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College Bans Gibson's *Passion* -- but Allows Blasphemous, Sexualized Skit

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By Jim Brown and Jody Brown
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(AgapePress) - A Florida college has prohibited a Christian student group from showing the film *The Passion of the Christ*. The same school once hosted a live performance that included an obscene reading that involved a character simulating sex with an image of Christ.

Administrators at [Indian River Community College](#) in Fort Pierce initially told the Christian Student Fellowship that Mel Gibson's film was too controversial. Later the school cited a school policy that bars the showing of R-rated movies on campus. Johnny Moore, IRCC's vice president for student affairs, says the school's decision was based on ratings -- not religion.

"Again, the decision not to show *The Passion of the Christ* had nothing to do with the movie's religious content," Moore explains, "but was solely because of the college's long-standing practice with R-rated movies for college-sponsored student organizations."

But David French, president of the [Foundation for Individual Rights in Education](#) (FIRE), says even though the policy is not in writing, the college justified its action by saying they were concerned dual-enrollment high school students on campus could wander into a private showing of the movie.

"What's astonishing about this case is that on the one hand, the college said that they're concerned with young people seeing an R-rated movie," French says. "And then on the other hand, in their own theater, they hosted a play that was open to the public that had an obscene title and that featured simulated sex, or discussions of simulated sex, with Jesus Christ."

According to FIRE, that skit -- performed by a campus project called "No Shame Theater" -- was typical of productions by the group, which it says has "hosted skits that would earn an R-rating in any movie house."

With regard to that performance, Moore says proper procedures to review requests for the use of school facilities were "unfortunately" not followed in that case. Still, says FIRE, the school appears to have taken no action to silence No Shame Theater. "The name of the play has been changed on the IRCC chapter's webpage and the link to the script has been removed, although the script remains accessible elsewhere on the project's website," says FIRE.

In the case involving *The Passion of the Christ*, French says

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administrators pulled leaders of the Christian group out of class and demanded they apologize, in writing, for protesting the school's ban on the film. Such actions, says French, show the school "has no respect for its students" or for the Constitution.

"So what we have is something far more than double standards," the FIRE president says. "It's a violation of free speech, it's a violation of freedom of association, it's intimidation, it's retaliation -- it's really quite astonishing."

French says the Christian Student Fellowship is now unable to meet on campus since its advisor resigned after the college instituted a new policy requiring that faculty advisors attend all student group meetings.

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