

## **Student Protest and Demonstration Policy and Guidelines**

### **Updated: September 2024**

At Simmons University we respect the rights of free expression and view protest as an acceptable means of demonstration<sup>1</sup>. This may include expressing opinions publicly and also joining together to demonstrate those concerns in a safe manner. Simmons protects the right of voluntary assembly, allows peaceful demonstrations, welcomes guest speakers, and endeavors to protect these assemblies from disruption and interference.

Simmons students planning a demonstration must meet all University student event requirements, as set forth in the Simmons University Student Event Policy and the Simmons University Student Event Guidelines, including, but not limited to, registering the demonstration through Campus Connect. Only Simmons students or recognized Simmons Student Organizations may register a demonstration.

Simmons also respects the rights of our community to be free from harassment. Demonstration becomes unacceptable when it obstructs the basic exchange of ideas and when it results in censorship. By asserting the right to engage in demonstration, individuals cannot decide for the entire Simmons community which ideas are worthy of expression.

Simmons University prohibits and will not allow disruptive or disorderly conduct that interrupts the academic enterprise, threatens the safety of others, suppresses others' speech rights, or disrupts the education of students and/or operations of the University. Such behavior, including, but not limited to, interrupting a classroom, blocking sidewalks or doorways, or halting a lecture, performance, or program, violates this Policy, the Campus Access and Use Policy, the Student Event Policy, and the Student Handbook. Conduct and/or activity as part of a demonstration that would violate any University policy, including, but not limited to, the Campus Access and Use Policy and Student Event Policy, is prohibited and would be a violation of this Policy. In addition, using intimidating tactics or unwelcome physical contact between demonstrators, counter-demonstrators, audience members, speakers or performers, or University officials is prohibited. Students engaging in such conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action.

The University reserves the right to modify the time, place, or manner of a demonstration, including when there is a reasonable expectation that it may threaten safety, suppress others' right to speech, or disrupt the academic, teaching, and learning activities of Simmons community members or the operations of the University. Please note that even those demonstrations that have been registered pursuant to the Student Event Policy may be canceled or cut short if the University believes the demonstration no longer complies with University policy.

### **Response to violations of the policy**

Students who violate this policy and/or fail to act in accordance with any other Simmons policy will be advised, when and as appropriate and reasonable, to cease the unauthorized and/or prohibited conduct. Should conduct continue, those engaging in the conduct shall be subject to

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, the term "demonstration" shall include, but is not limited to, protests, pickets, and other similar types of expressive speech in-person and online events.

discipline. Simmons reserves the right to take immediate action to stop and/or address any unauthorized and/or prohibited conduct, including that which violates this or any other Simmons policy. Criminal conduct and potential criminal conduct will be managed by the University's Office of Public Safety, as well as by other law enforcement agencies, such as the Boston Police, as needed and appropriate. University Public Safety has the authority to respond to criminal conduct and violence and/or threats of violence without prior notice to demonstrators, their organizers, or Simmons University administrators.

Simmons University is a private institution and as such may require members of the public to leave Simmons University property or off-campus or online Simmons-sponsored events. Failure to comply may result in removal and/or arrest for unlawful trespass or other criminal violations. Students who invite members of the public onto the campus or to off-campus or online Simmons-sponsored events are responsible for the conduct of their guests.

Please note: use of public streets for demonstrations is subject to City of Boston ordinances and permitting requirements.