Guidance for Event Organizers at William & Mary

Information to Review during the Planning Phase

The university supports individuals’ rights to speak, to engage in peaceful protest, to take part in orderly demonstrations, and to experience the free exchange and expression of ideas. Generally, peaceful protests should be allowed to continue. University business should continue as normally as possible.

A protest should be stopped if one or more of the following conditions exists as a result of the demonstration:

- Disruption of the normal operations of the university. Per the Student Conduct Code, this includes “interfering with ongoing educational activities, cultural events, or recreational, extracurricular or athletic programs.”

- Obstructing access to offices, buildings, or other university facilities.

- Threat of physical harm to persons or damage to property.

- Willful demonstrations within the interior of any university building or structure, except as specifically authorized and subject to reasonable conditions imposed to protect the rights and safety of other persons and to prevent damage to property.

- Unauthorized entry into or occupation of any university room, building, or area of the campus, including such entry or occupation at any unauthorized time, or any unauthorized or improper use of any university property, equipment, or facilities.

Involving WMPD in Advance of the Event

Event organizers are encouraged to meet with the WMPD to discuss plans and logistical needs for upcoming events, particularly if an event organizer learns about or suspects a demonstration may occur in conjunction with the planned event. The WMPD will review the following with the event organizer:

- Specific concerns the organizer may have;
- Security needs for participants, speakers/performers, protestors, and the community at large;
- The option of securing an alternate location for allowing an event to be relocated and continue despite a protest or interruption;
- Name and contact information of the event organizer who will be on-site at the event and who has the authority to speak/act should a demonstration occur;
- The protocol/script language drafted for responding to disruptions at a university event.