



Policy Title:	Seattle University Speaker Policy
Policy Owner:	Office of the Provost
Effective Date:	June 9, 2023
Last Updated:	June 9, 2023
Scheduled Review	June 9, 2025
Related Policies:	See Section VII
Related Forms:	See Section VII

I. POLICY STATEMENT

Seattle University (“University”) is committed to the free exchange of ideas and cultivation and care of the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. The University, therefore, permits official student clubs and organizations and University faculty members, staff, and administrators to invite external speakers to campus or University-sponsored events, and to hold events open to the campus community addressing the full range of intellectual, moral, and social issues.

II. PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

This Seattle University Speaker Policy (“Policy”) is intended to complement the University’s Jesuit values of free thought, critical thinking, and academic freedom by encouraging free, open, and thoughtful reflection, discussion, and debate while at the same time placing responsibility on sponsors to ensure that invited speakers do not disrupt the academic environment and University activities and functions or endanger members of the University community.

III. APPLICABILITY/RESPONSIBILITY

This Policy applies to all Seattle University faculty, staff, administrators, and official student clubs or organizations who wish to invite an external speaker to campus in connection with a University-sponsored event.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Campus: Real property owned, leased, or managed by Seattle University.

Disrupt(ion): Preventing or unduly interfering with the effective carrying out of University activities and functions (*e.g.*, teach, learn, assemble, research, administer) or a University-sponsored event.

Invited speaker(s), guest(s), or performer(s): An individual, group, or organization, including alumni, invited by a University community member to deliver remarks or otherwise present or perform at a University-sponsored event (as defined in this Policy) and who is not a University community member. All individuals invited to deliver remarks or otherwise present or perform are referred to in this Policy as an “invited speaker” even if the activity they are engaging in at a University-sponsored event is not a speech.

Official student clubs and organizations: A group of students with a designated purpose that has registered with and been recognized by the Center for Student Involvement or is a certified student organization in the School of Law.



Sponsor: The University community member, or their representative, responsible for the University's engagement with the invited speaker(s), including for organization, logistics, costs (staffing, AV, security and other costs, as needed) and adherence to University policies.

University community member: A Seattle University faculty member, staff member, administrator, or official student club or organization.

University-sponsored event: An in-person or virtual (online) event or program sponsored, co-sponsored, or hosted by the University or a University community member, including events directed toward enrolled students. This does not include speakers, guests, or performers invited to participate in an individual course, and does not include private or invitation-only programs or events. Faculty who wish to invite a speaker, guest, or performer to the University in relation to a course should consult with their dean's office on guest policies and procedures.

V. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

This Policy is intended to complement—and not replace or supersede—the University's other policies and protocols for planning and managing on-campus events and invited speakers, including:

- The On Campus Demonstrations Policy;
- The Policy on Political Campaign Activities;
- University Events Policies and planning procedure; and
- The Center for Student Involvement's event planning procedures.

Any University community member wishing to host a University-sponsored event or speaker must also consult and comply with the above-listed policies.

A. *Facilitating Free Speech and the Free Exchange of Ideas*

Seattle University is committed to fostering an environment of academic freedom, curiosity, and excellence. A Jesuit education cultivates a culture of dialogue, embraces free inquiry and exchange of ideas, and challenges students to think critically, exercise independent judgment, and test commonly accepted knowledge. The University is committed to cultivating an inclusive community where we productively engage across difference. The University recognizes that there are multiple perspectives on many issues that may be the subject of a University-sponsored event and that such diversity of viewpoint, and its free expression, is fundamental to the search for truth. Providing opportunities for free expression and inquiry is fundamental to the University's role as a Jesuit and Catholic academic institution. The University therefore is strongly committed to providing an environment where all issues can be openly explored and debated productively. Although the University neither sanctions nor censors content, the University and all University community members have a responsibility to assure that speech and expressive activities do not disrupt the academic environment and University activities and functions or endanger members of the University community.

B. *Organization and Management*

Invited speakers must be invited by a University community member or members, who shall then become the invited speaker's and event's sponsor(s). Responsibility for planning and managing an event at which an invited speaker is present is shared between the sponsor and the appropriate



University entities that manage space, catering, security, finance, and other functions that support event success. Campus events require advance planning in accordance with University Events policies and procedures.

i. Sponsoring an invited speaker.

Any University community member may sponsor an event that presents speakers in or at a University venue in connection with a University program or activity. With such sponsorship comes responsibility for organizing, conducting, and evaluating the event, and accountability for an event's consistency with this Policy and all other applicable University policies. The sponsor's responsibilities include:

- Selection of invited speaker(s);
- Informing invited speaker(s) of the University's commitment to civil discourse and the potential for a presentation of alternative views;
- Funding the event, including speaker/performer/appearance fees and other costs such as venue charges or security costs, if applicable.
- Responding to communications (calls, emails, etc.) concerning the event or invited speaker(s) before and after the event in a timely and responsible fashion;
- Following all established University policies and procedures related to contracting, scheduling, and using University facilities; and
- Maintaining a safe physical environment to the fullest extent possible.

Sponsors may consult with University Events for assistance with planning and presenting events covered under this Policy. Additionally, student organizations should consult with the Center for Student Involvement for assistance with hosting an event.

ii. Demonstrations and Conflicts

An individual or group wishing to demonstrate at a University-sponsored event or invited speaker may do so as long as they comply with University rules and procedures such as the Code of Student Conduct and the University's On-Campus Demonstrations Policy, and any invited speaker's right to freely express their viewpoint and the audience's right to see and to hear an invited speaker are not violated. Among other transgressions, it is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct for an individual or group to disrupt teaching, research, administration, conduct proceedings, other University activities or events, or of other authorized non-University activities or events.

Sponsors are required to plan for the possibility of demonstrations while organizing their events, on a case-by-case basis. Where applicable, the sponsor should prepare an area adjacent to the location of their event for demonstrations, even if that means reserving an outdoor or lobby space. This does not mean demonstrations are limited to such areas alone.

iii. Political Activities

As a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization, Seattle University is prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office or legislative measure. There are no exceptions to this prohibition. Please see the University's On Campus Political Activities Policy for more information



C. Process and Standards for Prohibiting and Disinviting an Invited Speaker

University Officials with decision-making authority: The University retains the right to make the final decision on who may speak, present, or perform on campus or at a University-sponsored event and whether additional security is required at a sponsor's expense. However, a decision to prohibit and disinvite an invited speaker is the last and least preferred option and should be made pursuant to the specific, limited standards set forth below. The following individuals, or their designee (the "University Official") have the authority on behalf of the University to determine whether, pursuant to the standards outlined below, a speaker should be prohibited and/or disinvited or their presence at a University-sponsored event necessitates additional security:

Official Student Clubs and Organizations:

Law students: Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Non-Law Students: Dean of Students

Faculty:

Respective School or College Dean

Administrators/Staff

Respective Dean, Vice President, or Vice Provost Overseeing Department or Unit

Applicable Standard: The University Official, or their designee, should exercise significant restraint in determining that an invited speaker should be prohibited and/or disinvited from coming to campus or a University-sponsored event or that additional security should be required, and should only do so if they conclude that the invited speaker, their presence, or their speech, presentation, or performance is likely to:

- (a) incite violence against any person or group;
- (b) threaten the physical safety of the University, its property, or any University community member;
- (c) promote a violation of law; or
- (d) pose a significant risk to the University's activities and functions.

The University Official, or their designee, must document their decision that an invited speaker should be prohibited and/or disinvited from a University-sponsored event in a written decision providing the rationale for their decision, provide a copy of the written decision to the event sponsor, and keep a copy of the written decision for their records.

Additional Security: If the University Official determines that an invited speaker's presence requires additional security, they should consult with the Department of Public Safety ("DPS") to determine the appropriate additional security measures required and notify the sponsor that they will be responsible for the additional cost.

D. Appeals

An appeal from the University Official's decision regarding additional security or that an invited speaker should be prohibited and/or disinvited from coming to campus or a University-sponsored event may be made to the Provost or the Provost's designee within seven (7) days of the University Official, or their designee, providing the event sponsor with their written decision. The



decision of the Provost, or their designee, is final.

VI. VIOLATIONS

A failure to adhere to the requirements of this Policy and/or a failure to adhere to University Events’ event planning timeline requirements may result in the University cancelling an event and/or prohibiting a speaker from coming to campus without notice, as well as sanctioning the University community member through any applicable disciplinary, conduct, or oversight policy (e.g., Code of Student Conduct, Club Handbook, Faculty Handbook). The actions or conduct of any invited speaker may be imputed to the event sponsor.

VII. RELATED INFORMATION

Item	Description
University Links	Conference & Event Services Code of Student Conduct Faculty Handbook Club Handbook On Campus Demonstrations Policy On Campus Political Activities Policy Solicitation Policy CES Policies Event Master Calendar
Forms	EMS Web App Eventbrite Account Request Alcohol Service Request Bake Sale Request
Related Links	N/A
Procedures	N/A