

## Charlene Jaeger

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**From:** Rich Kelley [rckelley@wsu.edu]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 19, 2005 12:25 PM  
**To:** cjaeger@wsu.edu  
**Subject:** RE: Free Speech controversy

Thanks Charlene. We have the information at hand pertaining to CI purchasing tickets, tables, etc. for events. Also, as Toni points out early on in her email, we were focusing on the educational aspect (teachable moments) of all the hullabalou surrounding Chris Lee's play. First, in all of Chris's requests around campus to produce his play, he never discussed his intentions on producing the play, other than saying that he "wanted to 'piss' people off". That's what he told Gail when VPLAC was approached for funding. Of course Gail and VPLAC were concerned, especially after Chris threatened to file a complaint if not funded, and stating that he had already been to the Theater Dept. Gail corroborated his statements through her arts connections on campus. After speaking with the AGs office, VPLAC ultimately funded the event. Then, when Chris approached CI to produce the event, we stated that only RSOs and University Depts. could schedule events on campus, unless they went through Conference Services as an outside entity. He registered as an RSO, and thus CI aided (as with all RSO events) Chris through the event registration process. It was CI that requested Chris to include a disclaimer in his publicity. CI put up no roadblocks or cautions different than what would have been said to any other RSO. Then, on day 3 of Chris' event, when we heard complaints from the University community, we attempted to contact Chris to obtain tickets, so that we could see what all the fuss was about and to give the ability of a small group of students to attend the play. Chris would not give us any complimentary tickets, though we funded the event, so we agreed to purchase tickets with our development funds. We were concerned that students were uninformed in regards to the play's contents, and wanted them to see the play, if they were to be upset. Kelly and Brenda met with students at the MSS centers and discussed Chris' rights and also these students' rights, and talked about appropriate behavior. With our staff, there was never any discussion about an organized protest, etc....only that individual offended students would stand and say "I'm offended" if they indeed felt offended.

VPLAC spends about \$10,000 per year on purchasing tickets or paying for greatly reduced tickets for students to attend arts events on campus. As FIRE pointed out in one of their articles, VPLAC partially funded the Vagina Monologues....as well as Chris' play. Typically, VPLAC receives free tickets or comps for its events or events it helps to fund. In addition, CI proper has bought tables at ASWSU's multicultural fundraising dinner, enabling staff and students to attend the event and providing funding support for ASWSU's cause. Additionall, CI has bought tables at Career Service's etiquette and networking dinners, for mainly the same reasons as listed above. Lastly, most of the rest of our events are free to the public, including UAN and College Bowl. SEB also provides free events, or tickets to students to allow them to attend events for free. Even for some of their large events, like Springfest and other concerts, as well as their first-run movies, they provide free/comp. tickets for select students to attend the events. These tickets are typically distributed or managed by CI. Ultimately, our staff and office believes in providing the broadest possible access to students in order to attend University events, even events that may be uncomfortable or offensive. While many of our staff may have been offended by Chris' play, as well as other events the University has produced, we are not in the business of censoring or prohibiting students' rights to produce or attend such productions, nor express their opinions afterwards.

Rich

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