

# Free Speech and Demonstrations Quick Guide

Cal Poly Humboldt has a rich history of student activism. We consider engagement with social and political issues as an essential component of university life. We are proud of this history and the beneficial changes student activism has brought to our community. Humboldt is committed to ensuring that our students may exercise their constitutionally protected rights of free expression, speech and assembly, while still respecting the rights of other individuals on campus and the greater community. Humboldt is a vigorous protector of our student's right to peacefully protest and to express their opinions through speech and media.



## What is Freedom of Speech?

The U.S. constitution states:

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."*

Free Speech is defined by the California Constitution as:

*"Every person may freely speak, write and publish his or her sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of this right. A law may not restrain or abridge liberty of speech or press."*

## What is Unprotected Speech?

Speech that promotes an unlawful end such as, promoting actual violence or harm, use of "fighting words," true threats, expression that constitutes criminal or severe harassment, defamation, obscenity, false advertising or the use of public resources for partisan political activities.

## Things to Keep in Mind:

- **Civil Disobedience** is the refusal to comply with certain laws or policies. By participating in civil disobedience, you are subject to student code of conduct violations and legal ramifications.
- The Constitution does not guarantee any right to engage in civil disobedience — which, by its very definition, involves the violation of laws or regulations.
- To engage in freedom of expression there must be reciprocal respect for the rights of all individuals.
- The exercise of the rights granted by the first amendment cannot interfere with others' exercising their own free speech rights.

## Planning a demonstration

- Review CSU policies including the [Time, Place and Manner Policy](#) (TPM) and the [Humboldt Addendum](#) and clarify related questions.
- Set a goal and purpose for your demonstration: Make sure all participating members of your club or organization understand the goal and intended outcome.
- Develop a plan: Meet with the Director of Student Life or Assoc. Dean of Students to discuss logistics, location, speakers, safety, security, emergencies, disruptions, counter-protests and other issues that will lead to a successful and safe event.
- Reserve an appropriate venue: Remember to utilize the [TPM](#) and [Humboldt Addendum](#) regarding amplification, use of public areas, and non-university speaker requirements.

## Recommendations for a safe and effective protest

- Maintain a safe physical and social distance when engaging in free speech activities.
- Contact UPD if a physical altercation erupts or there is a threat of safety to anyone involved.
- Do not block entrances or restrict the free flow of traffic in and out of campus buildings, parking lots, campus roads, and walkways.
- Reserve spaces on campus (ex: University Quad or Balabanis Art Quad) to have your demonstration
- Avoid obstructing/disrupting campus activities, classes, and offices.
- Ask professors for an opportunity to speak about the event; should be before class begins or after class ends
- Amplification for scheduled events and demonstrations requires prior approval through the Dean of Students or their designee.
- Avoid disorderly or lewd conduct.
- Follow directives from University officials acting in the performance of their duties.
- Do not engage in theft, destruction of, or damage to any university property or equipment.

For support with or more information about this process, contact the Associate Dean of Students (Siemens Hall 211), at (707) 826-3504 or [dos@humboldt.edu](mailto:dos@humboldt.edu), or visit the [free speech page](#).