



## **SPEECH ZONES PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

Today, public university officials often move students and student groups from a popular area on campus to a low-traffic area because they are sharing religious or conservative messages. This directly violates students' freedom of speech. Campus officials do these things because many public universities have speech zone policies that restrict the ability of students to speak freely on campus. These policies sometimes provide for a "free speech zone" on campus, but often that "zone" is so small or so far removed from the heart of campus that it is an ineffective area for sharing messages. Other campuses dramatically limit free speech to certain times of the day or week and often give administrators a right to review and approve materials before they are disseminated.

Below is a scenario and explanation of how colleges limit speech:

*A community college district in California punished a student for handing out religious flyers during school hours. The district enforced a speech zone policy that required all students to apply for permission to speak on campus 14 business days in advance of the planned activity and register any literature with the district 48 hours prior to distributing it. The district also restricted student speech to certain "college hours," which were between 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays.*

This scenario actually occurred at Yuba College in California and became the "top outrage" on campus for 2008 (according to a national conservative group). The student contacted Alliance Defending Freedom, and the district was not only forced to change its policies; it also paid a substantial amount of legal fees to settle the case.

Many other schools that had adopted, or were considering speech zones, abandoned them in the face of enhanced public scrutiny, including Georgia Tech, Texas Tech, Tufts University, Western Illinois University, Citrus College, and Appalachian State University.

### ***What can students do if their rights are being violated?***

Contact Alliance Defending Freedom by using the "Request Legal Help" form at [www.ADFLegal.org](http://www.ADFLegal.org) or by calling 1-800-835-5233. A legal representative will review the situation and advise the student of a course of action.