

## **DEMONSTRATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY**

Methodist University, as an educational institution, believes that the right of expression and inquiry is essential to both the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and truth and that right must be guarded, protected, and preserved. Members of the University community, both individually and collectively, are therefore encouraged to express their views through the normal channels of communication. The University also recognizes the right of the individual to express his/her views by demonstrating peacefully and constructively for concepts and beliefs he/she wishes to make known.

The University also has an obligation to protect the rights and freedom of individuals who do not wish to participate in a demonstration and who do not wish to have their educational and employment pursuits interrupted. The University is also obligated to protect its property and to prevent interference with scheduled activities of students, faculty, and staff of the University, as well as of any person who may be a guest on the campus. Methodist University will also uphold local, state, and federal laws and will attempt to inform students, staff, and faculty of such laws and other regulations.

To meet these obligations, the University has established the following regulations/definitions as reasonable guidelines for the public display of concerns and opinions:

### **Definitions**

The following definitions apply to the policy stated above:

1. **Demonstration or Peaceful Assembly**—A demonstration or peaceful assembly is a public manifestation of welcome, approval, protest, or condemnation through a mass meeting, procession, or picketing. Exhibitions commonly associated with approved social or athletic events are not usually within the purview of this definition and the supporting regulation.
2. **Unlawful Assembly**—an unlawful assembly is the meeting together of three or more persons to the disturbance of the public peace to cooperate in the execution of some unlawful private enterprise.

## **Regulations**

The following regulations govern the policy above:

1. The demonstration is to be registered with the Vice President for Student Affairs at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance.
2. At the time of the registration, the registrant is informed regarding reasonable demonstration activities.
3. Demonstrations may not block vehicle or pedestrian traffic and should not occur in the vicinity of classes in session or of Davis Memorial Library or inside any building.
4. The number of pickets may be limited by the Vice President for Student Affairs in reasonable consideration of space in the proposed demonstration areas.
5. The right of expression is not to be confused with license to incite violence or to use indecent language, since these are beyond legal and reasonable espousal of any cause for which demonstrations are conducted.
6. Individuals participating in an unauthorized demonstration, such as an assembly of students in a "sit-in" or "lie-in" in a restricted building or area, shall disband within the time stipulated when directed to do so by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee.
7. If a disturbance from observers begins to develop, the demonstrators are expected to refrain from altercations with them.
8. Observers are expected to maintain a reasonable distance between themselves and demonstrators at all times.
9. Observers may not obstruct legitimate demonstrations by physically blocking the path of other observers, throwing objects, or in any way acting to limit the right of free expression.
10. Both demonstrators and observers are expected to follow the directions of the security officers and other University officials and student staff members.

**Penalties**

Methodist University students or personnel involved in unregistered demonstrations that become disruptive or are otherwise in violation of Methodist University policies will be asked by the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee to disperse and comply with policy within a specified time. Failure to respond positively to such a request may result in arrest and/or disciplinary action by the University up to and including dismissal.