



# THE PARTY'S OVER FOR PLAYBOY'S LIST

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**P**layboy called it an honor of sorts, and in some ways, it probably was. Of the hundreds of colleges and universities across the country, only 40 made the magazine's 1987 list of top party schools.

This was to be the year for the updated list, the new set of honors, to bring college students up to date on the top party schools, pictorial tribute not to be excluded.

There will be no honors this year.

"I was under the impression we were killing the concept," says a source in *Playboy's* Los Angeles office. "My understanding was that Hef looked it over and said the point is that education is the thrust in the nineties. It's fun to say you're a party school, but there's more to it than that. We decided to re-evaluate this."

That's good news for college administrators like Rick Moore, director of communication at San Diego State U., the No. 3 party school in '87, where students and university officials fought against being on the much-anticipated 1993 list.

Last fall, when the magazine started congratulating the nation's campuses that had made the streamlined party college list, students and administrators at some of the chosen colleges started fighting back.

Cindy Rakowitz, *Playboy's* vice president of public relations and promotions, says the magazine wasn't responding to campus administrators by scaling down its party list. "It has nothing to do with [campus] administration," she says. "A magazine that's been successful for 40 years doesn't get nipped in the bud so easily."

What it came down to, though, for students and administrators at the newly honored "good-time schools" was that recognition from the controversial publication didn't quite fit into a changing campus climate, where health officials continue their battle against alcohol abuse and women on campus fight for equal rights.

"We sort of laughed it off five years ago and we shouldn't have," Moore says. "I was not aware of the impact it would have on our public image."

That public image, after all, has become very important to colleges and universities. If a school develops a reputation that it isn't doing enough to take a stand on behalf of women or that it supports the popular image of excessive drinking, then it faces a tough time attracting potential students and faculty and suppressing public outcry.

"It does give us a skewed reputation," says Tracy Krulik, a senior at the U. of Miami, named the No. 2 party school in 1987.

"In the South Florida area, UM is a highly respectable university. In other parts of the country, a lot of people have that view that UM is Suntan U. It attracts a lot of high school students who want to go to a party school."

And that, says Rae Goldsmith, director of public relations at Central Michigan U., is the problem.

"We don't think it represents us accurately," says Goldsmith, whose university was ranked No. 16 in '87. "We feel that it exploits the campus, but we know who we are and will continue to promote the image we know."

*Playboy* just makes that more difficult. But then again, *Playboy* makes no excuses.

"We will continue to be the focus of intellectual debate on campuses," says *Playboy's* Rakowitz. "It's a key to our sellability."

*Playboy* carefully avoids any formal affiliation with a college and keeps campus contact down to flyers and newspaper advertisements.

And after all, says Bob Pentzer, a spokesman for public relations at California State U., Chico, the No. 1 party school in 1987, *Playboy* doesn't do much for a university that already has a party school image.

"It's an image that's been around for awhile," Pentzer says of Chico's reputation. "I don't think they started it all;

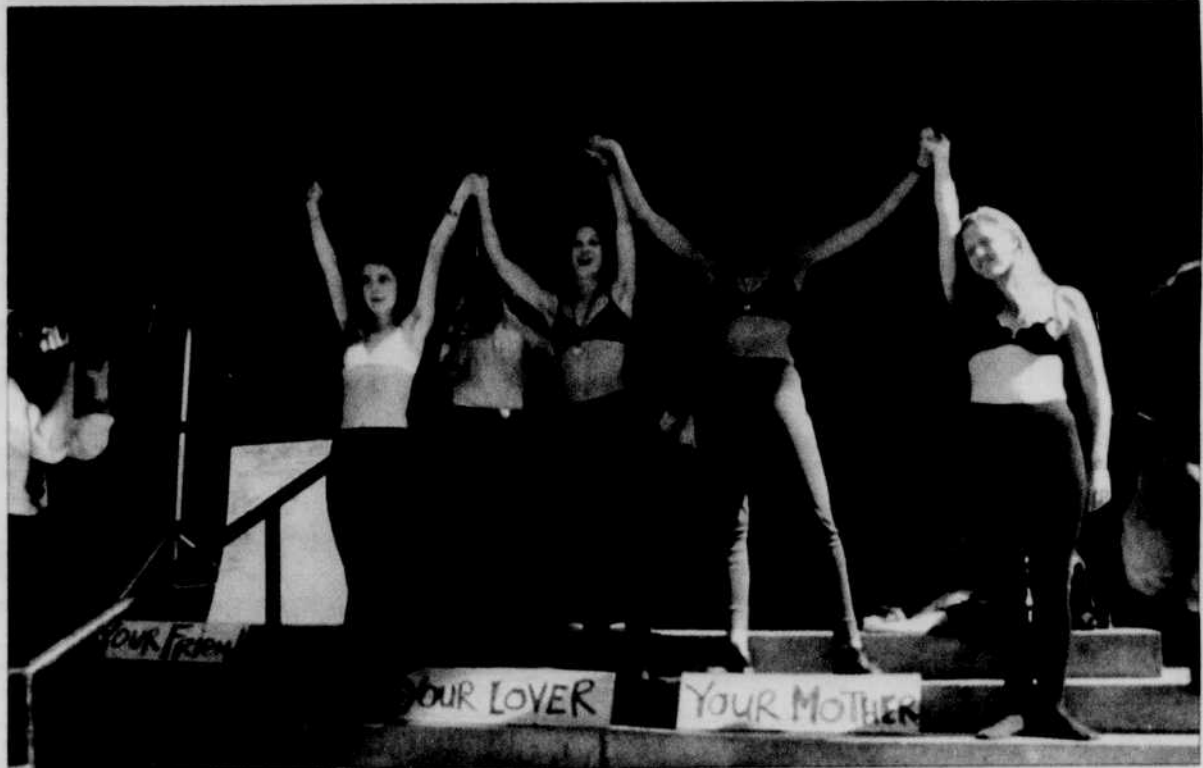
sources say.

When *Playboy* named the U. of Vermont a top party school again this year after its No. 4 ranking in 1987, the student government there decided to fight back. The association voted last fall on a resolution proclaiming an official criticism of the magazine's activities.

"We wanted people to know that the women who did choose to pose don't necessarily represent UVM," says junior Alexander Wilcox, vice president of the Student Government Association. "They can't speak for all of us."

UVM students protested with an elaborate theatrical presentation featuring a group of bare-chested women with grocery bags on their heads. After the three-hour rally, nearly a hundred people marched to the local

By Marshall Pierce, Vermont Cynic, U. of Vermont



Student demonstrators at the U. of Vermont protest *Playboy's* upcoming pictorial tribute featuring college women.

it's a party town."

Students who realize that have less of a problem with *Playboy's* unsolicited association with their schools.

"I don't think it's as big of a struggle as people think it is," says Mark Thomson, a junior at the U. of Nevada. His university was named the No. 14 party college. "I don't see our students all up in arms."

Even if schools can get around the dubious honor of being noted for the drinking stamina of its students, though, there's the little matter of *Playboy's* most controversial nature: using partially nude or nude female students who supposedly represent the top party schools. That part of the April issue won't be scrapped, *Playboy*

Holiday Inn to disrupt the interviews.

Liz Ruben, a senior at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, says *Playboy* can avoid these protests by making sure the colleges they choose want to be chosen.

"If they asked us if we wanted [them] to come and everyone said 'no,' then we wouldn't have to go through this," Ruben says.

But that doesn't necessarily mean universities should stop *Playboy* from coming on campus, says Teddy Keizer, a Brown U. junior.

"No matter how they go about coming to Brown, they're going to misrepresent the university," he says. "But they can do whatever they want."

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