

New York University students denounce decision against IYSSE club status

A WSWS reporting team
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New York University students expressed outrage when they learned that the school's Student Activities Board (SAB) had, for the second time, rejected the International Youth and Students for Social Equality's (IYSSE) application for club status, even though it met or exceeded every stated requirement.

The IYSSE obtained over 400 signatures from students in support of the club, and a number of professors sent messages of support to the SAB as well.

When the IYSSE's application was rejected last semester, the SAB provided a number of specious justifications for its action, including the claim that it is too similar to other established clubs, which the IYSSE rebutted in its application this semester.

The second rejection notice, sent out late Monday evening, did not provide any explanation of the rationale for the decision. The IYSSE has until March 18 to file an appeal.

An NYU graduate student from Turkey responded, "I think it is a hypocrisy on the part of the university. They say they support a diversity of political views and identities, but on another dimension they are rejecting the IYSSE. They are not allowing different clubs, and I don't understand how they judge differences and similarities between groups.

"It sounds like the IYSSE provided all the requirements for a club, and NYU is just representing its own stance."

Joseph, a student in the individualized studies program, said, "It seems like you met the requirements and even exceeded them [in reference to the over 400 signatures the IYSSE gathered]. It should be a Boolean system that accepts clubs if they check all the correct boxes."

Asked about his thoughts on the SAB's claims that NYU lacks resources, he added, "NYU has to compete

in a capitalist market and it is always expanding. There is a fight for resources against those plans, and it exposes the school's real ethics and priorities.

"It is possible there is also a bias against you. There is just a greater need for transparency in this institution."

Nathanial, a teacher and part-time NYU student, commented about the club application process, "It is not fair for groups applying. At the end of the day we are convening here to have a safe space of intellectual discussion.

"I really understand if there is a shortage of funds, but then they should make groups apply for funds. It shouldn't work this way."

After some discussion with an IYSSE member about the requirements for applying clubs, such as holding successful meetings and proving the club is sustainable, he added, "These demands are forcing you to come out on the street. How can you prove that a group is having a 'successful event,' or what does the SAB hold up as a model for a good event?

"I'm sure people are interested in this group and want to get involved, but they can't have a space to meet and discuss these issues. You guys can't even book rooms.

"Personally, I think more unpopular groups should be able to book rooms, and have a chance. Maybe every group should get a probationary period of one semester, and should have a chance to prove themselves. "

Nyles Pollonais, an NYU politics student, described his experience in the struggle to obtain club status for the IYSSE. "The rejection of the IYSSE's request for club status at NYU by the SAB makes me question how liberal this New York campus truly is. As I've slowly started to engage with the club's members, I've found a community larger than myself dedicated to

giving back to students and the working class internationally—a large part of attendees at this University.”

He added that it would be “discouraging if this rejection were to persist; this club is distinct in its ideas and positions on government, and it would thus lead to a detriment in philosophical and political discovery in the NYU Community if the IYSSE was not allowed to establish here on my campus.”



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