physical harm, coercion, intimidation or other invasion of lawful rights of the institution's officials, faculty members or students; or other campus disorder of a violent nature.
4. Any University affiliated speaker may be asked by a University official or University Police Department officer to relocate to one of the alternate locations listed if the designated "free speech zone" has been previously reserved by one or more student organizations or University departments.
5. Individual students, faculty or staff have the right of free expression anywhere on campus so long as the expressive activities or related conduct does not violate any other applicable University policies, nor pose a threat to the safety and security of the campus.
6. If a student organization or an individual student anticipates that an event may impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic or will involve a parade, march or other similar activity, the University requires the student organization or individual student to complete an event form through the Office of Leadership and Student Involvement (LSI) at least three (3) days in advance of the activity. LSI will work with the organization to meet the request or find a suitable time and location that balances the rights of the student organization with the rights of others and the University's educational mission. The purpose of this policy is not to

designate University streets and common areas as a public forum or to accommodate demonstrations or protests by those who are not part of the University community (non-students and other campus guests). Rather, the purpose of this policy is to promote and facilitate student expression while allowing the University to make any necessary arrangements (such as arranging parade routes, providing security) to assure such activities do not interfere with the University's mission and operations or with the rights of others and do not pose a threat of safety and security of campus.

7. Only to the extent allowed by applicable law, the University reserves the right to impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place, or manner of speech, demonstrations, and protests for reasons that include, but are not limited to, safety and security and/or mitigation of the disruption to campus activities.

Non-University Affiliated

1. Individuals or groups not affiliated with the University are permitted access to the *Free Speech Zones* subject to the following requirements:
 - a. Non University individuals or groups may reserve one of the designated *Free Speech Zone* spaces through the Dean of Students Office (Hattiesburg campus) or the Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coastal Operations no sooner than three (3) business days in advance and no later than one (1) business day in advance.
 - b. The Dean of Students Office or Office of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coastal Operations may reserve one of the designated *Free Speech Zones* if it has not been previously reserved by a student organization or University department.
 - c. Non University affiliated individuals or groups must comply with all of the requirements outlined in this policy.
2. Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Dean of Students Office (R.C. Cook Union, Room 220) for the Hattiesburg campus or the Office of the Vice President and Vice Provost for the Long Beach campus (Hardy Hall, Room 219).
3. Only to the extent allowed by applicable law, the University reserves the right to impose reasonable restrictions on the time, place, or manner of speech, demonstrations and protests for reasons that include, but are not limited to, safety and security and/or mitigation of the disruption to campus activities.

Review

The Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions

N/A

Appendices

See Free Speech Zone Maps for each of the campuses below:

- [Hattiesburg](#) and
- [Gulf Park](#)

Related Information

N/A

All Revision Dates

06/2024, 08/2022, 03/2020, 02/2020, 01/2020, 01/2019, 01/2019, 07/2018, 04/2018, 11/2017, 01/2017, 06/2015, 10/2013, 04/2013, 07/2012

Attachments

[84252 Gulf Park Free Speech Zones Sheet164.pdf](#)

[84363_Hattiesburg Free Speech Zones Sheet.pdf](#)

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
General Counsel	Jon Weathers: General Counsel	06/2024
Director of Compliance and Ethics	Frank Walters: Dir Compl & Ethics/Asc Gen Col	06/2024
Associate General Counsel	Subrina Cooper: Asc General Counsel	06/2024
VP of Student Affairs	Kristi Motter: VP Student Aff/ Enroll Mgt	06/2024
AVP & Dean of Students	Sirena Cantrell: AVP & Dean of Students	06/2024
Associate Director of Compliance and Ethics	Jennifer Lewis: Asc Dir Compl & Ethics	06/2024