

New York University Student Activities Board rejects IYSSE appeal on club status: An act of political censorship

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality at NYU
27 March 2017

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at New York University denounces the decision by the Student Activities Board (SAB) to reject our appeal for club status. The rejection is an act of political censorship attacking the democratic right of students at NYU to form an IYSSE club.

The rejection of the appeal comes after SAB denied the IYSSE's application several weeks ago, telling the IYSSE to "appeal" without providing any reasons for the initial rejection. This was the second rejection in consecutive semesters—the SAB rejected the IYSSE's initial application and appeal last semester as well.

Julie Corbett, the Vice Chair of Development for the SAB, wrote a perfunctory email to the IYSSE announcing the rejection of the appeal on March 24: "The Development Committee took the following into consideration while reviewing your application: the impact and community your organization would provide for NYU students; the sustainability of your mission statement in past and potential programming; and sustainability in your membership and outreach."

There is no indication from this letter that the SAB even reviewed the appeal, let alone seriously considered it. The IYSSE's appeal included detailed arguments disproving the reasons listed in Corbett's letter.

The IYSSE responded to the SAB's rejection of its application last semester by launching a campaign for club status that has drawn support from students and faculty across the university. As part of the Spring 2017 application, the IYSSE exceeded all stated criteria for club status by submitting over 400 signatures, demonstrating interest on campus through meetings and rallies that were attended by NYU students, and

receiving numerous statements of support from NYU faculty.

In denying the IYSSE's appeal this semester, the SAB did not even bother to go through the formality of organizing a meeting to present its reasons, as it did last semester.

Corbett wrote further that the SAB is "limited by both the amount of physical and financial resources available." This is false. NYU is awash in cash, charging students \$75,000 a year in tuition, room and board, yet claiming that these students do not have the right to form clubs and access the many rooms available to hold meetings.

The SAB and NYU administration are opposed to allowing a socialist, anti-war student group from representing the political interests of the working class on campus. As the IYSSE wrote in its appeal, "By rejecting the IYSSE, the SAB is preventing students from hearing an independent Marxist perspective on current events at a time when millions of young people across the country are looking for an alternative to the Democrats and Republicans."

NYU is thoroughly integrated into the political and business establishment. The university's board of trustees includes an array of financial speculators with political ties. The board includes Larry Fink, the chairman and chief executive of the world's largest asset-managing firm, BlackRock, and a longtime Democrat, and John Paulson, a hedge fund manager and economic advisor to Donald Trump.

The students on the SAB have their own political ties to the Democratic Party. They are not neutral arbiters in determining what impact the IYSSE "would provide for NYU students."

Corbett, who authored the rejection letter, participated in Obama's reelection campaign in 2012. She told the IYSSE last semester that its club application places too heavy an emphasis on opposition to war, and she has publicly expressed her support for NATO on social media. Student Senate President Ryan Thomas (who is not technically a member of the SAB) worked for Hillary Clinton's failed 2016 presidential campaign before broadcasting his recent employment with the *New York Times*. He boasted on a public social media account that he is "officially part of the corporate media establishment."

SAB member Joseph Onwughalu worked for investment bank Brown Brothers Harriman, while Rose Liu has campaigned for Democratic Party politicians and also lists her support for Hillary Clinton on public social media. Andrea Ng worked for J.P. Morgan and Citibank and also supports Hillary Clinton on social media.

The SAB has ignored repeated IYSSE requests for more information on the club application decision-making process. In January, following the rejection of the IYSSE's initial application for club status, the IYSSE requested all minutes be provided to the club president in order to prove there was no overt bias against the group. The SAB denied the request.

The repeated rejection of the IYSSE by the SAB is in violation of the NYU's Code of Ethical Conduct that specifies that all members of the university are "expected to consider and avoid, not only an actual conflict but also, the appearance of a conflict of interest."

With or without the approval of the SAB and university administration, the IYSSE will continue to fight for a Marxist political perspective on campus and orient the most serious section of the students towards building a revolutionary socialist movement in the working class.



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