

Policy on Assemblies, Demonstrations and Free Expression at Stevens

Approval Authority: Cabinet
Responsible Officer: Vice President for Student Affairs; Vice President for Human Resources
Responsible Office: Division of Student Affairs; Division of Human Resources
Effective Date: October 20, 2026

I. Purpose of this Policy

Stevens Institute of Technology affirms that freedom of expression, peaceful protest and open inquiry are essential to its mission as an institution of higher learning. The University encourages robust discussion and debate by faculty, staff and students (“Members of the Stevens Community”) and recognizes the rights of individuals and groups to express dissent through assemblies, demonstrations and other forms of peaceful protest in accordance with this Policy. In furtherance of these goals, the university has adopted the Chicago Principles which are stated in full in the university’s Faculty Handbook (Section 1.3).

This Policy is intended to ensure (a) the safety, operations and rights of all members of the campus community, (b) that the regular operations of the university are not disrupted and (c) that the university and Members of the Stevens Community comply with applicable law.

Members of the Stevens Community (students, student organizations and employees) may sponsor limited peaceful protests, dissents, demonstrations and similar gatherings (as further defined below, “Assemblies”) on Stevens’ campus, as permitted by this Policy. Any planned counter-protest will be treated as an Assembly for purposes of this Policy.

II. Policy

- A. Scope of Policy. This Policy sets forth expectations for all Members of the Stevens Community and for persons who are not Members of the Stevens Community but are visiting the Stevens campus or participating in programs or events on Stevens’ campus. It applies to Assemblies that occurs on Stevens’ campus or as part of any Stevens activity, regardless of location.
- This Policy does not apply to the invitation of academic speakers or organization of other types of academic events which are organized by faculty, departments or schools as part of their regular scholarly or academic activities. These scholarly and

academic activities shall be approved by the Provost, dean or department chair pursuant to their respective policies and procedures.

- B. Right to Assemble and Protest. Members of the Stevens Community have the right to organize and participate in demonstrations, rallies, picketing, vigils, marches and other forms of peaceful protest or observance in accordance with this Policy (“Assemblies”). For clarity, the term “Assemblies” under this Policy is not intended to include informal and peaceful gatherings of students or employees which (i) involve fewer than ten people, (ii) are planned spontaneously without advance organization or promotion and (iii) are in full compliance with the requirement of this Policy other than the requirement of advance notices and approvals.

The university is committed to administering this Policy in a viewpoint-neutral manner, provided that no Assembly, expressive activity or content may violate Stevens’ policies, including the University's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment and retaliation or applicable law. Stevens will address conduct that constitutes prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, including conduct based on shared ancestry, ethnic characteristics, national origin, religion or other protected characteristics. Under no circumstances will a permitted use of university space or facilities imply any endorsement by Stevens of the views expressed by any person, group or organization.

Stevens supports the rights of individuals and groups to engage in peaceful protest and expressive activity. Those rights do not extend to conduct that materially limits, obstructs or denies another person's access to the University's educational, employment, research, residential or co-curricular programs and activities.

A third party may participate in an Assembly only in order to be a speaker and when such party is sponsored by an employee, student or student organization. Any third party participation must be approved as described below to address security concerns. A third party may not bring outside members of their organization to participate in the Assembly unless approved as part of the request.

- C. Assembly Logistics. In addition to any requirements contained within the approval for an Assembly, if any, every Assembly must comply with the following:

1. Assemblies must be scheduled between the hours of 8 am – 9 pm;

2. Assemblies must take place within specific locations approved by Stevens;
3. The Assembly area will be designated by a particular room or space or, if outdoors, by barricades provided by Stevens Campus Police;
4. All participants in an Assembly (except for invited and approved speakers) must be members of the Stevens community and must be scanned through Ducklink (or other identification measures then in effect) as they enter the Assembly room or area;
5. Non-members of the Stevens community may not engage in demonstrations on campus unless individuals are invited or sponsored by a university-recognized employee or group to be a speaker and are approved in advance by Stevens and must comply with all relevant policies and procedures. Failure to comply may result in removal of any person or other action by Campus Police;
6. Any person wearing a face covering must comply with any request by a university official to remove or lower their face covering for identification purposes;
7. A closed room or delineated space for those who may wish to dissent from the Assembly message (and are not part of a planned counter-protest approved under this Policy) will be set up across from or adjacent to the Assembly area (the reservation of this space will occur in conjunction with Student Affairs/Human Resources staff);
8. No backpacks or bags, signs larger than 22x28 inches, banners, full-sized flags, furniture or other large items may be present in the Assembly area (the request for a room or space may include a request for space for bag storage);
9. Student Affairs/Human Resources and/or Campus Police staff members reserve the right to prohibit any object within the Assembly area that may pose a danger to the community;
10. All Assemblies will be monitored by Stevens Campus Police;
11. Faculty and instructional staff are not permitted to reschedule or cancel a class to allow students or employees to participate in an Assembly;
12. Staff may not participate in an Assembly during work hours without the prior approval of their supervisor;
13. All Assembly materials and messaging, wherever published or posted, must reference that the Assembly is an event for the Stevens community and is closed to the general public; and
14. All Assembly materials, messaging, chants, speakers and participants must comply with all Stevens policies and applicable law.

D. Prohibited Conduct.

Although all university Policies (including, but not limited to, the Student Handbook, the Student Organization Handbook, the Employee Manual and the Faculty Handbook) apply to Assemblies on Stevens' campus, the following non-exhaustive list provides examples of specific conduct that is prohibited at all Assemblies on Stevens' campus:

- i. Obstruction or disruption of the normal operations and activities of the university (academic classes, research, university operations, events, etc.);
- ii. Limiting access to Stevens buildings, offices and thoroughfares.
- iii. Unauthorized entry, presence or use, or blocking of ingress or egress, of university facilities or property, including private and shared spaces;
- iv. Conduct that threatens, endangers or poses a credible risk to the health or safety of any person.
- v. Physical or verbal intimidation or harassment;
- vi. Use of words in a situation of clear and present danger that incites others to engage in behavior that would violate Stevens' Policies or applicable law;
- vii. Possession or use of a weapon as defined in Stevens' Policy on Weapons;
- viii. Unauthorized use, misuse, taking unauthorized possession of, or destruction of university property, or acts committed with disregard for possible harm to such property;
- ix. Defacement of any area of the campus;
- x. Intentionally or recklessly starting a fire;
- xi. Use of vehicles or personal transportation devices (as defined in Stevens Policy on Personal Transportation Devices), or any activity which blocks vehicles from entering any area of campus;
- xii. Erecting structures, such as pop-up tents, canopies, or encampments of any kind;
- xiii. Using sound amplification equipment in a loud or disruptive manner; and
- xiv. Failure to comply with the directives of Campus Police or Stevens administration.

While the foregoing list of requirements is non-exhaustive, the intent of these and other restrictions which may be necessary or appropriate in the future is to ensure the orderly operations of the university in compliance with applicable law and the safety and security of the campus and its community members; see also paragraph G below.

E. Approval Process

1. To ensure that Assemblies are properly planned and supported, and to ensure that no Assembly disrupts the normal operations and activities of the University, it is required that members of the Stevens Community submit a request to the Vice President for Student Affairs (for students) or the Vice President for Human Resources (for employees) or their designee at least 5 business days before the planned occurrence of any Assembly.
2. The Vice President for Student Affairs/Vice President for Human Resources, as applicable, or designee will consider the request and may schedule a meeting to review event logistics and ensure compliance with this Policy. All Assemblies organized by students and student organizations will require a meeting.
3. Any room or space reservation for an Assembly may only be made following approval of such request by the Vice President for Student Affairs (for students) or the Vice President for Human Resources (for employees) or their designee. Once an Assembly is approved by the Vice President for Student Affairs, a Registered Student Organization may then formally reserve the designated space and submit the event request through Ducklink.
4. Any non-Stevens speaker(s) must be reviewed and approved by the Vice President for Student Affairs or Vice President for Human Resources, as applicable, or designee at least 3 business days prior to the Assembly date. In the event that an invited speaker poses a concern for the security of the campus community as determined by Stevens, the speaker will not be permitted to come to campus or participate in an Assembly.
5. Any materials and messaging relating to the Assembly which will be posted on Stevens' campus or shared on social media accounts or websites by the individual or group sponsoring the Assembly must be reviewed at least 24 hours in advance of any Assembly for compliance with Stevens policies by the Vice President for Student Affairs or Vice President for Human Resources, as applicable, or designee in advance of posting.
6. Following completion of the steps outlined in this Section, Stevens will endeavor to respond to the person or organization requesting approval within the 5 business day period. Notwithstanding this time period, no Assembly may occur without written approval from the Vice President for Student Affairs/Vice President for Human Resources (or designee), as applicable.

7. In the event that approval of an Assembly is denied, the relevant person or organization may request a meeting to hear an explanation for the denial and may thereafter resubmit the request pursuant to this Section.

F. Organizer Responsibilities

The individual or organization sponsoring an Assembly is responsible for communicating applicable requirements of this Policy to participants and cooperating with University officials regarding safety, logistics, compliance and operational matters. Sponsors are expected to take reasonable steps to help ensure that participants comply with this Policy and any conditions applicable to the Assembly.

G. Event Modification Authority

Following approval of an Assembly, Stevens may impose, modify or supplement reasonable conditions relating to the time, place or manner of the Assembly if necessary to address safety, operational, logistical, legal, compliance or security concerns. Failure to comply with such conditions may result in revocation of approval or other action under this Policy.

III. **Violations of Policy or Law**

- A. When an individual or group violates this Policy or applicable law, the individual or group will be subject to university discipline through the student conduct process (for students) or referral to Human Resources (for employees), and/or arrest, as appropriate.
- B. The Vice President for Student Affairs or Vice President for Human Resources, as applicable (or designee) may revoke Stevens' approval of an Assembly at any time if a serious violation of this Policy or law occurs, if adequate steps have not been implemented to ensure compliance with this Policy, or if public safety is at risk, as reasonably determined by Stevens based on its assessment of the circumstances
- C. In each case, written notice will be provided to the student, student organization or employee sponsoring the Assembly.

IV. **Emergency Authority**

Stevens, including Campus Police and other designated University officials, may take immediate action whenever it is determined by such party to be reasonably necessary to protect the safety of individuals, maintain access to University facilities, preserve University operations, ensure compliance with applicable law or prevent damage to property.

V. Non-Retaliation

Stevens prohibits retaliation against any individual for organizing, participating in, supporting, opposing or reporting concerns regarding an Assembly; for reporting alleged violations of this Policy; or for participating in the review, investigation or resolution of matters arising under this Policy.