

Widener University

Delaware Law School

Policy for Inviting Outside Speakers to Campus:

Prologue:

ABA Standard 208 provides that a law school may “[r]estrict expression that violates the law, that falsely defames a specific individual, that constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, or that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests.”

Consistent with ABA requirements and Delaware Law School’s commitment to the robust exchange of viewpoints valued by the First Amendment’s guarantee of freedom of speech and expression, and mindful of the equally important value of respect for all people within our community, the Delaware Law School Administration, through The Office of Student Affairs, hereby requires compliance with the following procedures before any student organization may invite an outside speaker¹ to participate in a campus event:

1. **Notice to SBA Secretary.** At least four full weeks before a speaker may be scheduled to arrive and present, and prior to inviting the speaker, the organization sponsoring or inviting that speaker must notify the SBA Secretary of the identity of the speaker, the topic of the proposed presentation, and the anticipated date and time of the event (if already known). The notification should be via email to the SBA Secretary at **DelawareLawSBA@widener.edu**. Whenever reasonably possible, the notification shall be accompanied by a recently updated resume or c.v. of that proposed speaker.
2. **Notice to Student Organizations.** Upon receipt of the required information, the SBA secretary shall notify the presidents of all active student organizations; the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs; the Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI); and any other recipient as may be additionally required by the Law School Administration. That notification shall take place as soon as practicable, but in no event more than three days after receipt of the notification² required in section 1., above. Notification shall be via email to the designated addresses of the relevant organizational presidents, as well as the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean for DEI, or another designee. The notification must not contain any language expressing an opinion on the proposed speaker. The president of the sponsoring organization must be copied on this communication.

¹ “Outside speakers” do not include employees of Widener University, emeritus faculty members, current or past adjunct faculty members, event judges, or alumni of Delaware Law School.

² Under this policy, any communication via email is deemed to be received on the date the email communication is sent.

3. **Comments to Sponsoring Organization.** Upon receipt and consideration of information relating to the proposed speaker, the president of any organization, including the SBA, or any other person designated to speak on behalf of the organization, may communicate via email any information, opinion, or other thoughts to the president of the sponsoring organization related to the invitation of the proposed speaker. Any such communication must be sent as soon as practicable, but in no event more than five days after receipt of the email notice required in 2. above. The SBA President, the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean for DEI, or designee (as relevant) must be visibly copied on this communication. There should be only one communication originating from each organization to the president of the sponsoring organization related to the invitation of the proposed speaker.
4. **Response to Commenting Organizations.** If any organization expresses a concern regarding the proposed speaker, the sponsoring organization shall respond via email to that organization as soon as practicable, but in no event more than 5 days after receipt of any communication from a student organization about the proposed speaker. The SBA President, the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs, and the Assistant Dean for DEI, or designee (as relevant) must be visibly copied on this communication. There should be only one communication sent in response to the organization that has expressed concern.
5. **Concerns from the Administration.** If the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs or someone from Delaware Law School's Leadership Team directly expresses a concern to the sponsoring organization, pursuant to ABA Standard 208, that the proposed speaker or topic will violate the law, falsely defame a specific individual, constitute a genuine threat or harassment, or unjustifiably invade a substantial privacy or confidentiality interest, the sponsoring organization shall respond in the manner designated by that Office.
6. **Exigent circumstances.** If an organization wishes to sponsor an event in the very near future in order to respond to a recent concern or event, or if a proposed speaker is unable to attend a scheduled event but the organization wishes to conduct the event at the originally designated time despite the original speaker's absence, the sponsoring organization shall communicate with the SBA Secretary and the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs as soon as reasonably possible and provide the resume or c.v. of the proposed replacement speaker. In each such case, the sponsoring organization, the SBA, and the Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs shall work together to design an expedited schedule for review of any speaker not approved through the process described in ¶¶ 1-6 above.
7. Except as provided in ¶5 above, the sponsoring organization is under no obligation to reject a proposed speaker based on the comments received, if any.