

**From:** Russo, Alexander N <[REDACTED]>  
**Date:** Thursday, September 23, 2021 at 8:25 PM  
**To:** Crowder, Jennifer <[REDACTED]>, Carpenter, Carina <[REDACTED]>, Gonzalez, Nichole <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Phillips, Gavin R <[REDACTED]>, Rohrer, Melissa <[REDACTED]>, McCormick, Cecilia <[REDACTED]>, Childs, Grace <[REDACTED]>, Bolze, Lila G <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: TPUSA 9/27 Program Update

Good afternoon all,

As previously stated by Jennifer Crowder, Gavin Phillips, and I, Alexander Russo, had met with Nicole Gonzalez and Jennifer Crowder to discuss the College's concerns with an event scheduled by TPUSA Etown for Monday 9/26. This is our understanding of what we had discussed, please let us know if we are missing anything! Since this event was funded by Leadership Institute (LI), LI requires we get an official statement as to why our event was not approved by the Elizabethtown College Administration. Please confirm this is what we talked about at our meeting.

Prior to the meeting, I (Alexander Russo) was under the idea that I followed the proper route to approve the event using 25LIVE. As of Monday, an event space was approved for Steinman hall. After clarifying with Carina Carpenter and fixing advertisements (as requested) to say "Critical Race Theory" instead of the previous "Critical Hate Theory," as designed by our speaker, Joe Basrawi, I was under the impression everything was on track to be approved. Nicole Gonzalez later emailed me requesting we meet to "discuss concerns regarding the event". After a lengthy and meaningful conversation with Gavin Phillips, Jenn Crowder, and myself, Nicole Gonzalez had informed us there is absolutely no way the event could be sanctioned by the college and it was not approved. The college administration, as well as Nicole Gonzalez, feels TPUSA is an organization, and Joe Basrawi is an individual, that seeks to cause division and disorder on campuses. It was suggested that Joe speaking on Critical Race Theory at our event would do just that. Nevertheless, both Nicole Gonzalez and Jennifer Crowder assured me that I am supported as an individual on the campus and our individual TPUSA chapter is supported. A suggestion was made to recreate the Republican club that was previously sanctioned by the college. However, Gavin and I expressed that it is not inclusive enough as libertarians, conservatives, Republicans, independents, and anyone interested are able to have a home in TPUSA where they would not have in Republican Club. Another main concern was the speaker who was secured was not a Critical Race Theorist and would cause division and damage in the college community, specifically marginalized groups. Nicole Gonzalez had informed us they had researched the speaker prior and were strongly opposed to the speaker, claiming he is intentionally disruptive. We expressed the diversity within the Elizabethtown College's TPUSA chapter and our speaker being of several marginalized identities. The definition of CRT was also clarified, which defined Critical Race Theory as relating to only the historical truth-telling about American white people oppressing black people, not other BIPOC. Nicole Gonzalez clarified that the discussion of CRT is primarily affecting Black students who are extremely marginalized here on campus and expressed concern that the college cannot sanction an event allowing or promoting an alternative or negative view of CRT. Joe speaking about CRT would only exclude marginalized people more as Joe is not a Critical Race Theorist. Despite many attempts to change Nicole's mind such as; suggesting we change the topic of the event; inviting both Nicole Gonzalez and Jenn Crowder to the event, and any other interested students, administration, or faculty; or give the administration Joe Basrawi's personal cell phone and email so to discuss his speech and the event as a whole with Joe Basrawi. Nicole Gonzalez indicated she was not interested in any of these options at this time, but stated the prospect of working on a secure and respectful event regarding Joe Basrawi and/or a related Critical Race Theory event with a conservative analytical perspective in the future (with other Critical Race Theorists present). It was also suggested that for the sake of civil discourse, diversity of thought, and tolerance, our chapter should be allowed to hold the event. Despite agreeing that these are good things to promote, Nicole Gonzalez felt Joe Basrawi would not facilitate a discussion that would not be harmful and marginalizing. Everyone at the meeting is believed to be on the same page that we needed to follow proper Club and Organization Handbooks in order to approve future events properly. Another main issue was that we did not give enough time for the College to put proper protections for the marginalized groups having given them such short notice. We expressed that it would be more division to cancel the event and offered to try and find any middle ground or solutions including welcoming anyone to attend the event. The speaker's flight was booked and paid for, and we were told the event could happen off-campus but could not have any ties or affiliation with the college if it occurs. As both parties at the meeting heard and acknowledged each other's concerns about division, Gavin Phillips and I expressed that we felt that members of our group would feel divided and excluded from the college community, and Joe Basrawi, LI, and TPUSA would be very unhappy the event is not taking place. We appreciate the meeting and were happy to discuss our ideas and concerns. I cannot express my gratitude enough for Nicole Gonzalez taking the time to discuss with me and hear my concerns. It is also important to note that Nicole Gonzalez also expressed to us that she and the college care deeply about us (TPUSA at Etown Members) as both individuals and as a group and they care to aid in our effort to make a space for our club in the campus community. I appreciate this and other similar sentiments shared more than I can express in words. Thank you for your time. Jenn Crowder and Nicole Gonzalez, please confirm these are the statements we discussed on September 23rd, 2021 regarding our TPUSA speaker event. Gavin Phillips and I, Alexander Russo, have also hereby confirmed this is what we discussed. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alexander Russo

Elizabethtown College Class of 2022  
Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Major  
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