College Republicans no longer recognized by UMSG

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After acting as the faculty advisor for the group formerly known as the University of Maine College Republicans for approximately a month, Professor of Political Science and Chair of the University of Maine Political Science Department Amy Fried resigned from the position in December of 2019. Fried is an advisor for multiple political groups at UMaine as well as the overseer of the Maine Policy Scholar Program.

In years prior, Fried had acted as the faculty advisor for the UMaine College Republicans and over the past three years had been an off-and-on advisor for the group. Currently, Fried is the advisor for the UMaine College Democrats, as well as the UMaine chapter of the Young Americans for Liberty.

In October of 2019, Fried became the advisor for the UMaine College Republicans when the group leaders approached her about not being able to find a new faculty member after an incident that took place.

“I decided to serve as advisor because I strongly support viewpoint diversity and student political engagement,” Fried stated. “I resigned after the group invited a speaker who the Young Americans for Liberty removed from their speakers’ bureau because of her ties to a Holocaust denier, Nick Fuentes. Holocaust denial is not only false historically but [perpetuates] anti-Semitic views.”

Fried also wanted to distance herself from the “hardline anti-immigration stance [of the group], as well as their use of social media to get a rise out of people.”

Since losing a faculty advisor, the group formerly known as the UMaine College Republicans are no longer able to seek recognition from the University of Maine Student Government (UMSG), will no longer receive UMSG funding and can no longer affiliate their group with UMaine by using the title of the university in the name of their group.

The aftermath of the College Republicans association with controversial figures like Fuentes has led to some internal loss of interest in the particular conservative viewpoint that the group touts, with members leaving to join other on-campus political groups such as the UMaine chapter of Turning Point USA, a conservative group at UMaine, and the Young Americans for Liberty, a group which welcomes students of any and all political affiliations.

Jacob Palmieri, a fourth-year political science student and former member of the College Republican’s executive board, explained that the group of students, “are just your everyday college Republicans.”
Our mission is to promote the GOP agenda and platform. Our events are meant to allow students on campus to get another point of view and to further the political dialogue. All of our events are open to the public and we welcome people of all political affiliations to come," Palmieri said.

Palmieri stated that he did not feel as though the group was disbanded and that the group did not express any reaction to the loss of UMSG support.

“I don’t think we were ever ‘disbanded’. However, it was unfortunate what happened to our group. We have never once called on other groups to be shut down. I think it is quite disgusting to wish to shut down political speech this way. Sadly, many on campus have openly called, helped and cheered our club when it seems like we no longer would be allowed to exist. We hear a lot about wanting to make a safe learning environment on a college campus but that safety hasn’t been extended to us. Many people in our club have expressed concerns about this,” Palmieri said. “The [group formerly known as the] UMaine College Republicans have been leading the charge as it pertains to promoting political dialogue on campus. We hold events open to everyone and attend events with an open mind trying to understand those who disagree with us. It seems to me that the problem people have with our club has nothing to do with rules or inviting speakers but simply the fact that we are conservative.”

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