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The Writing on my Wall: Freedom of Expression, First Amendment and Social Media: New Faculty Rights Concerns

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Citation Information

Flora, Bethany; and Renner, Jasmine. 2012. The Writing on my Wall: Freedom of Expression, First Amendment and Social Media: New Faculty Rights Concerns. *Proceedings of the Joint Meeting of the Academic Business World International Conference & International Conference on Learning and Administration in Higher Education*, Nashville, TN. 135.

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The Writing on my Wall: Freedom of Expression, First Amendment and Social Media: New Faculty Rights Concerns

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ABSTRACT

College professors and students are increasingly relying on social media network sites to make connections on a daily basis. As social media networking sites have developed, so has the capabilities of interaction grown. Social networking sites are part of regular daily lives for most faculty members. With this new technology questions about the lines of what is private and what is not has become blurry and misunderstood. Faculty find themselves involved in situations that are less than desirable and pose first amendment concerns.

This paper will discuss the emergence of social networking websites and their popularity with American university professors. Citing several cases this paper will discuss the basic legal framework for analyzing free speech rights of college professors. This paper will next consider a sampling of recent administrative decision where college professors were reprimanded and punished for online postings in social networks websites that were considered inappropriate by university authorities. .

The paper will discuss the on and off campus dichotomy of free speech for college professors and will discuss whether the university's current trend is the best approach in balancing faculty members free speech right against the university's educational mission.. The paper will conclude with an analysis of the privacy rights for college professors on social networking sites and whether they fit within the basic framework of the freedom of speech (First Amendment Constitutional Rights).