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Fort Pierce College Will Allow 'The Passion Of The Christ' Shown

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FORT PIERCE, Fla. -- A community college threatened with a civil liberties lawsuit for refusing a campus screening of "The Passion of the Christ" will allow the movie to be shown.

Indian River Community College officials announced Wednesday that they will lift the college's ban on campus groups showing R-rated movies. A 12-member committee will review all student groups' requests to determine whether they are appropriate.

The change will reverse a decision last fall that banned the Christian Student Fellowship club from showing the Mel Gibson movie.

"We want to make sure those wanting to express their ideas are able to do so and those not wanting to hear those ideas don't have to," said HenriSue Bynum, associate dean of arts and science.

The college's R-rated movie ban was not written in any of its policies, officials admitted, but they insisted it was a "long-standing practice," to protect dual-enrollment students, who are still in high school.

David French, president of the Philadelphia-based Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, said the group was encouraged by IRCC's action.

"If a university is a training ground for democracy, the last thing we need to do is inculcate adults with thinking that says things should be censored or suppressed," he said.

Christian Student Fellowship members, who asked the foundation for help after the ban, have not decided when they'll show "The Passion," said Elsie Mokoban, the club's publicity coordinator.

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"It's good for progress, and good for freedom, and good for the sake of us being at the college," she said.

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