

University of Texas Orders Website Review Following Claims It Treats Masculinity as a 'Mental Health Issue'

On Monday Jordan Peterson tweeted an article published by PJ Media that alleged the University of Texas had launched a new program to combat masculinity, which would be treated as a mental disorder.

[Via PJ Media:](#)

"The Counseling and Mental Health Center at the University of Texas at Austin recently launched a new program to help male students 'take control over their gender identity and develop a healthy sense of masculinity.'

Treating masculinity as if it were a mental health crisis, '[MasculinUT](#)' is organized by the school's counseling staff and most recently organized a poster series encouraging students to develop a 'healthy model of masculinity.'

The program is predicated on a critique of so-called "restrictive masculinity." Men, the program argues, suffer when they are told to 'act like a man' or when they are encouraged to fulfill traditional gender roles, such as being 'successful' or 'the breadwinner.'

Peterson, whose popular YouTube videos have struck a chord with young men, some of whom struggle with loneliness and isolation, was not amused. "It's difficult to comment on this without cursing violently so I won't," he said.

It's difficult to comment on this without cursing violently so I won't. <https://t.co/xN8AwnXWwo>

– Jordan B Peterson (@jordanbpeterston) [April 30, 2018](#)

Over the weekend, the University of Texas updated its “Voices Against Violence” webpage with a denial that it was treating masculinity as a “mental health issue”. Here is the statement:

The MasculinUT program does not treat masculinity as a “mental health issue,” and any such statements are simply not accurate. It was established to bring more men to the table to address interpersonal violence, sexual assault and other issues.

Like other UT programs related to sexual assault and interpersonal violence, MasculinUT is housed administratively in the university’s Counseling and Mental Health Center. Its goals include helping men explore ways to reduce sexual violence, helping students take responsibility for their actions, and fostering healthier relationships on campus and beyond.

These are important goals that we strongly stand behind. It has become clear that some of the communication and discussion surrounding MasculinUT did not convey this fully or clearly and was not effective at reaching the broad audiences the program envisioned. As a result, we will be reviewing the website and other content to ensure that it serves the program’s goals and will make any appropriate changes as we receive feedback from stakeholders.

Earlier this year, the UT System Board of Regents approved funding for mental health, student safety, and alcohol-related initiatives including efforts to reduce sexual assaults on campus. The new staff position that will oversee this program, and coordinate with other UT System schools, is part of those efforts funded by the Regents.

J.B. Bird, Director of Media Relations & Digital Newsroom at the University of Texas, said the website was changed on Sunday following of PJ Media's story, which he said contained inaccuracies.

"The university does not view this as a mental health issue. It's not a mental health program," Bird told me.

Bird said PJ Media cited materials from the website and that information was accurate. But he said the news organization canceled an interview prior to publication that would have allowed university officials to go on the record to explain it does not view masculinity as a mental disorder.

"[PJ Media] included a comment we could not be reached. That's not true," Bird said. "They have refused to add our comment to their story. I believe that's unethical."

Bird said all the communications on the MasculinUT website are being reviewed, but there are no plans currently in place to move the program from the university's Counseling and Mental Health Center.

Reached for comment, an official at PJ Media stood by the report.

Readers can find more information about the University of Texas program [here](#). Below are examples of posters from the MasculinUT campaign.

*One of images for the the MasculinUT Poster Campaign at [@UTAustin](#), which was accused by [@PJMedia_com](#) of treating masculinity as a "mental health disorder."
pic.twitter.com/BQY6fKI8xU*

– Jon Miltimore (@miltimore79) [May 1, 2018](#)

One of images for the the MasculinUT Poster Campaign at [@UTAustin](#), which was accused by [@PJMedia_com](#) of treating masculinity as a "mental health disorder."

pic.twitter.com/1fAGZ9wqqc

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[Image Credit: University of Texas]