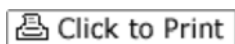




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Free Speech Policy

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Reporter: Kim Carapucci

Email Address: kim.carapucci@wctv.tv

A watchdog group is happy now that a local university has changed its free speech policy. Eyewitness News reporter Kim Carapucci has more. [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#)

Valdosta State University considers itself a pretty liberal school.

VSU President Patrick Schloss: "We believe strongly in free speech and open access."

But over the past year, it's been accused of violating students' rights to free speech.

In March of 2007, a student was kicked of the school when he spoke out against a proposed parking garage on campus.

The school's former policy said if a person wanted to express their opinions on campus, they had to follow a strict series of procedures.

William Creeley from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education:

"They can't quarantine free speech on campus. You can't have so many hurdles that students have to jump through before engaging free expression."

But now, VSU's president Patrick Schloss has drawn up a new free speech policy. The old policy restricted free speech on its outdoor stage to only two hours a day. Now, under the new policy, organizations can express their opinions whenever they want."

Free speech advocates say this change was needed.

Creeley: "It's amazing what a difference new leadership can make. We're very pleased that President Schloss has taken this step."

And many students agree.

VSU Student Trevor Smith: " It just says a lot about our university. It shows they're gonna be more tolerant of things like that."

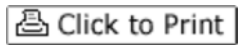
VSU Student Jasmine Coker:

"That they're willing to try different things and they're very open."

V-S-U President Schloss says the new policy clarifies the old policy by giving actual examples of free speech.

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