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## Campus



Heather Dougherty/Staff Photographer

# Laying Free Speech to Rest

*Students for Free Speech conduct funeral procession for free speech*

by Sally Gunter  
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THE STUDENTS FOR Free Speech host a funeral procession for the "death" of free speech in front of the Library on Monday morning

Dressed in black and pushing a wooden casket on a dolly, 10 members of Students for Free Speech conducted a funeral procession for free speech Monday morning.

"What we are doing is laying free speech to rest due to the administration's refusal to acknowledge the right of free speech," said Brian Platt, a junior political science and history major from San Antonio.

Platt dressed in a black robe and conducted a eulogy for free speech in the area between the Library and Student Union building.

The group did not speak as they walked from the Philosophy building to Memorial Circle, the Administration building and the Student Union building.

"I don't think a funeral is really about saying anything," said Sean Boyle, a junior sociology major from Keller. "Someone asked, and we told them."

A funeral is not about being effective but symbolic of last rights, Boyle said.

Several of the friends of free speech spoke at the eulogy.

"This is really hard to do," said Trevor Smith, a graduate student from Chicago studying philosophy. "Free speech always seemed to spring back, but today we saw the passing of free speech."

Kyle Lancaster, a sophomore mechanical engineering technology major from Grapevine, said he was proud of those who took advantage of their free speech rights.

"I didn't exercise my rights as much as others," Lancaster said. "But I took pride in other people who were expressive."

The procession was a political theater to gain media attention and catch the eye of

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the administration, Platt said.

"We will wait and see if the administration responds," he said. "We will plan our next move based on that."

This is one of many attempts by the Students for Free Speech to gain the attention of the administration.

The group turned in more than 500 student-signed petitions to President Jon Whitmore's office on Oct. 17.

Inside the box of petitions was a letter from an anonymous concerned student asking questions of the university's policies. The letter requested a response from Whitmore in *The University Daily* within the next week.

While Whitmore did not publicly respond to the letter, Michael Shonrock, vice president for Student Affairs, said he wrote a personal letter to Brian Roa, a graduate student from Lubbock studying philosophy.

In his letter, Shonrock said he answered the questions, asked for suggestions to change the policy and offered an invitation to meet with Roa at his convenience. Roa has not set up an appointment, Shonrock said.

"I look forward to meeting with him," Shonrock said.

During the meeting, Shonrock said he would like for Roa to clarify the exact ambitions and demands of the Students for Free Speech.

While he was unaware of the procession, Shonrock said he is pleased the group took advantage of the Student Union building.

The refusal of the administration to respond by a change in the policy shows the lack of respect the administration has for the students, Boyle said.

The Students for Free Speech said it will continue to draw media attention until there is unconditional free speech on campus.

"They may choose not to answer us but we will continue until we have free speech on campus," Platt said. "It is a fight worth fighting."



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