

Public Speech and Peaceful Assembly

Division of Student Engagement

Policy Owner: Dean of Student Engagement

Effective date: November 29, 2017

Approval date: November 29, 2017

Schedule for Review: Spring 2030

Policy Summary:

This policy acknowledges the right of individuals to engage in public speech and to peacefully assemble and provide guidelines to exercise individual's First Amendment Rights.

Policy Statement:

Fort Lewis College (FLC) acknowledges the right of individuals to engage in public speech and to assemble peacefully. At all times, the college expects the rights and privileges of all persons to be respected, the health and safety of the campus community members and property not to be endangered, and the normal college educational and business activities not to be disrupted.

FLC facilities are first and foremost for use by faculty, staff and students for activities and programs that directly relate to the educational mission of the college. However, FLC's generally accessible, open, outdoor areas on campus and non-academic publicly accessible facilities are open to individuals or groups for all non-commercial expressive activities, whether planned or spontaneous, including the distribution of material and collection of signatures, as long as those expressive activities do not disrupt the normal functioning of the college, or materially disrupt previously scheduled or reserved activities.

Coordination of Activities for Health and Safety

1. Any individual or group planning an assembly that is expected to attract a crowd of more than 50 people is required to notify the Student Union and Event Services Office of its plan and is strongly encouraged to coordinate its plan with the Office well in advance of the scheduled assembly. The purpose of the notification and coordination is to facilitate orderly operation of such an assembly within reasonable regulations regarding the time, place, and manner of exercising First Amendment rights, to prevent disruption of the normal college educational and business activities, and to protect the health and safety of the campus community members and property.
2. Any individual or groups sponsoring an assembly must assume responsibility for compliance with all state and municipal laws and college policies, including the Student Conduct Policy, the Colorado statute on riot offenses (C.R.S. § 23-5-124) and the Colorado statute on students' right to speak in a public forum (C.R.S. § 23-5-144).
3. Any individual or group wishing to utilize college space for commercial solicitation and vending may do so through the approval process set forth in On-Campus Solicitation and Vending and Tabling Policy.

Prohibited Areas

Public speech and peaceful assembly are not allowed inside residential building, inside any special-use facility (e.g., Chapel, Concert Hall, Gymnasium, Library, laboratories, Student Life Center), inside classrooms during academic hours, or in any instance that disrupts the college's normal educational and business activities.

Prohibited Activities

Any assembly that impedes the flow of foot-traffic across campus or access to a building, or disrupts normal college educational and business activities, or constitutes defamation, incites violence, or is not protected under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article II, Section 10 of the Colorado Constitution, is prohibited, and could be a violation of Colorado Revised Statute 18-9-109, Interference with staff, faculty, or students of educational institutions, resulting in arrest.

Enforcement

Individuals and groups who refuse to vacate premises when directed to do so by a college employee or a law enforcement officer may be arrested under Colorado Revised Statute 18-9-109, interference with staff, faculty, or students of educational institutions; CRS 18-9-117 Unlawful Conduct on Public Property, or any other applicable criminal law or municipal ordinances. Additionally, individuals and groups who violate this policy may be charged with violations of college policy and disciplined, which may result in suspension, expulsion, or employment termination from the college.

Reason for Policy:

To protect the health and safety of the campus community members and property.

Responsibilities:

For following the policy: All FLC community members and visitors.

For enforcement of the policy: Chief of Police

For oversight of the policy: Dean of Student Engagement

For procedures for implementing policy: Student Union and Event Services Office

For notification of policy: Policy Librarian

Cross-Referenced Policies:

On-Campus Solicitation and Vending Policy

Consequences of Non-Compliance:

Criminal prosecution and/or the College's disciplinary process.

Review and Revision History:

Policy 11-10 Public Speech and Peaceful Assembly was originally issued in September of 1993 and was revised in December of 2012, Reviewed and Updated July 2, 2025.