



**Responsible University Administrator:** Vice President for Student Affairs

**Responsible Officer:** Dean of Students

**Origination Date:** N/A

**Current Revision Date:** 7/5/18

**Next Review Date:** 6/30/19

**End of Policy Date:** N/A

**Policy Number:** STUA-UNA-012

## **FREE SPEECH, DEMONSTRATION AND PROTEST POLICY**

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### **Policy Statement**

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A policy has been established to facilitate free speech, demonstrations and protests on campus. Students and others should understand the parameters for such events.

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### **Reason for Policy/Purpose**

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

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### **Who Needs to Know This Policy**

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All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community.

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### **Website Address for this Policy**

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[www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-una-012](http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-stua-una-012)

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## Definitions

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N/A

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## Policy/Procedures

### Free Speech Zones

- 1.0 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:
  - 1.1 Hattiesburg Campus:
    - 1.1.1 **Shoemaker Square Fountain** (Paved area immediately surrounding the fountain)
    - 1.1.2 **Free Speech Area North** (Paved area on Southwest corner of HUB, North of the bollards)
    - 1.1.3 **Free Speech Area West** (Paved inset area, without bench, West of the Fountain, opening to Centennial Green)
  - 1.2 Gulf Park Campus:
    - 1.2.1 Shoo Fly area south of the tennis courts
    - 1.2.2 Green Space South of Library

### University Students, Faculty and Staff

- 2.0 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:
  - 2.1 The willful damage or destruction or seizure and subversion of the institution's buildings or other property;
  - 2.2 The forcible disruption or impairment or interference with the institution's regularly scheduled classes or other educational functions;

- 2.3 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.
- 3.0 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.
- 4.0 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.
- 5.0 If a student organization desires to demonstrate in an area of campus outside of the *Free Speech Zones* or if the student organization intends to advertise for an event or anticipates an event that may draw a large crowd or impede pedestrian or vehicular traffic or will involve a parade, march or other similar activity, the University requires the student organization 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 route, providing security) to assure such activities do not interfere with the University's mission and operations or with the rights of others. If an individual student wishes to conduct an organized demonstration or to demonstrate in areas other than the *Free Speech Zones*, the student must seek the sponsorship of a registered student organization and follow the procedures outlined in this section.

#### Non-University Affiliated

- 6.0 Individuals or groups not affiliated with the University are permitted access to the *Free Speech Zones* subject to the following requirements:
- 6.1. Non University individuals or groups may reserve one of the designated *Free Speech Zone* spaces through the Office of Event Services no sooner than three (3) business days in advance and no later than one (1) business day in advance.
- 6.2 The Office of Event Services may reserve one of the designated *Free Speech Zones* if it has not been previously reserved by a student organization or University department.

6.2 Non University affiliated individuals or groups must comply with all of the requirements outlined in this policy.

7.0 Any questions concerning this policy should be directed to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (R.C. Cook Union, Room 210).

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## Review

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

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## Forms/Instructions

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N/A

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## Appendices

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N/A

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## Related Information

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N/A

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## History

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**Amendments:** Month, Day, Year – summary of changes

07/01/12: Updated

04/12/13: Formatted for template. Minor editing throughout.

10/17/13: Revised – expanded free speech zones and changed registration authority.

6/23/15: Revised – deleted no. 5 from Section B, removed one month notice requirement in Section C, clarified purpose of policy in Section C, corrected title of policy reviewer to reflect recent change in title, and made other minor changes.

1/18/17: Minor edits to include Gulf Park Free Speech Zone.

11/9/17: Minor edits to reflect priorities of reserved spaces.

4/9/18: Minor edit to add Free Speech Area to Gulf Park Campus

7/5/18: Minor edit to reduce period for student organization to complete event form from one week to three days.

**Authorization:**

**Title: Free Speech, Demonstration and Protest Policy**  
**Policy number: STUA-UNA-012**

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible University Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Responsible University Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**REVIEWED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director of Compliance and Ethics

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Office of General Counsel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date