

Campus Response to Anonymous Social Media

A variety of student organizations, faculty and individuals have responded to the recent developments at Lehigh with regard to the racially and sexually charged anonymous posts on the social media app Yik Yak. Below are the actions and communications we are aware of at this time.

Email from the Council for Equity and Community (CEC)

March 23, 2014

Dear Members of the Lehigh Community:

It has recently come to our attention that the Yik Yak app is the latest social media tool being used to sow the seeds of hatred, discrimination, and division within our community.

To the victims of these cowardly attacks, we say: You are not alone. We stand with you.

To those courageous individuals who have spoken up and shared your stories, we say: Thank you. We appreciate your honesty, and we pledge that it will not be in vain.

To the administration and trustees: It is clearer than ever that we have much to do. The Council for Equity and Community (CEC) is ready to work with you, and with the entire campus community. We cannot rest until everyone feels safe and secure.

The CEC has been reestablished as the primary driver of the campus-wide diversity initiative. We are a dedicated group of 30 university peers who have been and continue to be committed to leadership and action in this realm.

We are outraged by the hurtful sentiments expressed on Yik Yak and in other forums, and we pledge our support to those who have been impacted.

Members of the Council for Equity and Community

Message from Student Athletes Leading Social Change

March 25, 2014

S.A.L.S.C.

Student-Athletes Leading Social Change

Believe in the future. Aspire to change. No one stands alone.

Fellow Student Athletes,

Social Media is a privilege that we as athletes take into serious consideration. To have a following by fellow students and to be recognized as an icon of our school is an honor. As such, we are strongly requesting that the student athlete population refuse to partake in the use of the new social app Yik Yak.

For those who are unaware, this app has been presented as a way to “help the local participants”, but it has ventured into a new realm of slander, racism, and obscenity. For those who believe that this campus deserves change, we ask you to take action in the movement we are calling “Delete the Yak”. There is no honor for those who post anonymously and disparage fellow brothers and sisters of the Lehigh community. Furthermore, it is no better to sit back and find amusement in the hurtful words of one’s peers directed at another person or organization. Do not allow this to be a means of entertainment because lives are already being impacted from the repercussions.

As athletes we have been taught to be forthright about our issues and shortcomings in order to become a cohesive unit. This cohesion is what makes us stronger when we compete. Let’s utilize what we have learned from sport to demonstrate our leadership now. Delete the app.

“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself.”(-Henry Ward Beecher)

Standing Strong for One Lehigh,

Nick Stephens , Co-Captain of Student-Athletes Leading Social Change (SALSC)
Emily Bausher, Co-Captain of Student-Athletes Leading Social Change (SALSC)
Bree Buysse, Co-Captain of Student-Athlete Council (SAC)
Ashley Blanks, Co-Captain of Student-Athlete Council (SAC)
Madeleine Smith, Coordinator of Student-Athlete Mentors (SAM)
Nate Brown, Coordinator of Student-Athlete Mentors (SAM)

Message from the Panhellenic Council

March 22, 2014

Chapter Presidents,

Can you please forward this email to your members.

The Lehigh Council of Student Presidents, also known as CSP, has come together to create this video to respond to the blatant acts of racism that occurred on campus last semester. Though time has passed and those events might just be a distant memory for some, we want to remind you that those acts of discrimination should not be forgotten, and are more relevant now than ever. Marginalization is an issue that is ever present in our world, so we must never forget that our fight against it should be strong and ongoing.

It is important for Lehigh University, as a whole, to remember that our community is comprised of individuals. Because of this, every person on this campus has a personal responsibility to continue to make changes in their lives to increase campus inclusion as well as improve our campus climate.

One of the ways you can start making an immediate difference on this campus is by addressing the issues we are currently facing with the new phone app Yik Yak. Many people who have downloaded the app are very disheartened that members of our community could make such insensitive and hurtful comments. As leaders on this campus and as members of the Greek Community, I hope you can see why apps such as Yik Yak work against the strong community we are working towards here at Lehigh. I urge you to help address this issue of Yik Yak by deleting it and encouraging others to do the same.

As you watch this video, please reflect on the thoughts of your campus presidents, as well as their pledges to change this campus into one we are proud of.

I challenge you - what will you do to change this campus for the better?

<http://youtu.be/ctBtaSHnYhU>

Thank you,

Kaitlin Slattery
President, Panhellenic Council

Blog Posts by Lehigh Faculty Members

Jeremy Littau, Journalism

[Yik Yak and the Lehigh culture: The paradox of sharing](#)

Dr. Dominic Packer, Psychology

[The Science of Anonymity: Why We Should Flood, Not Boycott, Yik Yak](#)

Other Actions

- On Sunday, March 23, the Women's Center hosted an impromptu discussion about Yik Yak

- In the student senate meeting on Wednesday March 26, there was an impassioned discussion about Yik Yak and how to proceed with stopping the hateful posts
- Several student senators mentioned that faculty members facilitated class discussions on the subject
- Sorority senate members indicated that several chapters have implemented a policy requiring members to delete the app and not post or "lurk"/ look at it
- Student-Athlete female lacrosse senator said her team has already followed the athlete agreement to delete the app from their phones
- Senate's Unity Committee is holding an open meeting on Friday March 28 to discuss the issue.
- The Council of Student Presidents also discussed the issue at their meeting during the week of March 24.