

Peaceful Demonstrations Policy

Soka University of America (SUA) encourages the free pursuit of learning and an atmosphere that supports civil discourse. The right to dissent and assemble is essential to academic freedom and scholarly pursuits. Dissent is a form of protest against a particular position, action, or situation, and SUA supports students' right to engage in peaceful demonstrations. It respects and defends free inquiry by SUA community members, while expecting that in the exchange of criticism and ideas, all will show respect for the humanity of others.

SUA also has an obligation to assure the freedom and safety of individuals to reside in residential spaces, to conduct normal business operations and the continuity of the educational process. Freedom of expression does not include the right to engage in conduct that threatens safety, suppresses others' right to speech, damages property or interferes with the education of SUA students. Such expression must also comply with the Student Code of Conduct, as well as all applicable laws, and SUA reserves the right to determine the time, place and manner of any demonstrations. Therefore, this document serves to outline the appropriate procedures for peaceful demonstration on SUA campus.

Guidelines for Planning a Peaceful Demonstration

The following guidelines apply to SUA students and student organizations. Individuals or organizations not affiliated with SUA cannot organize demonstrations on campus. Students or student organizations who are interested in planning a peaceful demonstration on campus must first request to host the demonstration in writing by completing the Request to Host a Peaceful Demonstration Form through the Office of Student Activities. The request must be approved before an event can occur. There may be times when a student or student organization plans a demonstration to quickly respond to a current event. Even in such instance, students or student organizations must still follow this policy. However, Office of Student Activities will make reasonable efforts to accelerate its review on a case-by-case basis in a manner that is consistent with this policy.

Procedure for Planning a Peaceful Demonstration

- A. Prior to sponsoring a peaceful demonstration, an SUA student or student organization representative must submit the Request to Host a Peaceful Demonstration Form at least one week in advance to the Office of Student Activities prior to any activity. Assembly organizers should provide the following information to the Office of Student Activities:
 1. The date of the event;
 2. The start and end times of the event;
 3. The purpose of the event;
 4. Name(s) of the coordinating student organization or student(s);
 5. Contact information for organizers;
 6. Estimated number of participants expected to attend the event;
 7. Location of the demonstration;
 8. Expected security needs of the event;
 9. Plans for managing disruptive behavior should it occur;
- B. A member of the Student Activities staff will review the request within two working days of its submission. The Office of Student Activities will meet with event organizers prior to its approval. The meeting will cover logistics including safety and security issues, use and limits of amplified sound, the potential for interference with the University's core educational and administrative functions and any other issues, questions or concerns raised by the request. Upon notification of a proposed activity, the Office of Student Activities will inform any other offices potentially impacted by the proposed activity.
- C. Demonstrations approved by the Office of Student Activities will be subject to time, place and manner considerations. Please note that the Campus Green and the grass area between the Performing Arts Center and Curie Hall are approved locations for peaceful demonstrations. For any other locations on campus, specific reason(s) for the location must be explained in the request for review and approval.

SUA reserves the right to modify the time, place or manner of a demonstration when there is a reasonable expectation that it may threaten the safety of others, suppress others' rights to speech, or disrupt the education of students by interfering with others' ability to see, hear or participate in another event, class or academic activity. Examples of conduct that will require modification of time, place, or manner or (if they do occur) would constitute violations of this policy include:

1. Blocking access to campus facilities or activities or impeding traffic, including to the venue in which another event is being held;
2. Utilizing signs constructed of hard materials other than cloth or cardboard, or large items that can pose a safety hazard or damage university property;
3. Noise levels, loud or amplified sound-making devices or visual aids which are disruptive to residential, academic or administrative activity.

Preservation of Core University Functions and Safety

- A. Except as expressly authorized by the Office of Student Activities or by an authorized University official responsible for a program or event sponsored by an academic or administrative unit, no speech, expression, or assembly may be conducted in a way that interferes with any
 1. teaching, research, administration, function of the University, or other authorized activities on the campus;
 2. free and unimpeded flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the campus; or
 3. University events, including guest speakers, distribution of literature, event signage, tables, exhibits, and use of amplified sound by university event organizers.
- B. Sponsoring SUA organizations and their representatives are responsible for ensuring that there will be no conduct that is prohibited by federal law, California State law, SUA's Student Code of Conduct, or any other university policies.
 1. If a demonstration or activity poses a health or safety risk or interferes with core university instructional or administrative functions, participants will be asked to disperse by Campus Security Officers.
 2. All individuals are expected to comply with the reasonable directions of university officials who are acting in accordance with the performance of their duties.
 3. Failure to comply with reasonable directions of university officials is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and is subject to sanctions. However, barring exceptional circumstances, the university will endeavor to issue a warning to any student or individual before taking further actions.
 4. Demonstrations or activities that have not been coordinated with or approved by the University through the process described in this policy are not permitted and will be considered violation of university policy.