# New College of Florida defends decision to host Russell Brand amid allegations



New College of Florida has confirmed that British comedian Russell Brand will proceed with a scheduled speaking engagement this Saturday, despite recent rape allegations against him. The Florida-based institution announced its decision on Tuesday, with Alexandra Nicole Islas, the college’s Director of Public Policy Events, stating, “In a time when public pressure often seeks to silence rather than engage, New College of Florida is reaffirming its role in creating space for open inquiry — not eliminating it.” The college aims to foster civil discourse and debate surrounding pressing public policy issues through its Socratic Stage Dialogue Series.

Brand’s appearance comes on the heels of serious legal troubles; he is facing six charges from UK authorities, including one count each of rape, indecent assault, and oral rape, along with two counts of sexual assault. These allegations involve incidents with four women between 1999 and 2005, prompting an investigation by London's Metropolitan Police that lasted 18 months. This inquiry was initiated following a joint report by The Sunday Times, The Times of London, and Channel 4, in which several women recounted their experiences. One of the accusers disclosed that she was only 16 years old when she engaged in a three-month relationship with Brand, which she described as "emotionally and sexually abusive." Another woman reported that Brand had exposed himself to her in an office setting and later joked about the incident on his radio show.

While Brand has acknowledged his past promiscuity, he has maintained that all encounters were consensual, despite the age of at least one of the alleged victims. He is scheduled to appear in Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Friday, May 2, as part of the ongoing legal proceedings.

New College of Florida, which has been undergoing a transition towards a more conservative ethos under the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, continues to navigate its own identity in the context of these controversies. Brand, aligning himself more closely with conservative viewpoints in recent years, has made several appearances alongside right-leaning figures, including Tucker Carlson, and was present at the Republican National Convention.

At the upcoming event, Brand will be interviewed by Mark Famiglio, chairman of the Sarasota Film Festival. Islas relayed that the college’s decision reflects its commitment to “civil discourse” and stated, “While the justice system independently addresses other matters, our responsibility is to ensure a space where ideas — especially those that invite dialogue such as the topic of cancel culture and free speech, can be explored with respect, critical thought and intellectual integrity.”

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)