1985 Correspondence re Sexist Language in Daily Beacon Crime Log

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University of Tennessee Commission for Women. 1985. "Correspondence re Sexist Language in Daily Beacon Crime Log."
TO: Jeff Brumley, News Editor  
The Daily Beacon  

FROM: Denise M. Harvey, Director  
Office of Affirmative Action  

DATE: July 2, 1985  

RE: Nonsexist Language Guidelines  

In the attached June 28, 1985, The Daily Beacon "Crime Log," you refer to female students as "girls;" yet you refer to male students as "males." This sexist language is offensive and is in violation of UTK guidelines for Nonsexist Language (UTK Affirmative Action Plan, Section 14, 1984).  

Please be more cognizant of these guidelines in the future.

cc: Karen Martin, Editor, The Daily Beacon  
Bob McElwee, Manager, Student Publications  
Judy Webster, Chair, Commission for Women  
Dr. Jack Reese, Chancellor
Crime Log

Monday, June 24, 1985
3:55 p.m. The head resident at Humes Hall reported that three of her residents received obscene phone calls. Officer dispatched.

Tuesday, June 25, 1985
4:52 a.m. Complainant reported an alarm sounding in the Austin Peay Psychology Building. Officer dispatched found no smoke.
6:49 a.m. Complainant reported that a candy machine had been broken into on the sixth floor of Dabney Hall. Officer dispatched.
11:15 a.m. Complainant reported a black male was wandering around inside the Home Economics Building. Complainant thought the suspicious person was not a student. Officer dispatched.
12:08 p.m. Complainant reported a black male wearing black shorts and a striped shirt was in the Law School Building. Complainant believed the suspect was trying to steal something or causing trouble. Officer dispatched. Suspect was gone when officer arrived.
7:43 p.m. Complainant reported she was hit in the eye and her glasses were broken while she was playing ball on field number two. Officer dispatched. Girl was taken to UT Hospital.
8:25 p.m. Complainant reported she had injured her ankle behind Reeps Hall. Officer dispatched.

Wednesday, June 26, 1985
6:08 a.m. Complainant requested ambulance for male subject at Clement Residence Hall. Officer dispatched.
9:28 a.m. Complainant reported she had been receiving obscene and harassing telephone calls from a male subject. Officer dispatched.
12:38 p.m. Complainant reported her purse was stolen from the Main Library.
4:04 p.m. Complainant in McDard Hall reported that a male subject walked in off the street and stated that he was from a mental hospital and needed help. Officer dispatched.

Thursday, June 27, 1985
2:25 a.m. Complainant at Town Apartments reported that a female resident was screaming. She thought the woman was being assaulted. Officers dispatched.

Compiled by Jeff Brumley
July 11, 1985

TO: Chief Hugh Griffin  
UTK Police Department

FROM: Denise M. Harvey  
Director  
Office of Affirmative Action

RE: Nonsexist Language, "Crime Log"

Please note the attached memos.

As always, I am available for comments or discussion.

bw

Attachments

cc: Bob McElvee, Manager, Student Publications  
Judy Webster, Chair, Commission for Women  
Dr. Jack Reese, Chancellor
MEMORANDUM

To: Denise M. Harvey, Director, Office of Affirmative Action

From: Hugh Griffin

Subject: Your memo dated 7-11-85 (Nonsexist Language, "Crime Log")

This is in reference to your memo to me dated July 11, 1985 regarding Crime Log dated June 25, 1985. I have checked the complaints you mentioned in your memo and neither complaint refers to the complainant as girl (Please see copy of complaint).

Even though we find we are not using sexist language we have issued a memo reminding our officers not to use when writing their reports.

If you have any questions, I will be happy to discuss.

HG/jc

cc: Bob McElwee, Manager, Student Publications
    Judy Webster, Chair, Commission for Women
    Dr. Jack Reese, Chancellor
    Phil Scheurer, Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
    Charlie Bradshaw, Editorial Editor, The Daily Beacon
July 9, 1985

MEMORANDUM

TO: Denise Harvey, Director
    Office of Affirmative Action

FROM: Charlie Bradshaw, Editorial Editor
      The Daily Beacon

RE: FIRST AMENDMENT FREEDOM AND LIMITED
    AUTHORITY OF THE OFFICE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Thank you so much for your correspondence of July 2, 1985
expressing an interest in our Crime Log feature. As you
may know, we take our crime log information directly
from the UT police logs. Therefore, any reference to
"girl" instead of "females" is of their choosing, not
ours.

If you are uncomfortable with such a designation, I suggest
you take up the matter with Chief Hugh Griffin.

As for your request that we "be more cognizant of their
guidelines in the future", I must inform you that our policy
decisions are protected by the First Amendment and therefore
are independent of yours or any other administrative office.

cc: Bob McElwee, Director of Student Publications
    Judy Webster, Chair, Commission for Women
    Dr. Jack Reese, Chancellor
July 9, 1985

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ms. Denise Harvey

FROM: Bob McElwee, Director of Student Publications

RE: NONSEXIST LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

In reference to your July 2 memo concerning the reference made to female students as girls in the crime log, I would like to make several important points to you.

(1) What you are asking the editors of the Beacon to do is called "censorship". Government employees are not allowed to determine the editorial content of the free student press (see the first amendment).

(2) The crime log is an "official record"—while we copy word for word from the officers report, we do not alter official records to meet our standards (or your standards).

If you have a problem with how the officers write up the report you should contact Chief Hugh Griffin to discuss the matter with him.

I understand your concerns, but I think in this case you should have researched the matter a little more before firing off memos and exhibiting a lack of knowledge in this area. Another suggestion concerning dealing with the press would be that you never tell newspaper editors what they are to print.

I hope this gives you a better idea of where the problem lies and I hope this helps you to correct the situation. I would be glad to talk with you more about student press rights if you would like to learn more about them.

cc: Karen Martin, The Daily Beacon
    Addy Webster, Commission for Women
    Dr. Jack Reese, Chancellor