

Victory! College Student Can Preach on Campus

A student at Thomas Nelson Community College recently claimed victory after winning a freedom of speech fight against his college.

Christian Parks sued the college system after campus police ordered him to stop preaching in a school courtyard.

The Alliance Defending Freedom, an Arizona-based Christian legal ministry who represented Parks, argued his free speech rights were violated.

The Virginia Community College system has agreed to pay Parks \$25,000 and voted to eliminate “free speech zones,” which confined student expression to designated areas. The policy was adopted in 1968.

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring’s office elected not to defend the policy in court, and it was suspended in April.

“Once the suit was filed, our office got all parties together to help facilitate a solution prior to extensive litigation,” Michael Kelly, spokesman for the attorney general, said.

Parks’ attorney said the case has resulted in greater freedom of expression for students.

“As a result of the case, the Virginia Community College System and Thomas Nelson Community College have changed their policies to allow much greater freedom of expression for students,” Travis Barham, an attorney with the group, said.

The expectation is that Parks will take advantage of the new policy and resume preaching on the Hampton campus.