Ventura College
Expressive Activities Q&A

1. What are expressive activities, and what is the College's responsibility to protect them?
Expressive activities include demonstrations, protests, rallies, petitioning, distributing literature, and other forms of protected speech and expression. As a public institution, Ventura College must protect these rights for students, employees, and members of the public, including expression that may be controversial, unpopular, or uncomfortable.

Policy References: BP 3900; AP 3900; California Education Code §§ 66301 and 76120

2. Can the College restrict expressive activities because the message is offensive, controversial, or inconsistent with institutional values?
Generally, no. The College cannot restrict otherwise protected expression solely because individuals disagree with the message or find it offensive. Restrictions must be consistent with constitutional protections and applicable District policies. However, expression involving legally unprotected threats, unlawful harassment, incitement meeting applicable legal standards, or conduct that substantially disrupts College operations may warrant intervention.

Policy References: BP 3900 (prohibited speech, hate violence, and substantial disruption); AP 3900

3. Where are expressive activities permitted, and what areas are restricted?
Under AP 3900, grassy areas, outdoor walkways, and similar common areas generally available to students and the community are designated public forums for expressive activities. Nonpublic forums include classrooms, campus offices, libraries, learning centers, indoor facilities, parking lots, athletic facilities, maintenance areas, and areas within 25 feet of doorways opening to outdoor campus areas.

Policy References: BP 3900 (public and nonpublic forums); AP 3900

4. What are time, place, and manner requirements, and when may administrators intervene?
Time, place, and manner requirements establish lawful parameters for expressive activities while protecting campus safety, access, and normal College operations.
Under AP 3900, administrators may address conduct involving:

- Physical obstruction or interference with individuals moving through campus.
- Unwanted physical contact or forcing individuals to accept materials.
- Amplified sound that disrupts or tends to disrupt classes, campus operations, or other lawful activities.
- Activities occurring in locations not designated for the proposed expressive use.

Any intervention must be based on the conduct or applicable location restrictions, rather than disagreement with the message being expressed.

Policy References: BP 3900; AP 3900

5. Must individuals obtain permission or complete the Expressive Activities Planning Form before engaging in expressive activities?
No advance permission is generally required to exercise protected expression in designated public forums. Ventura College's updated process encourages individuals and organizations to contact Student Affairs and submit the Expressive Activities Planning Form to support coordination, safety, and equitable use of campus spaces. Importantly, AP 3900 also recognizes that individuals may remain anonymous regardless of whether they check in.

Policy References: AP 3900

6. What should an administrator do if a protest or demonstration occurs without advance notice?
Administrators should first determine whether the activity is occurring in a designated public forum and assess any immediate safety, access, or operational concerns.
If the activity is lawful and does not violate applicable time, place, and manner requirements, the absence of advance notice alone is not grounds for terminating it.
Administrators should contact the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs for coordination and involve Campus Police when an immediate safety concern warrants intervention.

Policy References: AP 3900, BP/AP 3500 (Campus Safety); BP/AP 3501 (Campus Security and Access)

7. What if students, faculty, or staff report feeling uncomfortable, intimidated, or unsafe because of an expressive activity?
Administrators should acknowledge the concern, assess the circumstances, and distinguish between protected expression and conduct that may violate District policy or applicable law. Disagreement, discomfort, or offense alone does not establish a policy violation. However, credible threats, unlawful harassment, physical intimidation, or substantial disruption require appropriate assessment and response. Administrators should coordinate with Student Affairs, Campus Police, Human Resources, or other appropriate offices depending on the circumstances.

Policy References: BP 3900 (prohibited speech and hate violence); AP 3900; BP 5500 (Student Code of Conduct); BP/AP 3500 (Campus Safety).

8. Can individuals distribute flyers, circulate petitions, or post materials anywhere on campus?
No. AP 3900 permits the distribution of petitions, leaflets, newspapers, and other printed materials in designated public forums, subject to applicable restrictions. Individuals may not obstruct pedestrians, force others to accept materials, or distribute materials in restricted areas. Those distributing materials must also make reasonable efforts to remove discarded materials before leaving. Posting materials is governed by separate requirements, including designated bulletin boards, approved posting locations, and applicable Student Affairs procedures.

Policy References: AP 3900 (Distribution of Materials and Posting)

9. What is the difference between expressive activities and facilities use?
Expressive activities generally involve the exercise of protected speech and expression in designated public forums. At Ventura College, these activities are administered through the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. Facilities use involves requests for scheduled use of College buildings, rooms, grounds, and resources under the applicable Civic Center and facilities use requirements. These requests are administered through Business and Administrative Services. Administrators should understand the distinction and direct individuals to the appropriate office rather than applying facilities use requirements automatically to protected expression in designated public forums.

Policy References: BP 3900 (Civic Center Permit provisions); AP 3900; BP/AP 6700 (Facilities Use)

10. What are the expectations of College administrators when responding to expressive activities?
Administrators are responsible for protecting lawful expression while maintaining safety, access, and the educational mission of the College.
This requires administrators to:

- Apply District policies consistently and without viewpoint discrimination.
- Understand campus public and nonpublic forum designations.
- Distinguish protected expression from conduct that may warrant intervention.
- Avoid unnecessary confrontation or escalation.
- Recognize the boundaries of their administrative authority.
- Coordinate with Student Affairs and other appropriate offices when questions or concerns arise.

The objective is not to regulate viewpoints, but to ensure that expressive activities occur consistent with constitutional protections, District policies, and the orderly operation of the College.

Policy References: BP/AP 3900; BP 4030 (Academic Freedom); BP/AP 7217 (Faculty Responsibilities); BP 5500 (Student Code of Conduct); BP/AP 3500 and 3501 (Campus Safety and Security).