

New York University rejects club status for IYSSE for second semester

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The New York University Student Activities Board (SAB) rejected the application of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) for official club status for the second straight semester. The denial came even though the IYSSE met or exceeded all requirements for recognition of new clubs, including obtaining the signatures of hundreds of students.

The president of the IYSSE and 22 other individuals—presumably the leaders of other applicant clubs—received a one-sentence email message from the SAB late Monday night notifying them that their applications were denied. The SAB provided no information explaining the grounds for rejection. They also did not specify which, if any, clubs were approved. Prospective student groups whose applications were denied have until March 18th to appeal the decision.

The announcement that the IYSSE had been denied club status came after several delays by the SAB pushing back its decision.

The IYSSE opposes the antidemocratic club approval process at NYU, in which the SAB and the administration determine which clubs receive university sanction and which do not. The number of approvals is limited to a small fraction of applicants, typically around ten percent, on the spurious grounds that NYU lacks the financial resources to charter more student clubs.

The subjective evaluation process allows for political discrimination against socialists and other political tendencies that do not align with the dominant, Democratic Party-oriented outlook of campus administrators and the SAB, a section of the Student Senate.

“Given the level of support from students and faculty at NYU that the IYSSE has received in recent months, it is clear that the SAB has no objective criteria for

denying our application,” said Isaac, an NYU student and IYSSE member. “The entirely subjective and arbitrary character of the club approval process prevents students from joining and forming student groups that reflect their views and interests, constituting a substantial abridgement of their democratic rights.”

In rejecting the IYSSE’s application last semester, the SAB falsely claimed that the IYSSE was too similar to other clubs, in particular the International Socialist Organization (ISO) at NYU. In answering these charges, the IYSSE stressed that the SAB has no right to determine whether political organizations are “too similar.” This semester’s application noted the divergent history of the two tendencies for more than 75 years. The ISO endorsed the IYSSE’s application for club status following the publication of an open letter to the group.

In their decision to reject once again the IYSSE’s application, the SAB disregarded the growing support for a socialist student movement on campus. Over the course of this school year, the IYSSE gathered over 420 signatures from students calling for the establishment of the club, more than double the required 200. In addition, 200 more students signed petitions calling on the SAB to reverse its fall semester denial of club recognition.

Last month, dozens of students attended a public meeting and a rally called by the IYSSE to present a socialist perspective to fight the Trump administration.

Over the past two weeks, several faculty members submitted letters to the SAB demanding changes to the club approval process and the recognition of the IYSSE as an officially sanctioned club. Professors expressed shock at the gross unfairness of the process and urged the SAB to reverse course.

In an interview with the IYSSE, NYU political science professor Bertell Ollman rejected the rationalization of the university for denying students the right to form clubs. “All the talk about lack of resources, whether money or rooms, is ridiculous. When we are talking about student clubs, this has no basis at all.”

“The IYSSE plans to continue its fight against the antidemocratic actions of the university and the SAB,” Isaac said. “Given the unparalleled speed with which the Trump administration is violating core democratic rights, destroying social programs and making preparations for military conflict, there has never been a more pressing need for an IYSSE club at NYU.”



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