

5.30 – Protests & Demonstrations Policy

Rationale

At Central Lakes College, freedom of expression is vital to our shared goal of pursuing knowledge. All members of the college community have the right to explore new ideas and learn from one another. To preserve an environment of spirited, open debate, we should all have the opportunity to contribute to intellectual exchange and participate fully in college life.

Scope

This policy is effective on Central Lakes College's campuses and any other property controlled by the College. Members of the College community, including employees, students, guests, and visitors, are subject to it.

Policy

Central Lakes College community members may exercise their First Amendment rights to free speech on campus. While the College respects the rights and freedoms of every individual, the College encourages individuals to be guided by the principles outlined in the "Civil Behavior in a College Setting" section of this document.

The College maintains its right to place reasonable restrictions on time, place, and manner of expression. (See [CLC Public Access Policy](#) for those details.) It prohibits any acts that disrupt the normal operations of the College (e.g., teaching, study, research, administration, meetings, and other authorized and permissible use of college facilities), infringe on the rights and privileges of others, endanger the safety of any person, or cause property damage. While the interpretation of these factors may be subjective, the College must act reasonably to protect the members of the College community and any College property. Any member of the College community who engages in disruptive conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, and any disruptive guests will be referred to local law enforcement.

Under Minnesota State law, participants in a protest or demonstration must not obstruct the free movement of persons about the campus or block access to and from college offices and buildings. In the interest of public safety, attention must be paid to the occupancy limits in the space used. People participating in a protest or demonstration within a college building must adhere to the building's closure. College officials will require that protestors or demonstrators leave at the time of building closure.

This policy does not preclude the application of other College or Minnesota State policies or regulations that a situation may warrant. Furthermore, a protest or demonstration that significantly disrupts the College's operations or fails to comply with building closures may result in arrest and prosecution for violations of City or State ordinances or State or Federal statutes. Members of the College community may also be subject to disciplinary action.

Civil Behavior in a College Setting

The ideas of different members of the College community will frequently conflict, and we do not attempt to shield people from ideas that they may find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. However, in some circumstances, college policy, state statute, and formal college intervention may be appropriate for behavior that violates our community's standards. The College may restrict expression that violates the law or is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the College. In addition, the College may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression to ensure that it does not disrupt the ordinary activities of the College. (See [CLC Public Access Policy](#) for those details.)

Advance Arrangements for Public Expression

Central Lakes College recognizes that campuses are marketplaces of ideas. Advance notification enables the College to ensure participants' safety and assist organizers, ensuring the event occurs constructively and peacefully and does not disrupt the College's normal functioning.

For events occurring on Central Lakes College campuses or any other property controlled by the College, organizers must request approval from the CLC Security Director at least 48 hours before the requested start time. CLC Security will identify a specific outdoor area based on the event's needs for public expression.

Organizers should make appropriate arrangements to obtain city permits and to comply with city ordinances and applicable state and federal laws for events occurring on city sidewalks and streets adjacent to the College.

Placards, Banners, and Signs

Placards, banners, and signs are generally allowed but may not be dangerous to others or impede the participation of others in the normal life of the College. In such cases, College officials will require the individuals carrying the placards, banners, or signs to move to a different location or remove their materials. Please refer to the [CLC Posting Policy](#).

Noise Level

The College reserves the right to control the use of amplified sound devices on campus and on any other property under the College's control. If the sound amplification can be heard in surrounding neighborhoods, organizers must acquire a city sound amplification permit and adhere to city ordinances and applicable state and federal law.

Protest and Demonstration Duration

Protests and demonstrations are normally permitted unless College officials determine that College operations have been compromised and that the rights of others have been significantly infringed. Interference with instruction or regularly scheduled events is viewed as particularly disruptive to the College. While interpreting these factors may be subjective, the College must reasonably act to protect the members of the College community and any College property.

Counter-protests

A protest, demonstration, or event on campus may invite another form of protest, demonstration, or event by persons with differing views. The College respects the rights and freedoms of every individual, and the expression of all parties is important. If protected speech activities combine to become disruptive, the College reserves the right to relocate one or both activities or to maintain a perimeter to promote physical safety.

Speech That Is Not Protected

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution does not protect conduct that threatens persons' health, safety, or welfare. Any speech that inflicts or threatens harm, causes a breach of the peace, incites an individual(s) to commit a crime, contains obscenity, defamation, harassment, or discrimination, or causes panic is not considered protected speech. While the College is committed to upholding free speech, it must also reasonably act to protect the members of the College community and any College property.

Implementation

The Vice President of Administrative Services implements and interprets this policy and procedure.

Non-discrimination Statement

In keeping with its long-standing traditions and policies, Central Lakes College considers students, employees, applicants for admission or employment, and those seeking access to college programs based on individual merit. The College does not discriminate based on race, sex, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status concerning public assistance, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or other protected classes as required by law (including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972).

Date of Implementation: 10/28/2024

Date of last review: 7/31/2025