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11 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
12 FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA  
13 WESTERN DIVISION

14 KEVIN A. SHAW,

15 Plaintiff,

16 v.

17 KATHLEEN F. BURKE, et al.,

18 Defendants.

No. 2:17-cv-02386-ODW-PLA

**UNITED STATES' STATEMENT OF  
INTEREST**

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1 country. Such failure is of grave concern because freedom of expression is “vital”  
2 on campuses. *Shelton v. Tucker*, 364 U.S. 479, 487 (1960).

3 It is in the interest of the United States to lend its voice to enforce First  
4 Amendment rights on campuses because “[t]he Nation’s future depends upon  
5 leaders trained through wide exposure to that robust exchange of ideas which  
6 discovers truth ‘out of a multitude of tongues, (rather) than through any kind of  
7 authoritative selection.’” *Keyishian v. Bd. of Regents of State Univ. of N.Y.*, 385  
8 U.S. 589, 603 (1966) (citation omitted). “[O]ur history says that it is this sort of  
9 hazardous freedom—this kind of openness—that is the basis of our national  
10 strength and of the independence and vigor of Americans who grow up and live in  
11 this relatively permissive, often disputatious, society.” *Tinker v. Des Moines*  
12 *Indep. Cmty. Sch. Dist.*, 393 U.S. 503, 508–509 (1969).

### 13 **FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND**

14 Because the case is before the Court on a motion to dismiss, the Court must  
15 take all of Plaintiff’s well-pleaded allegations as true. *See Bell Atlantic Corp. v.*  
16 *Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555–556 (2007). Likewise, for purposes of this Statement  
17 of Interest, the United States takes Plaintiff’s well-pleaded allegations as true. The  
18 United States takes no view regarding whether Plaintiff will succeed in proving  
19 these allegations at trial.

20 According to the Complaint, Plaintiff Kevin Shaw is a student at Los  
21 Angeles Pierce College, one of nine public community colleges within the Los  
22 Angeles Community College District. Doc. 1 (Complaint) ¶¶ 1, 3, 14, 28. Mr.  
23 Shaw brings facial and as-applied challenges to the District’s published speech  
24 policies and the College’s published and unpublished speech policies.

25 Specifically, Mr. Shaw challenges Chapter IX, Article IX of the Los Angeles  
26 Community College District Rules (“District Rules”), which are promulgated and  
27 maintained by the District’s Board of Trustees. Chapter IX, Article IX contains  
28

1 provisions that govern freedom of speech on campuses (“District Free Speech  
2 Policy”):

- 3 • All of the District’s colleges, except for designated Free Speech  
4 Areas, are non-public fora that are not open to free speech and  
5 expression, *id.* ¶ 35, Ex. A at 31;
- 6 • Each college president may designate “Free Speech Areas” on campus  
7 “for free discussion and expression by all persons,” subject to content-  
8 neutral time, place, and manner restrictions, including “reasonable  
9 time restrictions on the use of Free Speech Areas,” *id.* ¶ 38, Ex. A at  
10 32; and
- 11 • Students may distribute literature, including “petitions, circulars,  
12 leaflets, newspapers, miscellaneous printed matter and other  
13 materials” *only* in designated Free Speech Areas, *id.* ¶ 37, Ex. A at 31.

14 Mr. Shaw alleges that Pierce College “has also adopted and enforced other  
15 policies and practices that severely restrict free speech and expressive activity,  
16 including an apparently unpublished requirement” that students wishing to utilize  
17 the Free Speech Area must first complete a permit application. *Id.* ¶ 4. This  
18 permit application contains additional rules governing campus speech (“College  
19 Free Speech Area Policy”). These rules can be found only on the permit  
20 application; thus, students like Mr. Shaw are only able to learn of the College’s  
21 particular rules governing free expression after requesting and obtaining an  
22 application form. *Id.* ¶¶ 43–44. Beyond that form, students “have no public,  
23 generally accessible means to discern any restrictions to which they are subject or  
24 under which they could be punished for engaging in speech or expressive activity”  
25 on campus. *Id.* ¶ 40.

26 As printed on the permit application, the Pierce College Free Speech Area  
27 Policy states the following:

- 1 • “The college has one (1) Free Speech Area” on campus “designated
- 2 for free speech and gathering of signatures,” *id.*, Ex. C at 36–37;
- 3 • “[D]istribution [of materials] shall take place only within the
- 4 geographical limits of the Free Speech Area,” *id.*, Ex. C at 38;
- 5 • Permitted students may utilize the Free Speech Area from 9:00 a.m.
- 6 until 7:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday, *id.*, Ex. C at 37; and
- 7 • Students wishing to distribute materials in the Free Speech Area must
- 8 provide to the Vice President of the Student Services Office (“Student
- 9 Services”) the name and address of the organization, the name(s) of
- 10 the distributor(s), and the date and time of distribution, *id.* ¶ 8, Ex. C
- 11 at 36.

12 According to Mr. Shaw, the College does not limit in any way the discretion of

13 administrators to approve or reject applications submitted by students. *Id.* ¶ 50.

14 The permit application also identifies the location of the Free Speech Area

15 by reference to dotted lines on an attached map. *Id.*, Ex. C at 37. These lines

16 delineate an area “comprising approximately 616 feet,” which is “approximately

17 .003% of the total area of Pierce College’s 426 acres, and approximately .007% of

18 the main area of campus featured in Pierce’s online campus map.” *Id.* ¶ 46.

19 According to Mr. Shaw, the geographic restriction is not tied to any interest of the

20 College because the College “has many open areas and sidewalks beyond the Free

21 Speech Area where student speech, expressive activity, and distribution of

22 literature would not interfere with or disturb access to college buildings or

23 sidewalks, impede vehicular or pedestrian traffic, or in any way substantially

24 disrupt the operations of the campus or the college’s educational functions.”

25 *Id.* ¶ 54.

26 The College enforces these speech restrictions through its Standards of

27 Student Conduct. Those standards require students to conform to District Rules

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1 (including the speech rules) and state that violation of the rules will result in  
2 disciplinary action. *Id.* ¶ 55.

3 Mr. Shaw alleges that the College enforces these rules in a manner that  
4 unconstitutionally limits student speech. On November 2, 2016, Shaw and two  
5 other individuals set up a table on an area of campus known as the “Mall” to  
6 distribute Spanish-language copies of the United States Constitution and to discuss  
7 free speech issues with students. *Id.* ¶¶ 56–57. Although the table was outside of  
8 the Free Speech Area, Mr. Shaw was not disrupting any campus operations or  
9 interfering with foot traffic while distributing copies of the Constitution. *Id.* ¶¶ 57–  
10 58.

11 Shortly after Mr. Shaw set up his table, an administrator told him that he was  
12 not permitted to engage in free speech outside the designated Free Speech Area  
13 and that he needed to complete a permit application to use the Free Speech Area.  
14 *Id.* ¶ 60. The administrator “insisted that Shaw accompany him into a building so  
15 that Shaw could complete a permit application.” *Id.* Upon asking the  
16 administrator “what would happen if he refused to accompany him into the  
17 building and continued his expressive activity in his current location, he was told  
18 that he would be asked to leave the campus.” *Id.* ¶ 61. Mr. Shaw complied with  
19 the administrator’s instructions and completed a permit application.

20 Approximately two weeks after that incident, Mr. Shaw again attempted to  
21 distribute materials outside the Free Speech Area. *Id.* ¶ 66. He distributed  
22 materials “for several hours in an open, grassy area of campus outside the Free  
23 Speech Area,” uninterrupted by administrators. *Id.* During this time, Mr. Shaw  
24 witnessed a large protest form outside the Free Speech Area. *Id.* Mr. Shaw  
25 therefore alleges that the College enforces its speech restrictions “selectively and  
26 unevenly” by allowing speech outside the designated area in some instances but  
27 prohibiting it in others. *Id.* ¶ 67.

1 Mr. Shaw engaged with administrators at length regarding his desire to  
2 engage in free speech. He informed them that he did not intend to block access to  
3 any buildings, use amplified sound, or disrupt College operations. *Id.* ¶ 65. He  
4 also sought a copy of the College’s speech policies. *Id.* ¶ 71. In response to this  
5 request, an administrator informed Mr. Shaw that those who wanted “to use the  
6 free speech area are asked to fill out a free speech use form” and that “[o]nce that  
7 is done a copy of the policy and a permit is handed to each person that comes into  
8 our office.” *Id.* ¶ 74.

9 Mr. Shaw attempted on three occasions thereafter to obtain a copy of the  
10 College Free Speech Area Policy and the permit application that he had submitted  
11 on November 2, 2016, from the Associated Student Organization office.  
12 *Id.* ¶¶ 77–80. According to the Complaint, it was only when Mr. Shaw refused to  
13 leave the office that Defendants begrudgingly provided him with a copy of the  
14 policy and his application. *Id.* ¶ 80–85.

15 Mr. Shaw subsequently filed suit, alleging that the College’s enforcement of  
16 its speech rules prevented him from speaking on campus and distributing materials,  
17 and that this conduct infringed on his rights under the First Amendment. Mr. Shaw  
18 further alleges that he wants to petition for signatures and distribute literature on  
19 campus without seeking prior authorization and without being limited to the 616-  
20 square-foot Free Speech Area. *Id.* ¶ 88. But he fears doing so because  
21 enforcement of the College’s policies could result in discipline under the Standard  
22 of Student Conduct or his removal from campus by the sheriff’s office. *Id.*

23 In the Complaint, Mr. Shaw challenges, both on their face and as applied, (1)  
24 the requirement that he seek permission before using the Free Speech Area and (2)  
25 the limitation of speech to the small Free Speech Area. *Id.* Defendants, various  
26 College officials, have moved to dismiss the Complaint. Doc. 22 (Defendants’  
27 Notice of Motion and Motion to Dismiss).

1 The United States does not address the Eleventh Amendment, standing, or  
2 qualified immunity issues raised in Defendants’ motion to dismiss. *Id.* at 3–10,  
3 22–25. Taking the facts alleged as true, the United States is of the view, for the  
4 reasons below, that Plaintiff has stated claims for violations of the First  
5 Amendment.

## 6 DISCUSSION

7 The free speech protections of the First Amendment are as applicable to  
8 State-run colleges as they are to any other government institution. *Healy v. James*,  
9 408 U.S. 169, 180 (1972). Mr. Shaw’s allegations, if proven, demonstrate that  
10 Pierce College’s speech policies and practices, which the College applied to deny  
11 Mr. Shaw his right to engage in expressive activity in a public forum, imposed  
12 prior restraints that were not narrowly tailored to further a significant government  
13 interest and failed to provide other alternative channels of communications. Mr.  
14 Shaw has therefore stated claims under the First Amendment.

### 15 I. PLAINTIFF ADEQUATELY PLEADED THAT THE DISTRICT 16 AND COLLEGE SPEECH RESTRICTIONS VIOLATE THE 17 FIRST AMENDMENT

18 Under the First Amendment, the power of the government to regulate speech  
19 on college and university campuses is contingent on the character of the forum in  
20 question. *Perry Educ. Ass’n v. Perry Local Educators’ Ass’n*, 460 U.S. 37, 44  
21 (1983) (“The existence of a right of access to public property and the standard by  
22 which limitations upon such a right must be evaluated differ depending on the  
23 character of the property at issue.”). A “public forum” is “public property which  
24 the state has opened for use by the public as a place for expressive activity,” either  
25 by tradition or designation. *Id.* at 45.

26 The government may impose permitting requirements on expressive activity  
27 in a public forum to manage competing uses of the space. *Forsyth Cty., Ga., v.*  
28 *Nationalist Movement*, 505 U.S. 123, 130 (1992). However, there is a heavy

1 presumption against the validity of prior restraints, *id.*, because “[i]t is offensive—  
2 not only to the values protected by the First Amendment, but to the very notion of  
3 a free society—that in the context of everyday public discourse a citizen must first  
4 inform the government of her desire to speak to her neighbors and then obtain a  
5 permit to do so,” *Watchtower Bible & Tract Soc’y v. Stratton*, 536 U.S. 150, 165–  
6 66 (2002). Thus, the Supreme Court has repeatedly “condemned statutes and  
7 ordinances which required that permits be obtained from local officials as a  
8 prerequisite to the use of public places, on the grounds that a license requirement  
9 constituted a prior restraint on freedom of speech . . . and, in the absence of  
10 narrowly drawn, reasonable and definite standards for the officials to follow, must  
11 be invalid.” *Niemotko v. Maryland*, 340 U.S. 268, 271 (1951).

12 Furthermore, in a “public forum,” the government may impose “[r]easonable  
13 time, place, and manner restrictions . . . but any restriction based on the content of  
14 the speech must satisfy strict scrutiny, that is, the restriction must be narrowly  
15 tailored to serve a compelling government interest and restrictions based on  
16 viewpoint are prohibited.” *Pleasant Grove City, Utah v. Sumnum*, 555 U.S. 460,  
17 469 (2009) (citations omitted); *see also Ward v. Rock Against Racism*, 491 U.S.  
18 781, 791 (1989); *Perry Educ. Ass’n*, 460 U.S. at 45. In such a forum, even  
19 content-neutral time, place, and manner restrictions must be narrowly tailored to  
20 achieve a significant government interest and “leave open ample alternative  
21 channels of communication.” *Perry Educ. Ass’n*, 460 U.S. at 45; *Ward*, 491 U.S.  
22 at 791.

23 The District Free Speech Policy designates the College’s Free Speech Area  
24 as a public forum “for free discussion and expression by all persons.” Doc. 1, Ex.  
25 A at 30. Because the Free Speech Area has been intentionally opened up for  
26 expression and speech, it is a designated public forum. *See Bloedorn v. Grube*,  
27 631 F.3d 1218, 1231 (11th Cir. 2011). Pierce College also has adopted an  
28 unpublished Free Speech Area Policy that, together with the District Free Speech

1 Policy, limits student expression to the Free Speech Area and requires students to  
2 secure permission to utilize the Free Speech Area from College administrators by  
3 submitting a permit application in advance. *Id.* ¶ 4, Ex. C.

4 Taken as true, Mr. Shaw’s allegations state a claim that the College’s speech  
5 restrictions are constitutionally infirm in two key respects. First, they create an  
6 unconstitutional prior restraint on speech in the Free Speech Area. Second, in all  
7 events, they are not valid time, place, and manner restrictions because they are not  
8 narrowly tailored and do not leave open ample alternative channels of  
9 communication.<sup>1</sup>

10 **A. The Permitting Requirement Creates An Unconstitutional**  
11 **Prior Restraint**

12 Under the First Amendment, there is a heavy presumption against the  
13 validity of prior restraints, which “make[] the peaceful enjoyment of freedoms

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14  
15 <sup>1</sup> There is no dispute that public educational institutions have a significant  
16 interest in ensuring that speech is not used to jeopardize the ordinary function and  
17 order of classes and other educational activities. *See Grayned v. City of Rockford*,  
18 408 U.S. 104, 118 (1972). In the light of these significant government interests,  
19 courts have noted that a school policy that “prohibits speech that would  
20 substantially interfere with a student’s educational performance, may” be  
21 constitutionally permissible because “[t]he primary function of a public school is to  
22 educate its students; conduct that substantially interferes with the mission is,  
23 almost by definition, disruptive to the school environment.” *DeJohn v. Temple*  
24 *Univ.*, 537 F.3d 301, 320 n.22 (3d Cir. 2008). Moreover, certain content-based  
25 restrictions on speech are permissible in any public setting. For example, public  
26 colleges can restrict fighting words, harassing speech that creates a hostile  
27 environment, and true threats. *See Chaplinsky v. New Hampshire*, 315 U.S. 568,  
28 572 (1942) (defining fighting words as those which “by their very utterance inflict  
injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace”); *Davis v. Monroe Cty.*  
*Bd. of Educ.*, 526 U.S. 629, 651 (1999) (establishing liability standards for  
damages under Title IX based on school district’s failure to respond to hostile  
environment created by student-on-student sexual harassment); *Virginia v. Black*,  
538 U.S. 343, 359 (2003) (defining true threats as speech that intends “to  
communicate a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful  
violence to a particular individual or group of individuals”) (citation omitted).

1 which the Constitution guarantees contingent upon the uncontrolled will of an  
2 official—as by requiring a permit or license which may be granted or withheld in  
3 the discretion of such official.” *Shuttlesworth v. Birmingham*, 394 U.S. 147, 151  
4 (1969); *see also Forsyth Cty.*, 505 U.S. at 130; *FW/PBS, Inc. v. Dallas*, 493 U.S.  
5 215, 225 (1990). “A prior restraint is any government restriction that vests an  
6 administrative official with discretionary power to control in advance the use of  
7 public places for First Amendment Activities.” *Univ. of Cincinnati Chapter of*  
8 *Young Americans for Liberty v. Williams*, No. 12-155, 2012 WL 2160969 at \*6  
9 (S.D. Ohio June 12, 2012) (citing *Kunz v. New York*, 340 U.S. 290, 293–294  
10 (1951)).

11 The First Amendment prohibits “regulations that confer unbridled discretion  
12 on a permitting or licensing official,” *Long Beach Area Peace Network v. City of*  
13 *Long Beach*, 574 F.3d 1011, 1025 (9th Cir. 2009), because they invite favoritism,  
14 arbitrary enforcement, and viewpoint discrimination, which is often difficult to  
15 detect, *Kaahumanu v. Hawaii*, 682 F.3d 789, 807 (9th Cir. 2012). Thus, any  
16 permitting requirement that operates as a prior restraint “must contain narrow,  
17 objective, and definite standards to guide the licensing authority.” *Forsyth Cty.*,  
18 505 U.S. at 131 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). Indeed, a heavy  
19 burden rests on the college to demonstrate the propriety of any prior restraints.  
20 *Healy*, 408 U.S. at 184. The Supreme Court has therefore permitted parties to  
21 challenge permitting requirements “in cases where every application creates an  
22 impermissible risk of suppression of ideas, such as an ordinance that delegates  
23 overly broad discretion to the decisionmaker.” *Forsyth Cty.*, 505 U.S. at 129.

24 As alleged in the Complaint, three aspects of the College’s permitting  
25 requirements for the Free Speech Area are facially unconstitutional. First, Mr.  
26 Shaw alleges that the College’s permitting system gives College administrators  
27 unlimited discretion to grant or deny permits. Doc. 1 ¶¶ 52, 111. Courts have  
28 routinely struck down permitting schemes that, like the scheme at issue here,

1 confer unbridled discretion and fail to identify objective and narrow standards for  
2 the licensing authority to apply. *See City of Lakewood v. Plain Dealer Publishing*  
3 *Co.*, 486 U.S. 750, 757 (1988) (“[I]n the area of free expression a licensing statute  
4 placing unbridled discretion in the hands of a government official or agency  
5 constitutes a prior restraint and may result in censorship”) (citation omitted); *Kunz*,  
6 340 U.S. at 294 (“[W]e have consistently condemned licensing systems which vest  
7 in an administrative official discretion to grant or withhold a permit upon broad  
8 criteria unrelated to proper regulation of public places”) (citation omitted); *cf.*  
9 *Bowman v. White*, 444 F.3d 967, 981 (8th Cir. 2006) (upholding permitting scheme  
10 because the rule “grants the University the right to deny or revoke a permit for the  
11 use of a space by a Non-University Entity only for limited reasons, such as  
12 interference with the educational activities of the institution”). This is true because  
13 “[i]f the permit scheme involves appraisal of facts, the exercise of judgment, and  
14 the formation of an opinion by the licensing authority, the danger of censorship  
15 and of abridgment of our precious First Amendment freedoms is too great to be  
16 permitted.” *Forsyth Cty.*, 505 U.S. 123 at 131 (internal quotation marks and  
17 citations omitted).

18         Second, the College’s rules require all speakers to apply for and obtain a  
19 permit, regardless of whether the applicants plan to speak alone or as part of a  
20 group and regardless of whether an applicant’s speech is likely to draw a crowd.  
21 Courts have rejected this sort of “unflinching application” of permitting  
22 requirements to small groups “posing no threat to the safety, order, and  
23 accessibility of streets and sidewalks,” *Cox v. City of Charleston*, 416 F.3d 281,  
24 285–287 (4th Cir. 2005), on the ground that such rules are not narrowly tailored,  
25 *Burk v. Augusta-Richmond Cty.*, 365 F.3d 1247, 1255 n.13 (11th Cir. 2004). Thus,  
26 courts have invalidated permitting requirements for small groups, *Boardley v.*  
27 *Dep’t of Interior*, 615 F.3d 508, 520–523 (D.D.C. 2010), including groups of ten,  
28 *Douglass v. Brownell*, 88 F.3d 1511, 1524 (8th Cir. 1996), groups of “six to eight,”

1 *Grossman v. City of Portland*, 33 F.3d 1200, 1205–1208 (9th Cir. 1994), groups of  
2 three, *Cox*, 416 F.3d at 286, and groups of two, *Cnty. for Creative Non-Violence v.*  
3 *Turner*, 893 F.2d 1387, 1392 (D.D.C. 1990).

4 In *Grossman*, the Ninth Circuit addressed the constitutionality of a  
5 municipal ordinance that required a permit for any person “to conduct or  
6 participate in any organized entertainment, demonstration, or public gathering, or  
7 to make any address, in a [public] park.” 33 F.3d at 1201. The city applied that  
8 ordinance to “arrest[] and handcuff[]” a member of a group of “six to eight people”  
9 engaged in “a small, peaceful anti-nuclear protest.” *Id.* at 1202. That person  
10 brought suit alleging that the ordinance violated his First Amendment rights, and  
11 the Ninth Circuit agreed. *Id.*

12 The Ninth Circuit held that the permitting scheme was “a prior restraint” that  
13 “restricted access to the public parks, the quintessential public forums,” *Grossman*,  
14 33 F.3d.at 1204 (internal quotation marks and citations omitted), and that the  
15 ordinance was not narrowly tailored, *id.* at 1205–1208. In particular, the Ninth  
16 Circuit concluded that the ordinance was “extremely broad” because it included  
17 “the actions of single protesters” within its sweep. *Id.* at 1206. Accordingly,  
18 “[r]ather than being narrowly tailored to protect speech, as it should have been,”  
19 the ordinance “was tailored so as to preclude speech.” *Id.* at 1207.

20 Similarly, other circuits have held unconstitutional as impermissible prior  
21 restraints permitting schemes that unnecessarily require two or three people  
22 gathered together to acquire a permit before engaging in speech. For example, the  
23 Sixth Circuit invalidated an ordinance as “hopelessly overbroad” because  
24 “virtually any group of two or more persons walking on a public right of way with  
25 a common purpose or goal would presumably be required to possess a permit  
26 under the Ordinance.” *American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Comm. v. City of*  
27 *Dearborn*, 418 F.3d 600, 608 (6th Cir. 2005). Likewise, the Fourth Circuit held  
28 unconstitutional an ordinance that criminalized the failure to obtain a permit before

1 a group of three people engaged in any sort of expressive conduct. *Cox*, 416 F.3d  
2 at 286 (“Even if their expression does nothing to disturb the peace, block the  
3 sidewalk, or interfere with traffic, the [regulation] renders it criminal.”).

4 As alleged, the College’s policies and practices similarly included the  
5 actions of a small group of people within their sweep. *Grossman*, 33 F.3d at 1206.  
6 Specifically, Mr. Shaw and two other people—a smaller group than the “six to  
7 eight” in *Grossman*, *id.* at 1202—“set up a small folding table outside the Free  
8 Speech Area on the Pierce College Mall” and “intended to discuss their political  
9 beliefs with students on the Pierce College Campus,” Doc. 1 ¶¶ 57–58. Mr.  
10 Shaw’s activities did not interrupt the ordinary functions of the College or draw a  
11 large crowd. *Id.* ¶ 58. To the contrary, he sought to distribute copies of the  
12 Constitution, speak to his fellow students, and collect signatures for a petition by  
13 himself or with one or two others. *Id.* ¶¶ 56–58, 64. The College’s policies  
14 prohibiting this kind of non-disruptive expressive activity by an individual or small  
15 group are unconstitutionally broad and, instead of “being narrowly tailored to  
16 protect speech,” are “tailored so as to preclude speech.” *Grossman*, 33 F.3d at  
17 1206–1207.

18 Third, the requirement that students provide their names, organizational  
19 affiliation, and other information to administrators before engaging in speech  
20 violates the First Amendment because it effectively bans all spontaneous speech.  
21 *See* Doc. 1 ¶ 48. Courts have struck down restrictions where “there is a significant  
22 amount of spontaneous speech that is effectively banned by the [regulation].”  
23 *Watchtower Bible & Tract Soc’y.*, 536 U.S. at 167; *see also Grossman*, 33 F.3d at  
24 1206 (noting that broad permitting schemes ban “[s]pontaneous expression, which  
25 is often the most effective kind of expression”); *Williams*, 2012 WL 2160969, at \*6  
26 (“[E]xpansive permitting schemes place an objective burden on the exercise of free  
27 speech. Further, they essentially ban spontaneous speech.”) (citation omitted).  
28 The permitting requirement here prevents students from engaging in spontaneous

1 speech, even within the designated Free Speech Area, and is therefore  
2 constitutionally suspect. *McGlone v. Bell*, 681 F.3d 718, 734–735 (6th Cir. 2012)  
3 (reversing dismissal of a complaint challenging registration requirement because  
4 college had “not explained how the policy at issue maintains order or prevents  
5 interruption of an educational mission”).

6 Mr. Shaw has stated a claim that the permit requirement on its face infringed  
7 on his First Amendment rights. Indeed, he has alleged that the requirement,  
8 together with campus administrators’ enforcement of the policy, has made him  
9 fearful to speak on campus. Doc. 1 ¶ 88. As the Ninth Circuit has recognized,  
10 permitting requirements have precisely this chilling effect because “[t]he simple  
11 knowledge that one must inform the government of [one’s] desire to speak and  
12 must fill out appropriate forms and comply with the applicable regulations  
13 discourages citizens from speaking freely.” *N.A.A.C.P. v. City of Richmond*, 743  
14 F.2d 1346, 1355 (9th Cir. 1984).

15 **B. Pierce College’s Ban On Speech Beyond The 616-Square-Foot**  
16 **Free Speech Area Is, In Any Case, An Invalid Time, Place, and**  
17 **Manner Restriction**

18 Even if the College’s closure to student expression of all fora outside the  
19 Free Speech Area were not an invalid prior restraint, it still would violate the First  
20 Amendment because it is not a valid time, place, or manner restriction. Time,  
21 place, or manner restrictions are a vital means through which the government  
22 manages competing uses of public fora. “For example, two parades cannot march  
23 on the same street simultaneously, and government may allow only one. A  
24 demonstration . . . on a large street during rush hour might put an intolerable  
25 burden on the essential flow of traffic, and for that reason could be prohibited. If  
26 overamplified loudspeakers assault the citizenry, government may turn them  
27 down.” *Grayned v. City of Rockford*, 408 U.S. 104, 115–116 (1972) (citations  
28 omitted). However, “[f]ree expression must not, in the guise of regulation, be

1 abridged or denied.” *Id.* at 117 (internal quotation marks omitted). Thus, it is  
2 well-established that “even in a public forum the government may impose  
3 reasonable restrictions on the time, place, or manner of protected speech, provided  
4 the restrictions are justified without reference to the content of the regulated  
5 speech, that they are narrowly tailored to serve a significant governmental interest,  
6 and that they leave open ample alternative channels for communication of the  
7 information.” *Ward*, 491 F.3d at 791 (internal quotation marks omitted).

8       Ultimately, “[t]he nature of a place, the pattern of its normal activities,  
9 dictate the kinds of regulations of time, place, and manner that are reasonable.”  
10 *Grayned*, 408 U.S. at 116 (internal quotation marks omitted). With respect to the  
11 unique characteristics of the educational environment, expressive activity that  
12 “materially disrupts classwork or involves substantial disorder or invasion of the  
13 rights of others is . . . not immunized by the constitutional guarantee of freedom of  
14 speech.” *Tinker*, 393 U.S. at 513. At the same time, “[c]ollege campuses  
15 traditionally and historically serve as places specifically designated for the free  
16 exchange of ideas.” *Bowman*, 444 F.3d at 979 (citing *Healy*, 408 U.S. at 180).  
17 Thus, “[i]n the absence of a specific showing of constitutionally valid reasons to  
18 regulate their speech, students are entitled to freedom of expression of their views”  
19 in State-operated schools. *Tinker*, 393 U.S. at 511.

20       Any assessment of the reasonableness of time, place, or manner restrictions  
21 requires an examination of the physical characteristics of the area in question and  
22 its traditional, designated, or habitual uses. *See infra* pp. 16–17. Yet Pierce  
23 College imposes its speech restrictions without regard for “[t]he crucial  
24 question”—“whether the manner of expression is basically incompatible with the  
25 normal activity of a particular place at a particular time.” *Grayned*, 408 U.S. at  
26 116. The District Rules indiscriminately convert all areas outside the Free Speech  
27 Area—that is, more than 99.9% of the campus, including its Mall, sidewalks, and  
28 publicly accessible spaces—into non-public fora without any consideration of the

1 variety of fora present on a modern university campus. Doc. 1, Ex. A (“The  
2 colleges of the Los Angeles Community College District are non-public forums,  
3 except for those portions of each college designated as Free Speech Areas”). That  
4 imprecise, blunt labeling of the College’s grounds fails to take into account the  
5 various uses of the many spaces on the College, and therefore disregards the  
6 corresponding levels of judicial scrutiny. *See Bowman*, 444 F.3d at 976 (“A  
7 modern university contains a variety of fora.”). Because speech restrictions in  
8 non-public fora need only be reasonable and *viewpoint* neutral, *see Perry Educ.*  
9 *Ass’n*, 460 U.S. at 46, the College is ostensibly free to discriminate on the basis of  
10 the content of speech or bar certain speech altogether.

11 This is particularly troubling because courts have held that outdoor public  
12 spaces on campus are public fora, especially for students such as Mr. Shaw. For  
13 example, the Fifth Circuit held that “outdoor areas of [a] campus generally  
14 accessible to students—such as plazas and sidewalks—[are] public forums for  
15 student speech.” *Justice For All v. Faulkner*, 410 F.3d 760, 769 (5th Cir. 2005);  
16 *Hays Cty. Guardian v. Supple*, 969 F.2d 111, 117 (5th Cir. 1992) (finding that a  
17 “campus’s function as the site of a community of full-time residents . . . suggests  
18 an intended role more akin to a public street or park than a non-public forum.”). In  
19 addition, the Eighth Circuit held that campus areas, “including the streets,  
20 sidewalks, and open areas located inside and directly adjacent to the campus,”  
21 were public fora. *Bowman*, 444 F.3d at 977–978; *see also Gilles v. Garland*, 281  
22 F. App’x 501, 509–510 (6th Cir. 2008) (discussing *Bowman*); *Roberts v. Haragan*,  
23 346 F. Supp. 2d 853, 861–862 (N.D. Tex. 2004) (holding that a campus’s park  
24 areas, sidewalks, streets, or other similar common areas “comprise the irreducible  
25 public forums on the campus”). To determine whether particular areas are  
26 designated public fora, courts must analyze the objective evidence in the record,  
27 including the physical characteristics and location of the area, the traditional use of  
28

1 the property, the purposes of the space, and the college’s intent and policy with  
2 respect to the property. *Bowman*, 444 F.3d at 978.

3 Pierce College is no exception to this rule. According to the Complaint,  
4 there are “open areas and sidewalks beyond the Free Speech Area where student  
5 speech, expressive activity, and distribution of literature would not interfere with  
6 or disturb access to college buildings or sidewalks” or otherwise disrupt the  
7 educational mission of the College. Doc. 1 ¶ 54. Mr. Shaw further alleges that, at  
8 the time he was stopped from distributing Spanish-language copies of the United  
9 States Constitution and discussing his political views with willing students, he was  
10 located alongside a “large thoroughfare called ‘the Mall’” and was not “disrupting  
11 campus operations or interfering with foot traffic.” *Id.* ¶¶ 57–58.

12 Although the College and District Rules are relevant in determining whether  
13 parts of campus have been designated as public fora for student speech, these rules  
14 are not dispositive in and of themselves. To the contrary, according to the Ninth  
15 Circuit, the College and District must consistently *apply* those rules if they wish to  
16 convert Pierce College’s public fora into a non-public forum property. The Ninth  
17 Circuit’s decision in *OSU Student Alliance v. Ray*, 699 F.3d 1053 (9th Cir. 2012),  
18 is instructive. In that case, the court held that in order to “destroy the designation  
19 of a public forum, the government must do more” than merely announce a policy.  
20 *Id.* at 1063. Rather, it must “consistently *apply* a policy specifically designed to  
21 maintain a forum as non-public.” *Id.* (emphasis added).

22 Mr. Shaw has alleged that the College’s application of its policies was  
23 inconsistent at best because the College allowed students to engage in expressive  
24 activity outside the Free Speech Zone. Specifically, Mr. Shaw alleged that campus  
25 administrators allowed a “large protest that formed outside of the Free Speech  
26 Area” to proceed. Doc. 1 ¶ 66. Indeed, on one occasion, Mr. Shaw was himself  
27 able to distribute materials outside the Free Speech Area unimpeded by Pierce  
28 College officials. *Id.* Thus, Mr. Shaw has demonstrated that Pierce College did

1 not consistently apply the District’s non-public forum policy to areas that would  
2 otherwise be public fora, including the campus’s open, grassy areas and sidewalks.  
3 *See Hays Cty. Guardian*, 969 F.2d at 118 (“[T]he government’s policy is indicated  
4 by its consistent practice, not each exceptional regulation that departs from the  
5 consistent practice”).

6 The allegations regarding the narrowness of the Free Speech Area give rise  
7 to a sufficient First Amendment claim because it is “the right of every citizen to  
8 ‘reach the minds of willing listeners and to do so there must be opportunity to win  
9 their attention.’” *Heffron v. Int’l Soc’y for Krishna Consciousness, Inc.*, 452 U.S.  
10 640, 655 (1981) (quoting *Kovacs v. Cooper*, 336 U.S. 77, 87 (1949)). The College  
11 has limited all speech to a 616-square-foot Free Speech Area on a campus that  
12 spans hundreds of acres. Doc. 1 ¶ 46. Moreover, the College bans distribution of  
13 materials and collection of signatures outside of the Free Speech Area. *Id.* And  
14 the map attached to the Complaint shows that the restriction of speech to the Free  
15 Speech Area prevents students from communicating with peers who traverse other  
16 parts of the campus. *Id.*, Ex. B. Yet the College fails to explain why its stated  
17 interest of “avoiding disruption, insuring safety, comfort, or convenience of the  
18 public, and maintaining grounds that are attractive and intact,” Doc. 22 at 23,  
19 justifies the limitation of free expression to a peculiarly small area of campus.

20 Specifically, the College does not address why substantial portions of  
21 ordinarily common spaces, including parts of the large thoroughfare known as the  
22 College’s “Mall,” are excluded as alternative fora for student expression.  
23 Doc. 1 ¶¶ 46, 57; *see Kuba v. I-A Agric. Ass’n*, 387 F.3d 850, 862 (9th Cir. 2004)  
24 (holding that a policy that “relegates communication activity to three small, fairly  
25 peripheral areas, does not sufficiently match the stated interest of preventing  
26 congestion and so is not narrowly tailored to serve the government’s interest”)  
27 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). “While the First Amendment does  
28 not guarantee the right to employ every conceivable method of communication at

1 all times and in all places, a restriction on expressive activity may be invalid if the  
2 remaining modes of communication are inadequate.” *Pine v. City of W. Palm*  
3 *Beach*, 762 F.3d 1262, 1274 (11th Cir. 2014) (quoting *Members of City Council v.*  
4 *Taxpayers for Vincent*, 466 U.S. 789, 812 (1984)).

5 Speech restrictions must allow students the opportunity to engage with a full  
6 cross-section of the campus community. *See Sarre v. City of New Orleans*, 420 F.  
7 App’x 371, 376–377 (5th Cir. 2011). Furthermore, the alternative forum may not  
8 compromise the “quantity or content” of student expression. *Ward*, 491 U.S. at  
9 802; *cf. Pine*, 762 F.3d at 1274–1275 (finding subject ordinance prohibiting  
10 amplified sound “leaves open robust alternative channels of communication”  
11 because it “in no way restricts the use or display of signs or the distribution of  
12 literature, thereby providing reasonable alternative modes of communication”).

13 Of course, none of the foregoing requires the College to open up its entire  
14 campus for free expression. While regulations of speech must allow for ample  
15 alternative channels of communication, speakers are not entitled to their first  
16 choice of alternative forum. Rather, the regulation must not foreclose the  
17 speakers’ ability to reach their intended audience. *Sarre*, 420 App’x at 376.  
18 Providing alternative channels of communication is particularly feasible because  
19 “[a] university campus will surely contain a wide variety of fora on its grounds.”  
20 *Bloedorn*, 631 F.3d at 1232; *see also Bowman*, 444 F.3d at 977 (“[L]abeling the  
21 campus as one single type of forum is an impossible, futile task.”). In addition to  
22 treating different parts of campus differently, a college also need not treat student  
23 speech identically to non-student speech. *See Justice For All*, 410 F.3d at 767; *see*  
24 *also Widmar*, 454 U.S. at 268 n.5 (“We have not held, for example, that a campus  
25 must make all of its facilities equally available to students and nonstudents alike.”);  
26 *Bloedorn*, 631 F.3d at 1234 (holding that for *non-students*, certain outdoor areas of  
27 a public college or university can be deemed a non-public forum if applicable  
28 policies suggest that these spaces are for the exclusive use and benefit of students).

1           These limitations, however, are largely inapplicable to the facts pleaded in  
2 the complaint. Mr. Shaw is a student at Pierce College and is seeking to engage in  
3 speech in outdoor areas and sidewalks—not classrooms or other spaces that are  
4 more appropriately characterized as non-public fora. Doc. 1 ¶ 88. These outdoor  
5 areas and sidewalks almost certainly constitute designated public fora as to Mr.  
6 Shaw. Mr. Shaw has alleged that there is no significant interest (such as  
7 interruption of campus operations or educational functions) in banning all  
8 expressive conduct outside of the 616-square-foot Free Speech Area. *Id.* ¶ 54.  
9 Nevertheless, the College’s rules have proscribed Mr. Shaw from engaging in  
10 speech outside that small area. *Id.* ¶ 88. Factual development is necessary to  
11 determine the proper character of the outdoor spaces, and such determination is  
12 better suited for the summary judgment or trial phase. Accordingly, Mr. Shaw has  
13 sufficiently pleaded a claim that the College’s limitations on speech outside the  
14 Free Speech Zone violate the First Amendment.

1 **CONCLUSION**

2 The United States respectfully requests that the Court consider the foregoing  
3 in resolving the pending motion to dismiss.

4  
5 Dated: October 24, 2017

6 Respectfully submitted,

7  
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