Yale University Free Expression Policy Guidance

As an academic institution dedicated to free inquiry and the search for truth, the University is committed to free expression. These guidelines are intended to promote the exercise of free expression and the safety and security of all members of the University community.

When Yale or its members host speakers, they are generally free to express their views, even if unpopular or controversial. Dissenting members of the community may peacefully protest and express disagreement, but they may not interfere with a speaker's ability to speak or attendees' ability to attend, listen and hear. This includes disrupting an event, whether the disruption takes place inside or outside the room where the event is taking place; and disruption, in any part of a building or facility, that interferes with the event or with classes or other university activity or operations.

The right to protest or express disagreement with a speaker is subject to three general conditions:

1) access to an event or facility may not be blocked
2) the event and the regular or essential operations of the University may not be disrupted
3) the safety of those attending the event and other members of the community may not be compromised.

The following constitute examples of conduct that disrupts or interferes with University events or operations, blocks access to university facilities, restricts others' ability to listen or be heard, or creates safety concerns, and is therefore not permitted:

- Holding up signs in a manner that obstructs the view of those attempting to watch an event or speaker
- Speaking from a bullhorn, shouting, or playing amplified music or noise from audio sources in a manner that interferes with speakers' ability to be heard and of community members opportunity to listen, or disrupts or interferes with classes or other university activities
- Standing up in an assembly in a way that obstructs the view of those attempting to watch an event or speaker and/or blocking the aisles or routes of egress
- Sitting in or otherwise occupying a building in a way that blocks access or otherwise interferes with university events or operations
- Trespassing by remaining in buildings when told to leave or remaining in spaces after hours when they are otherwise closed to the Yale community

University administrators and safety/security personnel may be present at a protest to ensure that the event proceeds in a way that is consistent with the University's policy on free expression.

Violation of the Free Expression Policy at Yale Law School

Violations of the University's policy on free expression are punishable through Yale Law School's Rights and Duties, which proscribes:

"Intentionally and substantially interfering with the conduct of classes, the administration of the Law School, or other University activities or functions, or with the freedom of movement, freedom of peaceable assembly, freedom to learn, or other rights of any member of or visitor to the Law School or University."

Engaging in such conduct can subject students to penalties up to and including probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending upon the gravity of the offense.

Free Expression Disruption Notice Protocol:

Before the Event Begins: As an administrator responsible for this event, I remind you that Yale is committed to protecting free expression and peaceful dissent. Interfering with a speaker's ability to speak and the audience's ability to hear and see is not consistent with the University's free expression policy.

After Any Disruption: As I have already informed you, preventing others from hearing or seeing the speaker is not permitted. I am informing you that you are in violation of the University's free expression policy, and any disruption must stop immediately. I will give you one more warning momentarily. If the disruption does not stop, you will be subject to possible disciplinary sanctions, citation, and summons.

Final Warning: I will now call upon University administrators and security personnel to assist in allowing this event to proceed without further disruption.