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Website lets BU women be rated; many object

By Matt Rocheleau and Stewart Bishop
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A new website allowing Boston University students to rate the attractiveness of female classmates has sparked an outcry on campus, including a public condemnation from the school's student union.

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RateBU.com allows users with a BU e-mail address to create an account and upload photos of BU women to be voted on by other users. The creator of the site was inspired by the founders of Facebook, and the site suggests users upload pictures from Facebook

for rating.

When users go to a voting page, they are prompted to click one of two photos that appear side by side, seemingly at random, to indicate which of the two BU females is "hotter." Results of that voting process apparently determine a top 25 ranking list.

"So far 731,139 votes cast on 388 girls!" the rating site's homepage declared yesterday afternoon.

The website's founder, sophomore Justin Doody, 20, said a rating section on male BU students is in the works.

The women pictured on the site are identified by first name. Users who upload photos are asked to enter the subject's first and last names and their graduating year. The site says the last names will never be displayed publicly, but are required for verification purposes.

Doody, an engineering student and Maryland native, said last night that he understands the criticism.

"I expected it to be controversial going into it," Doody said. "But I think a lot of people at the school realize it's not intended to be taken seriously. . . . It was not created maliciously at all."

Doody said he has been getting some personal attacks and understands why, but feels people who are concerned with the issues the site raises should instead focus on what's driving the site's popularity. "It would be more relevant to discuss the culture that embraces this," Doody said. "If no one wanted this site, it wouldn't exist."

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Students expressed dismay at the idea of students being ranked by peers based on their looks.

Nicole Rojas, a junior, said she discovered the site Sunday night. She was so disgusted she founded a Facebook group critical of the site.

"It's completely demeaning," Rojas said. "No one should be the subject of that kind of judgment."

Not only is the site degrading to women, Rojas said, but it also raises serious privacy concerns because, she said, many of the photos are taken from Facebook and posted on RateBU.com without the subjects' knowledge.

"It's definitely a breach of privacy," she said. "A lot of girls don't know how they got on there."

A statement from the school's student union posted on "The Quad," an online campus magazine, said the site "encourages a culture of judgment and objectification" and described it as "an offensive website that does not accurately represent the views of the student body or the culture that the student body strives to create." [Continued...](#)

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