

College's LGBT Group Launch Shame Campaign Over Hastert Admissions

A group of LGBT students and alumni of the Wheaton College is now engaged in a shame campaign of the evangelical college that was the alma mater of former Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.).

Wheaton College was formerly home to the J. Dennis Hastert Center for Economics, Government and Public Policy. Last year, prior to his indictment for banking fraud, Hastert resigned as a member of the center's board of directors, and the college issued the following statement:

Wheaton College has received and accepted the resignation of Wheaton alumnus and former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert from the Board of Advisors of its J. Dennis Hastert Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy.

The Center was established to pursue goals compatible with the mission of Wheaton College. Specifically, the mission statement of the Center is "to advance the training of Wheaton College students and the greater community in the understanding of market economies, representative democracies, limited government, and the redeeming effects of the Christian worldview on the practice of business, government and politics."

The Center will continue to serve these purposes in conformity with the highest ethical and academic standards of excellence and integrity, in conformity with our institution's identity.

The College respects Mr. Hastert's distinguished public

service record and the due process being afforded him pursuant to the charges that have been filed against him.

Two days later, following the former student's indictment, the center was renamed, removing Hastert's name. It now goes by the permanent name "Wheaton Center for Faith, Politics and Economics." But at the time of the indictment, Wheaton officials made the following statement:

It is with sadness and shock that the Wheaton College community learned of the indictment by the U.S. Department of Justice of alumnus and former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert, and of his resignation from the Board of Advisors of the J. Dennis Hastert Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy at Wheaton College.

In light of the charges and allegations that have emerged, the College has re-designated the Center as the Wheaton College Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy at this time.

The Center will continue in its mission "to advance the training of Wheaton College students and the greater community in the understanding of market economies, representative democracies, limited government, and the redeeming effects of the Christian worldview on the practice of business, government and politics."

Wheaton College serves Jesus Christ and advances His Kingdom through excellence in liberal arts and graduate programs that educate the whole person to build the church and benefit society worldwide. The College has not been implicated in or associated with any of the allegations in this matter.

We commit ourselves to pray for all involved, including Speaker Hastert, his family, and those who may have been harmed by any inappropriate behavior, and to continue the

work and mission of the Wheaton College Center for Economics, Government, and Public Policy.

Hastert later admitted he had made \$3.5 million in payments as “hush money” to former wrestlers he said he sexually abused while a high school coach before he entered politics. He admitted to trying to hide those payments by means of bank fraud and has been sentenced to federal prison.

In response to these developments, Wheaton officials issued another official statement:

Wheaton College serves Jesus Christ and advances His Kingdom through excellence in liberal arts and graduate programs that educate the whole person to build the church and benefit society worldwide. All students, faculty, staff and administration agree annually to our Community Covenant, which calls for Christ-like love, pursuit of holiness, and treatment of our bodies and those of others with honor. Scripture calls on all followers of Christ to seek righteousness, mercy and justice, particularly for the helpless and oppressed; to love and side with what is good in God’s eyes; and to abhor what is evil.

Sexual abuse is clearly and fundamentally incompatible with Christian ethics. This includes the sexual abuse of minors that Dennis Hastert has publicly acknowledged. The College is grieved by these revelations, respects the legal process that has led to accountability for Mr. Hastert’s acknowledged crimes, and continues to pray for the people and victims he harmed.

That’s not enough, the LGBT group OneWheaton said over the weekend. It demanded a much stronger statement of condemnation from the college.

“In the wake of Dennis Hastert’s admission of guilt and subsequent sentencing, with the details of his abuse now public, we call upon Wheaton College to issue an unequivocal

statement strongly condemning Hastert's abusive and deceptive behavior and expressing solidarity and support for Hastert's victims," OneWheaton demanded. "When powerful Christian institutions, like Wheaton College, fail to denounce the abusive behavior of their community leaders and instead praise, protect, or excuse the abuser, they are complicit in that abuse and the profound suffering and irreparable damage incurred. When the abuser is a Christian or represents key Christian institutions, this damage is not only psychological but spiritual."

Wheaton College has not yet responded to OneWheaton's statement.