

College bans distribution of underground zine

by Joseph Chilton
Editor in Chief

Margaret Anne Medley had just finished distributing all 125 copies of "The Pupil's Voice," a zine that she published with the help of several other students, when she was called to Campus Life and told that she would no longer be allowed to distribute her publication on campus.

The 12-page booklet, featuring artwork, essays, and poetry by 11 students, was handed out on campus last Thursday on Valentine's Day. Some of the content was controversial, including a cover photo featuring two students with the words "F—" and "Love" painted on their cheeks.

According to Dean of Students Sue Yowell, the publication was in violation of the Student Handbook because it was not affiliated with any sanctioned campus organization.

"We were concerned at what appeared to be an unauthorized student publication," Yowell said.

"I applaud the passion that they have for their project, but there are some policies that you have got to abide by."

Medley, who privately funded the printing of the zine, offered a different opinion on the nature of the pamphlet.

"I personally handed out each copy to people I knew. We were

not soliciting or anything like that, these zines were gifts. I don't see any difference between giving these out and giving out Valentine's Day cards," Medley said.

In Medley's opinion, the publication was not targeted because of its being unauthorized, but instead was singled out because of its content.

"I feel that if all the poems were about butterflies and puppy dogs, we would not have been called into that office to have that conversation," Medley said.

"She basically told us that we don't have any rights at a private institution."

While Yowell denies that the content was the cause of the publication being banned, she does admit that the offensive nature of some of the zine's subject matter drew attention to the situation.

"The content brought it to people's attention and students need to be cautious and know that

people don't want to be subjected to language that could be considered offensive," Yowell said.

According to Political Science professor Ralph Hamlett, this type of censorship should serve as a rallying point to students.

"When we are told that we don't have any rights, students should stand up and say 'What rights don't we have?' and then demand those rights. At a liberal arts institution students should have input as to what freedoms they do and do not have," Hamlett said.

Medley has expressed an interest in continuing to distribute the zine in the future, a possibility that Dean Yowell says would be banned by the College unless the publication was to go through the process of becoming a recognized campus organization. That process involves being approved by the SGA and having a faculty member agree to serve as faculty advisor for the zine.

According to Medley, however, going through that process would contradict the principles of the zine.

"This is about not being part of the system," Medley said.

"The point of this is to give students from all over campus, English majors, Art majors, athletes, or whatever, a chance to express themselves without having somebody edit it."

Was the zine's content offensive? Judge for yourself as we've printed portions of the publication on page 5.

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The cover of an underground zine that drew the attention of the College administration last week.