



## PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE PRESENTATIONS POLICY

*(Applicable to speakers proposed by registered student organizations)*

### **I. Purpose**

The University's [Presentations Policy](#) sets forth the conditions by which prospective speakers are permitted to speak on campus. The policy provides that the Office of Campus Activities is responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the policy with respect to speakers proposed by registered student organizations. The policy also requires OCA to establish procedures for the implementation of the policy and publish the procedures on the OCA web site.

### **II. Presenter Approval Process (Presentations/Speaker Policy)**

OCA will consider requests from registered student organizations to invite performers and/or speakers (individuals or groups) to campus. Requests should be submitted through the [Student Organization Presenter Request Form](#) a minimum of two weeks before your event. Since each request is considered individually, it may take up to a week before OCA provides a response. It is important that organizations do not invite speakers/performers to campus until the request has been approved.

In considering requests, the principles governing the permissible and impermissible content and values set forth in the Presentations Policy shall be considered. Where a potential speaker may generate controversy, significant opposition, or potential disruption at the event, OCA should consult with other University administrators, including the Office of the President, and the Department of Public Safety.

If an organization is looking for someone to present on a particular topic but does not have anyone in mind, OCA may be able to help. Contact OCA at [oca-sos@cua.edu](mailto:oca-sos@cua.edu) for assistance with identifying possible speakers.

### **III. Protest**

The Catholic University of America values and defends the right of free speech and the freedom of members of the University community to express themselves on University property, provided that such expression does not violate the law or applicable

University policies. Opposition to an idea or event can be expressed in clear and meaningful ways without substantially disrupting an event. For purposes of this policy, “substantial disruption” is defined in Section III.B below.

A. *Permissible* forms of protest include but are not limited to the following:

1. Engaging in activities in time periods or physical spaces that are external to the event and do not disrupt the event, such as organizing a counter event in a different room, holding a rally in an external space, passing resolutions, issuing pre- or post-event statements, carrying signs, distributing flyers, and using social media to express counterviews, subject to the University’s [Demonstrations Policy](#), [Code of Student Conduct](#), and all other applicable policies.
2. Engaging in activities at the event that do not disrupt the event, such as distributing flyers, participating in interactive components of the event in ways that are consistent with the event format (e.g., engagement during the question-and-answer periods), and holding signs that do not block audience members’ views of the event.

B. *Impermissible* forms of protest are those that substantially disrupt an in-person or virtual event in a way that has the effect of silencing a speaker. This includes but is not limited to forcing a change to the planned event format; disregarding time limits or other event guidelines to prevent speakers or other attendees from participating; preventing a person from speaking or being heard via such means as heckling, making noise, standing in the area of a room reserved for the speaker, blocking the speaker or event organizers from accessing AV equipment, blocking the views of attendees attempting to view the speaker; using or implementing technology features, such as the mute button and the camera button. Substantial disruption of an event can occur even if the speaker ultimately completes his or her planned remarks.

#### **IV. Code of Student Conduct and Discipline**

A. These procedures and the following protocols are intended to provide express notice that students engaging in impermissible forms of protest at a University-sponsored event that are on campus, off campus, or virtual are subject to discipline under the [Code of Student Conduct](#). Students are presumed to have read these procedures and the Code of Student Conduct; failure to do so is not a justification for disrupting an event or avoiding disciplinary sanction.

B. These procedures apply whether or not the protocols below have been executed in advance of an event.

## **V. Protocol Preceding an Event When There Has been Notice of Significant Opposition to or Potential Disruption of an Event**

The Division of Student Affairs, through its Office of Campus Activities, provides primary oversight over all student organizations and their activities, including event planning. If OCA becomes aware or a community member notifies OCA that an event may be the subject of significant opposition or potential disruption, OCA will endeavor to provide support to all students, including the event organizers and any students potentially affected by the event using the following protocol.

### **A. Logistics Prior to the Event**

1. OCA may send a message, either campus wide or to a group of interested persons, with relevant information, including but not limited to event details, the Presentations Policy and these procedures, guidance about appropriate forms of protest, a reminder of the Code of Student Conduct, information on support services, and notice about anticipated security (if relevant).
2. The Department of Public Safety may engage appropriate security for the event to ensure the safety and protection of all community members, e.g., maintain room capacity limits, crowd control, etc. If a speaker has private security, the Department of Public Safety will coordinate with such private security. Under no circumstances will private security be permitted to conduct any functions related to campus or event security and are only limited to providing personal security to the speaker.
3. Prior to the event and in consultation with the event organizers and the appropriate University administrators, OCA may authorize that the event be modified to account for the evolving needs of the event, e.g., move the event to a different space, create Zoom or live-streaming opportunities to view the event because of room capacity limits.

### **B. Student Support Prior to the Event**

1. OCA will engage with the student organization leaders hosting the event to provide notice of the significant opposition to or potential for disruption, counseling and guidance, and relevant support to the event organizers and invited speakers.
2. Where feasible, OCA will reach out to individual students and leaders of student organizations whose members may be in opposition to the event and/or any

identifiable potential protesters to understand their concerns and objectives; explain the ground rules for the event; discuss alternatives to event disruption and explore ways to address their concerns; and provide specific notice about how the University will respond if actual disruption occurs.

3. All community members are expected to know that disruption is impermissible based on this policy and the Code of Student Conduct. However, students who need further guidance, have questions, or would like advice about permissible forms of protest that do not violate the Code of Student Conduct are encouraged to affirmatively contact OCA.

4. These procedures provide reasonable notice of University policies and of the University's interpretation of the Code of Student Conduct.

#### C. Announcement Made During the Event

1. At the outset of the event, OCA may provide an express, oral announcement that includes the following information:

a. The University respects freedom of speech and academic freedom, including the lawful freedom to protest.

b. Permissible forms of protest are welcome, but such protest may not disrupt the event or silence any speakers from communicating with the audience.

c. Notice about the process that will be used if actual substantial disruption occurs, which includes

i. a warning from OCA personnel that the behavior is inappropriate and to discontinue such behavior;

ii. a notice that the protester(s) will be requested to leave the event and may be escorted out of the event if necessary; and

iii. a notice of consequences, which include being held accountable for violating the Code of Student Conduct.

2. Even in the absence of such an announcement, community members are expected to be aware of prohibited conduct and are accountable under University policies.

## **VI. Protocol During an Event Where there is Actual Disruption Due to Impermissible Forms of Protest**

If the actual disruption is caused by one or more identifiable persons, the following protocol will be used:

- A. OCA will seek to de-escalate the situation by reminding the persons of the rules relating to disrupting the event. OCA should remain neutral regarding the views expressed by the speaker and the disruptive persons.
- B. The persons will be notified they are engaging in disruptive behavior and asked to discontinue their disruptive behavior.
- C. If the persons continue to engage in disruptive behavior, or if other persons engage in the same or similar disruptive behavior, they will be directed to leave the event and will not be allowed to re-enter the event.
- D. If the persons do not leave the event and continue to engage in disruptive behavior, they will be escorted out of the event and may not be allowed to re-enter the event.
- E. If necessary, OCA may have the speaker step outside the room until order is restored.
- F. Students engaging in disruptive behavior are subject to discipline under the Code of Student Conduct.