

in 2007, listed by name the “sluttiest girls,” the “biggest Cornell University cokeheads” or people with herpes.

Terms and conditions had users agree not to post anything “unlawful, threatening, abusive . . . or invasive of another’s privacy.” But invading personal privacy anonymously was the whole point of the site.

Juicy Campus gave rise to a firestorm of protest: on Facebook, in campus newspapers and in resolutions by student governments. At least two colleges blocked access and a few students brought lawsuits.

Not surprisingly, the furor drew more attention and traffic to JuicyCampus.com. The site closed without apology in February 2009, citing low advertising revenues.

Remember *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*? Each time the apprentice breaks the broomstick, two new brooms take its place. Now there are Campus Gossip, enhanced with a section for photos and videos, and College ACB (for “Anonymous Confession Board”), with college-specific links and a redirect from the old Juicy Campus address.

What’s a college to do?

Most student affairs professionals are familiar with Arthur Chickering’s seven vectors of identity development, which shape the traditional-age college years. Among them are (2) managing emotions, (4) developing mature interpersonal relationships and (7) developing integrity.

Because these vectors are still under development in college students, they are apt to exercise poor judgment about consequences, to themselves or to others. In emailing a nude photo to a boyfriend or putting a drunken video on YouTube, they rarely consider its potential to harm their reputations in the long run. Nor have some learned how to behave with integrity toward others.

Attorneys, courts and elected officials have not settled where to draw the line between free speech and harassment when it comes to the Internet. It’s also unclear whether colleges can be held responsible in any way. In a recent case, a student’s mother filed a civil rights complaint against Hofstra University NY for failure to act on her complaint about online sexual harassment under Title IX.

How have universities reacted to gossip sites?

- Politely asked a site’s leaders to tone it down.
- Called for a boycott.
- Hit the site where it hurts: financially.
- Spammed the site.
- Ignored it.

Fox Valley Technical College WI and Emmanuel College MA have spelled out policies for using Facebook. Antelope Valley College CA publishes guidelines for computer use and email, allowing campus action against inappropriate uses including “using electronic email to harass others.”

While Americans once feared being watched by Big Brother, now it’s their anonymous neighbors or classmates—armed with cameras in their cell phones—who pose a threat.

Soon a student may graduate into a world where there’s no need to do a resume; potential employers will just Google her. No need to have interviews; they’ll just look at her Facebook page.

Instead of enlarging our freedom, the Internet may reduce our freedom by taking away any personal privacy. 

—SGC

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IN HER OWN WORDS

Asian Women Students’ Group: Success Through Mutual Support

By I-Chen Chuang, graduate student, University of Minnesota

Support and resources from the International Asian Women’s Group helped me to grow my self-confidence and learn how to be an international student using my identity and culture as a strength. —Student 1

“It is a positive group experience to me, and I am more open and feel comfortable in the group.” —Student 2

Since more than half of international students at the University of Minnesota are from Asian countries (Institute of International Education, 2008), and several women students expressed a desire for support, the Women’s Center at the University of Minnesota launched an International Asian Women’s Group (IAWG) in spring 2010.

As an international Asian woman student, I thought about what I would want to gain from this group if I were a participant. How could it benefit international Asian women students on campus? How could we help them to adjust in a new culture? How could it meet all participants’ needs?

Those questions, and meeting with my co-facilitator who is an Asian woman faculty member, led to crafting the group’s purpose: “The missions of the group are not only providing support for students but also helping them to succeed on campus.”

As an intern at the Women’s Center, I worked with staff to publicize the group on the Web site, post flyers and chalk the sidewalks in front of targeted buildings. In addition, I visited English as Second Language classes to make brief announcements. We emailed the recruitment poster to all Asian student organizations and departments (e.g., International Students & Scholar Services, Minnesota International Student Association, and Korean/ Chinese/ Philippine/ Vietnamese Student Association).

Some faculty and advisors sent return emails, mentioning that self-confidence and career development are common issues for international students, and expressing hope that IAWG could help both students and the campus to grow in successful ways.

The group kick-off activities built a great rapport and we learned about the many different Asian cultures there.

During our first group meeting, one student told us, “I often felt hard to express myself in English. Since I am in the both an international Asian student and a woman, I think this group can provide me a good opportunity to start.”

At the second meeting a speaker from International Students & Scholar Services offered a one-hour culture shock workshop. Six subsequent meetings included the topics of identity, self-esteem and career development.

Throughout the spring 2010 semester, IAWG provided a safe place for seven students to meet and address issues like culture shock, cultural gaps, language barriers, social and academic adjustment and long-distance relationships. They learned effective coping strategies, building an increased sense of belonging and confidence.

Participants found the short-term program helpful as they continued their adventures in the United States. 

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