

Court decisions open college dorms to group sales

UNIVERSITY PARK, PA (CPS) - Sales companies can invade dorms and make their pitches almost at will from now on, if two recent court rulings stay in effect.

A federal judge has said Pennsylvania State University cannot ban group sales presentations in its dorms because the restrictions violate students' free speech rights.

The decision, coupled with a similar ruling earlier this summer against the State University of New York-Cortland, may have far-reaching implications for dormitories across the country which try to restrict dorm sales and solicitation.

Pennsylvania officials had argued they had the authority to bar group sales meetings in their dorm rooms because the meetings disturb other students.

But U.S. District Judge Malcolm Muir has now ruled that the "free flow of ideas resulting from attendance at group commercial demonstrations and solicitations is a constitutionally protected right," and ordered the school to lift its

restrictions. In the New York case, university officials had also insisted their ban on commercial dorm sales was necessary to insure student safety and security.

In July, however, U.S. District Judge Neal McCurn ruled "a blanket restriction on commercial speech is a particularly overboard and inappropriate means of protecting students from commercial abuses."

But, McCurn added, while the school could not ban commercial sales meetings and demonstrations, it could place restrictions on the time and place the meetings are held.

Furthermore, the judge said, the school was only obligated to allow demonstrations and meetings, and could ban actual sales of products in residence halls.

Both suits involved American Future Systems, a Pennsylvania-based housewares firm which recruits students on campuses nationwide to help sell its products.

"Usually, they ask a student if they can have one of

their sales reps hold a sales demonstration in their dorm room," says Lee Upcraft, Penn State's manager of residential life.

"Fortunately, the law only applies to schools in the two federal court districts involved," says Gary North, housing director at the University of Illinois, and former president of the

Association of College and University Housing Officers.

North says colleges should have the right to restrict such meetings "to prevent things from getting out of hand."

Indeed, at Penn State the number of dorm sales meetings "is building each day as the word gets out (that the school cannot restrict them)," says

Upcraft.

"We're probably having at least three or four a day on campus now," he laments. "It may soon reach a point where it's difficult to maintain a good study environment."

Both schools plan to appeal the New York and Pennsylvania decisions.

New center focuses on personal growth

(Cont. from Page 1)

growth makes a well-rounded individual.

Marge and the rest of the staff urge all students to come

by to talk, relax, and take advantage of the special programs.

Parents' Weekend, November 5-6

Parents' Weekend 1983 is scheduled on the Meredith campus for Saturday and Sunday, November 5 and 6. Sponsored by Student Foundation and the Office of Institutional Advancement, this annual event provides an opportunity for parents and other family members of Meredith students to visit the

campus for two days of special events.

Highlighting this year's program will be an Open House at the home of President and Mrs. John Weems, a faculty forum, the traditional Saturday night banquet and Sunday picnic, and a special matinee performance of "Peter Pan." Also

planned are talent, fashion, and synchronized swim shows; special events for younger family members; and Sunday morning family worship in the chapel.

Programs and registration forms will be mailed to students' home addresses.

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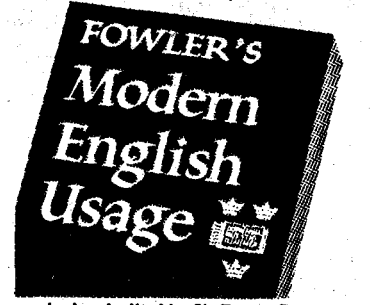
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