

news-journalonlineSM
West Volusia
 SUBSCRIBE
 SEARCH
 EMAIL UPDATE
 CONTACT US

Special Offer
 Subscribe or renew on our
 EZ Pay Plan and get a....

\$20 GIFT CARD
 TO WAL-MART
 OR PUBLIX



TUESDAY, JUNE 28, 2005

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF VOLUSIA & FLAGLER COUNTIES

- news
- business
- sports
- entertainment
- lifestyle
- opinion
- classifieds

West Volusia County

- Local News
- Campus page
- Chatterbox
- Columns
- Obituaries
- Public records
- Weather
- FHP traffic report

News

- Home East Volusia
- Flagler West Volusia
- Florida Nation
- Business Deaths
- Politics Hurricanes
- Sports Racing News
- Space Technology
- Weather Opinion
- Columns Letters
- Special Reports
- Noticias en Español
- Corrections

Features & Fun

- Lifestyle Entertainment
- Movies TV Listings
- Calendar Crossword

Online Only

- Beach Cam
- Community
- Photo Gallery

News-Journal

- Contact Us
- Site Index
- Customer Service
- Archive Page
- Help

Student activist wins 'free-speech' battle

By **MARK HARPER**
 Education Writer

Last update: June 23, 2005

A Seminole Community College student has won the right to set up a table in the campus cafeteria and distribute literature on slaughterhouses after being told she couldn't because it would cause "exceptional controversy."

When Eliana Campos, a 2003 graduate of Pine Ridge High School in Deltona, requested the spot inside the student cafeteria, she instead was referred to the Oviedo campus' "free-speech zone," a remote area near the Clock Tower.

Higher-ups at the college later reversed the decision, saying they intend to form a committee to rewrite the policy that limits such expressions to "free-speech zones."

Such zones -- usually small and out-of-the-way areas of campus -- are the latest challenge to free speech advocates like David French, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education in Philadelphia. Last year, a federal judge ruled a similar policy at Texas Tech University unconstitutional, but French says free-speech zones are quite common.

That's because some college officials say they need to balance the rights of an individual with the right of all students not to be impeded in their pursuit of education.

Campos, a 20-year-old freshman who lives in Oviedo, was working on a paper about three months ago when she learned about the "brutal mistreatment" of animals in slaughterhouses.

She was so appalled that she joined People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and asked to set up a table in the student cafeteria at the Oviedo campus. But administrator Gail Agor said no.

In an e-mail to Campos, Agor wrote: "PETA has a negative way of putting information out to consumers and ends up, quite often, alienating those of us with similar beliefs." Allowing PETA leaflets to be distributed in the same room where students would be eating meat was "a set-up for conflict."

Campos and French argued the decision unlawfully discriminated against her. Ultimately, James Henningsen, vice president for student success at the college, agreed.

He said the college must seek a new policy that provides "balance between protected individual rights of free speech and assembly and the institution's right to protect the 32,000 other students on campus."

It is that balancing act all colleges and universities face.

At the University of Central Florida, political activity and other exercises of free speech are limited to six specifically designated areas. Patricia MacKown, assistant vice president for student life, said students in recent years have used the areas to protest the war in Iraq, political stances and other matters.

Daytona Beach Community College does not designate any specific areas as "free-speech zones," although college officials do ask that any groups planning events let the student development office know ahead of time for security purposes.

ADVERTISEMENT

Town & Country REALTY
 Names You Know
 Company You Trust
386-734-8890
 townandcountryrealty.cc
 516 West New York Avenue, Deland, FL 32720

Typically, college and military recruitment tables, as well as street preachers and other groups work the busiest points on campus -- both in the Lenholt Student Center and in the courtyard just west of it, said Bruce Cook, assistant dean of student development.

"We had PETA here last fall," Cook said. "I allowed them to set up a table. We would not make a content-based decision."

French, the rights foundation director, said most colleges and universities unlawfully repress students' rights to free speech.

"It's very common," he said. "It's gotten to the point where if I'm looking at a policy and I don't see free-speech zones, I'm shocked."

At Seminole Community College, Henningsen commended Campos for making people more aware of free-speech laws.

"That took a lot of courage and was a great learning experience," he said.

For Campos, it was reaffirmation.

"Everybody should stand up for what they believe in," she said.

So next week, when she resumes classes, she'll be in the cafeteria, calling attention to her cause.

mark.harper@news-jrnl.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Many celebrities have thrown their support behind animal rights:

- French actress Brigitte Bardot has been a longtime animal rights activist. In 1999, Bardot asked South Korea to forbid its citizens to eat dog meat -- considered by some in that country a delicacy. In 1998, she called for the sterilization of stray dogs in Romania, as their large numbers were causing a threat to both the dogs and civilians.
- Actress Pamela Anderson, of "Baywatch" fame, supported a boycott against fast food giant KFC, claiming the chickens given to KFC by its suppliers were mistreated.
- In 1995, actress Mary Tyler Moore posted a letter in a Rockford, Maine, newspaper during the city's lobster festival, asking festival-goers to forgo lobster.

-- *Compiled by News Researcher Karen Duffy*

SOURCES: News-Journal archives, Associated Press

 [Search our archives for related stories](#)



[Help Stop Animal Cruelty](#)

With every bite you take. Order a Free Vegetarian Starter Guide today

[Animal welfare](#)

Meet Tens of Thousands of Vegetarian Singles for Love.

[Making Kind Choices](#)

The new book from PETA President Ingrid E. Newkirk.

[Animal Rights Essays](#)

Search our database of 101,000 essays for papers on Animal Rights