

BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE

# Student Handbook 2005-2006

Policies and Procedures



## Free Speech and Demonstration Policy

 [Print This Page](#)

**Bridgewater State College**, as an educational institution, strongly supports the tenets of free speech by all members of the college community. Lecture and other public events that promote the free and open exchange of diverse ideas are supported and encouraged. Additionally, the college recognizes that various forms of demonstration may either accompany such events or, in other cases, be organized to promote ideas and/or thoughts regarding other issues.

Dissent and/or demonstrations are viable expressions of thought and shall be viewed as such. Methods of peaceful dissent such as picketing, dissemination of literature, etc., can perform an educational function on campus. However, they should not be disruptive, result in damage or destruction, or represent a physical or emotional threat to any individual or group. The use of force or violence is not viewed as an acceptable form of dissent.

The following examples describe the limits of acceptable dissent. They are not intended to be comprehensive.

- a. **Picketing and the Peaceful Distribution of Literature.** Picketing in an orderly way or distributing literature outside a meeting is acceptable as long as these activities do not interfere with gaining access to the meeting or event. Blocking entrances or exits or creating other physical hazards is specifically prohibited. Picketing is not permitted indoors, and signs and pickets must be left outside of the meeting or event.
- b. **Silent and/or Symbolic Protest.** The wearing of symbolic clothing or the engaging in noiseless protests that involve gesturing, standing, or displaying signs are acceptable expressions of dissent, but these activities should not obscure the speaker from the audience's view or prevent the audience from hearing the speaker.
- c. **Vocal Dissent.** Dissenting vocally from a speaker's views, especially if the vocal protests are similar in kind and degree to the reaction of those supporting the speaker is acceptable. Disrupting a meeting or event with prolonged chants or other noise in a manner that interferes with the speaker's communication is not permitted, whether inside or outside the meeting.
- d. **Force or Violence.** Using force or violence is never an acceptable form of protest. Freedom of movement may not be interfered with. All persons at a talk must respect the right to dissent, as defined above. Any person who interferes with acceptable forms of dissent is considered in violation of this policy in the same way as is a dissenter who violates the rights of the speaker or the audience.

All public speeches, demonstrations, or protests shall be coordinated, as stated below, to ensure respect for all members of the college community. Access, egress, and full view or audibility may not be disturbed by any such protest. Organizers of events and protests must coordinate all such actions through the Conference and Event Services Office to provide for adequate facilities and security measures.

The following are the college's policies regarding public speaking or demonstration:

1. Members of the college community and all groups or individuals coming on campus for the specific purpose of speaking or demonstrating must be sponsored by a college-recognized organization, group or department.
2. The organization should meet with the Conference and Event Services Office to arrange for necessary support services, including safety and security measures. Student organizations should meet initially with the director of student activities or his/her designee. College departments or groups should meet initially with the associate dean, student affairs, or his/ her designee. If the college organization is coordinating the demonstration on behalf of a non-college sponsor, an authorized representative of that organization must also be present at this meeting.
3. The recognized organization sponsoring the activity should conform to the established procedures for securing adequate facilities (See Conference and Event Services Office Policies and Procedures) and should adhere to the guidelines that follow.
4. In the event that a speaker cannot find campus sponsorship, he/she may request permission to speak on the mall area between the campus center and the library, which is the college's designated free speech area. The speaker must make this request to the associate dean, student affairs. The college reserves the right to designate the time and length of the speech to ensure that it does not disrupt the college's regular business.

 [Back to Handbook](#)

*Bridgewater State College Student Handbook 2005-2006 last updated February 2005.*

**BSC Home | Academics | Admissions | Athletics | Careers | Library |**

**Directions | Site Map | Search**