

A love of freedom trumps hatred of JuicyCampus.com

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Abstract (Abstract): I'm the news editor for Marist's student newspaper and once Juicy Campus hit Marist it became important that the community understand all of the issues Juicy Campus raises. We ran a story on it, and then the Juicy Campus PR department contacted us and asked if we would be interested in interviewing Matt Ivester, the founder and president of the gossip site. Naturally, we accepted.

Ivester went on to explain his preliminary vision for Juicy Campus: "I always wanted Juicy Campus to be a place where college students were talking about things that interested them most. I knew I would quickly lose control of what content was on the site."

Fortunately for Ivester, U.S. law protects Juicy Campus from any possible defamation lawsuits. U.S. Legal Code Title 47 Section 230, which offers protection for private blocking and screening of offensive material, reads "No provider or user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider."

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Full text: Just one month ago, administrators at Tennessee State University (TSU) banned the controversial gossip site, JuicyCampus.com, in a move that was said to be in the best interest for TSU students and the university. Juicy Campus is an entirely anonymous site that provides a message board for students of 500 U.S. colleges to post about anything they want -- and they do. Many of the posts on the site are sexual in nature and some make defamatory comments toward other students.

Juicy Campus has garnered help from the ACLU and is working to bring a lawsuit against TSU for violating the First Amendment rights of students. Juicy Campus is a massive blaze that moves from campus to campus, wreaking havoc all along the way, and a lawsuit looming will only add fuel to the fire.

As a student myself, I was outraged when the site came to my school, Marist College. On the site you can find posts about important, prevalent campus issues; however, I found that the site was mainly being used for gossip -- and a great deal of it horrified me. For example, one of the most popular Marist threads is simply titled "SLUTS!!!!!" and students respond with the names of girls and sexual stories.

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The conception of Juicy Campus began soon after Ivester graduated from Duke.

"I knew I wanted to start up a college site," Ivester said. "One day I kind of realized: just two years out of school, I still loved hearing and talking about the crazy things that went on while I was in school-things we did while we were drunk Every college has these same great stories. I wanted to create a place online where people could share those stories. Juicy Campus was born."

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Initially, I wanted Marist to take action against Juicy Campus just like Tennessee State did, but after further

study on First Amendment issues the Web site should remain running. Juicy Campus provides a forum for students to speak, and anything short of hate speech should never be limited.

As Voltaire said so eloquently, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

I despise Matt Ivester for what he's created, but I love freedom of speech more.

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