



**Approving University Official:** Provost, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
**Responsible Offices:** Provost, Student Affairs, Human Resources  
**Effective date:** September 5, 2024  
**Next review date:** August 2027

## DEMONSTRATION POLICY

### Policy Statement

This Policy addresses the parameters for free expression and peaceful demonstration by members of the Northwestern community and third parties. For purposes of this Policy, the term *demonstration* has the meaning stated in “Definitions” below.

### Purpose

Northwestern welcomes the expression of ideas, including viewpoints that may be considered unorthodox or unpopular. The University supports free expression and allows peaceful demonstration. Regardless of their own views, community members share a corresponding responsibility to welcome and promote these freedoms for all. They also share a responsibility to maintain an atmosphere conducive to scholarly, creative, and educational pursuits and to respect the public safety and rights of all individuals. In order to promote these interests and to ensure the safe and effective operation of University business, this Policy establishes the parameters of free expression and peaceful demonstration at Northwestern University.

### Audience

All members of the Northwestern community as defined below and third parties.

### Definitions

*Community member:* Members of the Northwestern community, including faculty, students, staff, and trainees.

*Demonstration:* For purposes of this Policy, any public speech or other expressive activity by an individual or group occurring either (i) on or adjacent to Northwestern property or (ii) at University-sponsored events off campus. Examples of demonstrations may include but are not limited to assemblies, picketing, protests, counter-protests, rallies, parades, marches, teach-ins, or sit-ins.

## Policy Implementation

Consistent with the purpose of this Policy, the following requirements and guidelines are in place:

### I. *Requirements*

#### A. *These requirements protect the rights of others:*

- i. No community member or third party may intimidate, threaten to use force, or use force against any community member or third party.
- ii. No community member or third party may deprive (or attempt to deprive) others of the ability to participate in a University activity.
- iii. No community member or third party may prevent or obstruct (or attempt to prevent or obstruct) the speech or other expression of another community member, except that University officials may act consistent with this and other Northwestern Policies to ensure the speech or other expression of community members is consistent with the guidelines in this and other Northwestern Policies, including but not limited to those linked at the bottom of this Policy.
- iv. Placards, banners, signs, and other displays may not impede the participation of those assembled, endanger other community members, or violate University Policies, including but not limited to those linked at the bottom of this Policy. Displays, including but not limited to banners, signs, installations, light projections, and sound amplification are subject to restrictions detailed in the Display and Solicitation Policy.

#### B. *These requirements protect University operations:*

- i. No community member or third party may disrupt, prevent, or obstruct, or attempt to prevent or obstruct (i) the regularly scheduled activities of the University, such as classes, research, learning, meetings, interviews, ceremonies, emergency services, or operations of the University; (ii) co-curricular activities; (iii) University or public events; or (iv) medical center access or business.
- ii. No community member or third party may use or occupy campus facilities in a manner that impedes University operation of activities or events.
- iii. No community member or third party may obstruct movement around the campus (including but not limited to preventing entrance to or egress from any campus building or campus facility, or obstructing any University-owned and -maintained roadway or pathway) unless authorized by a University official.
- iv. On weekdays on the Evanston campus, demonstrations at the Rock may not occur until after 3:00 pm, when most classes in adjacent buildings have concluded. Amplified sound, including the use of bullhorns, loudspeakers, and similar devices, is prohibited on weekdays before 5:00 pm at the Rock and is subject to reservation and approval processes. The tradition of painting the Rock is permitted. Tabling and other events reserved through the University may continue to be held at the Rock at their reserved time. See the Display and Solicitation Policy for additional information on amplified sound, tabling, and other displays.

#### C. *These requirements ensure the physical safety of community members and third parties and compliance with applicable policies and other rules governing use of University facilities:*

- i. Overnight demonstrations, between 12:00 am/midnight and 6:00 am, are not permitted in any University location regardless of space (indoor or outdoor). All materials associated with a demonstration must be collected and/or

removed during the overnight hours. One small camping tent at the Rock will continue to be permitted for guarding and painting it.

- ii. All events and demonstrations are subject to the requirements and limitations of the event or demonstration's location (e.g., school, college, or facility), including [room occupancy and hours of operation](#). All events and demonstrations must comply with applicable building safety codes and University Policies.
- iii. Demonstrations cannot take place in areas where the presence of participants would compromise physical safety or a reasonable expectation of privacy, or violate laws, regulations, or Northwestern policies (e.g., laboratories and/or other research areas, residential spaces, dining halls).

D. *These requirements affirm that community members and third parties must comply with direction from Northwestern University Police and other University officials when they (police and officials) are enforcing this Policy and/or other University Policies. The role of Northwestern University Police during a demonstration is to maximize the physical safety and security of community members as well as protect University property:*

- i. Community members and third parties must identify themselves upon request by University officials.
- ii. Community members and third parties must remove placards, banners, signs, installations or other displays that violate this Policy and/or other University Policies upon request by University officials.
- iii. Community members and third parties must leave University locations when instructed to do so by a University official or Northwestern University Police. When possible, participants will be first given a warning to leave unless a physical safety issue prevents that step.

The University may impose additional time, place, and manner restrictions to achieve the purposes of this and other University Policies. Instances in which the University may enact time, place, and manner restrictions include but are not limited to during major University events (e.g., Commencement, sporting events) and in areas of the University where there is a need to balance free expression with the continuity of University operations.

Participants in demonstrations are subject to other Northwestern policies, city ordinances, and state and federal law in addition to this Policy.

## II. *Guidelines*

- A. *Student events.* To facilitate advance planning of an event or demonstration and to help protect the community, students and/or student groups in Evanston should notify [Student Organizations and Activities](#) in advance of any event or demonstration (see "Contacts" below for additional information). In Chicago, students and/or student groups should seek approval from their Student Affairs office. Notification should be submitted at least 48 hours before the start of the event or demonstration. Whenever possible, students and/or student groups should give additional advance notice, ideally two weeks or more, to best facilitate planning. Students and/or student groups at Northwestern University in Qatar should follow relevant processes for the Doha campus.

When conducting such events, organizers are expected to promote a safe environment and adherence to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and other University Policies.

- B. *Event Support Team (EST)*. The University typically deploys an event support team (EST) during student protests and demonstrations on the Evanston campus. When deployed, EST members serve as neutral observers with the goal of identifying and mitigating significant disruptions to University operations and active safety concerns.
- C. *Resources for risk assessment*. Occasionally the University determines, based on prior incidents or communications of intent, that the speaker or event may prompt a demonstration or become the target of threats or violence. In these circumstances, community members planning an event should notify [Student Organizations and Activities](#) (or relevant local office) and/or [Northwestern University Police](#) as soon as is feasible to consult and conduct a risk assessment (see “Contacts” below for additional information). Similar notification should be provided if organizers believe there is a possibility of counter-protest or dissent.
- D. *Security*. Northwestern University Police will conduct risk assessments and prepare plans upon request by organizers, or upon referral by Student Organizations and Activities (SOA) or another University office. As a result of that review, it may be determined that a police presence or security is needed, and may result in the presence of police officers, security officers, and processes such as bag-checks, event ticketing, and other steps to maximize the physical safety of attendees and the broader community. In rare instances that present significant threats to health and safety and/or significant disruption to mission-critical University operations, events may be canceled or not allowed.
- E. *Reserving space*. Community members are expected to follow applicable guidelines for seeking permission to use University space to conduct demonstrations. All outdoor events and activities must be reserved through Northwestern’s [Outdoor Event Request Portal](#).
- F. *Media*. Community members planning to invite journalists other than Northwestern student journalists to cover an event are encouraged to contact [Global Marketing and Communications](#) in advance of the event.

### III. *Counter Demonstration*

A protest, demonstration, or event on campus may cause dissent, resulting in a counter demonstration. When such an occasion arises, it is the responsibility of the University as well as all involved to allow for freedom of expression for all individuals. The requirements and guidelines in this Policy also apply to counter demonstrations. University officials may designate a separate area for counter demonstrations to maximize the physical safety and security of community members as well as University property.

## Consequences of Violating this Policy

If faculty, staff, students, or student organizations are suspected of violating this Policy, the matter will be referred to the appropriate office or department for follow up and potential disciplinary action under University Policies and procedures (including the handbook procedures referenced in “Related Information” below). For violations of the Policy by any community members or third parties, the University reserves the right to take appropriate action, which could range from a warning to suspension, expulsion, or termination. Third parties are not entitled to the notice otherwise afforded to community members and may face summary action in response to violations of this Policy.

There is no typical sanction associated with violations of this Policy. Each case is context specific; in

determining whether a sanction is warranted, considerations include the severity of the violation of this and any other relevant policies as well as any prior violations of University Policies or violations of expectations outlined in student, staff, and faculty handbooks.

## **Related Information**

[Display and Solicitation Policy](#)

[Faculty Handbook](#)

[Global Marketing and Communications](#)

[Northwestern Outdoor Event Request Portal](#)

[Northwestern University Police Special Event Security Request](#)

[Staff Handbook](#)

[Student Code of Conduct \(See section on Disruption and Disorderly Conduct\)](#)

[Student Handbook](#)

[Student Organizations and Activities home page](#)

## **Contacts**

The following individuals or offices can address questions regarding this Policy:

For faculty issues: Associate Provost for Faculty, at (847) 491-8543 or [assoc-prov-faculty@northwestern.edu](mailto:assoc-prov-faculty@northwestern.edu).

For student issues: Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students, at (847) 491-8430 or [dos@northwestern.edu](mailto:dos@northwestern.edu).

Student Organizations and Activities (third floor Norris University Center), at (847) 491-2350 or [studentorgs@northwestern.edu](mailto:studentorgs@northwestern.edu).

For staff issues: Human Resources, at (847) 491-7507 or [hrmis@northwestern.edu](mailto:hrmis@northwestern.edu).

For questions about arranging police presence or security for an event, contact Northwestern University Police, at (847) 491-3456 or [upevents@northwestern.edu](mailto:upevents@northwestern.edu).

For questions about media presence at an event, contact Global Marketing and Communications, at (847) 491-5001 or [global-marketing@northwestern.edu](mailto:global-marketing@northwestern.edu).

### **Chicago Campus**

Feinberg School of Medicine Vice Dean for Education (12<sup>th</sup> floor Arthur J. Rubloff Building, 420 E. Superior St.), at (312) 503-9443 or [dme@northwestern.edu](mailto:dme@northwestern.edu).

Feinberg School of Medicine Office of Finance & Administration (12<sup>th</sup> floor Arthur J. Rubloff Building, 420 E. Superior St.), at [FinanceandAdministration@northwestern.edu](mailto:FinanceandAdministration@northwestern.edu).

Pritzker School of Law Student Services (McCormick Hall, Rm. 166, 375 East Chicago Ave.), at (312) 503-0785 or [law-student-services@northwestern.edu](mailto:law-student-services@northwestern.edu).

Pritzker School of Law Facilities Management (Levy Mayer, Rm. M 88, 375 East Chicago Ave.), at (312) 503-5753.

Kellogg School of Management Evening and Weekend MBA Program Office (Student Life, 340 E. Superior St.), at (312) 503-8385 or [eveningweekend@kellogg.northwestern.edu](mailto:eveningweekend@kellogg.northwestern.edu).

Kellogg School of Management Wieboldt Facilities (340 E. Superior St.), at (312) 503-0021 or [facilities-chicago@kellogg.northwestern.edu](mailto:facilities-chicago@kellogg.northwestern.edu).

## **History**

Supersedes previous versions of the Demonstration Policy, published in 2018 and 2020, and the University Disruption and Demonstration Policy, which originated before 1980 and was revised in 2017.

## **Policy URL:**

<https://policies.northwestern.edu/docs/demonstration-policy-final.pdf>