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BYU removes LGBTQ materials intended for new on-campus students

PROVO — A collective of LGBTQ advocacy groups that support Brigham Young University students said Friday that the university removed 5,000 "Allyship and Activism Resource Guide" pamphlets that were set to be distributed to incoming freshmen.

BYU explained the move by saying it prefers to direct students in need of such services to on-campus resources, including its newly created Office of Belonging and its newly appointed vice president of belonging. According to a statement from the university, officials have met with the students who delivered these materials about why they were removed and will refund a paid advertisement in the monthly student newspaper.

Earlier this week, gift baskets welcoming new students to campus were delivered to a number of dorms and on-campus housing units, which included directions to resources for LGBTQ students. Within the baskets were 5,000 booklets that contained resources for marginalized students, including therapy, safe housing, scholarships, monthly and weekly activities and upcoming events approved by the USGA club, Cougar Pride Center, RaYnbow Collective and the OUT Foundation, according to a joint statement from the four organizations.

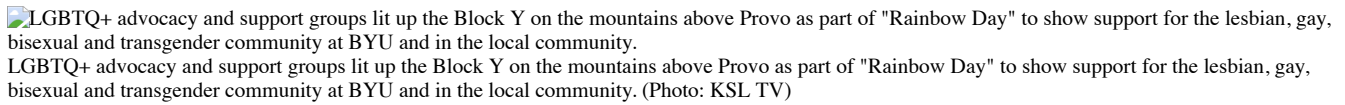
"BYU recognizes and welcomes LGBTQ individuals as part of our broader covenant-keeping university community," university spokeswoman Carrie Jenkins said in a prepared statement provided to KSL. "We love and welcome our LGBTQ students, employees and friends and want them to feel a sense of belonging as we work together to be true to our covenants and the teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

She then went on to explain in detail what happened when school officials learned about the information distributed by the advocacy groups.

"When we learned that a bag of promotional materials, which came through the advertising section of the student newspaper, was being distributed through residential buildings on campus, the decision was made to remove some materials from an organization outside of the university.

"Residence Life and New Student Orientation were not involved in preparing these bags and were not aware of the contents until after they had been distributed to some on-campus resident halls. The decision to remove the materials by Student Life was based on the university's commitment to provide support through the Office of Belonging and our counseling services and not to allow outside entities to imply affiliation with or endorsement from the university.

"The student newspaper is reviewing its approval process for advertising content, and it has reimbursed the person who placed these ads for the materials and advertising costs. Many of these flyers have also been returned to the students who created them."

LGBTQ+ advocacy and support groups lit up the Block Y on the mountains above Provo as part of "Rainbow Day" to show support for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community at BYU and in the local community. (Photo: KSL TV)

LGBTQ advocates said the creation and distribution of the booklets took "hundreds of hours and over 50 volunteers" to provide resources for new students.

"This decision is disappointing and disheartening, especially when we consider our experiences as freshmen feeling lonely, isolated and unsupported as queer students," the [collective statement said](#), in part. "Unfortunately, it follows a consistent pattern of BYU breaking its promises and agreements with LGBTQ+ students. There will always be LGBTQ+ students at BYU, and our goal is to support all students on campus, especially those who experience discrimination."

The groups added that the resource booklet will be distributed to those who want it during a Back to School Pride Night on Sept. 3 at Kiwanis Park in Provo. But some LGBTQ advocates said significant damage has already been done.

The RaYnbow Collective

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We are saddened by the actions BYU has taken against its LGBTQ students, and are in the process of working through this. Full statement, for easier reading, is in the thread below:

8:50 PM · Aug 25, 2022

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