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Byline requirement on Tufts journal lifted

By **Associated Press**

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MEDFORD - A Tufts University dean on Monday reversed a campus board's requirement that a student-run conservative journal include authors' names with articles - a rule imposed after the magazine published an unbylined parody that many found racist.

James Glaser, the private school's dean of undergraduate education, said the byline requirement was an unfair restriction on free speech, a view echoed by Tufts President Lawrence Bacow in a statement issued before the start of a new school year.

Glaser ruled on an appeal by the publication, The Primary Source, of a decision last spring by the Committee on Student Life. The panel, a board of professors and students that hears complaints against campus groups, took issue with The Primary Source's Christmas carol parody called "O Come All Ye Black Folk."

"Imposing such a (byline) provision on one publication in the context of a judicial decision can only be construed as punishment of unpopular speech," Glaser wrote in his decision. "To protect freedom of expression at Tufts, I must reverse this aspect of the outcome."

Glaser left intact the committee's decisions that The Primary Source was guilty of harassment and creating a hostile environment in violation of the school's nondiscrimination policy.

Glaser wrote that "constructive dialogue does not come from poking a sharp stick into the eyes of others and then inviting them to the table to talk."

With student offices closed a week ahead of fall classes, editors of the magazine could not be reached for comment Monday.

Bacow said that he intended to govern the privately run, 8,500-student school as if it were a public university in regard to First Amendment issues.

"Universities are places where people should have the right to freely express opinions, no matter how offensive, stupid, wrong headed, ill-considered, or unpopular," Bacow said.

A black student brought a harassment complaint to the Committee on Student Life after the magazine distributed its December edition, which contained the mock Christmas carol lambasting black students and the school's affirmative action policies.

The school's Muslim Student Association filed a separate harassment claim in April after the magazine parodied their advertisements for Islamic Awareness Week with information about brutality in Muslim countries.

Shirwac Mohamed, a board member of the Muslim Students Association, said his group never intended to infringe on anyone else's free speech rights.

"Our intention was for dialogue and we never got it," he said.

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