

HOPE COLLEGE - *Policy/Procedure - Campus Events with Visiting Speakers*

Hope College welcomes educational events that promote the understanding of ideas, positions and issues embedded in our political and social culture. Visiting speakers present the campus community with unique opportunities to welcome and engage guests. The procedures that follow establish consistent college-wide expectations for student groups¹ who seek to host events and provide this type of learning opportunity for the Hope College community.

Any event hosted by the college with an outside speaker, and particularly those that focus on elected officials and political candidates and/or contested/controversial ideas that challenge the College's mission, must respect:

- The college's [Mission](#) "to educate students for lives of leadership and service in a global society through academic and co-curricular programs of recognized excellence in the liberal arts and in the context of the historic Christian faith"
- The college's [Christian Aspirations](#) to be faithful, to be welcoming and to be transformational
- The college's [Virtues of Public Discourse](#): humility to listen; hospitality to welcome; patience to understand; courage to challenge; and honesty to speak the truth in love; and
- The college's [Freedom of Expression Statement](#)

The college must avoid jeopardizing its tax-exempt status under the 501(c)(3) rules of the Internal Revenue Code. To this end, the college may not be involved, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign or provide any form of endorsement for a political candidate.

POLICY

1. **Primary Purpose of the Event:** The event must have a clear purpose or intent that advances the organizing group's mission and respects Hope's Mission, reflects Hope's Virtues of Public Discourse and Freedom of Expression Statement and allows participants to seek Hope's Christian Aspirations.
2. **Campus Sponsor:** The event must be sponsored by a formally recognized Hope College student organization, campus office or academic program, or the Office of the President.
 - a. For events sponsored by a student organization, approval must be obtained in writing from both the organization's faculty/staff advisor and the Dean of Students or designee. Individual students interested in inviting a speaker may approach a recognized group's leadership, and the organization's student leadership must agree to sponsoring the speaker, which includes following the policy and procedures outlined below, including but not limited to, approval for all event speakers, any potential fundraising and all merchandise to be given away or sold in conjunction with the event.
 - b. For events sponsored by an academic course or academic department, the faculty must follow the processes as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, and inform the respective department chair

¹ The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines for student groups. Note this does not preclude campus offices from using it as a guide.

HOPE COLLEGE - *Policy/Procedure - Campus Events with Visiting Speakers*

and academic dean prior to the event. For events sponsored by a non-academic campus office, staff must inform the supervisory vice president prior to the event.

3. **Costs:** Hope College Business Services policies must be followed in payment for services rendered. Contracts for Student Organizations are signed by the Associate Dean of Student Life. Funding must be budgeted through Student Congress Appropriations prior to contract signing. Gift cards cannot be used as a form of payment.
4. **Program and Format:** The event must feature a program and format that supports engagement (such as a debate, dialogue, moderated discussion, Q+A, etc.) and honors Hope College's [Virtues of Public Discourse](#).
5. **Introduction of Event and Speaker:** For events that may include contested ideas and/or controversial topics, the introduction of the event will include a recitation of Hope's Virtues of Public Discourse as well as a statement of non-endorsement, delivered by a designated Hope College representative, such as a student organization leader or advisor, an administrator, or the faculty member teaching the course. Example introduction is available at the end of this policy.
6. **Limits on Signage:** Promotional materials (posters, screens, emails, social media, etc.) with basic event information, such as time and location, are permissible; any such communication must state that the event does not function as an endorsement by Hope College and that the speaker and/or the event content does not necessarily reflect the views and beliefs of Hope College.
7. **Time, Place and Manner:** The college reserves the right to determine the most appropriate time, place and manner for any campus event, including political events that focus on elected officials, political candidates and/or contested and/or controversial issues. Dimnent Memorial Chapel is not available for any event that focuses on politics, political candidates and/or political issues. The college will not relocate previously scheduled events in order to accommodate requests, unless agreed upon by college leaders.
8. **Protests:** Students have the right to disagree with and protest a speaker or group on campus, so long as protesting comports with time, place and manner restrictions outlined in the [Campus Demonstration Policy](#).

HOPE COLLEGE - *Policy/Procedure - Campus Events with Visiting Speakers*

GUIDELINES FOR EVENTS THAT FEATURE ELECTED OFFICIALS, POLITICAL CANDIDATES AND/OR POLITICAL PARTY OR POLICY ISSUES

Any event hosted by the college that focuses on elected officials, political candidates, political parties and/or political issues must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Be educational, with a primary purpose to educate students about specific issues or policies, provide an informed analysis of specific issues or policies, or invite a structured conversation about specific policies or issues.
2. Political rallies are not permitted on campus; the college will not host any event (or direct any college resources toward an event) whose primary purpose is to rally a base, create publicity, or generate support for a political candidate or political party.
3. Banners, posters or like materials that would generally be associated with a political rally may not be displayed in or around the location of the event.
4. Political fundraising is prohibited on Hope's campus. No political campaign merchandise may be sold (in exchange for federal or state political contributions or otherwise) at the event.
5. The college will allow an equal opportunity for all candidates and issues to be represented on campus, provided all relevant policies are followed.
6. Given security and visibility around candidates for US presidency, invitations to the US President, the US Vice President or candidates for the presidency or vice presidency may only be issued by the Office of the Hope College President.

PROCEDURES

For events sponsored by a student organization with a visiting speaker, please use the [Events on Campus with Visiting Speakers form](#) to request approval:

1. **Student Group(s) Hosting:** Initiate the process to host a visiting speaker. Identify and name the specific student group(s) that will (co-)invite the visiting speaker, and name how the goals for the event will align with the purpose or mission of the student group(s) that are hosting.
2. **Purpose and Outcome:** The intended purpose and goals of the event should be discussed and clarified with the student group and their advisor. In the case of a controversial speaker, a strong proposal will have given consideration to campus context and impact of the event. While not a requirement for planning, the following steps will strengthen and could expedite a controversial speaker proposal:
 - a. The student group conducts research (websites, articles, blogs, Instagram, X, etc.) to understand the speaker including any controversies surrounding the speaker.

HOPE COLLEGE - *Policy/Procedure - Campus Events with Visiting Speakers*

- b. The student group tests the impact of the speaker by asking a diverse group of Hope College community members about the proposed event.
 - c. The student group shares the results of this research with the group's advisor to discuss and to identify if the speaker is viable for a campus experience. This discussion should include: does the speaker advance the mission of the student organization? Is the speaker contrary to Hope's mission and/or context? Does the Freedom of Expression Statement allow for this type of speaker to be engaged on campus? Will they be able to engage the campus with Virtues of Public Discourse?
3. **Preliminary Interest:** Once the group has researched the speaker and discussed with their advisor, the student group may make a preliminary invitation, with no formal invitation extended to the speaker. The student organization should work to get accurate honoraria, date, title, and full terms of speaking engagement. Student groups should be prepared to indicate the audience, including indicating if members of the community beyond Hope students, faculty and staff will be invited.
4. **Approval:** Student groups must seek [written approval](#) from the Dean of Students or designee 30 calendar days before the event, upon completing steps 1-3. Once the Dean of Students approves, student groups will be expected to work with appropriate offices such as Events and Conferences, Campus Safety, or others recommended to coordinate the event. Student groups are strongly encouraged to plan events at least one semester in advance to allow ample time to complete the steps, recognizing that many events are being coordinated across campus throughout the year.
5. **Invitation and Contracts:** Once approved, the student group may extend a formal invitation. Student groups must work through Student Life staff regarding contracts, to determine the appropriate originator of the contract. Hope College will provide the event contract, not the individual student organization. Upon request, the college may consider (but does not guarantee) use of a speaker's contract, provided it does not stand in conflict with college policy.
6. **Planning Process:** The Student Life Office provides [additional planning resources](#) for student organizations. The Director of Public Affairs and Marketing, Director of Campus Safety, Director of Operations (Physical Plant), Dean of Students and other critical stakeholders will participate in the planning and execution of the event as well as planning for any anticipated protests, if necessary.
7. **Publicity and Promotion:** For potentially high-profile events, the Public Affairs and Marketing Division will coordinate with the event representatives, the sponsor organization and the relevant college offices on the dissemination of promotional materials and event information. Any promotional material must include a statement that the event does not function as an endorsement by Hope College nor does the speaker and/or the event content reflect the views and beliefs of the college. Student Life and Public Affairs and Marketing is available to assist with appropriate disclaimer wording. The college reserves the right to issue the initial announcement about the event, ahead of any political organization or campaign. The sponsoring group should ensure that all co-sponsors, including departments and other clubs, understand that their name will be associated with the event in promotional materials.

HOPE COLLEGE - *Policy/Procedure - Campus Events with Visiting Speakers*

8. **Tickets:** If the event is ticketed, all tickets must be managed through the college's Events and Conferences Office. At least 20% of seating or tickets must be reserved for Hope College students; the rest of the seating should be available to, but not necessarily guaranteed for, students, staff and faculty, unless the student sponsor organization requests it. The college reserves the right to restrict access to the event to Hope students and employees. Student organizations must request permission to open the event to the public as part of the approval process.
9. **Costs:** The college will support the expense of standard event operations. This includes room rental fees, most of which are waived for events sponsored by formally recognized Hope College student organizations, academic classes and academic departments (there are certain exceptions, e.g. Haworth Hotel). Any additional expenses for services that go beyond standard operations, including but not limited to security, technology support, insurance, or sound equipment, will be billed to the sponsor organization or department. The sponsor organization or department must be able to provide evidence of financial resources to cover any and all expenses.
10. **Presence of Advisors and/or Faculty:** If the event is sponsored by a student organization, the organization's faculty/staff advisor must be present prior to, during and after the event. If the event is sponsored by an academic class or academic department, faculty representing the class or department must be present. Co-sponsored events may have only one faculty/staff advisor or member present as primary sponsor. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization's student leaders and their faculty/staff advisor to work together to host a hospitable event and to engage Campus Safety or the Dean of Students or designee if assistance is needed (note this engagement can occur prior to, at the event, or following the event).
11. **Right to Deny or Withdraw Approval:** The college reserves the right to deny or withdraw approval of the event based on the following:
 - The event would significantly disrupt the time, place, and manner of the normal operations of the college.
 - The event would pose a threat to the physical safety of students, staff, faculty and/or individuals attending the event.
 - The event would not align with the core commitments to the college's Mission, Christian Aspirations, Virtues of Public Discourse and tax-exempt status.
 - The event would lack significant educational outcomes.
 - The event would function, either in appearance or substance, as a rally for a political candidate and/or political issue.
 - The event would jeopardize the college's reputation, the college's institutional standing, and/or the legitimacy of the college's core institutional commitments.

HOPE COLLEGE - *Policy/Procedure - Campus Events with Visiting Speakers*

- The event does not follow policy guidelines.
12. **Privileges:** The right to invite visiting speakers to campus in a privilege that is afforded to a student group. Failure to adhere to these procedures places a student group at risk for forfeiting their ability to bring visiting speakers to campus for a period of time. Multiple violations place the student group's renewal and/or access to appropriations funding at risk.

EXAMPLE STATEMENT OF WELCOME FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATION HOSTING A VISITING SPEAKER:

SHORT VERSION

The presence or absence of any particular speaker or viewpoint does not reflect Hope College's institutional endorsement or rejection of that speaker or viewpoint.

LONG VERSION

To prepare students to lead and serve as global citizens, and in keeping with its role as an educational institution committed to open academic inquiry, Hope College provides opportunities to engage with a variety of topics and perspectives. These opportunities frequently take the form of events organized or sponsored by campus departments, programs or student organizations. Although activities at the college are designed primarily for the campus community, such events are often open to the public.

The college recognizes that the subject matter, viewpoints and speakers may at times be controversial and contrary to the beliefs and opinions of some. The presence or absence of any particular speaker or viewpoint does not reflect institutional endorsement or rejection. Neither will any specific event necessarily be designed to integrate countervailing perspectives into the formal presentation.

In seeking to provide an environment characterized by respectful and constructive dialogue, guided by the highest standards of intellectual inquiry and in a spirit of Christian love, Hope has developed a set of standards for public discussion known as the Virtues of Public Discourse. Hope requests that all who choose to attend an event at the college do so in the spirit of the virtues, and asks that they refrain from being present if they cannot.