

Student Dissent/Disruption of College Functions

Ramapo College provides a number of channels through which students may raise issues or question College policies or procedures. Among them are the Student Government, public statements at Board of Trustees meetings, meetings with individual administrators or faculty members, and through recognized or registered student organizations. Ramapo prides itself on the degree of access to the governance process afforded its students.

Ramapo College also acknowledges the right of students to peacefully protest College policies or indicate dissent from governmental policies or private citizens' actions through lawful speech, protests, and demonstrations, or the display of symbolic attire. The College, in turn, has the right to enforce reasonable regulations with respect to the time, manner, and place in which these activities may occur to ensure normal College functions and activities continue unimpeded. With only a few exceptions related mostly to the creation of imminent danger through speech (untruthfully yelling fire in a crowded theater, for example), the content of speech by dissenting students may not be regulated.

At Ramapo College, lawful dissent changes to disruption when students interfere with the rights of others to teach and learn. These disruptions may include, but are not limited to:

1. Interference with the freedom enjoyed by members of the Ramapo College community or its invited guests to speak or hear one another during in-class or out-of-class educational programs or activities.
2. Interference with the normal administrative, advisement, or ceremonial functions of the College (e.g., meetings, orientation, counseling, graduation, athletic contests, etc.).
3. Interference with the public service activities of the College (e.g., the speeches of invited speakers, the activities of groups renting the College's facilities, etc.).
4. The occupation of rooms or defined areas used for teaching or administrative purposes or of space(s) which have not been reserved using the College's normal room or space scheduling system.

Following a warning from the President or his/her designee, students who continue to disrupt normal College activities or functions through speech or actions, or who violate State laws concerning disruptions at educational institutions, will be subject to the disciplinary sanctions of the Code of Conduct published in this Handbook. Specifically, an individual student or a group of students may be charged with violations of the Code of Conduct provisions H.1., intentionally or recklessly causing physical harm, intentionally or recklessly causing reasonable apprehension of physical harm, intentionally or recklessly causing threats to do bodily harm; H.2., intentionally or recklessly causing verbal or written harassment that is prohibited by law; H.5., intentionally or recklessly interfering with normal College-sponsored activities including,

but not limited to, presentation, studying, teaching, research, College administration, including institutional governance operations, the activities of fire, police, or other emergency services; H.14., intentionally and substantially interfering with the freedom of expression of others; and H.17., failure to comply with the directions of College officials, including Campus Security Officers acting in performance of their duties. (See Section B of the Code of Conduct for more specific information on how to file a complaint.) They may receive sanctions ranging from an official warning to expulsion. The College also reserves the right to seek injunctive relief from municipal or State courts depending on the severity or longevity of a student disruption of normal College functions.

A. Applicable State Laws

1. Entry into Educational Premises to Commit Indictable Offense (2A.149A-1) — Any person who enters any building, structure, or place used for any educational purpose with intent of committing therein any indictable offense shall be guilty of a high misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.
2. Entry into Educational Premises to Disrupt Classes (2A.149A-2) — Any person, other than a bona fide student therein or parents or legal guardian of such student or faculty, administrator, or other school employee, while in the performance of his/her duties, who enters any building structure or place used for any educational purpose with the intent of disrupting classes or of otherwise interfering with the peace and good order of the place shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.
3. Interference with Students, Faculty, Others (2A.149A-3) — Any person who obstructs, interferes with, assaults, or threatens bodily harm to any student, faculty, administrator, school employee, parent or legal guardian of any student, or any other person lawfully seeking to enter a school building or any other building, structure, or place used for any educational purpose shall be guilty of a high misdemeanor, punishable by imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or a fine of not more than \$10,000, or both.