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The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. [ABOUT THE FIRST AMENDMENT >](#)

News Story
Colo. State revises campus speech codes
By Courtney Holliday

 First Amendment Center Online intern
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Colorado State University has revised its campus speech codes after lobbying by student activists and the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education.

The university in Fort Collins revised three policies that [groups said violated the First Amendment](#) after concerns arose over restrictions on residence-hall advertising.

The Fort Collins *Coloradoan* newspaper reported that the Campus Libertarians began requesting change in the advertising, hate-incidents and peaceful-assembly policies in fall 2006. The Campus Libertarians, while campaigning for a marijuana-legalization amendment to the state's constitution, were denied permission to hang posters in the residence halls to support their cause. At the time, "offensive language" and "references to alcoholic beverages or other drugs" were not allowed in advertisements placed in the residence halls.

Examination of other policies by Seth Anthony, former chairman of Campus Libertarians, and other student leaders showed that "expressions of hostility" were prohibited in the hate-incidents policy, and locations for peaceful assembly and demonstration were vaguely identified.

Anthony enlisted the help of FIRE in February, according to a press release from the organization.

FIRE is a nonprofit educational foundation that lobbies for "individual rights, due process, freedom of expression, academic freedom, and rights of conscience" at U.S. colleges and universities, according to its [Web site](#).

FIRE wrote a letter to CSU President Larry Penley in March encouraging him to revise the policies in question. The letter was answered later that month by General Counsel Loretta Martinez. Martinez clarified that although one location, the Lory Student Center Plaza, was designated as the primary public-forum space, there were many other locations on campus that also could be used for assemblies. CSU added language to the peaceful-assembly policy to emphasize this fact.

Dell Rae Moellenberg, spokesperson for CSU, told the *Coloradoan* that administrators revised the policies because they "needed clarification."

CSU also changed the advertising policy to prohibit only "obscene language" and "promotion of illegal behavior." Under this policy, fliers supporting marijuana legalization would have been allowed. The hate-incidents policy was changed to restrict only actual harassment or abuse.

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“CSU did the right thing: it listened to students, took note of the First Amendment, and revised its policies accordingly. It just goes to show how students really can have an impact on campus policy, especially with the support of an organization like FIRE,” Anthony said in a FIRE press release.

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FIRE officials said they were pleased with the school’s responsiveness to their concerns.

“This is an exciting day for free speech at Colorado State. By making these changes, the administration has proven it is serious about protecting its students’ First Amendment rights, and we commend the university,” FIRE President Greg Lukianoff said.

Courtney Holliday is a junior majoring in economics and public policy at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

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