



Joint Statement from Queer Leadership About Campus Transphobia

As leaders of Queer organizations on this campus, we have become increasingly aware and disturbed at the escalation of hateful rhetoric towards LGBTQ+ students at the University of Iowa. We use this open letter to call on the University of Iowa's leadership to condemn these actions and to reinforce that all students have the right to a safe learning environment. Recently, a screenshot from the University of Iowa's YAF (Young Americans for Freedom) chapter group chat went viral on social media. The screenshot contained transphobic slurs used by the current and recently re-elected chair of the University of Iowa College Republicans to describe a group of individuals. In subsequent messages, YAF's vice chair advised against using terms that could be perceived as slurs out of fear that the messages could be exposed to the broader public, emphasizing the need to protect members from 'unnecessary' slander.

As YAF prepares to host political commentator Matt Walsh on our campus with the approval of the University of Iowa, these messages serve yet another reminder of the shameless and deceptive attacks that conservative student organizations have directed towards the transgender community. This semester, YAF's schedule includes events such as "Debating the Transgender Movement," "Women's Spaces in the Age of Transgenderism," and "What Age Should be Allowed to Transition?" While these events are marketed as debates on the existence of transgender individuals, they serve the greater purpose of belittling the transgender community and fueling further hate with serious real-life implications. The language used in the screenshot is not that of curious students seeking to hear different perspectives, but rather that of close-minded people seeking to put down those who have done them no harm.

Events and organizations that incite violence, and frankly push to refute the existence and validity of other students, should not be allowed on this campus. While the focus of this letter is for the transgender and LGBTQ+ communities, we want all students to feel safe and welcome. The queer leadership on campus calls on the University to suspend Iowa YAF from further activities in accordance with Rule 9 of the Office of Student Accountability's Rules for Student Organizations, as these events endanger the health and safety of our transgender peers. We request the University to address and condemn the harmful transphobia that has become a far too common theme among students at our campus. All students should have access to a safe and respectful campus.

Signed

Gamma Rho Lambda, Reaching OUT in Business, QTPOC Leadership, Trans Alliance, Queer Liberation Front, Delta Lambda Phi