

Two US academics protest ongoing political censorship of IYSSE at Sydney's Macquarie University

Our correspondents
1 September 2023

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) is continuing its campaign against the de facto banning of its club at Sydney's Macquarie University.

Management at Macquarie University still refuses to affiliate the IYSSE's club, despite its having met all stipulated requirements including holding a successful Annual General Meeting on May 3. Management blocked the affiliation on the basis of the false claim that the IYSSE had overlapping aims with the pseudo-left Macquarie Socialists group.

The IYSSE has thoroughly exposed this false pretence. The Macquarie Socialists issued a statement acknowledging it has no common aims with the IYSSE. But the university has stonewalled for three months, underscoring its blatant political censorship of the only genuine socialist, anti-war club on campus.

Over 600 have signed a petition to demand that the IYSSE be affiliated. Add your voice to the petition and send statements to management, copied to the IYSSE.

The IYSSE has published an open letter, "End political censorship at Macquarie University! Affiliate the IYSSE!" and is hosting a meeting on September 7 under the same title. Join the meeting:

Date: Thursday, 7 September
Time: 5:00 p.m. (AEST)
Room: 14SCO T5 Lecture Theatre, Macquarie University

Or participate in the online livestream via Zoom. Register at this link.

Below are two statements from academics. One is from Thomas Mackaman, a distinguished professor of history at King's College in Pennsylvania, and another from Professor Emanuele Saccarelli, a political scientist

at San Diego State University. Both are correspondents for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

To Macquarie University management:

I call on you to reverse your decision barring the International Youth and Students for Social Equality from reaffiliating at Macquarie University.

Management's claim that the IYSSE is redundant to another student group does not withstand elementary scrutiny. Despite its use of the term "socialist," the other student group in question is a pro-war organization. It is oriented to the promotion of issues of special interest to the upper middle class, for example identity and lifestyle politics. By its leadership's own admission, it has nothing in common with the IYSSE.

The IYSSE is an anti-war student group oriented to the working class. It has a long record of independent existence at universities, colleges, and high schools in a number of countries. Everywhere it has earned a reputation for its defense of democratic rights and for its serious engagement with historical questions. Nowhere is the IYSSE confused with the various upper middle class groups that, for their own purposes, misuse the word socialist. I am confident that the students at Macquarie University are every bit as capable as their peers in the US, Germany, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere, to tell the difference between the IYSSE and these other organizations.

College administrators, as we call them here in the US, have a duty to facilitate debate and discussion, and to foster the intellectual life of the campus. In the scales of your obligations to students, far greater weight must be attached to this than petty bureaucratic concerns over the repetition of the word "socialist" by two

completely different—indeed, diametrically opposed—organizations.

The aim of fostering discourse and intellectual growth among students has never been more critical than the present. This generation of young people faces the threat of world war, the rise of fascism, the COVID pandemic, and the global climate crisis. It is imperative that students' capacity to address these questions not be arbitrarily limited in the name of administrative bookkeeping.

For these reasons, I call on you to immediately reverse your decision denying the reaffiliation of the IYSSE at Macquarie University.

Sincerely,

Thomas Mackaman
John J.A. Whitman Distinguished Service Professor
Department of History
King's College
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

To Macquarie University management:

I am a Professor of Political Science at San Diego State University, where I serve as faculty advisor for a local chapter of the IYSSE.

I was informed that your office is refusing to officially recognize the IYSSE club at Macquarie even though they have complied with all of your official requirements. I understand that your explicit reason to do so is that a nominally socialist student club already exists on your campus. You have continued to deny the students' efforts after being informed multiple times and quite exhaustively by both the student group that is already recognized and by the IYSSE of the vast political differences separating them. This, to say nothing of the hundreds of protest letters you have already received from concerned citizens, students, and educators around the world, and of the online petition I just signed.

It is difficult to determine from afar whether your behavior is simply the product of bureaucratic stupidity or of a sinister inclination to politically censor the activities of your students. As politically reactionary and obtuse as my own university's administration is, I must say that even they would not dare to get in the way of students in such a hamfisted and openly undemocratic manner.

Even if the differences separating the two clubs were

slight (and by now surely you must have grasped that they are not), what exactly would possess you to step in and prevent any group of students to organize themselves according to their own understanding of their principles and political views? I struggle to come up with any plausible account of what your reasoning might be that does not involve bad faith, fear of the very students whose education and initiative you are supposed to facilitate, and, if the political climate in Australia is anything like what I see here in the United States, eagerness to capitulate toward political pressures coming from politicians and donors to prevent, among other things, the development of a genuinely anti-war movement among the youth.

I urge you to reconsider your decision and to officially recognize the IYSSE at Macquarie University.

Best,

Emanuele Saccarelli
Professor, Department of Political Science
San Diego State University

**End political censorship at Macquarie University!
Affiliate the IYSSE!**

Time: 5 p.m. Thursday, 7 September

Location: 14SCO T5 Theatre, 14 Sir Christopher Ondaatje Ave, Macquarie University

Or join the online livestream via Zoom. Register at this link.

We call on all readers to support the fight to defend the IYSSE at Macquarie University by sending letters of protest over the rejection of the IYSSE's affiliation to the Student Engagement, Inclusion and Belonging division of university management at studentgroups@mq.edu.au, and CC: iysse.macquarie@gmail.com.

Get in touch with the IYSSE to find out how you can be involved:

Email: iysseaus@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/IYSSEaustralia

Twitter: @IysseA

Instagram: @iysse.aus



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact