

DMACC's "Free Speech Table" Folds

DES MOINES, Iowa – Des Moines Area Community College has agreed to no longer enforce its policy of limiting its approved student speech zone to a table in the student center. It has also agreed to no longer require students to get permission to distribute fliers 10 school days in advance.

The agreement is enshrined in an agreed-upon court order issued Monday in a lawsuit Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys filed last month on behalf of a student. The college prohibited him from distributing fliers that protested the use of college funds for a conference on sexuality.

"Colleges should be the marketplace of ideas. The college has done the right thing in recognizing this by agreeing to end its problematic policy concerning the free speech of students," said Senior Legal Counsel David Hacker. "Free speech should not be censored or limited to a tiny area on campus, and college students should not need permission to hand out fliers—a classic exercise in constitutionally protected free speech."



In March, college officials barred Jacob Dagel, a Christian student at Des Moines Area Community College, from distributing fliers containing religious and political messages in the open-air quad on campus. The fliers protested the allocation of college funds to subsidize student tickets to the Iowa Governor's Conference on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth. A campus security officer informed Dagel that students must use the speech zone and obtain a permit 10 school days prior to the activity.

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys representing Dagele filed suit against the college on April 15 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Iowa. The suit argued that the college's speech policy unconstitutionally prohibited students from speaking spontaneously in reaction to news and current events on the public sidewalks and open spaces of the campus. In response to the suit, college officials agreed to a permanent injunction against the bad speech policies while a settlement of the case is finalized.

Timm W. Reid, one of more than 2,200 allied attorneys with Alliance Defending Freedom, is serving as local counsel in the case, *Dagele v. Des Moines Area Community College*.

Source: Alliance Defending Freedom

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