

Invited / External Speaker Policy

Mercer University Libraries contribute to Mercer University's mission and environment by inviting speakers and guests with a range of insights and experiences to engage with library patrons.

Invited / External Speaker: An individual who is not a current student, faculty, or staff member at Mercer University.

External speakers invited to Tarver Library are expected to respect and adhere to Mercer University's mission and values that emphasize freedom of thought and respect to every individual. Similarly, speakers, guests, and participants must observe and abide by state and federal laws. Beyond the contours of free speech rights afforded by the Constitution and the First Amendment, the two most significant federal statutes regulating speech in higher education are **Title VI** and **Title IX**, which prevent discrimination based on race and sex, respectively.

Expectations

Presentation and Content

- Presentations should be educational in nature and not promote any product or service or solicit funding.
- Presentations should not contain any material or content that might give rise to third-party claims for defamation, libel, or other injury to the rights of others.
- Presentations should be accessible so that all patrons, including those living with disabilities can engage with the content.
- Content will not infringe or violate any copyright.

In the furtherance of educational objectives, guest speakers are encouraged to accept questions and engagement with and from the audience.

Code of Conduct (External Speakers and Audience Members)

The external speaker is entitled to communicate their message to the audience during their allotted time. The audience is entitled to hear the message and see the speaker during the allotted time. Any dissenters must not interfere with the speaker's ability to communicate or the audience's ability to engage with (hear, see, speak with) the external speaker.

External speakers invited to Tarver Library are asked to frame discussions as openly and inclusively as possible and to be aware of how words or images may be perceived by others. Public expression cannot be unlawful and must not violate or conflict with local, state, or federal law. Similarly, public expression must not violate Mercer University policy or individual safety of affiliated individuals.

Inappropriate conduct:

- Harassment, abusive behavior, or intimidation based on race, color, religion, language, gender, age, sex, national origin, disability status, appearance, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual

orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local laws.

- Other acts of harassment including, but not limited to, bullying, abusing, yelling, sharing of inappropriate images.
- Verbal or physical threats of acts of violence

If these expectations are not upheld, or if speech violates any supporting regulations mentioned above, appropriate action will be taken by authorized campus or local law enforcement. Action could include a request for order, removal of the offending party, or cancellation and closure of the event.