

Students denounce CIA partnership with University of Illinois Chicago

The IYSSE at UIC
11 October 2018

The IYSSE at UIC is holding a public meeting tonight (Thursday) to discuss the recent partnership between the University of Illinois Chicago and the Central Intelligence Agency under the title “CIA out of UIC!” The meeting is at 5:30 p.m., at UIC in Taft Hall Room 117.

Click here to let us know if you are planning to attend.

Opposition is growing among students on the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) campus to the school’s recently announced partnership with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). The partnership was agreed to in February as part of the CIA’s “Signature Schools Program,” which includes a handful of other colleges around the country.

The partnership was arranged completely behind the backs of the students. At no point during the negotiations was input sought from any member of the student body, nor were they alerted that the partnership was being considered.

Since agreeing to the program, the university has provided little information to students about what the partnership entails. The university denied a request by the UIC chapter of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) to make public the “memorandum of understanding” (MOU) between the CIA and the university.

The IYSSE at UIC is waging a campaign against the collaboration of UIC with the CIA, working to make the partnership known to students and organizing opposition to its continuation.

The CIA has absolutely no business on any college campus. As the chief global spy agency of the United States, it is responsible for countless crimes—the overthrow of governments, the fomenting of civil wars, assassinations, torture and spying.

Campuses across the US and internationally are becoming ever more integrated into the military-intelligence-state apparatus. As the ruling class of every country prepares for an intensification of military conflict around the world, institutions of education are being turned into centers for the manufacturing of war propaganda, recruitment into the military and intelligence agencies, and the cultivation and promotion of nationalist ideology.

Members of the IYSSE spoke to students on campus Wednesday about the campaign and received overwhelming support for their call to remove the CIA from campus.

Miguel, a medical student at UIC, told us that he is very opposed to the partnership. “Let’s be clear, the CIA is the greatest terrorist organization in the world. Now it wants its tentacles on our campus. No way!”

Miguel was most concerned about the effect the CIA presence would have on political discourse on the campus. “Having the CIA on campuses is a threat to education itself. A system of education is meant to uphold enlightenment ideals. It should be a place where ideas and political opinions can be discussed openly and freely. The CIA promotes the exact opposite. They want to promote authority. They want to indoctrinate students with nationalism and support for the state. Their aims are at odds with the aims of education. They want to dumb down the student body and the population as a whole.”

The IYSSE also met a young Iranian student who said she opposes the collaboration of the university with the CIA and the militarization of society in general. She agreed that the presence of the CIA on the campus poses a threat to students, and especially immigrant students like herself. She did not want her photo taken or real name used for fear that her opinions

might affect her status.

“I’m Iranian and the people in my country are suffering immensely from the pressure of US imperialism. Many foreign countries in collaboration with the US invaded Iraq many years ago, and the people are still suffering the consequences. Currently in Yemen, the US ally, Saudi Arabia, with the direct support of the US is destroying the country. Many thousands of people are suffering and dying. This is the business of US imperialism and agencies such as the CIA.”

IYSSE members spoke to the student about the university’s claim that the CIA was on campus exclusively for “career opportunities.” She explained that this was not an innocent turn of phrase since war and militarism is a business for the ruling class, driven by profits. “I believe that so long as the military is operated as a business, which it does under capitalism, it will continue. They are making a profit from these wars, and this is the problem.”

The student expressed hesitation at the prospect of fighting against capitalism, “I believe in socialism, but I am worried that it is a hard fight against these powerful forces.” The IYSSE spoke to her at length about the revolutionary capacity of the working class and the need to build a leadership. She was encouraged by this perspective and agreed to attend our meetings to learn more.

Another student, Chinwe, a biochemistry major at the university, said that she feels that having the CIA on campus “is like having ‘Big Brother’ watching over the campus.”

She went on to say that “There is so much money spent on war and funding these agencies. Meanwhile, I know people who have full-time jobs making like \$20,000 a year. There is all this talk about ‘making America great again’—well, I don’t know how great this country has ever been. How about giving people good jobs, funding social programs and education?”

Chinwe explained that she did not really consider herself a Republican or a Democrat. She disagreed with the idea that the “white working class” is responsible for the election of Trump. “There was a time in this country when ordinary people with a normal job could afford a home, and now they can hardly afford to eat. I think this is why some people voted for Trump. I don’t really support either party and definitely would never

vote for a racist like Trump, but I can really understand why some people might vote for him. Obama did some crazy things when he was president. He worked for the businesses but not the workers, and people saw that.”

IYSSE members spoke to Chinwe about how the CIA has targeted UIC for this campaign because of its diverse student body and the collaboration of identity-based politics and US imperialism. Chinwe supported our call for the unification of workers of all races, nationalities, ethnicities, and gender. “I don’t think there is anything natural about racism. I learned a long time ago when I was a freshman in high school that it is used to fuel divisions in society so the rich can keep making money”

To join our fight go to IYSSE.com to locate a club near you or write to us to find out how you can start a chapter on your campus.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact