

Title: Flier Recruiting for White Supremacist Organization

The recent email message from Mark Land, Vice President, University Relations (copied below) was a tone-deaf response to a campus outcry over the following white supremacist recruitment flier found on campus.



Image 1 from <https://www.facebook.com/veronicajmobbs/posts/10213375908419610>

For those who don't know, at least one of the websites the flier invites "white people" to visit, the Daily Stormer, openly publishes neo-nazi and white supremacist content (including actual swastikas).

In these times that have included the Sikes Hall protests, Clemson's recognizing the slavery in its past, and the deadly march in Charlottesville, Clemson's choice not to denounce the message in this flier was at best morally ambiguous and at worst a slap in the face to women,

people of color, non-Christians, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and others that are targeted for violence by the so-called "alt right".

The only reason this email message gives for removing the fliers was that "the materials were not posted in accordance with the university's policy concerning the use of its facilities and grounds."

What about our values as an institution?

The [Clemson Forward webpage on Living](#) says, "ClemsonForward will strengthen the cherished sense of community and connectedness that defines the Clemson Family by enhancing diversity, improving workplace quality of life and creating an environment of inclusive excellence." The response to this flier does not enhance diversity. It diminishes diversity by not speaking out strongly against groups that espouse systemic violence against groups including women, people of color, non-Christians, LGBTQ+ persons. The response to this flier does not improve workplace quality of life. It decreases quality of life for marginalized students, faculty members, and staff members in the Clemson family by implying that Clemson does not disagree with the values of these neo-nazi organizations. The response to this flier does not create an environment of inclusive excellence. It undermines the work so many people have done to make Clemson a welcoming place for people from underrepresented groups.

The email response also states, "The university is deeply committed to the safety of its students, employees and guests. Any form of speech that is deemed to be a direct call to imminent lawlessness, or which presents a true threat to members of the campus community, will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately by the university." This is reassuring, to a point. But does not go far enough. It is clear from the rhetoric surrounding the deadly torch-lit march in Charlottesville that the so-called "alt right" is a group that advocates violence. It is not a revolutionary idea to suggest that we should distance ourselves from any group that chants things like "Jews will not replace us" and worse. By not stating clearly and definitively that the values espoused by these groups are directly opposed to our explicitly stated ideals, we weaken any efforts we make to achieve those ideals.

And what about the antifa flier (pictured next) referred to in Land's response email?



Image 2 from <https://s3.amazonaws.com/campusreform/10106/AntifaPoster.jpg>

The email message draws no distinction between this flier and the neo-nazi flier. They were both “free speech,” and they were both removed for the same reason: not following university policy. The implicit message here, that these fliers and the groups they represent are essentially the same, is a false equivalency. Opposing nazis, fascists, and white supremacists is vastly different from being a nazi, a fascist, or a white supremacist. And to be clear, the image of a fist punching a swastika (punching a symbol, not a human being) does not condone violence, unlike the websites linked on the white supremacist flier. So, one should not claim any equivalence

based on perceived threats of violence. However, this image does advocate for the destruction of nazi ideals, which I personally see as a reasonable goal of our “high seminary of learning.”

Sean Sather-Wagstaff, Associate Professor of Mathematical Sciences

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Subject: Special Inside Clemson: Important message regarding recent flyers posted around campus

Dear Clemson Community:

This week, flyers encouraging campus community members to join self-proclaimed “alt right” organizations as well as self-designated “anti-fascist” organizations have appeared at several locations around campus.

In both instances, the materials were not posted in accordance with the university’s policy concerning the use of its facilities and grounds, and without regard to content, were promptly removed by university staff members.

As a public institution of higher learning, Clemson fully supports the right of free speech. However, we require all free speech contributors to act responsibly, conform to our policies and abide by the law.

The university is deeply committed to the safety of its students, employees and guests. Any form of speech that is deemed to be a direct call to imminent lawlessness, or which presents a true threat to members of the campus community, will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately by the university.

Any student or employee who comes across future similar materials, should contact Clemson University Police, which is actively monitoring this situation.

Mark Land
Vice President – University Relations