

POLICY ON PUBLIC SPEECH, ASSEMBLY AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Northwestern State University views free speech as fundamental to democracy and the mission of higher education. NSU is committed to the lawful expression of ideas on our campus by students, administrators, faculty, staff and invited guests in accordance with state law, and the policies of the University of Louisiana System which include reasonable time, place and manner restrictions.

POLICY

- Northwestern State University shall strive to ensure the fullest degree of intellectual freedom and free expression.
- It is not the responsibility of NSU to shield individuals from speech protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution and Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution of Louisiana, and other applicable laws, including without limitation ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive.
- Students and faculty have the freedom to discuss any topic that presents itself, as provided under the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America and Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution of Louisiana and other applicable laws permit and within the time, place, and manner of expression that are consistent with this policy and that are necessary to achieve a significant institutional interest.
- Students and faculty may assemble and engage in spontaneous expressive activity as long as such activity is not unlawful and does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the institution, subject to the requirements of this policy.
- Any person lawfully present on campus who wishes to engage in noncommercial expressive activity at NSU shall be permitted to do so freely, as long as the person's conduct is not unlawful and does not materially and substantially disrupt the functioning of the institution.
- Protests or demonstrations that infringe upon the constitutional rights of others to engage in or listen to expressive activity by creating a substantial or material disruption to the functioning of the institution or to someone's expressive activity shall not be permitted.
- The public areas of Northwestern State University are traditional public forums and are open on the same terms to any speaker.
- Northwestern State University will not deny a belief-based student organization any benefit or privilege available to any other student organization, or otherwise discriminate against a belief-based organization, including any requirement that the leaders of the organization:
 - o Affirm and adhere to the organization's sincerely held beliefs.
 - o Comply with the organization's standards of conduct.
 - o Further the organization's mission or purpose, as defined by the organization.

TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER RESTRICTIONS

- Demonstrations or protests may not block ingress or egress to roadways, buildings, exterior patios, plazas, walkways, or gathering spaces.
- Demonstrations and protests should take place at least 150 feet from academic buildings during academic hours to avoid disrupting the academic functions of the university.
- Sound systems and amplification devices may only be used in areas and during hours that will not disrupt the academic and administrative functions of the university.
- Restricted areas of the campus, or those areas not deemed a traditional public forum, may not be used for demonstrations or protests.
- The interior of buildings may not be used for spontaneous expressive activity. Interior rooms and spaces must be reserved using that facility's reservation methods and be used for that facility's purpose.
- Harassment, threats, and expressions directed to provoke and likely to produce imminent lawless actions are prohibited.

REGISTRATION & PREFERRED LOCATIONS

The safety of members of the NSU community and visitors to the campus is paramount. To maintain safety and security, to minimize risks of harm and to minimize conflict with academic processes, the university has designated three preferred locations for demonstrations and protests. Preferred locations are:

- Student Union Plaza
- Flag Pole on the Kyser Hall Brickway
- Green Space between CAPA and Varnado Hall

To better provide safety and security to students, administrators, faculty, staff, and visitors, Northwestern State University requests that demonstrations and protests be registered with the Vice President for the Student Experience at least 24-48 hours in advance.

FREE SPEECH VIOLATIONS

Should you feel that your rights to free expression have been violated, you may seek relief by contacting the Vice President for the Student Experience or other appropriate university personnel.