

Real-Life Stories of Discrimination on Campus

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Anti-religious discrimination against students

- [Yale Federalist Society and Yale Law School](#): In February of 2019, the Yale Federalist Society invited Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Kristen Waggoner to speak at an event on campus. Before the event took place 20 student organizations publicly condemned the event, calling on the dean to enforce stricter policies to prevent student from working with “discriminatory” organizations.

They also asked her to deny admissions to students who worked on certain religious freedom issues during their undergraduate education. In March of 2019, Yale appeased the protesters and announced [three major policy changes](#) to their admissions policy.

The policies would prevent students from receiving Yale funding if they wished to work for an organization which does not abide by Yale’s anti-discrimination policy which includes “religion” and “religious creed” among many other factors. This change in policy would prevent students from working for many faith-based organizations which do take an applicant’s religion into consideration during the hiring process.

Senators Ted Cruz and Josh Hawley have publicly condemned Yale’s change in policy and have suggested that the administration pull funding from the law school. [1]

- [Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and the University of Iowa](#): On June 1st 2018, the University of Iowa told the student group, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, they must get rid of their group’s requirement that group leaders be Christian. When the group asked the university to reconsider, they were deregistered as a student group altogether. On April 6th, 2018 Becket Fund for Religious Liberty filed a suit on behalf of the group. On August 13th, 2018, the university agreed to temporarily reinstate the group while litigation against the university continues.
- [Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and Wayne State University](#): In 2017, when Intervarsity applied to renew their status as a recognized student organization, the university denied their request and informed the students that their organization’s chapter constitution was “discriminatory.”

Like many faith-based student organizations, Intervarsity requires their student leaders to share their Christian faith. It was this requirement that the school found to be “discriminatory.” In 2018, represented by the legal firm Becket Fund, the student group sued their school on the grounds that the school was discriminating against the group due to their religious beliefs.

- **Chike Uzuegbunam and Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC):** In the summer of 2016, Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC) student, Chike Uzuegbunam was reprimanded and silenced multiple times by campus authorities for sharing the message of the Gospel with his fellow students. Uzuegbunam attempted to hand out literature and share his faith with students in the library when he was reprimanded by campus police and informed that he could speak only in the two designated campus speech zones that make up 0.0015 percent of the campus and are open 18 hours of the week. Uzuegbunam complied but a month later while speaking with students in one of the designated speech zones, was again ordered by campus police to stop. In September of 2017, a lawsuit was filed by Alliance Defending Freedom on behalf of Uzuegbunam.
- [Business Leaders for Christ and the University of Iowa:](#) In 2016, the vice president of the Christian student group, Business Leaders for Christ, denied a position of leadership within the group to a student who disclosed to her his intentions of pursuing a homosexual relationship.

The student’s decision to partake in a homosexual lifestyle goes against Business Leaders for Christ’s statement of faith. In response to being denied the leadership position the student filed a complaint with the university asking for Business Leaders for Christ’s status as a recognized student group be taken away if they refused to comply with the university’s anti-discrimination rules. In turn, the university demanded that the student groups strike from their statement of faith the belief that any sexual relationship other than between a man and a woman is “not in keeping with God’s original plan for humanity.”

Business Leaders for Christ refused the administrations requests and in December of 2017, sued the institution and three of the administrators on the grounds that their freedom of speech and religion were violated. Becket Fund for Religious Liberty represented the student group and on February 6th, 2019, the court ruled in favor of Business Leaders for Christ.

Despite the court ruling that the university unjustly discriminated against the group and must recognize the status of the group on campus again, the University of Iowa continues to publicize statements claiming they will continue to exclude Business Leader for Christ from campus. Business Leaders for Christ’s legal representatives have appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Free speech discrimination against students

- [Students for Life and Carroll College in Montana:](#) In May of 2019, a purportedly Catholic college banned the pro-life group Student for Life from holding the “Planned Parenthood Truth” event on campus. The Vice-President of Enrollment and Marketing at Carroll College, told the club, “He did not approve an active campaign against one or more organizations

which support abortions.” The club was allowed to display a “Cemetery for the Innocents” but was not permitted to display the “Planned Parenthood Truth” banners.

- [Young America’s Foundations and the University of Northwestern in Minnesota](#): On March 4th, 2019, the University of Northwestern in Minnesota (UNW) banned a lecture by pro-life speaker Star Parker. The lecture was hosted by Young American Foundation (YAF), a conservative student group well known for their legal battles against institutions which ban their lectures. The administrators told the students members of YAF, they don’t bring speakers who “radically hold beliefs that UNW as a whole would not agree with.” The student organizers of the lecture proceeded to speak with other members of UNW administration to no avail. Since the banning of the pro-life lecture, the YAF chapter at UNW has been suspended.

Young America’s Foundation, Ben Shapiro, and College Campuses: The list of academic institutions that have banned the conservative speaker Ben Shapiro from speaking continues to grow. The Young America’s Foundation (YAF) which routinely attempts to hold lectures by Ben Shapiro on college campuses has, in many cases, taken to legal action when their speakers are banned from campuses and their student chapters suspended.

Perhaps the most high-profile example in recent years is [the lawsuit](#) which was brought against UC Berkeley when they banned both Ann Coulter and Ben Shapiro from speaking on their campus. The Department of Justice weighed in on the case, and filed a [statement of interest](#) in support of YAF. After a year of litigation YAF won the lawsuit and UC Berkeley agreed to pay YAF \$70,000 and rescind multiple university policies which have targeted conservatives.

In November of 2018, YAF threatened to take the University of Pittsburgh to court when, two days before a scheduled lecture by Ben Shapiro, the university charged YAF a security fee of \$5,546.52 or the lecture would be canceled. The esteemed legal firm Alliance Defending Freedom demanded the administration waive the fee.

The host of other universities which have opposed YAF Ben Shapiro lectures include:

[UCLA](#), [USC](#), [University of Minnesota](#), [St. Olaf College](#), the [University of California, Merced](#), [the University of Connecticut](#), [Concordia College](#), [Tufts University](#), the [University of California, Berkeley](#), [Northwestern University](#), [DePaul University](#), and [California State University, Los Angeles](#).

- [Intercollegiate Studies Institute and Gonzaga University](#): In 2018, the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) attempted to host a debate on Gonzaga campus entitled, “Why Bother with a Liberal Arts Education?” Three weeks before the scheduled date of the event, the school’s administration informed the organizers that the school would not host the event. The school then asked for the names of the students who were involved in organizing the event, but ISI refused to give them.
- [Ratio Christi and the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs](#): In November of 2018, student organization Ratio Christi was told by their school’s administration that they must change their group’s “leadership and membership criteria,” if they wish to be recognized by the school. In response the group, represented by Alliance Defending Freedom, sued the school.

- [Student's for Free Thought and Lawrence University in Wisconsin](#): In 2017, the campus group Students for Free Thought, brought the documentary 'Can We Joke,' to their campus. The documentary was met with vocal disruptive protests throughout the screening. Following the event, the university voted to not recognize the group as an official university club.
- [Turning Point USA and Arkansas State University](#): In 2017, an Arkansas State University (ASU) student attempted to set up a table representing her Turning Point USA chapter outside the student union, and an ASU administrator stopped her and informed her she was violating the school's speech policy. On behalf of Turning Point USA, Alliance Defending Freedom sued the school, claiming the school's policy is unconstitutional because it restricts free speech.
- [Turning Point USA at Macomb Community College v. Macomb Community College](#): In April of 2017, student members of the organization Turning Point USA were told by campus police that they could not speak to fellow students, pass out literature, or collect signatures. Two months later, Turning Point USA, represented by Alliance Defending Freedom, filed a lawsuit against the university. Not long after the lawsuit was filed did the school agree to suspend their problematic policies that previously banned their student's speech.
- [Young Americans for Liberty at Kellogg Community College v. Kellogg Community College](#): In September of 2015, two students were arrested on the Kellogg Community College campus for distributing copies of the U.S. Constitution on their campus. In January of 2017, the non-profit legal organization, Alliance Defending Freedom, filed a lawsuit against the school for enforcing school policies which violate their student's First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

Free speech discrimination against faculty

- [Dr. Allan Josephson and the University of Louisville](#): In 2017, the esteemed psychologist Dr. Allan Josephson, former chief of the University of Louisville Medical School's Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology, spoke on a panel of experts at a Heritage Foundation event regarding gender dysphoria in children. Upon learning of Dr. Josephson's involvement and his statements at this event, the university has since demoted the professor, significantly cut his budget, and decided to not renew his contract, among other repercussions.

In March of 2019, Dr. Josephson enlisted the help of the successful legal firm [Alliance Defending Freedom \(ADF\)](#), who [filed a lawsuit](#) against the university on the grounds that the university violated the professor's rights under the Fourteenth Amendment.

- **Meriwether and The Trustees of Shawnee State University**: In January of 2018, Dr. Nicholas Meriwether, a professor of philosophy at Shawnee State University, addressed a transgender student with the pronoun of the student's biological sex.

The student in turn filed a complaint with the University. Although the professor offered to refer to the student by their last name in order to not offend the student and not act betray his own conscience, the university was not satisfied.

The school placed a written warning on Dr. Meriwether's personnel file and threatened to take further disciplinary actions if Meriwether still refuses to comply with their directives regarding transgender students. In November of that same year, Alliance Defending Freedom filed a lawsuit on behalf of Dr. Meriwether against Shawnee State University.

Governmental actions

- [Executive Order to Protect Free Speech on Campuses](#): On March 21st, 2019, President Trump signed an executive order which would grant to federal agencies the authority to take appropriate steps, in keeping with the law and First Amendment, to require institutions of higher education who receive federal grants, to protect free speech and expression on their campuses. For an analysis of the executive order, [click here](#).
- **U.S. Department of Education Finds ESEA Restriction on Religious Organizations Unconstitutional, Will No Longer Enforce**: On March 11th, 2019, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos announced, "will no longer enforce a restriction barring religious organizations from serving as contract providers of equitable services solely due to their religious affiliation."
- [Remarks by Secretary DeVos to the National Constitution Center's Annual Constitution Day Celebration](#): On September 18th, 2019, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos spoke at the National Constitution Center's Annual Constitution Day Celebration to commemorate the city of Philadelphia's National Constitution Day.

Now, disagreement about deeply held beliefs can certainly fuel passions and raise decibels. But violence is never the answer. No one should confuse the right to speak with an invitation to use force. Administrators may think they're doing their part to reduce tensions by censoring certain ideas, but in fact, doing so often inflames them.

And the way to remedy this threat to intellectual freedom on campuses is not accomplished with government muscle. A solution won't come from defunding an institution of learning or merely getting the words of a campus policy exactly right. Solutions won't come from new laws from Washington, D.C or from a "speech police" at the U.S. Department of Education.

Because what's happening on campuses today is symptomatic of a civic sickness.

"The ability to respectfully deliberate, discuss and disagree - to model the behavior on display in Independence Hall - has been lost in too many places. Some are quick to blame a "tribalization" of America where groupthink reigns. Others point to the rise of social media where, under the cloak of anonymity, sarcasm and disdain dominate.

Certainly, none of that improves our discourse. But I think the issue is more fundamental than that. And it's one government cannot solve.

The issue is that we have abandoned truth.

Resources:

For stories and testimonies regarding the discrimination of medical students visits freedom2care.org/stories.

For more summaries of Alliance Defending Freedom court cases regarding religious freedom and free speech on college campuses, [click here](#).

Sources:

[1] <https://www.campusreform.org/?ID=12092> Accessed online 4/17/2019