



Student and Student Organization Guidelines for Free Expression on Campus

Updated May 2024



Student and Student Organization Guidelines for Free Expression on Campus

Updated May 2024

1.0 Guiding Statement

Rutgers University is proud of its long history of activism in which members of the community have engaged in peaceful protests and demonstrations and gathered for rallies and vigils. With a student population of over 50,000, consideration must be given to the spaces and guidelines for expressive activities at Rutgers University–New Brunswick to provide for the safety of participants and to minimize disruption of educational, research or business functions of the university. All activities are subject to Rutgers University policy on Disruptions (50.3.5)

All members of the Rutgers University–New Brunswick community – students, faculty, staff, and alumni – are free to express their viewpoints in public forums as private citizens. These rights of free expression are guaranteed by the First Amendment. It is a fundamental tenet of a liberal education that students be exposed to a marketplace of ideas and be able to discern for themselves what they believe. At Rutgers, we strive to teach students how to think, not what to think. As such, we will not move to silence or endorse any viewpoints on any issues. Our University is a community of diverse ideas, organizations and perspectives. The wide variety of programming at Rutgers highlights that not all of our students share the same background, beliefs, opinions, or interests. Embracing this diversity, we strongly support the right of free speech - including the right to express views that seem offensive to others - but expect all community members to engage in civil discussion and to treat each other with respect.

Rutgers Statement on Free Speech and Academic Freedom



All of the members of the Rutgers University community—our faculty members, students, alumni, and staff—are free to express their viewpoints in public forums, including viewpoints that may differ from the majority of people in the University community.

Rutgers University does not restrict the activities of recognized university organizations, including the speakers they invite to campus, provided organizations obey the law and follow University policy and guidelines regarding these events.

We will defend the rights of all Rutgers community members to speak freely. That freedom is fundamental to our University, our society, and our nation.



2.0 Time Place and Manner

The University maintains the right, and the responsibility, to determine appropriate time, place and manner to ensure that expressive activities do not interfere with or disrupt educational, research or business functions of the University, as well as to provide protections for public health, safety and welfare.

The following general conditions apply to use of all areas of the Rutgers University–New Brunswick campuses:

- Activities must be conducted in a way that are consistent with federal, state and local laws.
- Activities must be conducted in a way that are consistent with the rules, regulations, and policies of Rutgers University including the University Code of Student Conduct.
- Activities must provide for the safety and well-being of individual members and the campus community. This includes abiding by guidelines established by the State of New Jersey and/or Federal Procedures.
- Activities must allow for the continuation of academic activities, university operations, and university-sponsored events.

3.0 Designated Public Forum Areas

The following designated public forum spaces have been approved for small and large group demonstrations and expressive activities on Rutgers University–New Brunswick campuses. Those wishing to host programs should contact Student Centers and Activities for reservations.

College Avenue Campus

A designated public forum area is located on the steps between the main entrance of Brower Commons Dining Hall and Stonier Hall. The space also extends to the Records Hall courtyard. (Anticipated construction projects in Fall 2024 may impede use of space. A new location will be designated if necessary.).

Busch Campus

A designated public forum area is located on the lawn adjacent to the Paul Robeson Cultural Center and Busch Student Center.

Cook Campus

A designated public forum space is located at the Cook Student Center Patio.

Livingston Campus

A designated public forum area is located on the grass area in the front of Livingston Student Center.



Douglass Campus

A designated public forum area is located at the patio and grass area on the Nichol Avenue side of the Douglass Student Center.

Alternative venues may be requested for the proposed activity. Consideration will be given to the number of anticipated participants, the type of activity, the anticipated time and duration, and proximity to other university sponsored events, educational activities to minimize disruption.

4.0 Procedures for Small Demonstrations (less than 10 Participants)

Demonstrations or activities of ten (10) or fewer students may occur at any designated public forum outdoor area without advance notification. While not required, it is still strongly suggested that organizations fill out a [Public Forum Notification Form](#). These activities are subject to time, place, and manner considerations (see 2.0), must provide for the safety and well-being of community members, and may not disrupt educational, research or business functions of the University. Student organization members are encouraged to contact their advisor for assistance in planning their demonstration safely. Organizer will also meet with a member of the Demonstration Safety Response Team to discuss proposed activities and applicable policy guidelines.

5.0 Procedures for Scheduled Demonstrations (Those with more than 10 participants)

Student organizations holding public forums (i.e. demonstrations, vigils, etc.) in designated areas are asked to submit the [Public Forum Notification Form](#) at least three (3) business days in advance of the scheduled demonstration. Public Forums with an anticipated attendance of over 10 may require more advanced planning with Student Affairs staff and/or RUPD to ensure participants' safety and adherence to fire/safety regulations. We cannot assure the availability of the space or approve the expressive activities desired without proper notice.

There are a number of areas on campus which have been designated for expressive activities such as demonstrations, vigils, and protests, for more than ten (10). These areas have been identified for their visibility on each campus and where the activities are least likely to disrupt educational, research or business functions of the University; however, there are physical space considerations associated with some of the designated locations (see 3.0).

To ensure that the space can safely accommodate the anticipated numbers of participants and to allow the University to coordinate the use of any services, including Public Safety, Facilities, etc., use of the designated areas need to be requested formally by either a registered student(s) or student



organization(s). Requests must be made by filling out a Public Forum Notification Form three (3) business days in advance.

*Silent, peaceful protests or marches, which satisfy general University guidelines may be coordinated in alternative locations during the same time.

6.0 Spontaneous Demonstrations or Demonstrations Taking Place with Fewer than 3 days' notice

These procedures are not intended to prevent students from gathering with fewer than three (3) days' notice. For those situations, in which advanced planning is impossible, students are still encouraged to speak with an advisor, and fill out the [Public Forum notification Form](#) so that efforts can be made to ensure the safety of participants and allow for the continuation of educational, research, and business functions of the University to occur without disruption.

7.0 Operating Procedures for all Demonstrations

- No amplification of sound is permitted- except for vigils. Vigils are considered a program and not a demonstration. Bull horns are not considered amplified sound and are permitted.
- Individuals may not block or interfere with vehicular, bicycle or pedestrian traffic.
- Individuals may not block or prevent others from entering and exiting campus buildings.
- Individuals may not obstruct, disrupt, or attempt to force the cancellation of any event or activity sponsored by the university or by anyone authorized to use university facilities.
- Individuals shall not harass or be verbally or physically threatening or intimidating.
- Individuals shall comply with the directions of a university official acting in the performance of his/her duties.
- University property must be protected at all times.
- Placing or building structures is prohibited without expressed permission by Rutgers University. Structures established without permission will be removed and the sponsoring organization, department, and/or individual will be responsible for all related costs. No inflatable structures are permitted.
- Overnight camping is not a form of expression and, therefore, will not be permitted without prior permission from Student Centers and Activities in coordination with Institutional Planning and Operations.
- Events of a commercial, private, profit-making or fundraising nature are prohibited at all public forum spaces. Students should request programming space and follow guidelines for hosting these events.



8.0 Procedures for Demonstrating a Campus Speaker or Event

When an invited speaker or event is the focus of the protest, individuals may demonstrate and/or leaflet outside the location of the scheduled program within a designated area established to prevent minimal disruption to the scheduled speaker or event. Those who enter the scheduled event as audience members must not interfere with the program. Demonstrators may not hinder the ability of participants to enter or exit the event. Individuals who disrupt a program may be asked to leave. Signs or placards may only be permitted in the back of the room/facility to not impede the site-line of audience members.

9.0 Other forms of Promotion and Engagement – Tabling, Posting of Flyers, Outdoor Programs, and Fundraising

- **Tabling at a Student Center:** Student organizations wishing to promote a program, their organization, or a particular initiative may request a table by contacting (Student Centers and Activities: Meetings and Events Office at centerres@echo.rutgers.edu or 848-932-8821). Table reservations are available in a Student Center and in some cases outside of the Center in designated locations, including the Student Activities Center.
- **Tabling at a Dining Hall:** Recognized and registered student organizations may reserve tables for the distribution of information relevant to the organization's mission. A soliciting permit request must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Executive Director, Rutgers Dining Services. All requests are to be submitted via [online](#) form. Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm. If it is necessary to cancel a reservation, please contact the Office of the Executive Director, (848) 932-8469.
- **Posting of Flyers:** Bulletin boards in the Student Centers, Recreation Centers, Dining Halls and Residence Halls are for the purpose of promoting Rutgers University departmental, registered student organization and fraternity and sorority programs and events, unless expressly stated otherwise. These departments should be contacted directly for their specific posting policies. There is no posting of flyers/stickers outside of buildings on Rutgers University New Brunswick campuses. Flyers posted on bus stops, light poles or buildings will be removed by Facilities.
- **Chalking Policy:** Chalking Policy is under review and being updated. The new chalking policy will be available August 1, 2024.
- **Leafletting:** Rutgers University students may distribute, without registering or advance approval, university-sponsored announcements or statements in any outdoor area which is not restricted or scheduled. Materials should include the name(s) of the sponsoring organization or departments.



Leafletting of university-sponsored materials is defined as the handing out of materials. Such actions should not block or otherwise interfere with individuals entering or exiting campus buildings, force individuals to accept materials, or result in litter. Individuals or organizations may be held responsible for costs incurred with the clean-up of litter. Materials may not be left at bus-stops, table tops, counters, etc. Distribution of commercial materials or selling of items requires a table reservation at a Student Center. Reservations may be made by contacting the Student Center and Activities: Meetings and Events Office at centerres@echo.rutgers.edu or 848-932-8821.

- **Outdoor Programming:** Recognized student organizations may request to use outdoor space for programs. Requests for outdoor programming can be made by contacting Student Centers and Activities: Meetings and Events Office at centerres@echo.rutgers.edu or 848-932-8821. Please note that requests for outdoor programming will need to be reviewed by the Student Centers and Activities, other University units as needed and the organization's Advisor before an outdoor program can be approved.
- **Fundraising:** Recognized student organizations may solicit funds for sponsored events or charitable organizations. Tables may be reserved for bake sales, fundraising, or similar activities by contacting the Student Centers and Activities: Meetings and Events Office at centerres@echo.rutgers.edu or 848-932-8821.

NOTE: Fundraising tables will be available for organizations on a first come, first serve reservation basis and are available in all Student Centers. Fundraising is not permitted at tables at The Yard or Public Forum locations. Cash handling requires that all funds be deposited at the Student Center with no cash leaving the premises. **NOTE:** Fundraisers that involve dunk tanks, pie eating/throwing, etc. are considered programs and must go through the event planning process with corresponding department/advisor. Such fundraisers that are held outside will need to reserve an appropriate space through the Student Centers and Activities: Meetings and Events Office at centerres@echo.rutgers.edu or 848-932-8821.