

Oregon State University

Purpose, priorities, & philosophy of campus response to protest

Purpose

Oregon State University is committed to being a campus community that supports the right to assemble for many reasons, such as: to express differing opinions, to communicate dissent, or to request certain actions from the University. We believe that supporting these rights requires that we have a fully transparent plan.

The Procedures for Response to Protest is the document that supports those rights and helps us come to an understanding as a community about our shared approach and priorities. This document also allows us formally and broadly share our expectations (e.g. to use the lowest level of response that is appropriate) and philosophical structure (seeking to engage with demonstrators and recognizing express as an important value of our institution) across all levels of leadership and those working to respond to demonstrators on the ground. This document should be used in conjunction with [OSU's Time Place Manner Policy](#), as well as the [University's Freedom of Expression statement](#).

We intend for this document to provide guidance to university representatives at every level, so that we all understand how our engagement with protest must be consistent with our shared priorities and institutional values.

Priorities

Our priorities when responding to a protest on campus are as follows:

1. Attend to the physical safety of demonstrators and the campus community
2. Engage with demonstrators about their issues of concern
3. Commit to working with demonstrators and follow up on any of their issues of concern that are identified as being directed at the University

Philosophy

As a land grant institution, Oregon State University is an incubator of innovative thought and perspectives as diverse as our state. We embrace our diversity as a foundation from which to build our campus community. Our university mission calls us to promote economic, social, cultural and environmental progress for the people of Oregon, the nation and the world. This mission is advanced by ensuring a pursuit of learning and exchange of ideas that extends to every corner of our diverse human experience.

Oregon State endeavors to create responsible citizens of the world who exercise critical thinking. We commit to nurture a campus environment where differences of opinion and experience will be a part of our community. And at times, members of the OSU community or other community members may choose to assemble and protest in order to express those differing opinions, communicate dissent, or request certain actions from the University or others.

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Protecting and promoting freedom of speech and expression is not only a fundamental human right, it is the very bedrock of learning and should be at the center of university experience. Generating and exploring innovative ideas and realities requires us to advance multiple perspectives at once and engage in dynamic discourse.

We commit to respecting freedom of speech and expression, while also advancing our values of equity for all community members. In instances where the content of a protest contrasts with our institutional values, counter speech by the university may be appropriate. As an institution, we reserve the right to speak against messages that are contrary to our educational mission and values, encourage more dialogue, and continue to provide opportunities for learning. Oregon State University commits to the following values when responding to campus protests:

We commit to a safe campus environment: Our foremost duty as an institution is to ensure the safety of our community members. Our goal will be to listen to concerns, work to understand issues presented, and determine what response is needed. A situation will be deemed unsafe if there is physical harm, or viable threat of physical harm, to people or property. Additionally, our first responders must respond quickly to any emergency situation involving physical threat, regardless of the protest at hand. We will work in collaboration with our campus first responders to assess each situation and determine the best campus response.

We believe every voice matters: We affirm the right of every student, faculty, and staff member to share their voice on our campus community.

We commit to engage first with demonstrators and as university representatives, unless an emergency situation demands otherwise. Any law enforcement engagement, outside of emergencies, will be determined by the Protest Response Team.

We acknowledge our history, present and future: Campus activism has been a vehicle for institutional and community progress throughout the history of higher education. We stand in gratitude of such activism, which made significant strides toward equity in higher education and created educational opportunities that exist today.

We seek to understand: We will seek to understand the issues that lead people to protest both in the moment of protest and beyond. We believe understanding and maintaining lines of communication with campus leaders may help build relationship and trust. We believe extending opportunities for communication with campus leaders may offer additional avenues to voicing concerns and working in collaboration toward solving larger issues.

We communicate and engage with people in protest: We will always strive to create and maintain active communication with demonstrators and protest organizers during a protest and may call upon campus leaders to help in this endeavor. We believe creating and maintaining lines of communication before, during, and after protest gives us the best opportunity to ensure safety and find opportunities for common understanding.