

Reverse the rejection of club status for the International Youth and Students for Social Equality!

An open letter to the New York University Student Activities Board

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality

29 November 2016

The following is an open letter to the Student Activities Board of New York University, which rejected the club application of the IYSSE during its twice-annual review of new organization applications.

The decision by the Student Activities Board (SAB) to prevent the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) from establishing a club on campus is an attack on the democratic rights of students and the entire campus community of New York University.

The various reasons you have given to justify your rejection of our application for new club status are illegitimate.

First, after the initial application in October, you claimed the IYSSE was too similar to other groups, including the International Socialist Organization, which has a club on campus.

In fact, the ISO and the Socialist Equality Party, the parent organization of the IYSSE, are completely different tendencies with different histories and opposed positions on fundamental political questions. One could say that the differences between the ISO and the IYSSE are more significant than those that separate the Democratic and Republican parties.

In any case, it is not for the SAB to decide whether political organizations are similar to other organizations and therefore do not have the right to form independent groups on campus. Part of the political education of students is to learn to discriminate between different political tendencies and programs, and they have the right to hear a diversity of standpoints.

When the IYSSE addressed these and other issues in

appealing the initial denial of club status, the SAB added new and unrelated criticisms, such as the claim that the IYSSE would not last and that, because there is an IYSSE club at another university in New York, the club at NYU would be dominated by students outside the university.

These claims are both false and irrelevant. The IYSSE has clubs at many campuses throughout the US and internationally, as do many other organizations. This does not alter the right of students at NYU to form a chapter of the IYSSE, any more than it would for the Democratic or Republican Party youth organizations.

As for the claim that the IYSSE might not last, the large signature requirement (200) for forming a club, which the IYSSE easily exceeded, was set up precisely to show that there is significant support on campus for the formation of a club.

One final argument used by the SAB to justify the decision is that most new club applications are rejected because of a supposed lack of funds.

This is absurd. The university is awash in cash, which it uses to finance multi-billion-dollar real estate projects. The average student must pay more than \$70,000 a year in tuition, room and board to attend NYU, and yet the university claims it does not have enough money to allow students to form clubs of their choice!

These are not the real reasons for your decision to block the IYSSE from forming a club. This is a political decision aimed at preventing students at NYU from being exposed to a perspective hostile to establishment politics, and particularly to the

Democratic Party.

The SAB is not an impartial body, nor is the Student Senate of which it is a part. All those involved have their own political agendas, and many maintain close relations with the Democratic Party and the corporate and media establishment in New York City.

Student Senate Chair Ryan Thomas, for example, campaigned for Hillary Clinton and served as an intern at both the White House Office of Communications and the Democratic Party-aligned Center for American Progress. The current chair of the SAB, Rose Liu, has campaigned for Democratic Party officials. The head of allocations, Andrea Ng, interned as an analyst at JPMorgan Chase, one of the banks responsible for the 2008 financial crisis.

You rejected the IYSSE's application because you disagree with our politics. It is an act of political censorship.

The decision to block the IYSSE was made in the run-up to Election Day, as millions of young people expressed opposition to a political system controlled by the Democrats and Republicans, who are jointly responsible for decades of war, growing inequality, overwhelming student loan debt and continued attacks on democratic rights.

There is deep anger over the election of Trump and the extreme right-wing program of the incoming administration. The Democratic Party, including Clinton, President Obama and former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, have responded to the election by pledging to work with Trump, while covering up the dangerous character of the incoming government.

Particularly under these conditions, students have the right to hear the perspective of the IYSSE, which fights for the independent political mobilization of the working class in opposition to the entire political establishment and the capitalist system that both parties defend.

The IYSSE will be applying again in the upcoming spring semester. We demand that we be given official club status without interference from the SAB.

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