News



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Gonzaga University has reversed its decision to prohibit high-profile conservative pundit Ben Shapiro from speaking on campus.

A Feb. 4 statement, posted on the Spokane, Washington university's website, said school officials had reviewed an appeal by the Gonzaga University College Republicans to reverse a November rejection of the group's request to have Shapiro speak in January.

The November decision from Gonzaga's Student Development Office cited concerns that Shapiro's "appearances routinely draw protests that include extremely divisive and hateful speech and behavior which is offensive to many people, regardless of their age, politics or beliefs," according to the Spokesman-Review.

Editor-in-chief of The Daily Wire, former editor-at-large of Breitbart News and host of the podcast "The Ben Shapiro Show," Shapiro is known for controversial and conservative views on politics, abortion, gun ownership, race and the LGBT community.

According to a Feb. 27 post on the Gonzaga University College Republicans' Facebook page, no firm date for a Shapiro talk had yet been set. The group indicated it hoped to secure the McCarthy Athletic Center for the event [

https://www.facebook.com/GURepublicans/photos/a.1686175055037609/2249818838673225
].

Nicknamed "The Kennel," the well-known site is home to Gonzaga basketball games. The school's men's team was ranked number one in the country as of March 2.

The original rejection of Shapiro's appearance made headlines across the country.

It also:

* Generated a letter of protest to the Jesuit school by some 20 Washington state legislators who objected to censorship of ideas and reminded the university of the significant public monies it receives.

* Apparently led to a local radio station picking up Shapiro's syndicated radio broadcast.

A private Christian school, Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona, also recently initially rejected and then reversed a decision on a campus appearance by Shapiro, now scheduled to speak there April 10.

In Gonzaga's Feb. 4 announcement that Shapiro had permission to speak on campus, President Thayne McCulloh said he appreciated "that the students worked through the University's appeals process as set forth in the Events Policy to address issues regarding safety and campus security, as well as engaged in discussion about the focus of the event."

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