

# **AURORA UNIVERSITY**

## **Invited Speaker Policy**

**Effective:** August 27, 2026

**Approval:** August 7, 2026

### **A. POLICY STATEMENT**

Freedom of inquiry and expression are central to Aurora’s educational mission as an inclusive community dedicated to the transformative power of learning. The University has incorporated these central Mission commitments into the following Policy regarding outside speakers and speaker events.

It is the policy of Aurora University that campus community members, including University representatives, faculty, staff, Registered Student Organizations (“RSOs”), alumni, and affiliates of the University, may invite speakers of their choosing to campus, subject to the following standards and to other relevant statements such as the *Statement on Free Expression and Civil Discourse* and the *Campus Demonstration Policy*. An invitation extended to an outside speaker, or approval of an outside speaker request, does not constitute approval or endorsement of the speaker’s statements or viewpoint(s) by the University.

The University serves as the final decision-maker regarding approval of campus speaking requests subject to this Policy (as further set forth in Sections B-K below). Decisions will be made in a manner consistent with applicable federal, state, and local law and with the University’s *Mission, Vision, and Values*.

### **B. SCOPE, EXCEPTIONS, AND RELATED POLICIES**

This Policy applies to all members of the Aurora community eligible to invite or engage outside speakers to participate in an Aurora program or an event held in an Aurora facility or venue or held remotely using University video conferencing technology. This extends both to programs and events limited to the Aurora community members and also to those open to the general public. Except as exempted below, these requirements encompass invitations made by all University representatives (including Trustees and University officials); faculty members (except as exempted below); staff members; Registered Student Organizations (“RSOs”); alumni; and any recognized affiliates of Aurora, including those that have already received written approval to hold a program or event at the University prior to seeking to engage an outside speaker. Certain provisions of this Policy also apply to the outside speakers themselves.

A “speaker event” subject to this Policy is defined to mean a program or event in which an outside individual is invited to present or to answer audience questions (i) in-person, through an event held within an Aurora facility or venue; or (ii) remotely, using University video conferencing technology. In other words, the prior approval requirements of this Policy apply regardless of the modality of the speaker event. However, this Policy exempts and does not apply to Aurora sponsors or invited/outside speakers for the following events or in the following situations:

- Academic, scholarly or research events that meet the following criteria: (i) classroom or course-related academic events in which external speakers might be invited, which are

subject instead to the *Faculty Handbook*; or (ii) small-scale academic events such as research seminars or academic talks for scholars in related fields. However, such events remain subject to relevant laws and policies governing all Aurora activities, such as those relating to intellectual property and copyright, image use, privacy, and facilities use. In addition, when there are contracts and payments involved, the University's purchasing and contracting policies will apply.

- Private or by-invitation programs, meetings, or events that are not open to the general public and are authorized or convened by University leadership.
- Please note that speaking engagements by currently-serving elected or appointed public government officials, or by current candidates for office, are subject to laws and policies arising from the University's not-for-profit status. In addition to requiring approval under this Policy, those engagements, whether arising inside or outside the classroom and regardless of modality, are subject to more specific notice and approval limitations, as addressed in Section G below.

The scope and provisions of this *Invited Speaker Policy* will be interpreted and applied consistent with the provisions of other related policies and procedures of the University. Related Policies and Statements, with links to the versions of those materials currently in effect, are set forth in Section L below.

### **C. APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SPEAKER EVENTS**

Individuals or organizations seeking to invite outside speakers to campus under this Policy should proceed as follows:

- The applicant should notify the Office of the Dean of Students of plans to have a speaker event and apply for University approval of the event by emailing the Office of the Dean of Students at [dos@aurora.edu](mailto:dos@aurora.edu).
- The Office of the Dean of Students will provide further information about important procedures and requirements for seeking and obtaining approval. These include applicable timelines; information about reservation of space; and information for RSOs and other organizations or individuals about their responsibilities in seeking approval for a speaker event and the University's decision-making authority.
- Applicants for approval must pay close attention to the timelines provided by the Office of the Dean of Students and scrupulously comply with them or approval may be delayed or denied. Applicants should consult the Dean of Students at [dos@aurora.edu](mailto:dos@aurora.edu) immediately if any of the timelines raise issues for the applicant.
- All individuals or organizations seeking approval must work with the Office of the Dean of Students to determine if additional security measures are necessary for the event. Further information about the responsibilities of applicants will be provided by the Office of the Dean of Students (at [dos@aurora.edu](mailto:dos@aurora.edu)).

- Requests must be approved in writing by the University; no speaker event may proceed without prior, affirmative written approval from an authorized University representative.

#### **D. CONTRACTS**

Any contract for a paid outside speaker must be signed by an agent of the University who has been approved to sign contracts. Any such contract is subject to prior review by the risk management department or other authorized University agents. The University reserves the right to require assurance of insurance coverage or other commercially reasonable assurances as a condition to approval. All proposed third-party contracts, agreements, and arrangements must be fully disclosed to the University at least **30 days** in advance of the speaker event and must be signed by an agent of the University, not by the RSO or individuals seeking to sponsor the event. **Students and faculty are not authorized by the University to sign any speaker contracts, regardless of whether the engagement includes payment to the speaker.** Further information about the contracting process, including important timelines, will be provided by the Office of the Dean of Students.

#### **E. RESERVED USE OF UNIVERSITY SPACE**

Space for speaker events must be secured by the sponsoring individual or organization as part of the approval process. Information regarding the securing of locations is also available from the Dean of Students' office ([dos@aurora.edu](mailto:dos@aurora.edu)) and in the Student Organizations Handbook.

#### **F. FUNDING**

Funding for programs involving an outside speaker typically comes from the sponsoring organization, with AUSA funding also available after the event has been approved and placed in a location on campus.

Alumni, foundations, and other non-University sources may provide funding for campus speakers. To ensure transparency, compliance, and consistency with the University's mission, the University requires that such funding must be disclosed to the University or, if such information becomes available after approval, no later than 14 days prior to the scheduled Speaker Event. All written agreements and other arrangements related to non-University funding of speaker events must be fully and timely provided to the University to permit disclosure of funding sources in all publicity for such programs.

#### **G. POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND SPEECHES**

IRS regulations relating to the University's not-for-profit status prohibit the University from engaging in partisan political activity or permitting its resources to be used for support of such activities. A proposed event or program, including a speaking appearance, that includes partisan political activity or includes candidates for public office or elected or appointed government officials must be identified as such in the relevant application for approval and approval may be denied, delayed, or limited in scope to comply with the University's obligations under federal law.

The Offices of the President, Academic Affairs, Philanthropy and Engagement, and Planning/Engagement must be separately notified at the time Speaker Event approval is sought of any proposed appearance on campus of a current or former elected or appointed government official or candidate for public office. The Offices of the President, Academic Affairs, Philanthropy and Engagement, and Planning/Engagement must also be notified where a faculty member invites a speaker who is a current or former elected or appointed government official or a candidate for public office to present in the classroom.

The University strictly prohibits any fundraising or solicitation in the course of a speaking appearance or demonstration on the part of an elected or appointed government official or candidate for public office.

## **H. GENERAL SUPPORT, RESOURCES, AND SECURITY**

All individuals and organizations sponsoring speakers under this Policy are required to coordinate logistical aspects of approved speaker events (including but not limited to publicity, set-ups, lock/unlock schedules, and other details) with the Dean of Students or designee (for students or student organizations), the Provost or designee (for faculty), or the Senior Vice President for Student Success or designee (for staff or other individuals or groups).

The Aurora University logo may only be used in promotional materials or publicity for a speaker event, or within speaker presentation materials or related handouts, with the prior written approval of the University.

The University has sole discretion in determining security measures and requirements for events taking place on Aurora's campus. Outside speakers and guests must inform the event sponsor if special circumstances and needs for security are known and should be considered when determining security measures. Some events may require support from campus and/or other resources (including University staff from various offices, Aurora Police and/or Fire Department, outside a/v tech companies, etc.). These determinations will be made by the University, in consultation with the sponsoring organization or individual(s) and with the sponsor being responsible for all costs of such services.

## **I. OVERNIGHT STAYS**

Outside speakers and those who accompany them to campus for a speaking event are not permitted to stay overnight on campus. If accommodations are necessary, they must be provided off-campus and paid for by the sponsoring organization or by the speaker themselves.

## **J. DEMONSTRATIONS REGARDING SPEAKER EVENTS**

Demonstrations regarding a campus speaker or speaker event must adhere to the University's *Campus Demonstration Policy* and related policies.

## **K. UNIVERSITY'S DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY AND RIGHT OF REFUSAL**

Where a threat assessment or review of an application or event plan indicates significant risk to the community or operations of the University, the President and senior administration will work with event sponsors to determine measures to maximize safety and mitigate risk. The University reserves the right to deny approval, relocate or reschedule an event, or cancel an event. This includes where (i) the University finds that the event poses an imminent and credible threat to the community that cannot be mitigated by revisions to the event plan; and/or (ii) the University finds that the speaker event appears to be demonstrably inconsistent with the University's *Mission, Vision, and Values*; other policies; or applicable law.

## **L. RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FORMS**

For further information or questions, please contact the following offices or reference the following Links and Policies:

### **Links to Responsible Office E-mail Addresses:**

- [Office of Student Success](#)
- [Office of the Dean of Students](#)
- [Office of Academic Affairs](#)
- [Campus Public Safety](#)

### **Links to Related Statements and Policies:**

- [Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [A-Book Student Handbook](#)
- [Campus Demonstration Policy](#)
- [Campus Postings Policy](#)
- [Faculty Handbook](#) (password required)
- [Gift Acceptance Policy](#) (password required)
- [Mission, Vision, and Values](#)
- [Naming Recognition Policy](#) (password required)
- [Policy Prohibiting Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence](#)
- [Social Media and News Media Guidelines](#)
- [Statement on Free Expression and Civil Discourse](#)
- [Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)
- [Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [University Notice of Non-Discrimination](#)