

## **UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS RESPONSE TO DEMONSTRATIONS GUIDELINES**

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The University of Massachusetts recognizes the rights of members of the University community to freedom of assembly and speech, and strongly believes in fostering discourse and the free exchange of ideas at the University. However, as a matter of law and University policy, these rights and interests are restricted, and must be exercised on University property in a manner consistent with the mission and operation of the University and the rights of other members of the University community. Accordingly, the University long ago adopted policies and procedures at each of its campuses which take into account these countervailing interests.

Nonetheless, some members of the University community on occasion have exceeded the bounds of appropriate expression during the course of demonstration, by interfering in the educational activities and business of the University and with the rights of others. It is therefore desirable to reaffirm the importance of appropriate time, place and manner restrictions on demonstrations. Accordingly, and in order to provide further consistency in the application of University policies to on-campus protests, the Office of the President is issuing the following guidelines for responding to demonstrations on University property:

- All campuses shall routinely and consistently apply the provisions of their respective codes of conduct and other relevant policies and procedures to on-campus demonstrations.
- The campuses shall take steps through appropriate procedures to hold demonstrators accountable for actions which violate University policies and regulations. Such improper actions include but are not limited to:
  - Material disruption of or interference with instructional activities, other University business and campus events;
  - Actual or threats of physical violence, or other forms of harassment, or destruction of University, other public or private property;
  - Interference with free entry to or exit from University facilities and free movement by individuals; and
  - Interference with the rights of other members of the University community to freedom of speech and assembly, and other rights.
- Demonstrations are limited to appropriate public forums, which do not include, among other locations, faculty and administrative offices, classrooms and other instructional facilities. (Public forums are locations which by tradition or policy are available for public assembly and speech -- such as a student union lobby where students have traditionally gathered to debate issues.) To the extent that a public forum exists within a University building, any demonstrations within that forum shall take place only during the building's normal operating hours.
- Where appropriate, the University shall endeavor to maintain open lines of communication with demonstrators and to provide opportunities for discussion of matters in dispute so long as the demonstrators act consistent with University policy and the rights of others. However, as a general rule the University shall not negotiate with individuals who occupy any University facility, or with associated demonstrators, while any such occupation continues, and shall never negotiate within an occupied facility.

These guidelines are intended to support, not supplant, existing University policy. They apply to all members of the University community, including undergraduates, graduate students and employees, as well as to guests and visitors. The guidelines should be implemented as consistently as possible, recognizing that special circumstances may on rare occasion require limited and judicious deviation from the guidelines.

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*Issued by President Bulger on August 11, 1997*