

Decision on the May 18 Appeal of *The Primary Source*

The Primary Source has appealed the decision of the Committee on Student Life. This appeal is based upon “denial of fair process.” The complaints that have been raised about process are difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate. There are no transcripts of hearings and most of the concerns raised in the appeal are based upon the impressions of the participants. I thus refrain from making a determination about the process issues raised in the appeal. The case, however, raises a concern that is of great importance to the university. This issue is in my jurisdiction and I address it here.

The Committee on Student Life imposed a by-line provision on *The Primary Source*. Imposing such a provision on one publication in the context of a judicial decision can only be construed as punishment of unpopular speech. To protect freedom of expression at Tufts, I must reverse this aspect of the outcome. I leave untouched the remainder of the committee’s opinion.

Freedom of expression is a primary value to foster on a college campus. We also wish to encourage civility. The students writing for *The Primary Source* say that they want to encourage debate on campus. But constructive dialogue does not come from poking a sharp stick into the eyes of others and then inviting them to the table to talk. I encourage the students who write for the publication to examine their role in constructive dialogue in this community. They may choose to ignore this advice, and they certainly have a “right” to do so, but in so doing they risk isolating themselves from those that they seek to engage.

James M. Glaser
Dean of Undergraduate Education
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