
[FacultyStaff] Clarification on Public Forum/Third Party Event Policy

President's Office <President.Office@fredonia.edu>

Mon, Jan 8, 2024 at 4:59 PM

Reply-To: president.office@fredonia.edu

To: Faculty/Staff group <facultystaff@fredonia.edu>, All Registered students <students@fredonia.edu>



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 8, 2024

Dear Fredonia campus community:

I would like to take this opportunity to clear up some confusion and misunderstanding across campus regarding the “Public Forum/Third Party Event Policy.” This policy defines “third party” as “any person or persons not associated with or employed by the University who desire to use public forum areas to exercise their First Amendment Right to Free Speech.” With the rise, nationally, in requests from third-party organizations to demonstrate on public university campuses, and in consultation with the SUNY Office of General Counsel, we reviewed and updated our existing policy with the goal of soliciting input from the campus.

The policy that was updated is ***not*** intended to restrict peaceful assembly on campus by the campus community (faculty, staff, and students). As a matter of fact, I am proud of two recent demonstrations held on campus: the December 5 demonstration by UUP, and the December 7 demonstration by students and faculty/staff. I am supportive of students and faculty/staff making their views known through peaceful, safe, and respectful demonstrations. I even joined Fredonia students in a march across campus shortly after I started as president. It is important for you to know that “third party” policies regarding demonstrations on university

campuses are not unique. Most universities have these policies, and our current policy dates back to at least 2013.

There has also been some speculation that the policy was shared with campus in December as a result of the demonstration on December 7. That is not accurate. The “Public Forum/Third Party Event Policy” review began in spring 2023. The draft revision was developed in the spring and summer of 2023. The final revisions were made in October of 2023 with the plan to share it with the campus for feedback. Unfortunately, it was not shared with the campus community until mid-December. To reiterate, the draft that was shared out was not in connection with nor a response to the December demonstrations by students, faculty, and staff. Moreover, as indicated earlier, this “Third Party” policy pertains to any person or persons not associated with or employed by the University.

I hope this clears up some of the misunderstandings and disinformation that have been brought to my attention. This is the feedback period for the suggested revisions to the policy. I encourage you to take some time to provide some suggestions that would be helpful to ensuring that we have a good policy by writing to campus.life@fredonia.edu.

Very truly yours,

Dr. K
Stephen H. Kolison, Jr., Ph.D.
President



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