

Letter to the editor: UB should stand against hate speech

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<http://www.ubspectrum.com/article/2017/04/letter-to-the-editor-ub-should-stand-against-hate-speech>

Dear Students,

The Council of Advocacy and Leadership is an organization consisting of the student government Presidents, the Chief Justice of the Student Wide Judiciary, and the UB Council Student Representative at the University at Buffalo. Our purpose is to provide resolutions on key issues at every level of the University hierarchy affecting any and all student governments and their constituencies. Collectively, we strive to represent all 30,000 students at UB.

In light of the appearance of controversial speakers who have made our Muslim community feel unsafe, we issue the following statement:

UB is an inclusive and diverse community that believes in the strength and beauty of its diversity and in the importance of scientific facts. It is furthermore a community that does not and will not condone hate speech and harassment based on religion, ethnicity, race, or national status. As a leader in New York State's public higher education system, UB serves as a role model for the city of Buffalo, our region of Western New York, and the state as a whole.

As your student government leaders, we do not condone hate speech. Speech is power, and that means that speech gives the power to hurt others. We encourage an atmosphere where everyone feels safe. We call on UB to continue fostering in their community members an understanding of the responsibility of speech, and the ramifications of all forms of violence. When a specific group of people are singled out to be threatened based on a shared characteristic, such as religious affiliation, the power of speech can quickly turn into targeted violence.

In light of recent events involving the Muslim community on our campus, we encourage all of UB's community members to practice solidarity, to speak up when harassment occurs, and to show their commitment to diversity and inclusion by actively pursuing the safety of everybody who makes up our campus community.

Sincerely,

The Council of Advocacy and Leadership

Tanja Aho, President, Graduate Student Association

Connor Arquette, President, Medical School Polity

James Corra, UB Council Student Representative

Nicholas D'Angelo, President, Student Bar Association

Jacob Henning, Chief Justice, Student Wide Judiciary

Jeffrey Morrisey, President, Graduate Management Association

Matthew Rivera, President, Undergraduate Student Association

Taylor White, President, School of Pharmacy Student Association