

Leading Christian University Cancels 'Unapologetically Muslim' CAIR Event

Southern Methodist University has canceled an upcoming Muslim youth event after determining that hosting an organization designated as a terrorist group by Texas conflicts with the university's mission.

The North Texas chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations planned to hold its Muslim Youth Leadership Symposium on Sept. 19 at SMU's Dallas campus.

Titled "Unapologetically Muslim: Youth in Action," the event targeted high school and college students. Promotional materials promised community speakers, interactive workshops and a visit to Dallas City Hall.

An SMU spokesperson confirmed the cancellation in a statement to The Christian Post.

"After reviewing plans for an upcoming unaffiliated youth leadership symposium advertised to take place at SMU, the University has determined that permitting the event to take place on campus, given the State of Texas' current designation of the symposium's organizer, is inconsistent with our mission and related University policies," said Megan Jacob, SMU's director of media relations.



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"As a result, the event will not take place on campus," she added.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott designated CAIR and the Muslim

Brotherhood as “terrorist organizations” in November. Abbott said the organizations seek to “forcibly impose sharia law and establish Islam’s ‘mastership of the world.’” His order prohibits them from acquiring real property interests in Texas.

The state designation, rather than a federal terrorist designation, became the central reason behind SMU’s decision. CAIR’s online flyer still listed the university as an event location Thursday afternoon, according to The Christian Post.

The decision carries added significance because of SMU’s historic Christian identity. Founded in 1911 by the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the university houses the Perkins School of Theology, one of 13 United Methodist seminaries supported by the denomination’s Ministerial Education Fund. SMU was also ranked among the nation’s leading Christian colleges in 2026.

The university previously welcomed CAIR for an interfaith panel about ISIS and religious extremism in 2014. This time, however, Texas’ terrorist designation led SMU to draw a clear institutional boundary.

Yet the cancellation leaves a deeper issue for Christians to confront: Why was an “Unapologetically Muslim” event organized by CAIR scheduled at one of America’s leading Christian universities in the first place? SMU ultimately stopped the symposium, but its presence on the calendar shows how far a historically Methodist institution has moved from treating its Christian mission as the defining boundary for what it welcomes on campus.

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