



FACT SHEET ***Sheeran v. Shea***

ABOUT Sheeran v. Shea

Attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund Center for Academic Freedom filed a [lawsuit](#) on March 9, 2009, against officials of the Community Colleges of Spokane and Spokane Falls Community College for violating the constitutional rights of Christian and pro-life students. SFCC officials threatened Beth Sheeran and members of a Christian student group with disciplinary measures, ***including expulsion***, if they decided to hold their proposed pro-life event on campus. ADF Litigation Staff Counsel Heather Gebelin Hacker is scheduled to present oral arguments on April 29 to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington on behalf of Sheeran.

FACTS

- Not only did the school censor [pro-life information](#), ***the students were threatened with formal discipline and possible expulsion if they held a pro-life event.***
- SFCC officials claimed the event was “biased,” “discriminatory,” “hateful,” and “one-sided” ***because pro-abortion information would not be presented.*** In essence, the school gave the pro-life group a “choice”: promote abortion or be silent.
- Such suppression/coercion is made possible, in part, by an unconstitutional speech code.
 - This speech code is enforced, in part, through [a system of reporting that encourages students to become “informants”](#) by filing “bias incident” complaints against fellow students for actions subjectively deemed “offensive.”
 - SFCC’s Orwellian [“Stop the Hate” materials include a so-called “Pyramid of Hate”](#) as a guide to what constitutes reportable “Acts of Bias.” Examples:
 - “Justifying bias by seeking out like-minded people”
 - “Screening out positive information”
 - “Non-inclusive language”
- School officials claimed that student clubs on a state college campus cannot distribute or display pro-life materials because the clubs are sponsored by the state.
- School officials claim that advocacy from one point of view is forbidden on campus, but the wide range of other events allowed shows this cannot be the case.

CONTACT

Greg Scott, National Media Relations Director

Phone: (480) 444-0020, ext. 17102 / E-mail: adfmedia@telladf.org / Web: www.telladf.org/pressroom

ABOUT ADF

The ADF Center for Academic Freedom defends religious freedom at America’s public universities. ADF is a legal alliance of Christian attorneys and like-minded organizations defending the right of people to freely live out their faith. Launched in 1994, ADF employs a unique combination of [strategy, training, funding, and litigation](#) to protect and preserve religious liberty, the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family.

ABOUT Heather Gebelin Hacker

Heather Gebelin Hacker serves as litigation staff counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund at its Sacramento Regional Service Center in California, where she litigates cases for the ADF Center for Academic Freedom to protect the rights of Christian students, faculty, and staff at public colleges and universities across the nation. Hacker is admitted to the state bar in California and Arizona. She has practiced law since 2005 and earned her J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Hacker served as an ADF Blackstone intern and became an ADF Blackstone Fellow in 2003. She also completed a legal internship at the Rutherford Institute. Hacker joined ADF in 2005.