

Liberty Students Return Their Diplomas in Act of Defiance Against Trump, Falwell Jr.

A growing group of Liberty University graduates are returning their diplomas to their alma mater to protest University President Jerry Falwell Jr.'s support of U.S. President Donald Trump.

"I'm sending my diploma back because the president of the United States is defending Nazis and white supremacists," Chris Gaumer, a former Student Government Association president and 2006 graduate, tells NPR. "And in defending the president's comments, Jerry Falwell Jr. is making himself and, it seems to me, the university he represents, complicit."

One alum created a private Facebook group called "Return your diploma to LU." The group has more than 300 members at the time of reporting.

"Anything other than strong condemnation from Trump [of the hate groups] is disappointing," says Georgia Hamann, a 2006 LU graduate and attorney in Phoenix, Arizona, who penned a letter to the school on behalf of the participating alumni's behalf.

NPR reports:

While this state of affairs has been in place for many months, the chancellor's recent comments on the attack upon our neighbors in Charlottesville have brought our outrage and our sorrow to a boiling point. During the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, white supremacists, nationalists and neo-Nazis perpetrated brutal violence against anti-racist protesters, murdering one woman and injuring many. Instead of condemning racist and white nationalist ideologies, Mr. Trump provided equivocal and contradictory comments. The chancellor

then characterized Mr. Trump's remarks, which included the claim that some of the persons marching as white nationalists and white supremacists at the rally were 'very fine people,' as 'bold' and 'truthful.' This is incompatible with Liberty University's stated values, and incompatible with a Christian witness.

Alumni say they will mail back their diplomas back to Falwell's office on Sept. 5.

"Shame on the media for even reporting," Falwell tells the *Independent Journal Review*. "If the graduate doesn't like Donald Trump, he should just state that he went to Liberty University, and he doesn't like that one of Liberty's leaders supports the president."

Falwell says the protest "has absolutely no effect" for students to send their diplomas back because the degrees were earned. The university "will not revoke them or 'take them back.'"

"The vast majority of administration and faculty at Ivy League schools supported Barack Obama," he says. "We are all entitled to our opinions as Americans."

Falwell told ABC's *This Week* that the alumni misinterpreted his comments.

Here's my entire portion from this morning on @ThisWeekABC talking about the events in ://

– Jerry Falwell (@JerryFalwellJr) Aug. 20, 2017

LU has not responded to *Charisma News'* request for comment.