

# Free Expression

## A Right and Responsibility

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A guide to expressive activity at  
Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

**RUTGERS**  
Student Affairs

## Rutgers University's Commitment to Free Expression

All members of the Rutgers University community—our faculty members, students, alumni, and staff—are free to express their viewpoints in public forums. This includes viewpoints that may differ from the majority of people in the University community.

Rutgers University does not restrict the activities of recognized university organizations, including the speakers they invite to campus, provided organizations obey the law and follow University policy and guidelines regarding these events.

## What Should I Know About Free Expression On Campus?

Public universities cannot regulate speech in public forums and must remain neutral in subject matter and viewpoint.

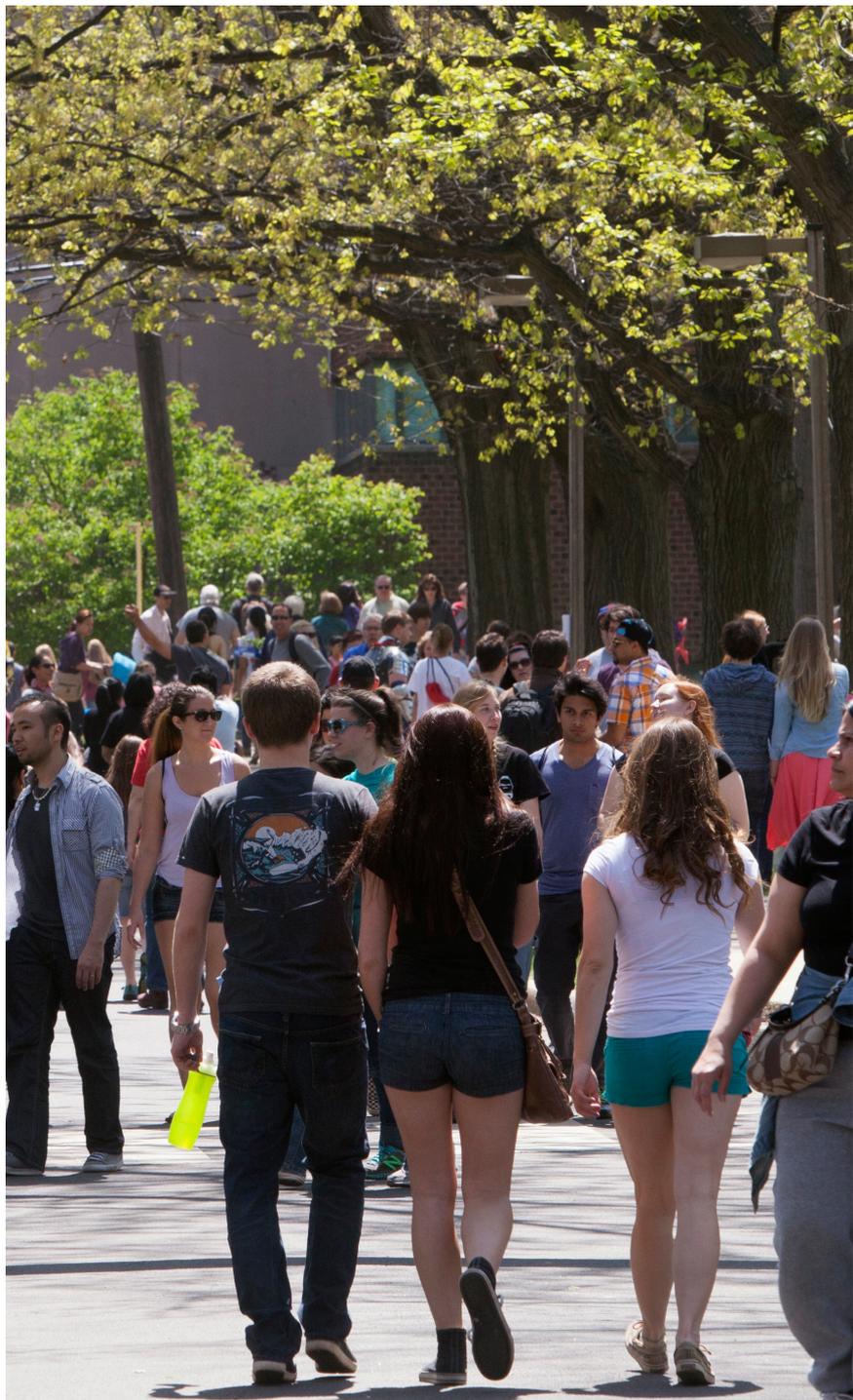
Certain locations on campus are not public forums and are not available for events, meetings, or demonstrations unless an exemption is granted.

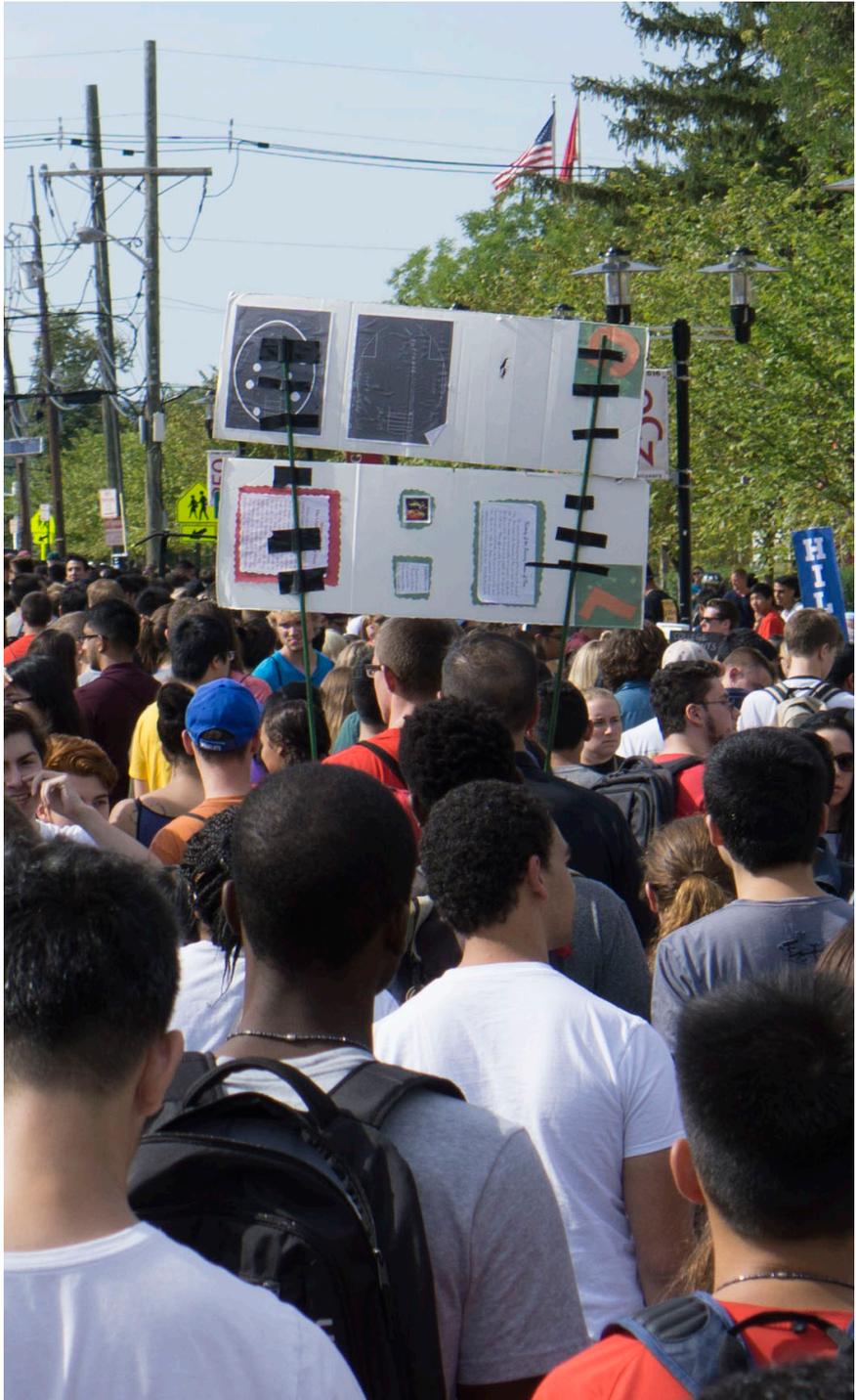
These include:

- Private offices and research laboratories
- Facilities with sensitive materials, equipment or records such as some offices, museums, and libraries
- Classrooms or meeting spaces where classes or other activities are already being held
- Health Services, CAPS, and other clinical facilities

**Expressive activities should not disrupt normal University operations. Be aware of activities that might:**

- Block access to campus buildings
- Obstruct the free movement of persons about campus





## What Is Not Considered Free Expression?

Individuals and groups may be found in violation of University policy if they engage in the following actions or behaviors:

- Unreasonably infringing on others' rights to free expression at demonstrations, events or programs
- Threaten individuals or cause an injury to someone
- Harass, threaten violence, or intimidate others
- Violate the law or University policy
- Enter a restricted area without authorization

## Tips for Planning a Demonstration or Expressive Activity

### Prior to the Event:

- **Review University policies**, including the University Code of Student Conduct, Disruption Policy, and Student Organization Guidelines for Free Expression on Campus.
- **Develop a Plan:** meet with your Campus Advisor or a staff member in Student Centers and Involvement, the Cultural Centers, or the Dean of Students Office to discuss logistics such as format, location, speakers, and any other items you think will lead to a safe and successful event.
- **Fill out the Public Forum Notification Form:** Filling out this form at least three days in advance can help you secure the site you wish to use.

## During the Event:

- **Speak with Demonstration Response Team Members:** The Demonstration Response Team is made up of staff members from Student Affairs in attendance. Let them know who is in charge from your organization and what the plan for the event entails. The Demonstration Team is there for observation purposes only but will work with the organization and RUPD if intervention is needed.
- **Communicate Your Plan to Attendees:** Meet with organization members and demonstration participants to discuss the purpose of the event and what they should do if confronted by threats, harassment, or violence during the event. Groups should not respond physically – someone should call 911 immediately. Attendees should also be aware of University policies and procedures, as they also can be held responsible for their actions.
- **Report safety concerns promptly:** If something occurs and you need assistance call 911 immediately.

## After the Event:

- **Follow up** with members and participants to debrief the event.
- **Meet** with Campus Advisor to discuss next steps.

## Recording in Public Areas

Participants may use recording devices or cameras at events that are open to the public, provided it is in compliance with the University Code of Student Conduct (see Section VII.M. Undisclosed Recording).

## Still Have Questions?

When in doubt please feel free to contact a staff member in Student Centers and Involvement, one of the Cultural Centers, or a staff member in the Dean of Students Office. We can answer questions about public forums on campus, assist with planning, and provide you with access to University policies and procedures.

# **Information and Resources**

**Office of the Dean of Students**

848-932-2300

**Student Centers and Involvement**

848-932-6978

**Asian American Cultural Center**

848-445-8043

**Center for Latino Arts and Culture**

848-932-1263

**Center for Social Justice Education  
and LGBT Communities**

848-445-4141

**Paul Robeson Cultural Center**

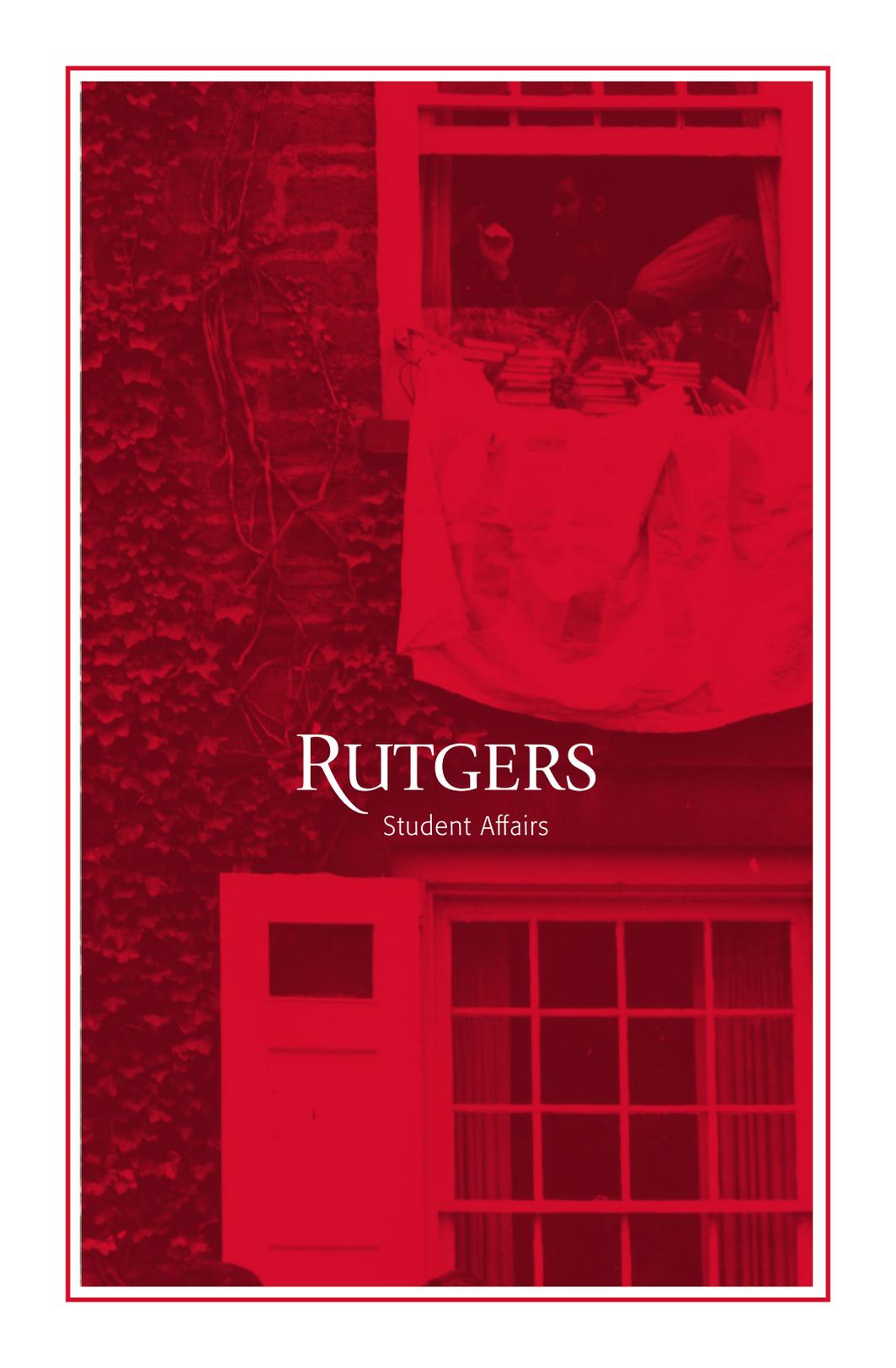
848-445-3545

**Rutgers University Police**

848-932-7211

Links to the Public Forum Notification Form, University Code of Conduct, and Disruption Policy are available online at:

**[deanofstudents.rutgers.edu](http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu)**

A red-tinted photograph of a building facade. On the left, a wall is covered in dense ivy. To the right, a window is visible, with a white sheet or tarp draped over the sill. On the sheet, several stacks of books are visible. Below the window, a white door is partially open. The entire image is framed by a thin red border.

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