

WILL, MSLF: Secure legal victory for student group at UW-La Crosse

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The News: The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) and the Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF) today secured a legal victory for a conservative group, Young America's Foundation (YAF), a student organization that was denied student-organization status by University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. The school originally denied the group's designation because the student organization rightfully refused to sign onto a "DEI" inclusivity statement that opposed the organizations values and violated their First Amendment Rights. UW-La Crosse only backed down after WILL and MSLF threatened legal action on behalf of YAF.

The Quotes: Dan Lennington, WILL Deputy Counsel stated, "This is a victory for free speech and equality. WILL stands ready to defend the Constitutional rights of every Wisconsinite. Period. We applaud the students at UW-La Crosse for standing up for themselves and setting a great example for others to follow. On the other hand, it's time for academia to ditch the woke nonsense."

Additional Background: UW La-Crosse withheld recognition of YAF unless YAF adopted a so-called "inclusivity statement"—a document riddled with recitation of certain political and social policy positions dictated by the University. Some of these statements included a commitment to advancing the interests of individuals who lacked "documentation" to be legally present in the United States and required student groups to state their opposition to the enforcement of valid immigration laws currently in the United States.

The University was also asking students 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. See, e.g., *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President*.