

This Public University Is Being Sued Over Its Speech Policy

A group of Christian students at North Carolina State University is now suing the public institution for violating their First Amendment-protected right to share their faith with others.

The group, Grace Christian Life, has been prohibited from talking with fellow NC State students or sharing tracts without a permit. In a lawsuit filed on their behalf by the Alliance Defending Freedom, in addition to being unconstitutional, the regulation—in place since 1993—is inconsistently applied.

“The courts have well established that a public university can’t require permits in this manner for this kind of speech—and certainly can’t enforce such rules selectively,” ADF attorney David Hacker said. “Unconstitutional censorship is bad enough, but giving university officials complete discretion to decide when and where to engage in silencing students makes the violation even worse.”

University officials disagree, saying the policy is applied consistently in “hundreds upon hundreds” of cases where students and groups use its process to distribute information on topics ranging from faith to health. They said they remain willing to “work with all individuals” to navigate the permitting process.

One of the students who belongs to Grace Christian Life told her story in an article published on the ADF’s website. In it, she explains what it has meant to her personally.

“I came to NC State to learn to be a teacher, because I want

to give a voice to my future students to share their own ideas with the world," she said. "I want to become a teacher because I am called to show people that they are valuable, that their ideas and thoughts are valuable.

"I want to inspire the next generation to love truth, and instill values that will benefit both their lives as individuals and the world they are entering to serve. They need to know that they have value, and that their thoughts and opinions have value. But it's not enough for them to simply know this.

"They also need to know that they have the freedom to share those thoughts and ideas with the world. They need to know that everyone has the freedom to speak, and live, according to their deepest convictions. I am honored to stand with Grace Christian Life.

"Free speech is something we should never take for granted, and I am hopeful that my school will do the right thing and ensure liberty for all NC State students, both now and in the future."