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G-burg College revises policy

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SEXUAL

By STEVE MARRONI For the Daily Record/Sunday News Article Launched: 08/26/2007 02:34:14 AM EDT

At bottom: POLICY CHANGES

Aug 26, 2007 — Gettysburg College's sexual misconduct policy, which was criticized by a group called FIRE last year, has been revised.

Greg Lukianoff, president of FIRE, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, said the group took issue with vague wording in the college's previous sexual misconduct policy, which drew no distinction between a hug and sex crimes.

"When colleges pass codes so broad, every student can be found guilty of violating it on a regular basis," Lukianoff said. "It leaves it up to the discretion of the school to enforce the policy as they chose."

The group, a nonpartisan organization that monitors educational institutions and civil rights, also disputed Gettysburg's former definition of sexual consent, which includes "continuing and active consent" throughout.

Julie Ramsey, Gettysburg's vice president of student life and dean of students, said a policy committee of students, faculty and administrators gathers each year to review the college's policies.

Ramsey said they reviewed the sexual misconduct policy last

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year and rewrote it. Changes include more specific language along the lines FIRE called for. Changes include more specific language that addresses FIRE's concerns.

"The policy talks

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about consent, and it talks about how students give consent and tries to make that as clear as possible," Ramsey said. "It lays out very clear definitions of what sexual misconduct is and how consent is defined."

The revised policy defines sexual

misconduct and sexual assault as "deliberate physical contact of a sexual nature without the other person's consent."

Violations include unwanted sexual contact, nonconsensual intercourse and exposing one's self to another person when it is unwanted.

The policy also has a revised definition of consent that includes "informed, freely and actively given, using mutually understandable words or actions which indicate a willingness to participate in mutually agreed upon sexual activity."

Other revisions to the policy update the reporting process.

Alleged victims can make an official report to the school if they're clear on how they want the situation to be handled, or they can make an unofficial report where they can talk about their options confidentially with a counselor.

Regardless of FIRE's criticism, Ramsey said, committees routinely examine the school's policies and update them when necessary.

The previous year, the committee overhauled the college's drug and alcohol policy.

Policy changes

A committee of Gettysburg College students, faculty and administrators recently reviewed and revised the school's sexual misconduct policy.

The policy now defines sexual misconduct and sexual assault as "deliberate physical contact of a sexual nature without the other person's consent;" has a revised definition of consent; and has updated the steps to be taken when reporting sexual misconduct.

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