

# Harassment charges against 'Source' dismissed

*CSL cites magazine's first amendment rights*

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Daily Editorial Board

Almost a month after *The Primary Source* published suggestive remarks and a cartoon in its Oct. 11 issue - prompting senior Iris Halpern to file a sexual harassment complaint against the magazine - the Committee on Student Life (CSL) yesterday dismissed the charges against the *Source*.

After an hour-long hearing and 30 minutes of deliberations, the committee's two student and six faculty members decided unanimously that the *Source* did not violate the University's sexual harassment policy when it published a cartoon featuring breasts and printed remarks about "well-endowed SLAM members" and their "oh-so-tight tank tops." Halpern, a vocal member of Tufts' Student Labor Action Movement (SLAM), said the cartoon and the remarks - one of which mentions her by name - were sexually degrading and filed a complaint with the Dean of Students Office and Tufts' Office of Equal Opportunity.

It was not the first time Halpern and her organization has received coverage in the *Source*. As it lobbies to increase benefits for Tufts' outsourced custodians, SLAM is often the butt of jokes in the biweekly, conservative magazine. But *Source* editor-in-chief Sam Dangremond denied the allegations against the magazine and said that neither the comments or the cartoon referred to Halpern's body.

According to Dangremond, CSL chair and Professor Peggy Cebe said the decision "was in no way an endorsement of *The Primary Source*."

"They felt it necessary to uphold the freedom of expression at Tufts," Dangremond told the *Daily* last night, and he "expected nothing less."

The outcome did not surprise Halpern, who said that the decision was made

before deliberations even began.

"Half an hour clearly doesn't suffice if you go in neutral," she said. "The administration and the University do not care about sexual harassment. I'm sad that it wasn't even taken seriously."

Dangremond arrived at the 6:30 hearing with two people, while Halpern was accompanied by a self-described coalition of more than 20 supporters. Some carried signs with messages like "Stop looking at our breasts" and "Keep your first amendment off my body."

"There are a lot of people on this campus pissed off about sexual harassment," said Liz Monnin, co-chair of the Tufts Feminist Alliance and one of Halpern's supporters. "We're trying to make this campus safer for people."

But Joshua Martino, the *Source's* former editor in chief, said campus support for Halpern was minimal. "We had support from outside the *Source* and we knew that Iris Halpern's support came from a small group of people who passionately disliked the *Source* and would see laws of the Constitution broken in order for us to be punished."

Dangremond said his defense at the hearing relied almost entirely on the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech. His argument cited several Supreme Court precedents.

"The right to parody public figures has a long frame of Supreme Court cases upholding that right," he said. "What we engaged in is parody and was not sexual harassment."

Dangremond said the controversial cartoon was in fact a farce of one that appeared in *The Observer* in September and the other comments mocked SLAM's use of clothing to promote its cause. He added that the *Source* could not be held responsible for unintended interpretations of its content.

But Halpern said that the cartoon that appeared in the *Observer* was decidedly different from the *Source*'s "sexually degrading" reinterpretation. The original, she explained, featured virtually "no chest", while the *Source* set up its Oct. 11 issue with references to her. That way, she said, readers would recognize that she was the subject of the caricature.

When she went before the committee, Halpern stressed that her complaint was about sexual harassment, not first amendment rights trumped by the *Source*.

"I wasn't trying to close down *The Primary Source*," she said. "We were not trying to censor anything and I never wanted to abrogate free speech.

"It was turned into a first amendment hearing when it had nothing to do with the first amendment."

When the committee returned a 30-second verbal decision at 8:30 last night, she said there were no references to sexual harassment.

"[Sexual harassment] is as important as free speech on this campus," Halpern said. "The policy forbids individuals from being targeted."

Dangremond said the *Source* did not meet the conditions for sexual harassment.

"We are creating a hostile environment with four tidbits in a magazine?" he asked last night.