S2022-W4 – Motion to Amend S2022-R6

WHEREAS, since the introduction of S2022-R6 on April 6th the authors have gotten substantial feedback from administration and faculty members.

WHEREAS we were advised to focus on the UNT policy side of the issue and so we decided to adjust our approach accordingly, striking sections that pertained to First Amendment issues as those are not University controlled.

LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the following be added as the second whereas statement of S2022-R6:

WHEREAS the UNT Student Code of Conduct (17.012) defines harassment as “the unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status when such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment and is: (a)sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that it interferes with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities, or (b) sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent that it unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment” and discrimination as “treating an individual or group of individuals unfavorably in their employment or education because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.”

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the following be added before the statement on President Smatresk’s first email:

WHEREAS on March 7th, the student organization in question also tweeted the phrase “Transgender people do not exist!!”

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the following statements be amended as so:

WHEREAS the Trans community at UNT feels threatened, unsafe, and harassed by the aforementioned Student Organization’s transphobic actions and rhetoric. Trans students are not satisfied with the UNT administration’s response to these events.
WHEREAS on March 2nd, the event featuring guest speaker Jeff Younger took place. It was held in Curry Hall which was closed except for the room the meeting took place in, and guests were cut off from entering after capacity was reached. Just outside, a few hundred protesters gathered in support of Transgender Students and Children, and were heard chanting “protect trans kids” among other things. The event itself comprised of protesters present shouting in an attempt to prevent Younger from speaking. Jeff Younger is quoted as saying things like “there is no such thing as a trans person” and calling protesters “snowflakes” and “communists” during the meeting. Younger and some other UNT Student were escorted out of the building by campus police. Later that night the police also responded to a complaint from someone in a local hospital who said they were hit by a UNT Police vehicle. Details as reported by the Dallas Morning News and Pink News.9

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the following amendments be made in this order:

WHEREAS The above-mentioned actions by the Student Organization were in clear violation of UNT policy 16.0041. The transphobic statements, actions, and rhetoric used on campus directly threaten the physical health and lives of UNT students, and caused substantial and direct harm and distress to the trans community on campus.

WHEREAS Title IX prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of "sex" as "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Additionally, in 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court held that similar language in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (which prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex) in cases Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia and Altitude Express, Inc. v. Zarda, necessarily extended protection to individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. A determination was based on the language of Title VII itself. This sets a precedent to interpret all federal legislation prohibiting discrimination because of sex, to also prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.19,20

WHEREAS according to ACLU of Kansas Legal Director Sharon Brett, “Hate speech is free speech, so the Constitution protects people’s ability to say hateful and potentially emotional harmful things. That is a core component of the First Amendment right to the freedom of speech. Hate speech crosses over that threshold when it incites criminal activity or when it provides a direct threat to somebody, of violent or criminal activity.”12

WHEREAS in Virginia v. Black (2003) the Court defined true threats as “statements where the speaker means to communicate a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group of individuals.” Further, the Court held that speech loses First Amendment protection and becomes intimidation when it is “a type of true threat, where a speaker directs a threat to a person or group of persons with the intent of placing the victim in fear of bodily harm or death.”13

WHEREAS According to an article from the Washington post, on Texas Governor Greg Abbot’s recent directive14 for CPS and DFPS to investigate cases of gender-affirming
child care as abuse, they say. “There is no existing law in Texas, or any other state, that
categorizes gender-affirming care as abuse. In the wake of Abbott’s directive, some
county attorneys said they would not enforce it, and legal and transgender policy experts
emphasized that neither the letter nor [Texas Attorney General Ken] Paxton’s
[supportive] opinion were legally binding. Yet within days of Abbott’s letter, Texas
officials began opening investigations of families suspected of providing gender-
affirming care to their children — and these investigations have been conducted outside
the typical protocol for child abuse cases, according to attorneys who represent the
families and the testimony of a Child Protective Services investigations supervisor. As of
March 11th, officials confirmed that nine such cases had been opened. Since then, Texas’s
authority to launch these investigations has only grown murkier. On March 11th, a judge
in Austin issued a temporary injunction against Abbott’s order, calling it an
unconstitutional overreach and a violation of the democratic process. The injunction
blocked investigations and prosecutions of families accused of child abuse solely on the
basis of providing gender-affirming care, at least until a trial in the case could take place
in July. But within hours, Paxton tweeted that his office had filed an appeal — and
claimed that the judge’s injunction was thereby “frozen,” and investigations would
continue. Legal experts and state officials have said it’s unclear how the DFPS plans to
proceed. Attorneys representing clients under investigation have said they have not yet
been told whether the cases will continue or be closed, and so the uncertainty has
intensified for parents who are still waiting to hear what will happen to their families.”15

WHEREAS language like “criminalize child transitions” is harassment and
discrimination, legally unlawful, and must be considered a true threat per Virginia v.
Black, as removal of gender-affirming child care can cause bodily harm, as well as
mental and emotional harm. According to the Trevor Project’s 2021 National LGBTQ
Youth Mental Health Survey, “42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting
suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth”. In
addition, “62% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of major depressive disorder in the
past two weeks, including more than 2 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth.”
Threatening access to health care and a child’s ability to live as their true self would have
a direct negative impact on a Transgender youth’s mental health and could put their life
at risk. In contrast, the survey also stated that “LGBTQ youth who had access to spaces
that affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity reported lower rates of
attempting suicide than those who did not.”16

WHEREAS the transphobic statements, actions, and rhetoric used on campus directly
threaten the physical health and lives of UNT students. These statements cross the line
from hate speech to “true threats” and are not protected by the Constitutional Right to
Free Speech.

WHEREAS The UNT Student Code of Conduct says “Students or Student Groups may
be disciplined for attempting to or engaging in the misconduct listed below. […]
Violations of federal, state or local laws (whether convicted or not) or other University
policies.” This includes 16.004, the anti-discrimination and harassment policy.17
LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the following statement be amended as so:

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT any UNT Student Organization that engages in hate speech harassment, discrimination, hate crimes, and/or violation of UNT policy through transphobic posts, statements, and actions be immediately suspended to protect the mental, emotional, and physical health of transgender students at UNT.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the references be amended by the following to match the above changes,

12. ACLU Hate Speech vs. Hate Crimes
15. Washington Post on the Texas Trans Child Abuse Investigations
   https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/03/17/texas-trans-child-abuse-investigations/
18. 1 Tweet from UNT Student Organization on March 7th, Appendix H
19. Title IX, U.S. Department of Education
   https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html
20. Supreme Court Ruling on Title VII

Respectfully Submitted,

Senator Beige Cowell
College of Music

References:

1. Notated version of S2022-R6 for convenience, Appendix A

In Witness thereof, I hereby certify the Student Senate of the University of North Texas Student Government Association has approved this document and is referred to the office of the President.

David Muñoz-Sarabia
Speaker of the Senate

4-13-22

Date
Appendix A
Appended A, See attached document for the notated version of S2022-R6

WHEREAS the University of North Texas policy states “The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.”1

WHEREAS the UNT Student Code of Conduct (17.012) defines harassment as “the unwelcome verbal or physical conduct because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status when such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment and is: (a)sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent that it interferes with a student’s ability to participate in or benefit from educational programs or activities, or (b) sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent that it unreasonably interferes with an employee’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment” and discrimination as “treating an individual or group of individuals unfavorably in their employment or education because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.”17

WHEREAS on February 16th, a UNT Student filmed a 39-second video of her and a friend in Willis Library where she was conversing with another UNT student. The other student was expressing his distaste before walking away. He had been looking at a computer screen where she and her friend had been scrolling through posters advertising a UNT Student Organization’s upcoming event with Jeff Younger (previously scheduled for February 23rd and later moved to March 2nd due to inclement weather). The student and her friend said they were at Willis Library to print out flyers.2

WHEREAS at the time of the situation, Jeff Younger was running for a Texas State House seat. He fought his ex-wife for custody over his two children, one of which is a young trans girl, and lost. He is very outspoken on his position to try and outlaw the “chemical castration of minors”, block schools from enacting transgender transition without parental consent, and reform juvenile justice laws.3

WHEREAS defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, transphobia is the “irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against transgender people.”
WHEREAS Jeff Younger’s program presented at the UNT Student Org event was transphobic.

WHEREAS a UNT Student Organization posted two flyers\(^4,5\) on their Instagram and Twitter pages. The phrase “Criminalize Child Transitions”\(^4\), which was present, is violent, hateful, and transphobic.

WHEREAS the poster\(^4\) is directly attacking members of the UNT community, and would directly attack future members of the UNT community. Many have siblings who are children and are trans, still some UNT students transitioned as children themselves. There could be currently or in the future, transgender UNT students who are 17-years-old (including freshman and TAMS students), who are minors and can be considered children.

WHEREAS on March 7\(^{th}\), the student organization in question also tweeted the phrase “Transgender people do not exist!!”\(^18\)

WHEREAS on February 22\(^{nd}\), UNT President Neal Smatresk sent out an email to all eagleconnect emails. The message was a mostly non-specific response to the previously described incidents on campus. There was no explicit condemnation of the transphobic actions that took place. Some notable quotes include “Regardless of who we are or where we come from, we always will encounter people who disagree with us, or do not accept us. Here on our campus, we honor our First Amendment rights, even when we don’t agree with others’ opinions. Our views, or our very existence, might be challenged in ways that feel incredibly hurtful,” and “I encourage you to engage in open discourse, free expression, and debate. All individuals have the right to peacefully assemble, to speak, and to engage in expressive activity, including that which you may find offensive. Each of you has the freedom to express yourself and the freedom to walk away, disempowering those with intolerant views.” His statement equated transphobic harassment to a difference in opinion. While it’s true that the UNT campus honors every student’s First Amendment rights, Smatresk’s response seemed to ignore (or be ignorant of) the severity of the situation, and did nothing to try to protect transgender students from future harm.\(^6\)

WHEREAS on February 25\(^{th}\), SGA Senator Beige Cowell published a survey to their social media titled “Survey for the Trans Community at UNT” in collaboration with The Space at UNT Media Relations Officer Samantha Cowell. The survey’s purpose is “[for] Samantha and Beige to build legislation that would protect Transgender, Non-Binary, Genderqueer, and Gender Questioning members of the University of North Texas Community”. The survey collected 58 responses (6 of which were test responses by the survey makers) and stopped collecting new statements on March 17\(^{th}\).\(^7\)

WHEREAS the following statements were submitted to the survey by self-identifying UNT students who are transgender. Statements appear as they were submitted, including typos and
“The email response calling transphobic remarks a form of opinion/freedom of speech was awful. I came to this university that boasted it’s diversity to get away from that rhetoric I would regularly get from my family and others at home. I’m sick of my rights being an opinion for someone to debate, and I feel like UNT should do much MUCH better if they’re going to continue boasting how accepting they are.”
- Anonymous

“I came to UNT with the expectation that I would be safe. The guest speaker to be brought by YCT has severely harmed that sense of security, and the inaction by UNT administration as well as the condescending message from President Smatresk has made the situation worse.”
- Anonymous

“The YCT has been spreading extremely negative commentary about the trans community that is dangerously misleading and just contributes to trans suicides. I’ve been incredibly distraught over not just Kelly Neidart and YCT’s actions, but also UNT’s inability to make any action against it. This is hate speech and I can’t even feel comfortable on a campus that prides itself on inclusivity.”
- AJ Tucker

“I no longer feel safe on campus. I have to be vigilant in every fucking step that I take, aware of every corner, every little presence. I am not passing. I do not have that luxury. I am so very fucking scared for myself and my friends that also do not pass. We have no chance of safety, no chance of avoiding sexual assault to ‘fix us’- or physical assault, or even gun violence, and no idea how many in number they are. I used to feel safe being who I was on campus. I was trying to come out of my shell and transition safely where I would not get that support in my own home. I can't even fucking do that now.”
- Anonymous

“It seems like many people intentionally are spreading misinformation about the Trans community and being blatantly disrespectful and discriminatory against the Trans community. Personally my most common feeling is anger, which compels me to try to act against them to protect myself and those I care about. Fear is also very common. Though I try my best to ignore it, fear of others who might wish me harm based on both my skin color and my presentation are a part of my life that I don't think will change, but I sincerely hope I can help build a world where people no longer need to live with that fear.”
- Daniel Disla

“I don’t feel comfortable presenting myself openly in public when there’s a school funded group openly rallying for the criminalization of my identity. It’s hard not to feel ostracized from my peers knowing a large group of people think this way.”
- Anonymous

“The recent rhetoric has made me feel unsafe on campus. This isn’t a matter of opinions, but a group of people who are unwilling to listen to medical
professionals and decide to spread misinformation about an even more vulnerable group within the trans community instead. This rhetoric is a false justification for people who wish harm. Our first amendment for freedom of speech, freedom of EXPRESSION, is encroached upon when we allow bitter extremists the leeway to behave like this and insist people like me shouldn’t exist. The statements made by Kelly are slanderous and libelous to not only the trans community, but to parents of trans children. I’m furious at how entitled this group feels to know and control every aspect of a community they so stubbornly refuse to listen to in the first place. She can feel however she wants, whatever, but she does not actually care about children when she uses her personal little feelings to try and claim she knows everything about a group she’s not even in nor listens to.”
- Robin Richerson

• “As a nonbinary student on this campus, the recent transphobia has negatively impacted my time here. I came to UNT expecting to find a welcoming community that supports and sustains the diverse student population, but instead tears itself apart from the inside. There are those on campus who are doing their part to maintain a healthy, equitable campus and I appreciate them for it; however, there are those who are remaining close-minded. I hope that school administration listens to the students and implements a positive change soon.”
- Anonymous 32

• “I feel like we’ve been put under the myth that UNT is safe and “liberal” university but I feel like students on campus have been judgmental of individual’s gender identity, refusing that call individuals by their pronouns and chosen names, and finally their have been transphobic bullying and harassment in social media spaces such as the UNT Reddit that go unchecked.”
- Anonymous 33

• “It has made me feel very unsafe on campus and in general. The knowledge that my parents are being shamed for half supporting me is disgusting. Never did I think I’d be calling my parents to warn them. My life is in danger and UNT cares more about freedom of speech.”
- Gahlo Reese

• “It is incredibly stressful to not only be hated & discouraged on account of my identity by the entire world, but to experience it on a college campus where I PAY TO ATTEND because the campus admin allows it is abysmal.”
- Anonymous 39

• “It’s all very hurtful. A primary reason why I chose to attend UNT was because they were so infamously inclusive and diverse. I wanted a place to feel safe and at home since I hadn’t been out to my family at the time, but apparently I was mistaken. It’s nice to have professors ask for everyone’s pronouns at the start of courses and go out of their way to not deadname anyone, but I guess trans inclusivity doesn’t go beyond that for UNT. I feel threatened. I feel unsafe. I feel afraid. The actions of Kelly and the YCT are blatant acts of discrimination, and with their past encounters inspected, it’s obvious their views go beyond the simple “conservative”. UNT is putting the safety and wellbeing of their trans students at risk just as to not anger those on the right, avoid bad press from right-wing media, and possible loss of funding. I’m terrified for the protest. I’ve been
told I’ve been a big name in getting the information out surrounding it, which is
kind, but I haven’t said outright that I’m afraid. I don’t want everyone else to
panic, but people need to realize the truth of being trans. I’m afraid they will bring
backup- people who aren’t students and don’t have the risk of expulsion holding
them back from showing trans people what they really think about us. I fear that
this will become something worse. I don’t want UNT’s lack of response to end in
injury, violence, or god forbid death. But it’s the reality we trans people have to
face. We have to think about the people who want us dead, who want to hurt us
for being unapologetically ourselves. Cis people don’t realize that. Being trans in
the real world comes with a big fat dose of fear, anxiety, apprehension, and
hiding. Neal’s response to the YCT has only brought those feelings to the
forefront of his trans students. We no longer feel that safety we were initially told
we would feel by “texas’ most diverse and inclusive campus”.

- Fin Cowand

• “after seeing the YCT official twitter i was vey hurt and offended by the things
they posted. they blatantly state that they are against the LGBTQ+ community in
a post that quotes "I'm conservative but i support the LGBT" followed by a line of
red flags. they also posted a meme poking fun at the general population of UNT,
claiming that the "starter pack" for going to UNT includes being medicated, being
trans or queer, being a communist, and a guy wearing makeup. I was already
really uncomfortable reading all these, knowing these people are going to school
with me. i got a pit in my stomach after seeing one of their tweets in particular.
they posted a picture of a person burning in supposedly hell, with the caption,
"they/them's on judgement day. for one it felt very hostile and being a nonbinary
person with amazing and supportive Christian family and friends, it made me very
angry. not to encourage their stereotype, but I am mentally ill and while they may
not be out to literally burn me, my brain is convinced i am not safe on campus
because of this hate group. ill be honest i look like a queer, ive got dyed hair,
piercings, a funky fashion sense, so its not like i can just blend in. plus i don't
want to feel like i have to blend in. i want to feel safe on this campus, i went to
school here because i figured it would be safe for me. freedom of speech is not a
valid argument for letting this hate group continue with their harmful actions. yes
they are allowed to say and think as they please, but they are doing so while
representing UNT and generalizing all members of UNT in a very hurtful way. i
would honor their protection of the first amendment if they were just saying they
were racist, homophobic, transphobic, ablest, and so on because thats their views
and they aren't hurting anyone physically or mentally just by saying they dont like
you. however, i felt specifically targeted with the burning person post. when i read
it my mind started racing, paranoia set in, i couldnt focus on the work i was meant
to be finishing that day. i had to sit down with my mother to calm me down and
tell me that itll be ok. i cried and wondered if it would be safe for me on campus
when there are people out there telling me that ill burn. i know that for non-
Christians it doesn't mean much to be told that, but when you have supporters
around you that are Christian it comes off as violent and terrifying. i choose not to
state my religion as i am unsure of my faith in anything. hate speech is protected
by the first amendment, but it can be argued that when it genuinely affects
someone, something should be done about it. Craig R. Smith, Director, Center for First Amendment Studies of California state university, wrote the essay, “Circumventing the ‘true threat’ and ‘viewpoint’ protection tests to deal with persistent campus hate speech.” In this, Smith proposes that students or others subjected to harassment provide the context of the harassment, such as the psychological effects, to show how the speech impacted their education or work. so, if the internal hurting of this hate groups speech isn't enough for people to shut them down. maybe you will acknowledge how it has stunted me academically this whole week. i spend 8-10 hours everyday studying and working on assignments. when my paranoia set in over what i saw them saying, i could no longer focus on the work i had just taken a break from to talk to fellow club members of The Space. when i saw the terrible things being shared online by one of UNT's own official clubs i felt sick to my stomach. needless to say i am quite behind on my work for this week after i needed to take a mental break to assure myself that i would be safe; if not on campus, then at home. many of the trans and queer folk on campus are mentally ill and are being targeted by YCT. they are trying to make us upset and scared, they want a reaction out of us they want to hurt us. i wish UNT would listen to their students in this case. i understand the first amendment and viewpoint protection, i support it too. however, this has gone further than just sharing opinions. This is harming the trans community on campus. we do not feel safe knowing that this hate group is allowed to say and do things that can do so much damage to a persons psyche. this isn't the respectful debate many of the school staff are making it out to be. this has gone much further and there needs to be action.”

- Anonymous 42

• “By saying, "we appreciate you," and, "you matter," without doing anything to actually protect us, I feel less accepted than if the school had just remained silent. Actions speak louder than words, and your inaction is stating loudly that you don't actually care about your transgender students. I'm already afraid to be myself around my family; how am I supposed to be able to learn if I'm afraid to be myself in my own school as well?”

- Anonymous 44

• “Up until recently, I considered UNT to be a welcoming and comforting environment for those who identify with marginalized groups, including the LGBT+ community. I am so thankful to have the support of my friends and family as a person who openly identifies as being of a sexual minority and happens to also be transgender. I regret to say that my loved ones and I have been very disappointed with the activity on campus in recent times in regard to the blatantly transphobic and false agenda being spread by the YCT that minors are being forced into gender transition surgeries. The freedom to spread such a hateful narrative will inevitably open up the doors for alt-right groups to also openly discriminate against those of sexual minorities, people of color, and those of other underrepresented populations. UNT has a responsibility to limit this kind of dangerous dialogue on campus and, in order to keep their promise of being a safe campus for all, I believe it is essential that UNT prevent the YCT from continuing to be affiliated with our campus.”
- Anonymous 45

- “I'm a demigirl so it's always upsetting to hear transphobia, but I'm also a student teacher, so the most upsetting part is my trans students constantly hearing others debate whether they should have rights or not. They're already struggling with their identity and parents, they don't need the community to debate their rights to exist or whether their existence is even real. Plus it just misinforms their parents and peers to continue being transphobic towards them.”

- Anonymous 47

- “Intollerance feels like the new norm, Neal just gave the YCT a bigger following and tried to clean up the mess with a shitty email, successfully giving the hate group a bigger audience and platform to spread hateful ideologies more. While preaching about how unt is a loving, respectful campus, this reaction to this amount of intolerance really sets the stage for what unt truly stands for. Receiving funding from those who they think actually matter, stepping on the toes of the community who actually brings UNT to life.”

- Violetta Sol

- “While it is not wholly surprising that there would be transphobic rhetoric on a Texas university campus, the spineless response of the administration and refusal to even attempt to challenge these statements is indicative of who the University of North Texas considers permissible on its campus. Between the positions of "trans people exist" and "trans people should not exist", there can be no middle ground, no place for compromise. Yet, this is exactly the impossible position the administration has chosen to place students who are already attending school during a pandemic and in the shadow of a new and rapidly developing global conflict. It is not enough to merely exist in a state that seems to monthly enact new legislation against a vulnerable class of people; no, the administration of an institution of higher learning has decided to align itself with those opposed to modern science and suggest that we should "hear out" individuals who deny our very existence. This is an abdication of its duty to the students of UNT and an embarrassment to anyone affiliated with this school. To allow this hateful rhetoric to go unchallenged; to suggest that marginalized individuals should have to defend their own right to exist without being attacked; to invite onto this campus individuals running political campaigns on the back of beliefs that deny the humanity of UNT students tells one everything one needs to know about this joke of a university. I had my suspicions during the pandemic as we were forced into classrooms despite the dangers that this institution exists largely to launder the tuition paid into the pockets of those who benefit from it; the fact that there is absolutely no loyalty to these students against those who violate federal law, the student code of conduct, and basic human decency make it abundantly clear that those in charge of this university have absolutely no scruples. I am ashamed to soon have UNT as my alma mater.”

- Anonymous 54

- “After going to the YCT protest, not only did I feel hurt and scared that people would stand by some of Jeff Younger’s statements, including him saying that trans children being more likely to commit suicide as “funny,” and to see UNT not only defend YCT’s decision to let this man speak horrible rhetorics of the
trans community on campus, but to then also demonize the trans community for protesting that action and standing up for our freedom and rights, is incredibly hurtful and discouraging. The police also caused injury among protestors and not only refused to take accountability but also justified their actions, which UNT’s president standing with their incorrect statements of the events does not help the harm caused on transgender students by the police at the protest. None of this would have happened, and so much emotional and physical damage could have been avoided, if YCT was never allowed to bring Jeff Younger to speak about criminalizing trans health care to minors. YCT, and specifically Kelly Neidart, have targeted the trans community for a while and has harassed my girlfriend for being trans and posting videos of trans students and essentially doxxing anyone who is transgender on social media without their consent. YCT makes me scared to exist on campus, and if I can’t feel safe for being myself at UNT, one of the most liberal colleges in Texas, then where would I be? Seeing Texas as a whole demonize and target the trans community has made my mental health decline and discouraged the efforts of my transgender peers, and for the UNT president to claim to care about us and yet not stand with us and protect us from this hateful speech from YCT, I have no hope in UNT ever being as inclusive and safe for me as they claim, and that makes me fear for my life everyday.”

- AJ Tucker

- “I have felt unsafe on campus due to recent comments and events on campus. I have felt threatened just because of who I am and am scared to use any public bathrooms on campus as someone could harass me and easily get away with it.”

- Anonymous 59

WHEREAS the following statements were submitted to the survey by self-identifying UNT students who are not transgender, but have a loved one who is. Statements appear as they were submitted, including typos and grammar mistakes, in order to maintain the integrity of the original statement. Used here with written consent.

- “It has offended me to the core, but that is nothing to the heartache my trans friends are going through. College is supposed to be the place they can embrace their true selves, and to see hatred against them is a pain. Trans kids can’t undergo reassignment surgery, but they can be hurt if outed to their transphobic parents. I am begging for the trans community to be protected.”

- Lorenzo Canizares

- “I do not consider myself trans, but I am genderfluid. I have loved ones close to me who are trans are students here. On campus, my friends and I are having our identities threatened. Knowing about this rhetoric on campus makes me hesitant to share my identity with anyone. I’ve stopped telling people my pronouns and that usually helps me, but it’s not that easy for my friends who are transitioning. It’s not always easy to “pass” when transitioning and because of that they are at risk of harm. We shouldn’t have to hide our identities because of harmful rhetoric that threatens us just because of how we present ourselves and our identity. Looking at the suicide rates of those in the trans community has me worried about my friends and those who are not out yet. For myself, not telling people my
pronouns and my identity has caused emotional distress. With UNT students posting publicly online about their hate and targeting UNT students, I’ve also taken my identity and pronouns out of my bio in fear of being targeted. Knowing UNT backs these students who are targeting trans/non-binary students, breaks my heart, and it’s caused my friends and I depression and anxiety.”
- Anonymous 22

- “I see many of my trans friends share how transphobic behavior on campus makes them upset and afraid to participate on campus. My little sister who is a trans woman has seen the recent events that has transpired at UNT and it makes her not want to come back to campus. As someone who is non-binary, I want to do anything I can to make the campus safe for everyone in the community.”
- Anonymous 24

- “Although I am not a member of the trans community, I have many friends who are, and I have heard their stories of feeling unsafe on campus. It breaks my heart that people are constantly worried for their safety with having done absolutely nothing wrong. As an ally to the trans community, I have been trying to spread awareness to ensure that my friends can live without fear.”
- Addison Surrett

- “I know that Kelly and the members of the young conservatives of Texas have gone at great lengths to make LGBT members feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Personally I have felt disappointed with the campus’ actions with allowing Kelly and YCT to keep harassing students on the basis on gender and sexual orientation. This behavior isn’t funny nor should a student be allowed to film other students in an attempt to shame them or ridicule them. These people make the UNT campus feel unsafe and dangerous. If someone can get away with recording another student against their will, then this behavior won’t be stopped. UNT thinks they’re staying neutral by doing nothing, but allowing a group of people invite someone who openly campaigns for policies that hurt members of the LGBT after Texas has signed a law will hurt those members in the same week, UNT is siding with Kelly and YCT. Students shouldn’t have to feel scared or threatened because some club considers sexual identity or sexual orientation “political”. This is a clear mistake on the university’s part for allowing a group of people to consistently harass LGBT students. While I am not a part of that community, I find it extremely saddening and frustrating. I can’t stand to see friends scared or be targeted by a group of people who are too obsessed with how someone else identifies. The fact remains that Kelly and YCT actively target LGBT students who are simply living their life and partaking in LGBT events. UNT should handle this situation and not allow harassment and hate persist like this. These actions do not only affect LGBT students, they affect all of us. Because of Kelly and YTC can target one group of minorities, what’s to stop them from targeting another?”
- Anonymous 37

- “I used to work as an orientation leader and I had the opportunity to meet several wonderful incoming students who are a part of the trans community. However, many of these students were coming from situations where it was unsafe to tell their own family members about their identity. When these students came to
UNT, the few I spoke to told me how they finally felt safe about being who they are at UNT, and they even had the opportunity here to legally change their name, get a binder, etc. But the recent transphobic rhetoric on campus will create an unwelcome and potentially unsafe environment for our trans community, and it will only make these students feel isolated and not welcome to be who they are, when previously they felt that UNT was a place where they could finally be themselves. UNT says that they are welcoming of students in the trans community, but this recent transphobic rhetoric says otherwise, and I just want my students to feel welcome and safe on campus.”
- Anonymous 40

- “My trans loved ones already live in constant fear. "What will others say? What will they think?" Are some thoughts they have in their mind. The recent events only terrifies them more. It even terrifies me. What if this moves from transphobia to the rest of the LGBTQIA+ community? People are suggesting to move to states where we're welcomed but why should we have to? We're still human beings.”
- Zachary Wolfe

WHEREAS the following statements were submitted to the survey by self-identifying UNT students who are not transgender, nor do they have a loved one who is. Statements appear as they were submitted, including typos and grammar mistakes, in order to maintain the integrity of the original statement. Used here with written consent.

- “Although I am not transgender, I understand the direct, negative impact that this kind of rhetoric has on the trans students here at UNT, and for that I am upset. It’s incredibly frustrating to see such overt hatred thrown towards transgender people who are simply trying to live out the best lives that they can.”
- Anonymous 35

- “Recent events have made me question the sincerity of UNT faculty and administrators when they claim UNT is a diverse and accepting community.”
- Anonymous 51

- “I love the war against transtards. Let's cure this mental disability!!!!!”
- Anonymous 52

WHEREAS the Trans community at UNT feels threatened, unsafe, and harassed by the aforementioned Student Organization’s transphobic actions and rhetoric. Trans students are not satisfied with the UNT administration’s response to these events.

WHEREAS on March 2nd, the event featuring guest speaker Jeff Younger took place. It was held in Curry Hall which was closed except for the room the meeting took place in, and guests were cut off from entering after capacity was reached. Just outside, a few hundred protesters gathered in support of Transgender Students and Children, and were heard chanting “protect trans kids” among other things. The event itself comprised of protesters present shouting in an attempt to prevent Younger from speaking. Jeff Younger is quoted as saying things like “there is no such thing as a trans person” and calling protesters “snowflakes” and “communists” during
the meeting. Younger and some other UNT Student were escorted out of the building by campus police. Later that night the police also responded to a complaint from someone in a local hospital who said they were hit by a UNT Police vehicle. Details as reported by the Dallas Morning News and Pink News.9

WHEREAS on March 3rd, UNT President Neal Smatresk sent out an email to all eagleconnect emails. The message was regarding the aforementioned event (taking place on March 2nd) by a registered UNT Student Organization. The email was focused solely on the events of the protest including security issues, concerns, and non-violent and violent developments. He did not comment on the content that was being contended over, nor did he express support for the Transgender Community at UNT in any way. Merely stating “Because conversations surrounding the student organization’s event, which focused on criminalizing healthcare for transgender children, have been contentious, UNT Police created a plan to ensure their ability to maintain a safe environment for our entire campus community, the student organizers, their guest, and event protestors, requesting advance assistance from both Denton Police and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).” and “We have always been a passionate community that stands up for our ideals, but last night’s behavior by some individuals is not reflective of the UNT I know and love.”10

WHEREAS on March 10th, UNT President Neal Smatresk held a Town Hall to address some concerns from the Trans Community, here is an account from Samantha Cowell, a trans UNT student who was present at the event.

• “President Smatresk held a town hall this afternoon on the steps in front of the Hurley Administration Building. This was done to respond to some of the concerns of the transgender community as well as the university community as a whole regarding the recent YCT protest. President Smatresk responded to questions with non-answers. He gave very surface-level responses and declined to elaborate on what the UNT administration would do to mitigate the issue. However, he did say that the issue involving YCT was being looked into by a third-party investigator though declined to confirm if said investigator(s) was unbiased. Through most of the event, Smatresk brushed aside the first-hand accounts of those in the crowd who are members of the trans community.”

WHEREAS on March 16th, UNT President Neal Smatresk sent out an email to all eagleconnect emails at the behest of students. The short message was titled “Supporting our queer and trans community). Smatresk condemned transphobic actions as “abhorrent. It is unacceptable when people are hateful, or groups go out of their way to bully or demean marginalized populations. There is no place for this behavior on our campus.” and concluded with “We are focused on learning from recent experiences and events that have impacted our community.” However, his message had no plan of action to tangibly address the transphobic situations nor did he mention any efforts that would protect the queer and trans community from future harm.11
WHEREAS The above-mentioned actions by the Student Organization were in clear violation of UNT policy 16.0041. The transphobic statements, actions, and rhetoric used on campus directly threaten the physical health and lives of UNT students, and caused substantial and direct harm and distress to the trans community on campus.

WHEREAS Title IX prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of "sex" as "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Additionally, in 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court held that similar language in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (which prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of sex) in cases Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia and Altitude Express, Inc. v. Zarda, necessarily extended protection to individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. A determination was based on the language of Title VII itself. This sets a precedent to interpret all federal legislation prohibiting discrimination because of sex, to also prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.19,20

WHEREAS according to ACLU of Kansas Legal Director Sharon Brett, “Hate speech is free speech, so the Constitution protects people’s ability to say hateful and potentially emotional harmful things. That is a core component of the First Amendment right to the freedom of speech. Hate speech crosses over that threshold when it incites criminal activity or when it provides a direct threat to somebody, of violent or criminal activity.”12

WHEREAS in Virginia v. Black (2003) the Court defined true threats as “statements where the speaker means to communicate a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group of individuals.” Further, the Court held that speech loses First Amendment protection and becomes intimidation when it is “a type of true threat, where a speaker directs a threat to a person or group of persons with the intent of placing the victim in fear of bodily harm or death.”13

WHEREAS According to an article from the Washington post, on Texas Governor Greg Abbot’s recent directive14 for CPS and DFPS to investigate cases of gender-affirming child care as abuse, they say “There is no existing law in Texas, or any other state, that categorizes gender-affirming care as abuse. In the wake of Abbott’s directive, some county attorneys said they would not enforce it, and legal and transgender policy experts emphasized that neither the letter nor [Texas Attorney General Ken] Paxton’s [supportive] opinion were legally binding. Yet within days of Abbott’s letter, Texas officials began opening investigations of families suspected of providing gender-affirming care to their children — and these investigations have been conducted outside the typical protocol for child abuse cases, according to attorneys who represent the families and the testimony of a Child Protective Services investigations supervisor. As of March 11,16, officials confirmed that nine such cases had been opened. Since then, Texas’s
authority to launch these investigations has only grown murkier. On March 11th, a judge in Austin issued a temporary injunction against Abbott’s order, calling it an unconstitutional overreach and a violation of the democratic process. The injunction blocked investigations and prosecutions of families accused of child abuse solely on the basis of providing gender-affirming care, at least until a trial in the case could take place in July. But within hours, Paxton tweeted that his office had filed an appeal—and claimed that the judge’s injunction was thereby “frozen,” and investigations would continue. Legal experts and state officials have said it’s unclear how the DFPS plans to proceed. Attorneys representing clients under investigation have said they have not yet been told whether the cases will continue or be closed, and so the uncertainty has intensified for parents who are still waiting to hear what will happen to their families.”

WHEREAS language like “criminalize child transitions” is harassment and discrimination, legally unlawful, and must be considered a true threat per Virginia v. Black, as removal of gender-affirming child care can cause bodily harm, as well as mental and emotional harm. According to the Trevor Project’s 2021 National LGBTQ Youth Mental Health Survey, “42% of LGBTQ youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, including more than half of transgender and nonbinary youth”. In addition, “62% of LGBTQ youth reported symptoms of major depressive disorder in the past two weeks, including more than 2 in 3 transgender and nonbinary youth.” Threatening access to health care and a child’s ability to live as their true self would have a direct negative impact on a Transgender youth’s mental health and could put their life at risk. In contrast, the survey also stated that “LGBTQ youth who had access to spaces that affirmed their sexual orientation and gender identity reported lower rates of attempting suicide than those who did not.”

WHEREAS the transphobic statements, actions, and rhetoric used on campus directly threaten the physical health and lives of UNT students. These statements cross the line from hate speech to “true threats” and are not protected by the Constitutional Right to Free Speech.

WHEREAS The UNT Student Code of Conduct says “Students or Student Groups may be disciplined for attempting to or engaging in the misconduct listed below. […] Violations of federal, state or local laws (whether convicted or not) or other University policies.” This includes 16.004, the anti-discrimination and harassment policy.

WHEREAS the UNT Code of Student Conduct defines Interim Suspension of Student Group as “A directive from the University to cease all activities, meetings, programs and representation as a Student Group while the conduct process is pending. A Student Group can be interrim suspended when the University reasonably believes the Student Group’s continued presence poses a substantial and immediate danger to the health, safety or welfare of any member of the University community or to the University premises.”
THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT any UNT Student Organization that engages in hate speech harassment, discrimination, hate crimes, and/or violation of UNT policy through transphobic posts, statements, and actions be immediately suspended to protect the mental, emotional, and physical health of transgender students at UNT.

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this legislation be sent to the following parties:

- Dr. Neal Smatresk, UNT President
- Joanne Woodard, Vice President for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access
- Dr. Elizabeth With, Senior Vice President of Student Affairs
- Dr. Maureen McGuinness, Dean of Students
- Kathleen Hobson, Director of UNT Pride Alliance
- The Space at UNT
- Christa Coffey, Director of Student Activities

Respectfully Submitted,

Senator Beige Cowell
College of Music

Samantha Cowell
Media Relations Officer, The Space at UNT

Julian Yanas
College of Music IDEA Council

References:

1. UNT Policy 16.004 [https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-004](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-004)
2. UNT Student Video (reupload found on Reddit) [https://www.reddit.com/r/PublicFreakout/comments/svx4be/absolute_king_stands_up_to_transphobic/](https://www.reddit.com/r/PublicFreakout/comments/svx4be/absolute_king_stands_up_to_transphobic/)
4. “Criminalize Child Transitions” Poster, Appendix A
5. Jeff Younger UNT Event Poster, Appendix B
6. 1st Email from Neal Smatresk, Appendix C
7. Cowell & Cowell Survey Graphic, Appendix D
8. Cowell & Cowell Survey Results, Appendix E
9. Coverage on the March 2nd Event/Protest
   - Pink News [https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/03/04/university-north-texas-jeffrey-younger-anti-trans/](https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2022/03/04/university-north-texas-jeffrey-younger-anti-trans/)
- Dallas Morning News
- Video of Event on YouTube
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWF4RFdfQwM

10. 2nd email from Neal Smatresk, Appendix F
11. 3rd email from Neal Smatresk, Appendix G
12. ACLU Hate Speech vs. Hate Crimes
13. Virginia v. Black
15. Washington Post on the Texas Trans Child Abuse Investigations
    https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/03/17/texas-trans-child-abuse-investigations/
16. Trevor Project National Survey 2021
    https://www.thetrevorproject.org/survey-2021/
17. UNT Code of Student Conduct
    https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/07.012_CodeOfStudConduct.Final8_.19_format_0_0.pdf
18. Tweet from UNT Student Organization on March 7th, Appendix H
19. Title IX, U.S. Department of Education
    https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/tix_dis.html
20. Supreme Court Ruling on Title VII
Appendices
Appendix A “Criminalize Child Transitions” Poster
Appendix B Jeff Younger UNT Event Poster

YCT hosts Jeff Younger, local business owner and veteran, to hear his vision for Texas. Jeff Younger attracted national attention defending his young son against being forcibly transitioned by his ex-wife, and now looks to continue the fight representing Texas House District 63.
Appendix C 1st Email from Neal Smatresk

Embracing all of our community members — An Official Notice from the President

Tuesday, Feb. 22, 2022

Dear UNT Community,

UNT is our home, and everyone should feel accepted and safe in their home. We are a deeply diverse community of people from a variety of cultural, political, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds with a vast spectrum of life experiences and perspectives. Our campus community is inclusive and has long embraced, and been proud of, that very diversity.

I know the last several days may have felt particularly difficult for the transgender members of our community, due to the intolerant views of a handful of campus members. We have a variety of resources through our Division of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access to support you during your time at UNT, and we hope to offer you a safe place to heal and grow your support system.

Regardless of who we are or where we come from, we always will encounter people who disagree with us, or do not accept us. Here on our campus, we honor our First Amendment rights, even when we don't agree with others' opinions. Our views, or our very existence, might be challenged in ways that feel incredibly hurtful. Especially in those moments, I want you to know that you are a valued member of our Mean Green Family. We value diversity of thought because it helps shape us all, whether it's exposing us to new ideas or reaffirming who we want to be in the world.

I encourage you to engage in open discourse, free expression, and debate. All individuals have the right to peacefully assemble, to speak, and to engage in expressive activity, including that which you may find offensive. Each of you has the freedom to express yourself and the freedom to walk away, disempowering those with intolerant views.

Speak up for and take care of one another. And above all, walk through this life with care, kindness, and grace.

Respectfully,
Neal Smatresk
UNT President
Appendix D Cowell & Cowell Survey Graphic

SGA Senator Beige Cowell &
The Space Officer Samantha Cowell

SURVEY FOR
THE TRANS
COMMUNITY
AT UNT

Use your voice and help us protect
Trans students at UNT

This survey is made for the use
of Samantha and Beige to build
legislation that would protect
Transgender, Non-binary,
Genderqueer, and Gender
questioning members of the
University of North Texas
Community.

LINK IN BIO

Be heard!
# Appendix E Cowell & Cowell Survey Results

Survey for the Trans Community at UNT Responses  
Condensed and Censored  
Collected from February 25th, 2022 to March 17th, 2022  
By Senator Beige Cowell and Samantha Cowell

## Short-hand Key

**Identity** - How would you describe yourself?
- Trans selected “I am a UNT Student and identify as a member of the Trans Community.”
- Ally selected “I am a UNT Student and do NOT identify as a member of the Trans Community, but I DO have a loved one that does.”
- Neither selected “I am a UNT Student but do NOT identify as a member of the Trans Community, NOR do I have a loved one that does.”
- N/A selected “I am not a UNT Student.”

**Consent** - “Do you consent to your statement being used by Senator Cowell and Samantha in their legislation?”
- Yes selected “Yes”
- No selected “No”, if no, the statement is present here as [REDACTED]

**Name** - “Would you like to be credited by name?”
- ‘Name here’ selected “Yes”
- ‘___’ selected either “No (I want to remain anonymous)” or “N/A (I do not want my statement used)”

Survey Link: [https://forms.gle/J4dB5XJNU2munXZB](https://forms.gle/J4dB5XJNU2munXZB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Consent</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>It hasn’t affected me at all outside of people being mad about it on twitter. I didn’t know anything was happening until Neal sent out that statement a few days ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>[REDACTED]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s disappointing to see unt do little to nothing but claim to be all inclusive and against hate speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>It has affected my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Lorenzo Canizares</td>
<td>It has offended me to the core, but that is nothing to the heartache my trans friends are going through. College is supposed to be the place they can embrace their true selves, and to see hatred against them is a pain. Trans kids can’t undergo reassignment surgery, but they can be hurt if outed to their transphobic parents. I am begging for the trans community to be protected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>It is really upsetting to me. My brother and most of my friends are transgender, and they are some of the nicest people I know. A lot of them feel uncomfortable and even unsafe, which I really hate to see.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>The YCT has posted numerous opressing statements on Twitter and have even hung posters up on campus that really make me feel uncomfortable to know that I’m around these people that probably</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The email response calling transphobic remarks a form of opinion/freedom of speech was awful. I came to this university that boasted it's diversity to get away from that rhetoric I would regularly get from my family and others at home. I'm sick of my rights being an opinion for someone to debate, and I feel like UNT should do much MUCH better if they're going to continue boasting how accepting they are.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I came to UNT with the expectation that I would be safe. The guest speaker to be brought by YCT has severely harmed that sense of security, and the inaction by UNT administration as well as the condescending message from President Smatresk has made the situation worse.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The YCT has been spreading extremely negative commentary about the trans community that is dangerously misleading and just contributes to trans suicides. I've been incredibly distraught over not just Kelly Neidart and YCT's actions, but also UNT's inability to make any action against it. This is hate speech and I can't even feel comfortable on a campus that prides itself on inclusivity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I feel scared, not only for my closest loved ones, but for personal privacy in the eyes of the government.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I no longer feel safe on campus. I have to be vigilant in every fucking step that I take, aware of every corner, every little presence. I am not passing. I do not have that luxury. I am so very fucking scared for myself and my friends that also do not pass. We have no chance of safety, no chance of avoiding sexual assault to 'fix us'- or physical assault, or even gun violence, and no idea how many in number they are. I used to feel safe being who I was on campus. I was trying to come out of my shell and transition safely where I would not get that support in my own home. I can't even fucking do that now.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Ally</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I do not consider myself trans, but I am genderfluid. I have loved ones closed to me who are trans are students here. On campus, my friends and I are having our identities threatened. Knowing about this rhetoric on campus makes me hesitant to share my identity with anyone. I've stopped telling people my pronouns and that usually helps me, but it's not that easy for my friends who are transitioning. It's not always easy to have “pass” when transitioning and because of that they are risk of harm. We shouldn't have to hide our identities because of harmful rhetoric that threatens us just because of how we present ourselves and our identity. Looking at the suicide rates of those in the trans community has me worried about my friends and those who are not out yet. For myself, not telling people my pronouns and my identity has caused emotional distress. With UNT students posting publicly online about their hate and targeting UNT students, I've also taken my identity and pronouns out of my bio in fear of being targeted.</td>
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| ally status | ally status | Knowing UNT backs these students who are targeting trans/non-binary students, breaks my heart, and it's caused my friends and I depression and anxiety.

23 | Ally | Yes | I see many of my trans friends share how transphobic behavior on campus makes them upset and afraid to participate on campus. My little sister who is a trans woman has seen the recent events that has transpired at UNT and it makes her not want to come back to campus. As someone who is non-binary, I want to do anything I can to make the campus safe for everyone in the community.

24 | Ally | Yes | Although I am not a member of the trans community, I have many friends who are, and I have heard their stories of feeling unsafe on campus. It breaks my heart that people are constantly worried for their safety with having done absolutely nothing wrong. As an ally to the trans community, I have been trying to spread awareness to ensure that my friends can live without fear.

25 | Trans | No | [REDACTED]

26 | Ally | Yes | hate it

27 | Trans | Yes | Daniel DiIa

28 | Trans | Yes | It seems like many people intentionally are spreading misinformation about the Trans community and being blatantly disrespectful and discriminatory against the Trans community. Personally my most common feeling is anger, which compels me to try to act against them to protect myself and those I care about. Fear is also very common. Though I try my best to ignore it, fear of others who might wish me harm based on both my skin color and my presentation are a part of my life that I don't think will change, but I sincerely hope I can help build a world where people no longer need to live with that fear.

29 | N/A | N/A | I don't feel comfortable presenting myself openly in public when there's a school-funded group openly rallying for the criminalization of my identity. It's hard not to feel ostracized from my peers knowing a large group of people think this way.

30 | Trans | Yes | The YCT event has caused such an uproar that whenever I open social media all I see is transphobia (people calling it out) but it feels like I am exposed to so much more of it now. It also feels like our safety is up for debate, and that is wrong.

31 | Trans | Yes | Robin Richerson

The recent rhetoric has made me feel unsafe on campus. This isn't a matter of opinions, but a group of people who are unwilling to listen to medical professionals and decide to spread misinformation about an even more vulnerable group within the trans community instead. This rhetoric is a false justification for people who wish harm. Our first amendment for freedom of speech, freedom of EXPRESSION, is encroached upon when we allow bitter extremists the leeway to behave like this and insist people like me shouldn't exist. The statements made by Kelly are slanderous and libelous to not only the trans community, but to parents of trans children. I'm furious at how entitled this group feels to know and control every aspect of a
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>As a nonbinary student on this campus, the recent transphobia has negatively impacted my time here. I came to UNT expecting to find a welcoming community that supports and sustains the diverse student population, but instead tears itself apart from the inside. There are those on campus who are doing their part to maintain a healthy, equitable campus and I appreciate them for it; however, there are those who are remaining close-minded. I hope that school administration listens to the students and implements a positive change soon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I feel like we’ve been put under the myth that UNT is safe and “liberal” university but I feel like students on campus have been judgmental of individual’s gender identity, refusing that call individuals by their pronouns and chosen names, and finally their have been transphobic bullying and harassment in social media spaces such as the UNT Reddit that go unchecked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>As a trans student on campus, I feel threatened, unappreciated, scared, and sad. To know that a school who prides themselves on the &quot;diversity&quot; of their students, they really don’t do much to keep said diversity feeling safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Although I am not transgender, I understand the direct, negative impact that this kind of rhetoric has on the trans students here at UNT, and for that I am upset. It’s incredibly frustrating to see such overt hatred thrown towards transgender people who are simply trying to live out the best lives that they can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>It has made me feel very unsafe on campus and in general. The knowledge that my parents are being shamed for half supporting me is disgusting. Never did I think I’d be calling my parents to warn them. My life is in danger and UNT cares more about freedom of speech.</td>
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| 37  | Ally     | Yes      | I know that Kelly and the members of the young conservatives of Texas have gone at great lengths to make LGBT members feel uncomfortable and unsafe. Personally I have felt disappointed with the campus’ actions with allowing Kelly and YCT to keep harassing students on the basis on gender and sexual orientation. This behavior isn’t funny nor should a student be allowed to film other students in an attempt to shame them or ridicule them. These people make the UNT campus feel unsafe and dangerous. If someone can get away with recording another student against their will, then this behavior won't be stopped. UNT thinks they’re staying neutral by doing nothing, but allowing a group of people invite someone who openly campaigns for policies that hurt members of the LGBT after Texas has signed a law will hurt those members in the same week, UNT is siding with Kelly and YCT. Students shouldn’t have to feel scared or threatened because some club considers sexual identity or sexual
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<td>orientation “political”. This is a clear mistake on the university’s part for allowing a group of people to consistently harass LGBT students. While I am not a part of that community, I find it extremely saddening and frustrating. I can’t stand to see friends scared or be targeted by a group of people who are too obsessed with how someone else identifies. The fact remains that Kelly and YTC actively target LGBT students who are simply living their life and partaking in LGBT events. UNT should handle this situation and not allow harassment and hate persist like this. These actions do not only affect LGBT students, they affect all of us. Because of Kelly and YTC can target one group of minorities, what’s to stop them from targeting another?</td>
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<td>It is incredibly stressful to not only be hated &amp; discouraged on account of my identity by the entire world, but to experience it on a college campus where I PAY TO ATTEND because the campus admin allows it is abysmal.</td>
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<td>I used to work as an orientation leader and I had the opportunity to meet several wonderful incoming students who are a part of the trans community. However, many of these students were coming from situations where it was unsafe to tell their own family members about their identity. When these students came to UNT, the few I spoke to told me how they finally felt safe about being who they are at UNT, and they even had the opportunity here to legally change their name, get a binder, etc. But the recent transphobic rhetoric on campus will create an unwelcome and potentially unsafe environment for our trans community, and it will only make these students feel isolated and not welcome to be who they are, when previously they felt that UNT was a place where they could finally be themselves. UNT says that they are welcoming of students in the trans community, but this recent transphobic rhetoric says otherwise, and I just want my students to feel welcome and safe on campus.</td>
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<td>It’s all very hurtful. A primary reason why I chose to attend UNT was because they were so infamously inclusive and diverse. I wanted a place to feel safe and at home since I hadn’t been out to my family at the time, but apparently I was mistaken. It’s nice to have professors ask for everyone’s pronouns at the start of courses and go out of their way to not deadname anyone, but I guess trans inclusivity doesn’t go beyond that for UNT. I feel threatened. I feel unsafe. I feel afraid. The actions of Kelly and the YCT are blatant acts of discrimination, and with their past encounters inspected, it’s obvious their views go beyond the simple “conservative”. UNT is putting the safety and wellbeing of their trans students at risk just as to not anger those on the right, avoid bad press from right-wing media, and possible loss of funding. I’m terrified for the protest. I’ve been told I’ve been a big name in getting the information out surrounding it, which is kind, but I haven’t said outright that I’m afraid. I don’t want everyone else to panic, but people need to realize the truth of being trans. I’m afraid they will bring backup people who aren’t students and don’t have the risk of expulsion holding them back from showing trans people what they really think about us. I fear that this will become something</td>
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worse. I don’t want UNT’s lack of response to end in injury, violence, or god forbid death. But it’s the reality we trans people have to face. We have to think about the people who want us dead, who want to hurt us for being unapologetically ourselves. Cis people don’t realize that. Being trans in the real world comes with a big fat dose of fear, anxiety, apprehension, and hiding. Neal’s response to the YCT has only brought those feelings to the forefront of his trans students. We no longer feel that safety we were initially told we would feel by “texas’ most diverse and inclusive campus”.

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after seeing the YCT official twitter i was very hurt and offended by the things they posted. they blatantly state that they are against the LGBTQ+ community in a post that quotes "I'm conservative but i support the LGBT" followed by a line of red flags. they also posted a meme poking fun at the general population of UNT, claiming that the "stutter pack" for going to UNT includes being medicated, being trans or queer, being a communist, and a guy wearing makeup. I was already really uncomfortable reading all these, knowing these people are going to school with me. i got a pit in my stomach after seeing one of their tweets in particular: they posted a picture of a person burning in supposedly hell, with the caption, "they/them's on judgement day: for one it felt very hostile and being a nonbinary person with amazing and supportive Christin family and friends, it made me very angry. not to encourage their stereotype, but i am mentally ill and while they may not be out to literally burn me, my brain is convinced i am not safe on campus because of this hate group. ill be honest i look like a queer, i've got dyed hair, piercings, a funky fashion sense, so its not like i can just blend in. plus i don't want to feel like i have to blend in. i want to feel safe on this campus, i went to school here because i figured it would be safe for me. freedom of speech is not a valid argument for letting this hate group continue with their harmful actions. yes they are allowed to say and think as they please, but they are doing so while representing UNT and generalizing all members of UNT in a very hurtful way. i would honor their protection of the first amendment if they were just saying they were racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, and so on because that’s their views and they aren’t hurting anyone physically or mentally just by saying they don’t like you. however, i felt specifically targeted with the burning person post. when i read it my mind started racing, paranoia set in, i couldn't focus on the work i was meant to be finishing that day. i had to sit down with my mother to calm me down and tell me that i'll be ok. i cried and wondered if it would be safe for me on campus when there are people out there telling me that i'll burn. i know that for non-Christians it doesn't mean much to be told that, but when you have supporters around you that are Christian it comes off as violent and terrifying. i choose not to state my religion as i am unsure of my faith in anything. hate speech is protected by the first amendment, but it can be argued that when it genuinely affects someone, something should be done about it. Craig R. Smith, Director, Center for First Amendment Studies of California State University, wrote the essay, “Circumventing the ‘true threat’ and ‘viewpoint’ protection tests to deal with persistent campus hate speech.” In this, Smith proposes that students or others subjected to harassment provide the context of the harassment, such as the psychological effects, to show how the speech impacted their
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education or work, so, if the internal hurting of this hate groups speech isn't enough for people to shut them down. maybe you will acknowledge how it has stunted me academically this whole week. i spend 8-10 hours everyday studying and working on assignments. when my paranoia set in over what i saw them saying, i could no longer focus on the work i had just taken a break from to talk to fellow club members of The Space. when i saw the terrible things being shared online by one of UNT's own official clubs i felt sick to my stomach. needless to say i am quite behind on my work for this week after i needed to take a mental break to assure myself that i would be safe; if not on campus, then at home. many of the trans and queer folk on campus are mentally ill and are being targeted by YCT. they are trying to make us upset and scared, they want a reaction out of us they want to hurt us. i wish UNT would listen to their students in this case. i understand the first amendment and viewpoint protection, i support it too. however, this has gone further than just sharing opinions. this is harming the trans community on campus, we do not feel safe knowing that this hate group is allowed to say and do things that can do so much damage to a persons psyche. this isn't the respectful debate many of the school staff are making it our job to be. this has gone much further and there needs to be action.

| 43 |

My trans loved ones already live in constant fear. "What will others say? What will they think?" Are some thoughts they have in their mind. The recent events only terrifies them more. It even terrifies me. What if this moves from transphobia to the rest of the LGBTQIA+ community? People are suggesting to move to states where we're welcomed but why should we have to? We're still human beings. Just like MLK had a dream where all races could be together I have one where all LGBTQIA+ members can live their lives without having to fear being themselves. My partner's father once asked me, "why share to everyone what you believe in? No one cares, just move on." I then asked him, "Why do you spread the gospel? Because some book told you to?" Then thought to myself: At least we have a good reason. Pride. When someone is proud of something their first reaction is to tell the world. When I build a computer, the first thing I do is take a picture. Because I'm proud of my accomplishment. We share who we are because we're proud to be a part of our community. As any human being would be.

| 44 |

By saying, "we appreciate you," and, "you matter," without doing anything to actually protect us, I feel less accepted than if the school had just remained silent. Actions speak louder than words, and your inaction is stating loudly that you don't actually care about your transgender students. I'm already afraid to be myself around my family; how am I supposed to be able to learn if I'm afraid to be myself in my own school as well?

| 45 |

Up until recently, I considered UNT to be a welcoming and comforting environment for those who identify with marginalized groups, including the LGBTQ+ community. I am so thankful to have the support of my friends and family as a person who openly identifies as being of a sexual minority and happens to also be transgender. I regret to say that my loved ones and I have been very disappointed with the activity on campus in recent times in regard to
| 46 | Trans | Yes | I felt very comfortable here before, especially seeing that the school has a club for people like me. The hateful things being said and the vast misunderstanding of trans and queer issues is a depressing reminder that not everyone at this school is as loving and supportive as the club is. |
| 47 | Trans | Yes | I'm a demigirl so it's always upsetting to hear transphobia, but I'm also a student teacher, so the most upsetting part is my trans students constantly hearing others debate whether they should have rights or not. They're already struggling with their identity and parents, they don't need the community to debate their rights to exist or whether their existence is even real. Plus it just misinforms their parents and peers to continue being transphobic towards them. |
| 48 | Ally | Yes | Harvey Simpson | The recent transphobia from other UNT students makes me really afraid for my trans siblings and myself, as a non-binary person. |
| 49 | Trans | Yes | I have already been through a lot being trans, and it's so defeating to see the one place I thought I could live a normal life at in Texas become engulfed in this mess. |
| 50 | Trans | Yes | Everyone has their own views on this, and I fully respect their views. I may not agree with them, but silencing free speech on a college campus is a slippery slope! |
| 51 | Neither | Yes | Recent events have made me question the sincerity of UNT faculty and administrators when they claim UNT is a diverse and accepting community. |
| 52 | Neither | Yes | I love the war against transphobes. Let's cure this mental disability!!! |
| 53 | Trans | Yes | Violeta Sol | Intolerance feels like the new norm. Neal just gave the YCT a bigger following and tried to clean up the mess with a shitty email, successfully giving the hate group a bigger audience and platform to spread hateful ideologies more. While preaching about how unt is a loving, respectful campus, this reaction to this amount of intolerance really sets the stage for what unt truly stands for. Receiving funding from those who they think actually matter, stepping on the toes of the community who actually brings UNT to life. |
| 54 | Trans | Yes | While it is not wholly surprising that there would be transphobic rhetoric on a Texas university campus, the spineless response of the administration and refusal to even attempt to challenge these |
statements is indicative of who the University of North Texas considers permissible on its campus. Between the positions of "trans people exist" and "trans people should not exist", there can be no middle ground, no place for compromise. Yet, this is exactly the impossible position the administration has chosen to place students who are already attending school during a pandemic and in the shadow of a new and rapidly developing global conflict. It is not enough to merely exist in a state that seems to monthly enact new legislation against a vulnerable class of people; no, the administration of an institution of higher learning has decided to align itself with those opposed to modern science and suggest that we should "hear out" individuals who deny our very existence. This is an abdication of its duty to the students of UNT and an embarrassment to anyone affiliated with this school. To allow this hateful rhetoric to go unchallenged; to suggest that marginalized individuals should have to defend their right to exist without being attacked; to invite onto this campus individuals running political campaigns on the back of beliefs that deny the humanity of UNT students tells one everything one needs to know about this joke of a university. I had my suspicions during the pandemic as we were forced into classrooms despite the dangers that this institution exists largely to launder the tuition paid into the pockets of those who benefit from it; the fact that there is absolutely no loyalty to these students against those who violate federal law, the student code of conduct, and basic human decency make it abundantly clear that those in charge of this university have absolutely no scruples. I am ashamed to soon have UNT as my alma mater.

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<td>On one hand, it is not something I am used to - the modern world isn't exactly kind to transgender or gender nonconforming people. On the other hand, I am greatly disappointed - UNT's claim as an accepting, open space is sufficed somewhat when the administration turns away as we're being stabbed in the heart.</td>
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<td>Trans</td>
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<td>After going to the YCT protest, not only did I feel hurt and scared that people would stand by some of Jeff Younger’s statements, including him saying that trans children being more likely to commit suicide as “funny,” and to see UNT not only defend YCT’s decision to let this man speak horrible rhetoric of the trans community on campus, but to then also demonize the trans community for protesting that action and standing up for our freedom and rights, is incredibly hurtful and discouraging. The police also caused casualties among protestors and not only refused to take accountability but also justified their actions, which UNT’s president standing with their incorrect statements of the events does not help the harm caused on transgender students by the police at the protest. None of this would have happened, and so much emotional and physical damage could have been avoided, if YCT was never allowed to bring Jeff Younger to speak about criminalizing trans health care to minors. YCT, and specifically Kelly Neidart, have targeted the trans community for a while and has harassed my girlfriend for being trans and posting videos of trans students and essentially doxxing anyone who is transgender on social media without their consent. YCT makes me seared to exist on campus, and if I can’t feel safe for being myself at UNT, one of the most liberal colleges in Texas, then where would I be? Seeing Texas as a whole</td>
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AJ Tucker
demonize and target the trans community has made my mental health decline and discouraged the efforts of my transgender peers, and for the UNT president to claim to care about us and yet not stand with us and protect us from this hateful speech from YCT, I have no hope in UNT ever being as inclusive and safe for me as they claim, and that makes me fear for my life everyday.

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<td>No</td>
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<td>I have not experienced any transphobic rhetoric, directly or indirectly. I think a mountain is being made of a mole hill.</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Trans</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>I have felt unsafe on campus due to recent comments and events on campus. I have felt threatened just because of who I am and am scared to use any public bathrooms on campus as someone could harass me and easily get away with it.</td>
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Appendix F 2nd Email from Neal Smatresk

Response to Wednesday night student org event and protest

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Dear UNT Community,

Last night a registered student organization, Young Conservatives of Texas, hosted a guest speaker at Curry Hall. Because conversations surrounding the student organization’s event, which focused on criminalizing healthcare for transgender children, have been contentious, UNT Police created a plan to ensure their ability to maintain a safe environment for our entire campus community, the student organizers, their guest, and event protestors, requesting advance assistance from both Denton Police and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS).

Based on the event space capacity and for safety purposes, the room was limited to 80 attendees. A few hundred protestors gathered outside the building, holding signs and chanting. The police agencies tasked with maintaining public safety were inside and outside the building. DPS officers were staged at a nearby location as an extra safety precaution.

The police believe a small group of protestors not affiliated with the university contributed to escalating the overall protest from peaceful to an aggressive encounter. These actions culminated with a group of protestors swarming police, who were working to safely escort both the guest speaker and student organizers off campus. DPS was called in to assist with maintaining safety.

A group of protestors surrounded the police vehicles containing both the student organizers and their guest and attempted to block their exit from the scene by banging on the vehicles and impeding their movement. The officers engaged emergency lights and sounded warning sirens repeatedly while inching forward as other officers assisted in clearing a path for the vehicles to exit safely. We have heard accounts of a protester who was reportedly injured during that time. However, we do not have confirmed details of that report. While overall the event was not without incident, it did end without any reported serious injuries. UNT Police and the other supporting agencies were able to get the student organizers and their guest to safety, while also dispersing the protestors without further incident.

We have always touted the importance of freedom of expression and been proud of our students’ ability to speak up for themselves and participate in nonviolent protest. UNT Police have continuously worked to create and maintain an environment safe for all students to express themselves, regardless of topic. As always, campus safety is our top priority, and we will continue working to provide a safe environment for our students. We have always been a passionate community that stands up for our ideals, but last night’s behavior by some individuals is not reflective of the UNT I know and love.

Respectfully,
Neal Smatresk
UNT President
Appendix G 3rd Email from Neal Smatresk

Supporting our queer and trans community — An Official Notice from the President

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Dear UNT Community,

Following a helpful meeting with students who gathered outside the Hurley Administration Building recently, I want to state my unequivocal support for the queer and trans members of the UNT community. Offensive statements directed at these students by a student organization are abhorrent. It is unacceptable when people are hateful, or groups go out of their way to bully or demean marginalized populations. There is no place for this behavior on our campus.

Very soon, I will help facilitate a meeting between members of the trans community, representatives from the UNT Police Department, and members of the UNT administration. In addition, a listening session for all students and a Town Hall on First Amendment rights and Title IX will occur prior to the end of the spring semester. We are focused on learning from recent experiences and events that have impacted our community.

Respectfully,
Neal Smatresk
UNT President

Appendix H Tweet from UNT Student Organization on March 7th

YCT UNT @YctUnt · Mar 7
Transgender people do not exist !!