

# Speaker and Expression Policy

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## I. Preamble

In accordance with its Mission Statement and The Petrean Creed, Saint Peter's University is committed to discourse intended to seek truth and recognizes its responsibility to provide a forum for the free expression of ideas in a democracy. In the context of academic freedom, Saint Peter's University gladly invites speakers of various persuasions and convictions to address its student body. These speakers should contribute to the educational growth or to the cultural enrichment of the students in accordance with the mission of the University. The following is a statement of policy concerning speakers on campus ("Speakers" may include prerecorded speeches/programs):

As an (North) American, Jesuit university, Saint Peter's declares its educational goals as providing its students with an intellectual, religious, social, and personal climate. This climate will promote growth toward more cultured and competent individuals, conscious of their rights as persons and of their obligations as creatures of God, members of the human race and as global citizens.

"Jesuit education was and is about the formation of more fully human persons and that this humanistic creed and tradition should have impact on every aspect and every discipline of the Jesuit educational enterprise. This humanistic tradition does not limit itself to **a mens sana in corpora sano**, a healthy mind in a healthy body. Instead, right from its beginning, Jesuit education has consisted in a struggle for human dignity and human rights, enlightened freedom of conscience and responsible freedom of speech, respectful dialogue and patient promotion of justice."

- **Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.**, 29th Superior General of the Society of Jesus (1983 – 2008)

## II. General Policy

Saint Peter's is committed to standards promoting speech and expression that foster the maximum exchange of ideas and opinions. This statement of policy outlines principles that ensure these standards relative to the sponsored engagement of a speaker by any department chair, individual faculty member or officially recognized faculty group, officially recognized student organization, and/or administrators or administrative department (hereinafter collectively the "University Community"), subject to the conditions set forth below.

1. Members of the University Community have the right to express points of view on the widest range of public and private concerns and to engage in the robust expression of ideas. The University encourages a balanced approach in all communications and the inclusion of contrary points of view. This freedom, however, is subject to reasonable restrictions of time, place and manner, as described herein. The right of free speech and expression does not include unlawful activity or activity that endangers or imminently threatens to endanger the safety of any member of the University Community or any of the University's students or physical facilities, or any activity that disrupts or obstructs the operations of the University or imminently threatens such disruption or obstruction.
2. Moreover, expression that to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, is grossly obscene or grossly offensive on matters such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, or sexual orientation is inappropriate in a university community, and the University will act as it deems necessary to educate any member of the University Community that violates this principle.
3. In all events, the use of the University forum shall not imply acceptance or endorsement by the University of the views expressed by any speaker.

## III. Guidelines

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Associate Vice President for Student Life and Development (hereinafter collectively the "Vice Presidents") have the responsibility for administering the guidelines that follow below. In administering these guidelines, the Vice Presidents shall be advised by a Committee on Speakers and Expression, composed of students, faculty, and administrators of the University ("Committee on Speakers and Expression"). The Vice Presidents and the Committee may consider and recommend to the President revisions and improvements to these guidelines in a manner consistent with the ideals articulated at the beginning of this document. It is imperative that members of the University community thoroughly read the entire Speakers and Expression Policy before undertaking efforts to sponsor external speakers on the University's campuses and property.

## 1. Events

- a. An individual member or group of members of the University Community may organize and sponsor an event at the University inviting any person to speak. For purposes of this document, an event is any public meeting organized and sponsored by an individual member or group of members of the University Community primarily for the dissemination or exchange of ideas. **"Public meeting" shall not be construed to include formal academic convocations, regularly scheduled classes, or regular business meetings of any University organizations.**
- b. The individual or group sponsoring such an event must reserve the place where it will occur, in accordance with registration requirements. Because of the proximity of the Quad to classrooms, sound amplification in conjunction with any presentation in **the Quad during non-Meeting Hours** is prohibited, as is disruption of classes in any other way.
- c. The University will make every effort to accommodate an individual member or group of members of the University Community who wish to schedule an event. Members of the University Community who invite someone to speak must reserve an adequate space in advance of the event with the appropriate Office, as follows, in accordance with that Office's regulations:
  - i. **Officially recognized student organizations** must go through the Office of Student Activities.
  - ii. **Department chairs, faculty and official recognized faculty groups** must go through the Office of the Academic Dean.
  - iii. **Administrators and Administrative departments** must go through the Room Reservations Specialist in the Office of the Vice President of Finance and Business.

## 2. Procedures

### a. **General**

- i. For all events at which there is an outside speaker, the sponsoring organization/department/office must obtain **prior approval in accordance with this policy using the *Request for Approval of Off-Campus Speaker Form*.**
- ii. For events sponsored by administrators or administrative departments within the areas of Academic Affairs, Student Life and Development, Mission and Ministry, Advancement, and Finance and Business, **preliminary approval** must be obtained from the respective Vice Presidents.
- iii. For student organizations, once **preliminary approval** is obtained for an external speaker, the sponsoring individual/department/organization must obtain a *Professional Entertainer/Speaker Agreement* from the offices of the Associate Vice President for Student Life and Development. That Agreement details all the necessary terms (costs, security requirements, transportation, etc.) agreed to by the sponsoring individual/department/organization and the speaker.

After negotiating and agreeing to the terms, the speaker must sign the *Professional Entertainer/Speaker Agreement* first. The Agreement must be then submitted to the Associate Vice President for Student Life and Development (VPSA) for **final approval** and signature at least **ten** business days prior to the proposed date of the event. In special circumstances, at his or her sole discretion, the Vice President may waive the ten business day requirement. (In the absence of the VPSA, the

1. *Agreement* may be signed by the President.)
2. The individual/department/organization sponsoring the event may be required to include the following statement in all its advertising, announcements, and news releases: "*The presence of a guest speaker on the campuses of Saint Peter's University does not necessarily imply approval or endorsement by the University of the views expressed by the guest speaker or by anyone else present at the event.*" **This statement must also be read aloud in front of the audience prior to the start of the program, if required during the approval process.**

## 3. **Student Organizations**

In addition to the General procedures enumerated above, the following procedures apply to **officially recognized** student organizations:

- a. Student organizations may invite a speaker under the following conditions:
  - i. The University has the right to assume that opposing sides of certain issues will be presented. The University may require a debate format, a panel of discussants, or an additional program in order to meet this expectation.
  - ii. The event should take place in a location and in a manner that does not infringe on the rights of the other members of the University Community.

- b. **For events that are open to a limited audience (the University Community and their guests), preliminary approval** must be obtained from the organization's advisor, who will then submit the request to the Director of Student Activities. The Director of Student Activities has the authority to overrule approval by the organization's advisor.
  - c. **For programs that are open to the whole student body and the outside public, final approval** must be obtained from the Director of Student Activities and Dean of Students at least **ten** business days prior to the proposed date of the event. In special circumstances, at his or her sole discretion, the Dean of Students may waive the ten business day requirement.
- 4. **Costs**  
An individual/department/organization sponsoring an event is responsible for all costs (including security if such is deemed necessary by the University administration) associated with the event.
- 5. **Access to Events**  
Any event that receives financial support or other benefits of any kind from the University must be open to the University Community. If seating is expected to be limited, an equitable means of ticket distribution must be approved by the appropriate University Office, as stated in Section III(A)(3) above.
- 6. **Literature and Publicity**  
Saint Peter's University encourages the University Community to promote their events and activities responsibly through a full range of available media. These information and communication outlets include flyers and posters on bulletin boards, chalk messages on **pre-approved areas**, newspaper ads, web pages, the University's monthly calendar, WSPC radio station, the *Pauw Wow* student newspaper, information tables in The Quad, the first floor of Dinneen Hall, and word of mouth. Communication and publicity should be conducted in a manner that is respectful of others' rights to share information and recognizes one's part in the University Community. The foremost issue in this policy is the safety and security of the University, its students, faculty, staff, administrators, guests and facilities. Many of the restrictions exist to ensure safety and respect for all. (For more details, refer to Section IV, "Posting and Distribution of Announcements and Event Publicity).
- 7. **Protest of Events**  
An individual or group wishing to protest at an event may peacefully do so as long as any speaker's right to free speech and the audience's right to see and to hear a speaker are not violated and there is **no actual or imminently threatened disruption or obstruction of the operations of the University**.
- 8. **Potentially Controversial Speakers**  
In the case of a potentially controversial speaker, approval of the speaker may be granted in the discretion of the Vice Presidents based on a variety of factors. These factors include adherence to the University's mission and the safety/security of students, faculty, staff, administrators, and guests. The Vice Presidents may discuss the potentially controversial speaker and the above factors with the Committee on Speakers and Expression. Final approval as to a potentially controversial speaker will be determined by the President, in his/her sole discretion, pending the advisement of the Vice Presidents. Saint Peter's University reserves the right to exclude events, speakers, or groups whose nature or presentation is contrary to or inconsistent with the University's Mission Statement. This determination shall be at the sole discretion of the President or the President's designees.
- 9. **Disciplinary Procedures**
  - a. Violations of the policy and/or guidelines by students will be handled through the Office of the Dean of Students