

## Respect civil discourse on OSU campus

By **The Daily O'Collegian Editorial Board**

Students going past the library may have noticed some defaced chalking on SGA presidential candidates' campaign messages. Students going past the library may have noticed some defaced chalking on SGA presidential candidates' campaign messages. The defacing of messages is a shame because it paints OSU students as immature and could be used as justification to do away with chalking on campus.

If you want to campaign against someone, do it the right way. Register to chalk, write to us or put up fliers.

Explain why people shouldn't vote for the candidates, or why people should give SGA any credibility at all.

OSU, like many universities across the country, has limited free speech. In 2007, OSU earned a red light rating in the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education's report "Spotlight on Speech Codes" at college campuses.

This means OSU like 259 other college campuses (75 percent of schools surveyed), has trouble with free speech on its campus, according to the report. The red light designation means a campus has at least one policy that clearly "unambiguously infringes on protected expression."

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At OSU, the red light designation may be in reference to a line in the Oklahoma A&M Colleges policy manual that places limitations on where, when and what forms of expression are allowed in certain areas.

In situations such as the defacing, perhaps instead of anonymously invoking the "chalker's veto," publicly addressing the perceived faults of the candidates would be a better option.

These pages are open to such discourse. Exercise your right to free speech in the open. Don't give others an excuse to limit speech on campus.

We are fortunate to have chalking as an option — OSU's policy manual reserves the right to restrict free speech in certain areas, such as our patchwork of sidewalks.

OSU's administration could easily outlaw chalking with this code, especially when chalking turns ugly. If chalking is kept civil then there is less credibility for any censorship attempts.

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