

# WILL: Challenges DEI mandates at University of Wisconsin campus

Posted on Thursday, Dec 14, 2023

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

**The News:** The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) and the Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF) are preparing a legal challenge against the University of Wisconsin La-Crosse for denying a conservative group, Young America's Foundation (YAF), a student organization designation.

In violation of the First Amendment, UW-La Crosse is denying the group's designation because the student organization rightfully refuses to sign onto a "DEI" inclusivity statement that opposes YAF's values.

**The Quotes:** Dan Lennington, WILL Deputy Counsel stated, "We are now seeing the fruits of UW's radical DEI agenda: students forced to adopt UW-approved beliefs before receiving benefits. This is a blatant violation of the First Amendment. Make no mistake, WILL is ready to challenge discriminatory DEI policies everywhere and anywhere. The school must correct this action, or we are prepared to take further legal action."

James Kerwin, Senior Counsel at MSLF stated, "Universities are supposed to be havens for free inquiry and expression. But, like many schools nationwide, UW is going in the opposite direction: outlawing speech and trying to force dissenters to shut up and tow the party line. YAF and MSLF are having none of it. Government actors like UWL have no business whatsoever telling YAF or any other student group what beliefs it must have and what positions it must take on social issues."

**Additional Background:** UW La-Crosse is withholding recognition of YAF as a student organization unless YAF adopts a so-called "inclusivity statement"—a document riddled with recitation of certain political and social policy positions dictated by UW. Some of these statements include a commitment to advancing the

interests of individuals who lack “documentation” to be legally present in the United States and requiring student groups to state their opposition to the enforcement of valid immigration laws currently in the United States.

The University is also demanding students to promise that they are “committed to... addressing issues of equity and justice,” through race-conscious policymaking in the university setting and at a broader social level. Such policies are contrary to Supreme Court caselaw, which demands equal treatment of all Americans.

**About Mountain States Legal Foundation:** WILL is proud to partner with MSLF, a non-profit law firm dedicated to restoring those rights enshrined in the Constitution. MSLF is focused on protecting property rights and economic liberty, defending the right to keep and bear arms, championing free speech and association, and upholding the principle of equal protection. From their headquarters in Colorado, MSLF litigates crucial cases across the nation at every level—even all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States.

**About Young America’s Foundation:** YAF is the leading organization for young conservatives. With more than 60 years of experience and contacts on more than 2,000 campuses, YAF helps students find support, promote conservatism, and take action. Former Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker is the President of YAF.

### **Read More:**

- [Our Letter](#)
- [Resolution to Mandate DEI Statement from UW-La Crosse](#)