This policy has been replaced with the Expressive Activity Policy, which became effective on 08-01-2024 and is overseen by VP and General Counsel.

# Policy for the Use of Indiana University Assembly Ground

BL-ACA-I18

## About This Policy

**Effective Dates:**
01-01-1969

**Last Updated:**
01-01-1969

**Responsible University Office:**
Office of the Provost

## Scope

The following principles shall apply with respect to the use of the Assembly Ground in Dunn Meadow.

## Policy Statement

### 1. Basic Principle

The Trustees of Indiana University have designated the area immediately north of the Indiana Memorial Union as an assembly ground, establishing this area as a public forum for expression on all subjects. We support this decision by the Trustees and believe it serves the University well. Universities in our civilization are places where dissenting and controversial views can be aired and discussed. This exchange of views is not merely something to be tolerated; it is a source of diversity and strength for our society as a whole. Of course this right of expression is not a license to violate the law or to interfere with the rights of others to express themselves. Of course when a demonstration becomes violent or represses the rights of others, it has no place on a university campus. But the mere fact that some find a demonstration distasteful is no more reason to ban it than to ban an idea the listener finds distasteful. We have reviewed the history of demonstrations in the Assembly Ground. Many of us as individuals disagree with the points of view which have been expressed there. Many of us who agree with the substantive views expressed in individual demonstrations have found the form of their expression sometimes distasteful, or worse. Taken as a whole, however, this history shows us a lively and vigorous commitment to the exploration of matters of public concern: the vigor of that commitment is to us one of the measures of greatness in a university.

### 2. Specific Guidelines

We therefore recommend the following guidelines for the use of the Assembly Ground:

A. The Trustees of Indiana University have designated an area on Dunn Meadow immediately north of the Indiana Memorial Union as the Indiana University Assembly Ground. The University community supports that decision and the policy that students, staff and faculty of the University may express any point of view on any subject in the Assembly Ground, with or without advance notice, within the limits of applicable laws and regulations. This decision enhances the rights of free speech and assembly and contributes to the University's richness and diversity. The University community therefore expects that all will respect the right of expression in the Assembly Ground and will maintain courtesy and good order during the use of the Assembly Ground.

B. Effective communication sometimes requires the use of signs, symbols or structures, as well as the spoken or printed word. We recognize the use of these signs, symbols or structures as an appropriate exercise of the right of expression in the Assembly Ground and call upon all to respect these forms of expression.

The construction of enduring signs, symbols or structures in the Assembly Ground may enhance the effective communication of a particular idea or point of view. We also recognize that the erection of permanent structures in the Assembly Ground has at least the potential of limiting the use of the Assembly Ground by others and may also present practical problems entirely unrelated to the point of view or idea being expressed. To enhance the effective use of the Assembly Ground, we believe the following rules should be adopted.

1. The use of signs, symbols or structures in the Assembly Ground may be an effective form of expression.
2. Any sign, symbol or structure which is either (a) continually carried or (b) taken away from 11:00 P.M. until 6:00 A.M., may be used in the Assembly Ground, day or night, to express any point of view on any subject, with or without advance notice, within the limits of applicable laws or regulations.
3. Leaving an uncarried sign, symbol or structure on the Assembly Ground between 11:00 P.M. and 6:00 A.M. requires advance notice and permission. This permission should be granted without regard to the point of view or the idea being expressed. The Provost of the Bloomington campus should designate an official who is responsible for receiving notice and giving permission. Permission should be granted provided there are reasonable arrangements for safety, sanitation, and repair of any damage to the meadow. Permission must never be refused because the demonstration is controversial or might be unpopular. Permission should ordinarily be limited to a period of two weeks; permission should be renewed on request unless there are others requesting permission under this section. We do not believe that overnight camping is itself a form of expression and we therefore believe that permission should not be granted to cook or live in overnight structures.

C. We believe the Bloomington Provost should create a committee to oversee the implementation of these provisions, to give continuing advice on changes of policy, and to provide, if necessary, more detailed regulations than those in the previous paragraph. That committee should also have the power to review denials of permission for uncarried overnight sings, symbols or structures. Because that review should be prompt if it is ever needed, we think the committee should be very small--perhaps the President of IUSA, the President pro tem of the Bloomington Faculty Council, and a member designated by the Provost.

D. We believe the University should not use physical force to enforce these rules. In cases of non-compliance, the University should use the legal process to enforce its legal rights. This commitment might involve some cost to the University and would probably entail more serious consequences for violators; we believe these costs are an appropriate way to mark the weight the University community attaches to both the rights and responsibilities it recognizes in the Assembly Ground.

## History

Board of Trustees – Minutes from 1969