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USF 'Whistler' Stays In School

Times Bureau

TAMPA — Blind student Joe Engressia yesterday was placed on disciplinary probation and fined \$25 by University of South Florida officials for using a whistling technique to make free long distance telephone calls.

Dr. Herbert Wunderlich, USF vice president and dean of student affairs, said the 19-year-old electrical engineering student would be allowed to finish the current term and return to USF in January.

Engressia while on disciplinary probation will not be allowed to hold student government office or represent the school in any organization.

THE MIAMI STUDENT also was ordered to make a \$25 payment to any worthy cause.

Asked about the penalty, the smiling student said, "I feel justice has been done and I know now I shouldn't have done what I did. I feel relieved now."

The ruling came after a lengthy hearing Tuesday before the USF disciplinary appeal board. The board made its recommendation to Wunderlich.

Engressia was appealing a university offer to withdraw from school during the current term or else be suspended.

The action began when telephone company officials alerted the university last month that the long distance calls were being made free of charges.

The telephone company said it will not prosecute.

ENGRESSIA SAID HE MADE the calls by dialing information numbers in distant cities and then whistling at a certain frequency before the final number of the call registered. The whistling reportedly disrupted the long distance toll equipment and left an open line to be used for the free calls. The calls were recorded only as information calls.

Engressia said he charged fellow students \$1 each for making approximately 25 calls.

Blind since birth, Engressia is attending USF on a scholarship.