First Reading: 10-8-13

Second Reading: 10-15-13

Pass:

Other:

Resolution 3-13-F    Resolution to Support Amending University Internet Usage Policies

PURPOSE:    For the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University to support the amending of university Internet Usage Policies to promote freedom of speech.

WHEREAS:   Western Kentucky University is deemed a “red light” university by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education,  meaning our student handbook has at least one policy that both clearly and substantially restricts freedom of speech, and

WHEREAS:    Freedom of speech is a constitutional right of students and should be respected by Western Kentucky University and not limited by their policies any more than necessary, and

WHEREAS:   The phrase “reasonably likely to be perceived as offensive or disparaging” depends on the perception of the judge more than objective maliciousness and includes benign content and content that expresses a well-founded and genuine point of view, and

WHEREAS:   The policy in question would be unnecessary if the clause after it (restricting abusive and harassing language,) included all forms of speech instead of language alone, and

WHEREAS:   Harassment is a term with a specific, legal definition and is more objective and appropriate than current terminology, and

WHEREAS:   Any particular types of content that the university wishes to limit (i.e. pornography) should be stated explicitly instead of included in an overreaching policy, and

WHEREAS:   The Student Government Association is founded upon a belief that students should have the ability to express their opinions openly and honestly, and

WHEREAS:   A student’s personal TopperMail email account should be a valid channel for expressing oneself and one’s personal opinions, and

WHEREAS:   The ability to have open and honest communication benefits our community through creating a Marketplace of Ideas, in which the best ideas rise to the top and the friction of minority opinions prevent complacency, and

WHEREAS:   Discussion of controversial issues assists in the goals of higher education by exposing students to new ideas and stimulating the formation of cohesive opinions, and

WHEREAS:   Showing due respect for individual rights will cease to deter potential students from Western Kentucky University, and

THEREFORE:    Be it resolved that the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University support the amending of university Internet Usage Policies to promote freedom of speech.

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