

**UUP Plattsburgh Chapter Position Paper
on Workplace Safety, Maintenance of Order, and Disruptive Conduct**

Plattsburgh Chapter Executive Board

March 7, 2023

The SUNY Plattsburgh community has experienced a number of campus protest actions over the years, many relating to racist incidents. As is appropriate, the administration has typically responded with scheduling meetings or forums so that students and other members of the campus community can be heard.

Unfortunately outside the organized meetings and forums, there have been instances where individuals or groups have taken campus protest actions that have disrupted campus offices, classrooms, and other spaces.

Some protest actions have included students overcrowding floors in the Kehoe building in the fall of 2022, walking into computer labs and classrooms with megaphones, and mobilizing protests to various campus buildings and other locations in the city of Plattsburgh.

The UUP Plattsburgh Chapter affirms and supports SUNY Plattsburgh's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and the rights of freedom of speech and assembly.

We also affirm UUP members' rights to fair treatment, due process, and a workplace free of harassment, intimidation, and bullying.

These values do not contradict nor supersede each other.

In this most recent instance and those that proceed it, it is clear that further knowledge, communication, and action is needed from campus leadership to ensure that future actions do not violate the following safety standards, policies, and codes of conduct.

[SUNY Rules for the Maintenance of Public Order](#)

In particular:

Prohibited Conduct – No person either singly or in concert with others shall:

7. enter into any private office of an administrative officer, member of the faculty or staff member without implied or explicit permission;
8. enter into and remain in any campus building or facility for any purpose other than its authorized uses or in such manner as to obstruct its authorized use;
10. refuse to leave a campus building or facility after being required to do so by an authorized administrative officer;
11. obstruct the free movement of people and vehicles in any place to which these rules apply;
12. deliberately disrupt or prevent the peaceful and orderly conduct of classes, lecture and meetings;

[SUNY Plattsburgh Workplace Violence Prevention Policy & Procedure](#)

SUNY Plattsburgh's Workplace Violence Prevention Policy defines workplace violence as "physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting". The policy commits to "ensuring a safe and supportive learning, living and working environment for all faculty, staff, students and visitors" and prohibits "intimidating conduct in the workplace."

[SUNY Plattsburgh Student Code of Conduct](#)

SUNY Plattsburgh's Student Conduct Manual prohibits disruptive conduct (7), harassment (16), misuse of college property (18), and obstruction of college activities (19).

[SUNY Plattsburgh Group Conduct](#)

SUNY Plattsburgh's Group Conduct Manual prohibits disruptive conduct (5), harassment (14), misuse of college property (16), and obstruction of college activities (17).

It is the responsibility of all members of SUNY Plattsburgh's administrative team to uphold and enforce college policies and procedures.

The safety and wellbeing of faculty, staff, and students on campus should never take a backseat to protesters' rights of freedom of expression.

Recommended Actions

We believe the following will clarify expectations for campus leadership, employees and students; improve safety; and establish a campus culture that balances protest actions with maintaining a safe and non-disruptive work environment.

- That the administration acknowledge that more actions could have been previously taken to prevent undue harm to faculty and staff, and that the President's Cabinet review with specific purpose to assess the College's compliance with the above stated policies, rules and regulations.
- That the administration support the faculty and staff in its statements to the public and within the college community, and refrain from public implication of wrongdoing by faculty and staff. All should be presumed innocent until proven guilty through the appropriate due process forum.
- Request an independent review of the campus response to the events by a committee from outside the SUNY Plattsburgh campus. That committee should be familiar with SUNY policies, campus safety, and Affirmative Action procedures.

- The workplace violence policy should be amended to include violation of employee workspaces, disruption of operations, and intimidation of campus employees.
- That the administration clarify to the campus community the acceptable and unacceptable conduct for protests.
- Include union representation in the review of workplace violence reports and annual review as required by law ([https://dol.ny.gov/workplace-violence-prevention-information.](https://dol.ny.gov/workplace-violence-prevention-information)) and on the DIRECT team.
- That the campus, in implementing the Middle States recommendation on evaluating those in higher administrative positions include a section or language pertaining to the handling of campus protests or other incidents.