



UCWAZ STATEMENT ON TURNING POINT USA

On Wednesday, October 11, David Boyles, an instructor in the ASU English Department, was followed upon leaving the English course he teaches, aggressively questioned, and then finally attacked by affiliates of Turning Point USA (TPUSA). The attackers openly declared the motivation behind their questioning to be Dr. Boyles's advocacy on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community. We want to make clear that such an attack is unacceptable and cannot and will not be tolerated. Our community stands strong together in solidarity with Dr. Boyles, and we will pursue every avenue available to us to ensure such attacks do not happen again.

First, we commend ASU President Michael Crow for his clear and unequivocal [statement](#) on Saturday condemning Turning Point USA (TPUSA) for its affiliates' assault on Dr. Boyles. We agree wholeheartedly with President Crow that TPUSA's tactics are "anti-democratic, anti-free speech and completely contrary to the spirit of university scholarship, teaching and community." These are strong words and we believe they accurately capture the situation. They are, however, just words. While President Crow maintains that "ASU will do all that we can to end the bullying and intimidation" and "reduce threats against the members of the ASU community," his statement is distressingly vague. We remain deeply concerned about what concrete steps are being taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the students, staff, and faculty on ASU campus, especially the members of our LGBTQ+ community.

There are several concrete actions that President Crow and the university administration can take towards realizing this outcome:

- **Ban TPUSA from ASU**
- **Answer the demands of ASU's LGBTQ+ community regarding a safe, welcome, and inclusive campus**

The first step is removing the official recognition and legitimacy the university gives to a registered student organization that is openly encouraging and motivating attacks like this on university students, staff, and faculty. **TPUSA must be banned from campus and its university organization unregistered.** We do not take this position lightly. We believe in an environment of free speech at ASU, in which a diverse array of ideological viewpoints can be aired by community members in good faith and good will. However, when free expression of ideas is replaced by the infringement of rights, and when the physical safety and well-being of ASU community members are violated, organizations forfeit their right to a place at the table. As President Crow himself notes, TPUSA's actions have resulted in "physical and mental harm" and constitute "intimidation, embarrassment and bullying."

This is in line with ASU's Student Organization/Club Handbook and the ABOR Student Code of Conduct. The latter clearly states that "**The officers or leaders of a student organization may be held collectively and/or individually responsible when such violations are committed by persons associated with the organization who have received consent or encouragement from the organization's officers or leaders or if those officers or leaders knew or should have known that such violations were being or would be committed.**" The

violations at work here are those of “[e]ndangering, threatening, or causing physical harm to any member of the university community” and “[e]ngaging in discriminatory activities, including harassment . . . as prohibited by applicable law or university policy.” We quote from sections D3, F2, and F21 here: <https://public.powerdms.com/ABOR/documents/1491970>.

Unregistering and banning TPUSA is especially important for the safety and wellbeing of our LGBTQ+ community, which has been targeted by TPUSA’s online “Professor Watchlist.” ASU claims to promote a “campus that is open, safe and supportive by providing educational opportunities and advocacy programs that empower students of all gender identities and sexual orientations, and their allies, to thrive in an inclusive and affirming academic and campus environment.” See here: <https://eoss.asu.edu/cultural-connections/resources/lgbtqia-students>

ASU cannot claim to uphold such an environment if it not only tolerates the presence of, but also officially recognizes and registers groups that engage in violence against members of our LGBTQ+ community and against members of its own students, staff, and faculty.

The second step is to support the LGBTQ+ community by providing a campus environment that lives up to the call for inclusion in the ASU Charter, which President Crow has quoted many times. **Our LGBTQ+ community has repeatedly made clear what it needs to be safe, welcome, and included at ASU:**

- Stop increasing the police presence. Their presence and extra security measures are not going to keep us safe. Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment will.
- Create an LGBTQ+ Student Center. ASU is embarrassingly behind other universities on this basic resource that would promote education and understanding.
- Increase awareness of basic etiquette on including LGBTQ+ people among the campus community and model that inclusion at the university administration level.
- Increase access to basic mental health services with professional mental health counselors who have experience working with LGBTQ+ people and are LGBTQ+ themselves, especially LGBTQ+ people of color.

Similarly, ASU cannot claim to uphold such an “open, safe, and supportive” environment unless it listens to and follows through on the loud and clear feedback from its LGBTQ+ community. President Crow and the university administration need to bring LGBTQ+ students, staff, and faculty to the table, listen to them, and then follow through on what the community is saying. The university’s repeated failure to do so is directly responsible for contributing to the conditions that led to the senseless attack on Dr. Boyles.

We stand together against violence and hate. We stand together in solidarity with Dr. Boyles. We stand together, committed to carrying out the actions that will ensure our university and our campuses are safe and inclusive for the students, staff, and faculty so that an attack like this will never happen again. We challenge President Crow and the university administration to do the same.

Signed,
United Campus Workers Arizona Executive Committee
Rainbow Coalition at ASU Executive Board
Young Democratic Socialists of America at ASU
Black Graduate Student Association Executive Board
Association for Women Geoscientists, Southwest Chapter

GRADient
Transfam at ASU
Arizona Students Association