

HOWARD UNIVERSITY POLICY

Policy Number:	Series: 600-004 Student Life
Policy Title:	PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY POLICY
Responsible Officer:	Vice President for Student Affairs
Responsible Offices:	Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards Office of Human Resources
Effective Date:	August 30, 2023

I. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets forth Howard University's procedures related to permissible peaceful assemblies. While it is promulgated under the Student Life series, this policy offers guidance to all University stakeholder groups and individuals seeking to conduct peaceful assemblies on campus.

II. RATIONALE

The primary function of a university is to discover and disseminate knowledge by means of research and teaching. To fulfill this function, a free interchange of ideas is necessary not only within the university but also with the larger society. As such, Howard University (the "University") believes peaceful assembly is an acceptable means of expression within our community.

The University seeks to provide the right to engage in peaceful assemblies for all faculty, staff, and students in our academic community. In providing individuals the right to peaceful assembly, there must also be room for others in the community to access academic and educational processes, to reside in residential spaces, and to take advantage of normal business operations.

By law, only peaceful assemblies are protected. Participation in a peaceful assembly must be voluntary and must support the basic exchange of ideas with persons who may be opposed to the ideas or claims that a particular assembly is promoting. In all cases, students, faculty, and staff must be afforded an opportunity to decline to participate in the assembly and to exit and enter freely.

Actions that disrupt the University's operations or endanger the safety of others are expressly prohibited. Persons engaging in disruptive, dangerous, or disorderly conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, or, in the case of faculty or staff, termination of employment.

III. ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

This policy applies to all individuals who wish to use designated spaces on Howard's campus, for the purposes of peaceful assemblies, including students, registered student organizations, other Howard community members (faculty, staff, and alumni), and external organizations and individuals.

IV. DEFINITIONS

In the context of this Policy, the following terms are defined as follows:

Campus—Any of the University's four designated geographic areas in the District of Columbia (East, West and Central) and Maryland (Beltsville).

Property—Any of the University-owned permanent and temporary buildings, structures, and open spaces on the University's campuses.

Protests—Any public display of individual or group speech or other expression of objection, disapproval, or dissent.

Demonstrations — Any public display of individual or group speech or other expression on University Property. Examples of demonstrations may include but are not limited to assemblies, picketing, protests, counter-protests, or sit-ins.

Vigil - An observance of commemorative activity or event meant to demonstrate unity around a particular issue or concern, and/or to promote peace and prevent violence.

Business Hours—The time period when University business is conducted, generally between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The term extends to official University events held on the weekends, such as graduation ceremonies and other activities.

Overnight—The time period between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

Disruptive Conduct—Acting in a manner that impairs, interferes with, or obstructs the orderly conduct, processes, or functions of the University or that interferes with or negatively impacts any person or persons in the classroom or on University-owned or operated property or at any University-sponsored event. This also includes interference or obstruction of any means of entry or egress to University-owned or operated property.

Amplified Sound —Voice, music or other sound increased or enhanced by any electric, electronic, or mechanical means, including handheld devices such as megaphones and sound trucks.

V. PROCEDURES

A. Access to University Property

Many outdoor areas on campus are, in a general sense and during normal business hours, considered "open to the public." However, all campuses and University-owned buildings are private property. As such, the University restricts access to certain buildings and outdoor areas during business hours and restricts access *to all* buildings and some outdoor areas during non-business hours.

Occasionally, the University exercises its right to deny individuals access to all or some University property, normally after an individualized determination has been made that a person(s) has engaged in criminal activity, suspicious activity, or behavior that is or is likely to be threatening, violent or disruptive to University operations and activities.

B. Advance Arrangements

To further the effectiveness of their event, organizations and other groups of students organizing a peaceful assembly are encouraged to make advance arrangements with staff of the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Student Affairs. Advance notification enables the University to help ensure that the event takes place in a constructive and peaceable manner.

A written request to hold a peaceful assembly should be submitted at least 48 hours before the start of the event. With the appropriate advance notice, the Office of Student Affairs together with the Department of Public Safety will help to assure that the event is effective, to ensure participants' safety, and to assist organizers in seeing that the assembly does not disrupt the normal functioning of the University.

C. Assembly Duration

Peaceful assemblies are normally permitted until or unless University officials determine that University operations have been compromised, a health or safety risk arises, and/or the rights of others have been significantly infringed. Interference with instruction and research is viewed as particularly disruptive to the University.

D. Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend all their classes as scheduled. Specific class attendance policies are the prerogative of the individual faculty member. Students will be held responsible for any missed coursework. Any arrangements for missed coursework will be at the discretion of the faculty. In some cases, missed coursework may result in a reduction in grade or no grade at all for unapproved absences.

E. Sound Amplification

Use of amplified sound in a manner obstructive or disruptive of university operations is prohibited.

Amplified Sound is increased or enhanced by any electric, electronic, or mechanical means, including handheld devices such as megaphones and sound trucks.

F. Overnight Assembly

Due to risks associated with overnight outdoor gatherings on Howard University property, overnight assemblies are expressly prohibited.

VI. ENFORCEMENT

Any violation of this policy by a University student is subject to the Student Code of Conduct. Any violation of this policy by a University employee is subject to the Employee handbook. Additionally, University employees who assist students in the violation of this policy shall be considered under Section 10 of the Employee Handbook for misconduct. University employees who are union members who participate in unprotected demonstrations are subject to collective bargaining agreement and Employee handbook violations. Students and employees are required to fully cooperate in investigations of any alleged violations of University policies. Violations of local, state, and federal law may also be referred for criminal or civil prosecution. Individuals or organizations that are not registered members of the University community will be referred to the Department of Public Safety.

VII. HYPERLINKS

Additional resources may be found at:

- [Howard University Policy](#)
- [600-001 Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Homepage | Howard University Student Affairs](#)
- [Homepage | Department of Public Safety \(howard.edu\)](#)
- Office of Human Resources: [Employee Handbook](#)