

# Freedom of Expression and Dissent/Speakers Policy

---

## **Introduction**

This policy is in place to provide for student expression and dissent in an equitable and safe manner.

All persons, organizations or groups are encouraged to consult this policy before engaging in any form of organized dissent.

## **Freedom of Expression**

As an academic community, the University is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge. Therefore, persons, organizations or groups have the freedom to present various points of view without physical restriction, disruption or intimidation by others. Such inappropriate behaviors are contrary to the University's mission and will not be tolerated.

## **Dissent**

Dissent, defined as disagreement or a difference of opinion, is integral to the purpose of higher education. A university must be an optimal learning environment and all members of the LMU community have a responsibility to maintain an atmosphere of free inquiry and expression that is orderly, safe and regulated within necessary restrictions of time, location and method.

## **Coercive Disruption**

The difference between legitimate dissent and coercive disruption can be difficult to define. Coercive disruption is generally regarded as Group A imposing its opinion upon Group B without Group B's consent, regardless of either group's perceptions of the amount of power or influence their opposition possesses. Thus, a group perceived as "powerless" is not necessarily innocent of coercive disruption if its forms of expression are disruptive, unethical, unlawful or otherwise extreme.

Furthermore, any gathering of people that performs a disruptive act in a violent or boisterous manner is acting contrary to University policy. More specifically, coercive disruption includes any activities that:

- Deny or infringe upon the rights of students, faculty or staff of the University community.
- Disrupt or interfere with educational or other activities of the University community.
- React to the peaceful dissent of others by attempting to deny their rights.
- Obstruct or restrict free movement of persons on any part of the campus.
- Deny the use of offices or other facilities to students, faculty, Public Safety officers, staff, administrators or guests of the LMU community.
- Endanger the safety of any person on the campus.
- Result in the destruction of property.

## **Events sponsored by Student Organizations and University Programs**

### **Lecturers and Other Public Speakers**

The University is dedicated to providing an academic environment that encourages students to seek truth, develop critical thinking and make responsible decisions that influence their lives and the greater community in which they live. To this end, student organizations are encouraged to invite lecturers from outside the University community.

It must be clearly understood that student organization or University program sponsorship of guest speakers does not imply University approval or endorsement of the views presented.

These guidelines do not apply to faculty members who, under the principles of academic freedom, have the right to invite lecturers to their classrooms.

### **Approval Process**

Registered student organizations and University programs must seek approval for any lectures or programs through the Activity Planner and Event Proposal Process coordinated through Student Leadership & Development. Review of the event will include, but is not limited to, the content of the program, impact on human and/or financial resources, ability to maintain orderly operation of campus activities and the physical safety of the campus population. Final authorization for a speaker may be required from the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs.

The Guiding Principles for Student Programming will be used to determine the congruence of each requested event with the university mission and Catholic teachings. In some cases the event may not be approved or the format of the event may need to be modified to create a balanced educational opportunity for the campus community.

All applicable policies governing student events, safety, ticket sales, amplification and catering must be observed while planning and implementing the event.