

How to Handle Offensive Speakers & Printed Materials

Offensive speakers thrive on attention and publicity. They use offensive language or printed materials in an attempt to catch your interest.



Effective strategies for offensive speakers:

- Ignore the offensive speakers completely. Do not give them any attention. They will leave campus if they do not have an audience. They want you to stop and argue with them; and if you give-in to this temptation you will likely keep them here longer.
- Do **NOT** touch any of the offensive speakers. Some of these groups fund themselves by claiming they were “assaulted.”
- Conduct a positive campaign of buttons and banners – “Not in our House” or “Peace in the Park.”
- Counter-schedule another unity event at the same time.

Why does the college *allow* offensive speakers and printed materials on campus?

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

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, Skyline College, 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 the Board Policy 2.31 Speech: Time Place and Manner Policy, https://smccd-public.sharepoint.com/BoardPoliciesandProcedures/2_31.pdf or call (650) 738-4275.

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“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.

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 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Amendment_to_the_United_States_Constitution

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