

# The Almagest

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“KEEP YOUR FACE TO THE SUNSHINE AND YOU CAN NEVER SEE THE SHADOW.” - Helen Keller

## Does the new bill threaten first amendment?

**Corey Drummond**  
PRINT EDITOR

The new bill voted into legislation, which will move the free speech zone from outside the University Center to the flagpole, may not last very long. A petition has begun to circulate to fight the bill, and discussions of first amendment rights could sink it before it swims.

On Monday, October 13, Natasha Regard, secretary of

free speech area's current location,” Howard said.

The bill is an answer to the supposed significant harassment reported by students from some people using the campus free speech area. Was the harassment significant enough to require this bill?

“I actually addressed that first when it was brought to the SGA floor,” Griffin said. “I believe that if you ignore these people then they’ll stop messing with you.”

Howard believes the harassment has been significant

verbal harassment incidents on campus, but I do know that the visitor who was verbally harassing our students was not breaking any rules set by LSUS, such as stepping onto the concrete or using foul language,” Howard said.

If the bill goes through, it is still unknown how it would affect students and organizations that may want to use the space.

“Those organizations will not be able to reach the volume of students that they can reach now. To be clear though, student organizations can reserve any room in the U.C. for events or discussions,” Griffin said.

Howard agrees that it will impact the campus, but not too significantly. The new space is a good alternative for everyone involved.

“I do think this will have an effect on people and organizations who want to use the free speech area to exercise their first amendment rights, but many of the SGA senators believe that the area in front of the LSUS flagpole is a good compromise, because there is still a great deal of traffic, but does not hinder the students day-to-day schedules,” Howard said.

She also agrees with Griffin that all organizations have access to LSUS facilities when they need them.

“Additionally, there are many other venues through which a person or organization can get their message heard across LSUS, such as renting a table in the UC or holding a meeting in the UC Theater,” Howard said.

Whether there will be any backlash or student agreement with the bill, the opposition holds that people will defend their constitutional rights if pushed.

“I believe that the students are not yet aware of this bill, but I believe any Constitution loving American will see through this bill, and agree that this bill attacks the spirit of the law that is the first amendment. I would like to conclude with this, though, the fight against this bill is on the principle of the bill not the purpose,” Griffin said.

Griffin remains confident that the bill will not pass for legality reasons.

“I would like to point out that after discussing the matter with university officials, they informed me most likely the school’s attorney will deem this can not be done legally, and in addition there was a federal judge that ruled in favor of the opposition at LSU Baton Rouge when they attempted to move their free speech zone to the back of campus,” Griffin said.

Howard stands behind the decision made by the SGA on the students’ behalfs. She believes if the bill goes

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Photo by Chris Rebouche

The SGA is responsible for many of the legislative decisions on campus, like moving the free speech zone

the student government association, presented a bill titled “Moving the Public Speaking Area” which was passed on October 20.

The SGA student update said that the bill’s goal in moving the LSU Shreveport Public Speaking Area was to “restrict future harassment of students by outside speakers.”

The bill passed with an exceptional nine-to-four ratio (one senator abstained) and seemed to be moving forward quickly. However, the bill’s opposition has been gaining ground and could take it down.

“The perspective of the bill’s opposition was that this bill attacked the spirit of the first amendment; the bill’s purpose was to willfully put the free speech zone in an area that had less traffic so undesirable speakers would not have to be heard from,” said John Griffin, president of the College Republicans.

Kirsten Howard, president of SGA, believes that the bill serves a noble purpose and that it will help students who feel harassed by aggressive speakers.

“The purpose of the bill proposed was to decrease the harassment of LSUS students on behalf of some of the speakers who make use of the free speech area on campus,” Howard said. “Although there is less traffic in the flagpole area and will decrease the number of harassed students as wanted, there will still be plenty of students in that area in order for the speaker’s message to be heard.”

The defense of the first amendment is the primary point for the opposition to this bill. Griffin believes strongly that the bill puts in danger the campus’ right to free speech.

“As the opposition we believe that the free speech zone’s current location must be defended because not every university is like LSUS, where you can freely discuss religion and politics,” Griffin said. “At some other universities you must be in the free speech zone to even discuss the constitution. Therefore the free speech zone is our last line of defense for free speech on campus.”

This point was not considered lightly. Howard says the possibility that the bill goes against free speech was brought up when discussing it.

“It absolutely was considered, but we believed that the flagpole area was a nice compromise, so that the speakers can be heard but not be a hindrance to everyone traveling to and from classes, which we feel is the case right now with the

enough to make a change.

“Several incidents of verbal harassment have been reported all over campus, which is what sparked this bill. Many students have asked why we haven’t done anything to prevent this sort of harassment on campus previously,” Howard said. “That is why the SGA Secretary [Regard] came up with the idea to relocate the free speech area. Although we cannot prevent these campus visitors from verbally harassing our students, we can do something to try and better this situation.”

Regarding the nature of the harassments, whether religious or otherwise, Howard is not sure.

“I am not completely aware of the nature of all of the



Photo by Alexandra Meachum

The LSUS Public Speaking Area may move from outside the UC to the flagpole



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# Red River Radio manager honored for career

**Corey Drummond**  
PRINT EDITOR

On Monday evening, Kermit Poling was celebrated by the LSU Shreveport Honors Program for his extensive career as a composer and musician. The Red River Radio producer and manager was honored as the Fall 2014 Honors Program Distinguished Author.

The room gathered in an informal semi-circle to discuss Poling's success as a composer and author.

The Honors Program wanted to extend the title of "author" to a broader context, allowing for Poling, a musician, to be honored for his work.

"It is more than just writing a book. Authorship is really any creative endeavor, including dissertations," joked Dr. Linda Webster, chair of the department of arts and media. "It seemed appropriate to ask Mr. Kermit Poling to be our fall Distinguished Author because he is published in several areas, but his creative endeavor goes far beyond the printed page."

Webster introduced Poling as a "renaissance man" for his work published across different

mediums from film, concerts, and ballet, and his proficiency with several instruments like the violin and piano.

She joked that he was probably excellent at things he hasn't even tried yet.

"The term 'renaissance man' scares me. I don't necessarily think of myself in that way, but I guess if you really look at it for what it is, I'm someone who tries to do a lot of different things and tries to be accomplished at all of them," Poling said.

Poling has enjoyed his success, but has not been spoiled by it.

"I've been very fortunate in what I've been able to do and I've also been fortunate in that I have had success in a number of different things that at first may not even seem like they are related, or if there is a relationship there, it doesn't seem really obvious," Poling said.

Poling's career has certainly been a success, with other musicians and composers using the material he created in their own work.

More regarding Poling's career and history will be featured in the *Almagest* soon.



Photo by Corey Drummond  
Kermit Poling speaks to students about his career and history with music

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through, there will be a negative return but students will understand and agree with supporters.

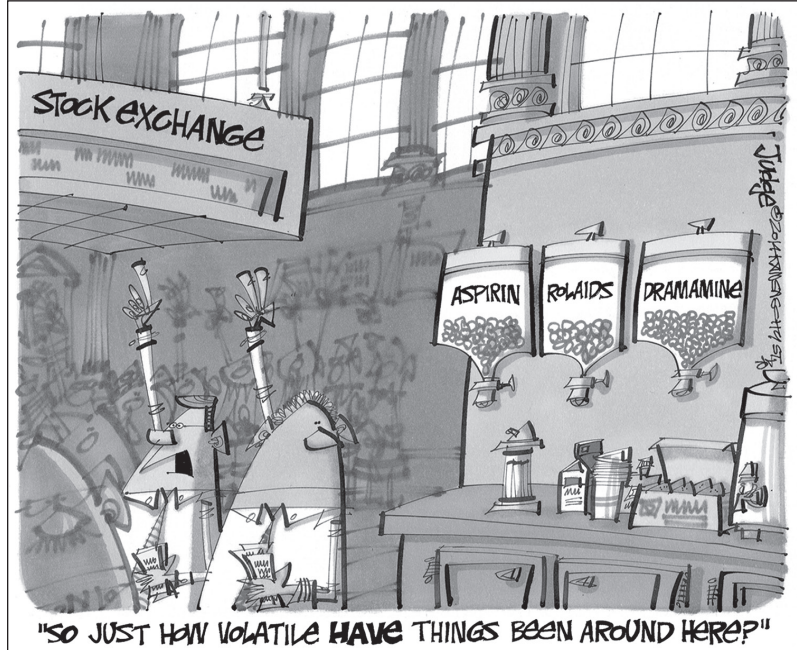
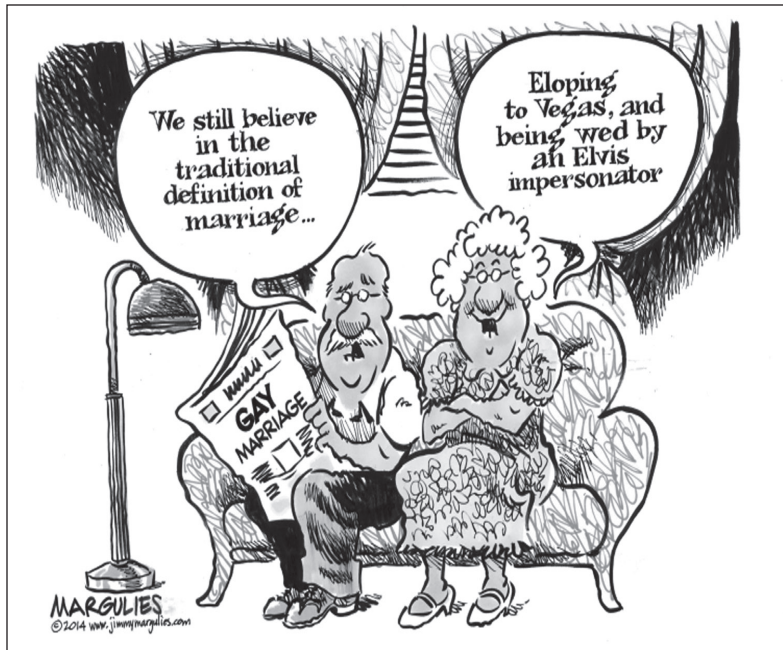
"I do expect some backlash from this bill passed by the SGA, but I believe the majority of students, especially those who are familiar with these cases of verbal harassment on campus will agree with the decision of the SGA," Howard

said.

Howard wants students to be more involved with SGA, so issues like this in the future can be handled with the best representation of the campus possible.

"Either way, we would love to hear the students' opinions and have them get involved in this

direct issue. This can be done by talking with an SGA member, attending one of the SGA's open weekly meetings, posting to our Facebook page, or directly emailing us," Howard said. "The SGA is supposed to be representative of the LSUS student body, and we want to accurately represent your opinions on this issue, so please share!"



The *Almagest* weekly cartoons are courtesy of Kings Features Weekly. All ideas from these cartoons are meant for humorous purposes and opinions are not shared by the *Almagest*.



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**Staff Writers**  
Malva Chintakindi  
Carly Dean  
Katherine Lejeune  
Ebonie Nelson  
Jannen Pero  
Emily Wright

**Executive Editor**  
Hannah Sprawls  
**Print Editor**  
Corey Drummond  
**Video Editor**  
Kaylynn Henry  
**Digital Media Director**  
Chris Rebouche

Louisiana State University Shreveport  
Bronson Hall, Room 344  
One University Place  
Shreveport, LA 71115  
phone/fax: (318) 797-5328  
e-mail: [almagest@lsus.edu](mailto:almagest@lsus.edu)  
[www.almagestlsus.com](http://www.almagestlsus.com)