



Protests and Demonstrations Policy

(as of 15 October 2020)

Protest is a necessary and acceptable means of free expression of ideas accepted across the Thiel Community. It's part of who we are and evident in Thiel's statements on values and diversity state:

Freedom of inquiry is at the center of our value system and is the basis from which we study with curiosity, live together with civility, serve society, respect one another, build our community, deepen our faith, express our creativity, and experience our independence in pursuit of truth.

It is a priority of Thiel College and its community members to respect all aspects of diversity. Thiel College encourages students to bring discussion and consideration of diverse facets to the forefront. Awareness of diversity is a vital component of our experiences of being human. All Thiel College community members are encouraged and supported to sustain the discussion around inclusive practices and the development of an open and accepting campus climate.

Forms of protest or demonstrations that do not interfere with the freedom of our community members to engage in usual and scheduled activities are permitted. However, protest or demonstrations (in person or virtual) that encroach upon the rights of others to peaceful assembly, orderly protest, and the free exchange of ideas, or that interfere with the rights of others to make use of or enjoy the facilities or attend the functions of the College, will not be tolerated.

- Picket lines which permit free passage of those who wish to pass, and signs, banners, and peaceful assemblies are acceptable.
- The carrying of signs that could pose a hazard to other people will not be permitted, (i.e., signs must be constructed entirely of soft material such as cardboard or cloth). Attaching banners to sticks, poles, or other rigid materials that potentially could inflict harm is not allowed either inside campus buildings or outside. Banner and signage content must be in good taste. If messages and graphics are deemed offensive, dangerous, or impedes the participation of others, College officials will require the individuals to move to a different location or remove their materials.
- Actions such as the following, are unacceptable: blocking; obstructing, or impeding the passage of a person or vehicle; actions that result in bodily harm; erecting or placing of obstructions that result in depriving others of their rights; creating a noise level that impedes community members from carrying on their normal activities.



- Outside groups are not permitted to protest on Thiel property. They can legally protest on public sidewalks at the edges of campus, as long as the Thiel Community is able to safely access campus property and buildings.
- The College reserves the right to designate locations for protests.

Halting a lecture, debate, or any public forum is an unacceptable form of protest. "Halting" means directly or indirectly preventing a speaker from speaking – however brief - or seizing control of a public forum for one's own purposes.

Responsibilities of those Organizing and Participating in Picketing and Other Demonstration Events

Because Thiel is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) it cannot “participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office. In other words, any activity or action must be considered non-partisan or Thiel risks losing its 501(c)(3) status.

Organizers and participants must follow these guidelines in planning and conducting pickets and other demonstration events:

- A member of the Thiel College community must be designated Organizer for the event (“member” is defined as faculty, staff, and/or students). Each event must be sponsored by a Thiel faculty or staff member.
- The Organizer must submit a Wufoo event-form to be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled Student Government Association (SGA) meeting (check the SGA website for dates and times.). The request to demonstrate should include the proposed time, place, manner, and planned size for the event. SGA will determine if the request moves on to the Student Life Office for approval (see below for requests that are not approved).
- If students are responding to an issue they have with the institution, students are encouraged to first take part in a private meeting with campus officials to attempt to resolve issues before they reach the point of a protest.
- If a campus guest participates in an approved campus demonstration and violates College policy, the host, event organizer, will be held accountable for the actions of their guest(s).
- The Thiel College Student Code of Conduct, Office of Residential Life Policies and Procedures, and/or other College/administrative regulations must be observed at all times in the planning and conduct of any event.



- The Organizer is responsible for communicating the parameters that have been set for the event by the Student Life Office and the Department of Public Safety -to all participants prior to the event, to take reasonable measures to ensure the safety of participants, and will act as the primary liaison with the Student Life Office and/or the Department of Public Safety during the event itself.
- Occupancy and gathering policies are subject to broader health and safety protocols (i.e., COVID-19).

Consultation on Requests Not Approved

In the event that a request to conduct picketing and/or a demonstration is not approved by SGA or the Student Life Office, the Organizer or group may appeal and choose to do the following:

- If a request is denied, the Organizer has two days from the time of denial to appeal to the Vice President for Student [Life](#) and Dean of Students (or designee). A meeting will be scheduled to re-present the proposal. If the Organizer is planning the event on behalf of a recognized club or organization, the advisor to the club or organization should attend this meeting as well.
- The Vice President for Student [Life](#) and Dean of Students (or designee) will inform this group as well as the Organizer as to the final decision within 24 hours.

Unauthorized, Obstructive, or Disruptive Demonstrations

- The college official responsible for the specific building area affected should summon the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students (or designee) and the Department of Public Safety to the scene.
- Vice President for Student [Life](#) and Dean of Students (or designee), in consultation with the official responsible for the specific building or area affected, will determine the point at which the normal operations of the specific building or area are disrupted.
- If it is decided that a coordinated/approved demonstration or an unauthorized demonstration is disruptive or obstructive, or physical violence, unauthorized entry, disruption of normal business and/or academic activities, and/or destruction of property has [occurred](#), the Vice President for Student [Life](#) and Dean of Students (or designee), in consultation with Public Safety, will instruct the demonstrators to leave the area immediately. If the demonstrators do not leave the area immediately upon hearing the formal instructions, the President will be



informed of the situation and Public Safety will be asked to arrest violators and clear the area. The Student Life Office reserves the right to instruct demonstrators to leave the area immediately without following the steps in this policy when the health, safety, and property of any community member have been harmed or are imminently threatened.

- Whenever possible during actions to control an obstructive or disruptive demonstration, senior ranking College officials should be present to observe the actions of all involved.