

Point/Counterpoint

Are Chalk/Water-Soluble Shoe Polish Messages *Vandalism*?

Greene's Point

USM political science professor Kate Greene [provides](#) what appears to be USM's definition of vandalism when it comes to chalking messages around campus – if you have USM's permission, it's *not* vandalism; if you don't, it *is*. Of course, as Greene points out, this is not a dictionary-ready definition, as vandalism is properly defined as *deliberately mischievous or malicious destruction or damage of property*. Greene then asks: Since there was no damage to the property on which three alleged males chalked their "Impeach Saunders!" message, how can the USM police department charge vandalism?

Of course, regular readers of USMNEWS.net are aware that USM police *are*, possibly from orders above, pursuing *vandalism* in this case. USM vice president for student affairs, Joe Paul, is also referring to the chalking episode as vandalism, as is College of Health dean Michael Forster. Joining this administration chorus, for a three-part vandalism harmony, is USM's student government president, Kasey Mitchell. In the end, Greene seems to be on point to most who are following this situation.

Foles' Counterpoint

Student Printz reader Shawn Foles [counters](#) Greene's definition by stating that the chalking represents vandalism "because of where it was put." Foles cites the student organizations handbook, which apparently states that the only acceptable location for campus chalking at USM is "The Hub." Chalking anywhere else is, according to Foles, *vandalism*, regardless of whether it's done by Greek organizations or independents.

Foles adds to his shaky definition by pointing out that "Ms. Melissa" registers campus chalkers (i.e., gives permission, or not), and when there are cases of chalking outside The Hub, she contacts the chalkers and asks them to remove the chalking. Of course, this addendum admits that chalking outside The Hub area is not vandalism, which is what Foles wants to call the "Impeach Saunders!" messages, because Ms. Melissa does not contact USM police chief Bob Hopkins to ask him to pursue felony arrests of the chalkers. *No damage done* – she simply asks they remove it.
