

How to Handle Speakers & Materials You May Find Offensive

Many speakers thrive on attention and publicity. They use provocative language or materials in an attempt to catch your interest.

Effective strategies for dealing with speakers you may find offensive:

- **Ignore the speakers completely.** Do not give them any attention. Do not stop and argue with them. Do not give in to the temptation to lash out.
- **Do NOT touch any of the speakers.**
- Conduct a positive campaign of buttons and banners.
- Counter-schedule another unity event at the same time.

Why does the college allow speakers and materials that may be provocative on campus?

The campus is a public venue where any person can exercise his or her First Amendment rights. Some speakers, though unpopular, are usually acting within their legal rights. In most cases, their printed materials are also protected by the First Amendment.

Policies for College of San Mateo

The views expressed by individuals or groups using free speech space to exercise their constitutional rights do not necessarily represent the views of the San Mateo County Community College District, College of San Mateo, its administration, faculty, staff or students. The presence of these individuals or groups should not be construed as an endorsement or sponsorship of these groups or their point of view. The views and opinions of these individuals and/or groups do not necessarily state or reflect the opinion, policy or position of the district or the college.

For additional information regarding College and District policies, please refer to SMCCCD Board Policy 2.31 Speech: Time, Place and Manner, http://downloads.smccd.edu/file?s=/sites/downloads/BoT&du=/sites/downloads/BoT/PoliciesProcedures/2_31.pdf or call (650) 574-6141.

Individual Support

Anyone who may need support dealing with the issues brought up by provocative speakers or materials is encouraged to contact the College's Personal Counseling & Wellness Services in Building 1, Room 147 or at (650) 574-6396.

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Free Speech and The First Amendment



“The **First Amendment** to the United States Constitution is a part of the United States Bill of Rights that protects freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and the right to petition.”

“*Criticism of the government and advocacy of unpopular ideas that people may find distasteful or against public policy, such as racism, sexism, and other hate speech are generally permitted,*” because **freedom of speech** is protected in the United States.

There are **exceptions** to these general protections, including the Miller test for obscenity, child pornography laws, speech that incites imminent danger, and regulation of commercial speech such as advertising.

For example, **flag desecration** has continually, albeit controversially, been protected by the First Amendment, despite state laws to the contrary. A Constitutional Amendment has been introduced to contravene the First Amendment's protection on flag burning, but it has failed to acquire the requisite enactment by the states.

This information was retrieved from Wikipedia on July, 12, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First Amendment to the United States Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution)

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