News



by Dan Morris-Young

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Gonzaga University College Republicans "deserved better from Ben Shapiro," said the Spokesman-Review in a March 15 report that detailed the well-known conservative commentator had declined to speak at the school despite dogged efforts by the campus group to gain that permission.

In November, the Jesuit university's student development office turned down the College Republicans' request to have Shapiro speak on campus, citing concern that the well-known pundits' "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."

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.

In early February, school officials posted a statement on the university's website saying an appeal by the College Republicans to reverse the November rejection had been approved, paving the way to Shapiro's appearance.

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Despite the group's garnering pledges and donations to pay Shapiro's $30,000 speaking fee and $20,000 to stage his talk at Gonzaga's McCarthy Athletic Center, the Shapiro-affiliated Young America's Foundation declined the invitation, the Spokesman-Review reported.

The publication reported that the Young America's Foundation told Gonzaga's College Republicans that a smaller venue was preferred to the roughly 2,200 seats available at the McCarthy Center so that if the facility did not fill, it would not appear Shapiro's address was weakly attended.

"It wouldn't look full, in their mind," College Republicans president Olivia Johnston told The Spokesman-Review, asking: "Is the content of the message more important or is a full room more important?"

[Dan Morris-Young is NCR West Coast correspondent.]