

Culture of Respect: Conservatives Need Not Apply?

Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS) are located in the Finger Lakes District of New York. Once two separate colleges, Hobart for men and William Smith for women, the jointly organized colleges have a student body of around 2,200.

Like most colleges today, HWS prides itself on its dedication to “empathy, diversity and truth.” Here is the [statement](#) from their website:

A Culture of Respect is one in which empathy, diversity and truth are valued and practiced.

A culture of respect is one that encourages us to see the world from multiple perspectives; to participate in dialogue that lifts understanding and that cultivates a practice of listening; to understand marginalization and isolation as the byproduct of prejudice and hate; to show leadership and intervene even when it is inconvenient and especially when it is difficult; and to fight oppression while we also guard against intolerance in our own thoughts and actions.

Sounds noble, yes?

Unfortunately, that culture of respect doesn't apply to conservatives.

Recently, when two students at HWS, Hannah Sailer and Jenny Yuodsnukis, sought to found a [chapter](#) of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) at their college, their application for official club status was denied because it may “cause stress to the student body.”

ISI [chapters](#) function as book clubs, host conservative speakers, offer scholarships, and encourage the discussion of conservative ideas. They exist at schools as diverse as Harvard University, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the United States Military Academy, and Christendom College.

Are the students in those and dozens of other institutions of higher learning suffering stress from the presence of ISI?

When Sailer and Yuodsnukis brought their proposal to their student government, they were asked whether such a club might spread racism, and whether they would be willing to take “diversity and inclusion courses” to make sure members of their club would be aware of those two concepts. Several days later, they received an email denying them the right to start a club associated with ISI.

In a [telephone interview](#), Drew Van Voorhis, a writer for The College Fix, gleaned these comments regarding the club:

‘When I was approached by ISI to start this club with [Yuodsnukis], I was so excited because I thought there is no way that [the university] can say no because there are other political clubs on campus...and I understood that not everyone likes us, but I didn’t think we would be denied. I felt like the whole situation was very inappropriate and unprofessional in the way that [the university] handled it,’ Sailer said.

Said Yuodsnukis: ‘I’m not surprised this is happening...but we’ll keep trudging and this is what we’re going to have to deal with as conservative students.’

Which brings us back to that “Culture of Respect” HWS so proudly claims.

Did the members of the HWS student government show empathy and

respect to these two young conservative women?

Did they search for truth?

Did their refusal to grant club status of ISI encourage others “to see the world from multiple perspectives?

Did they “participate in dialogue that lifts understanding?”

Is the “marginalization and isolation” of conservatives a “byproduct of prejudice and hate?”

Did the members of the student government “fight oppression” while guarding against intolerance in their own thoughts and actions?

Liberal or conservative, most of us know the answers to these questions.

The [“About”](#) section of the ISI website begins this way:

Most thoughtful college students are sick of getting a shallow education in which too many viewpoints are shut out and rigorous discussion is shut down.

We teach them the principles of liberty and plug them in to a vibrant intellectual community so they get the collegiate experience they hunger for.

The student government of Hobart and William Smith Colleges just made the case for ISI.

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[Image Credit: Pixabay]