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TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT**Local & State**

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TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

UM club's admission urged to be reviewed

By Erik Schelzig
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CORAL GABLES - The previously denied application for a campus conservative club should be immediately reviewed on the "principles of free speech, academic freedom and competition," University of Miami president Donna Shalala said Friday.

Four underclassmen had been repeatedly blocked from starting a conservative club because it overlapped with the objectives of the College Republicans.

The students, who argued their group was not interested in party politics, asked an academic rights organization - the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education - to help pressure the university administration into admitting the club.

Shalala, who was Bill Clinton's Health and Human Services secretary, said the student committee overseeing admission of clubs was operating under old rules that sought to save money by not admitting redundant clubs.

"That's unfair, because it means that existing organizations are protected from competition from new clubs," she said. Shalala said she changed the rules for the oversight committee to remove the evaluation of potential clubs' proposed activities.

"The student group cannot judge the substance of what the clubs want to do," she said. "They simply have to review

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whether it's a real student organization."

Sarah Canale, the 19-year-old co-president of Advocates for Conservative Thought, had just finished her second final exam of the day when she heard that Shalala was urging a reconsideration of her club.

"That's incredible," she said. "I'm very hopeful that we will now be considered to become a group. Obviously that was our whole point."



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