



UW-River Falls Releases Guide of Offensive Words and Phrases for Students to Avoid

The PC movement continues to barrel through college campuses across the country with extraordinary steam as exemplified by a new campaign against so-called offensive language at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, in which students are asked to avoid innocuous words and phrases like “you guys” and “crazy.” The school published a guide for its “[Check Yourself Educational Campaign](#)” in which it lists a set of terms and words that are said to be offensive.



“Sometimes we say things without realizing the impact they may have on others,” suggests the campaign. “Take time to educate yourself about language and the histories of oppression. This list is not extensive, but touches on common identities and concepts. Read them. Consider them. Understand them. And Check Yourself before you use them.”

While a number of the expressions found within the guide would generally be classified as offensive, such as racial slurs, derogatory terms, and curse words, others are harmless colloquialisms.

The guide spends a lot of time discussing terminology that can be perceived as offensive by the LGBTQ community.

For example, it instructs students to avoid asking about the gender of a trans person from someone other than the transgender individual. Similarly, students are not allowed to make claims that bisexuality does not exist and that people are simply either gay or straight. The reason? “This denies the fluidity of sexuality and dismisses people’s experiences and definitions of self.” At the same time, however, students are asked not to make such statements as “I think everyone is really bisexual” because it then denies bisexual students of their individuality as bisexuals.

It also prohibits students from using terms like “she-male,” “she-he,” and “tranny,” as they “dehumanize transgender women.” It asks students to stop exclaiming that something is “so gay” as a “negative adjective.” All derogatory terms for homosexuals such as “faggot” and “dyke” appear on the list.

The guide also showcases an underlying anti-male attitude, as it takes a stand on using words referring to “people with vaginas to express that someone is weak or emotional dehumanizes women and perpetuates misogyny and sexism” but makes no such point regarding men and derogatory words typically used for males.

It instructs students to avoid using terminology having to do with female promiscuity, such as “ho” and “slut.” The reasoning is bizarre as it seems to indicate that racism somehow plays into the use of these words. It also seems to justify a sexually promiscuous lifestyle as one that should be accepted. The guide asserts that the use of these terms does the following: “Dismisses anyone seen as being ‘too sexual’, particularly sex workers, women, LGBTQIA+ people, and people of color. Perpetuates



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negativity towards sex itself. Promotes a sexual double standard.”

Additionally, students are asked to avoid the phrase “illegal aliens” because it apparently reduces undocumented immigrants to “something less than human.”

Students are discouraged from using terms like “ghetto” or “ratchet” because it associates “people of color” with negative characteristics of being “poor” or “dangerous.”

The guide also asks students to avoid terminology that would amount to body-shaming, specifically by referring to someone as fat, as the guide claims such a word reinforces “harmful assumptions that fat people are gluttonous and are fat because they have no constraints around food.” Students are asked not to refer to themselves as fat for the same reasons.

It continues by stating that the term audaciously implies “that there is an acceptable amount of food to eat and anything more is disgusting, or that enjoying too much food is disgusting.”

“Ugly” also appears on the list, because it somehow “can be connected back to white supremacist, ableist, sizeist standards of beauty.”

Any reference to a person’s inability to execute a task, such as “retarded,” “lame,” “dumb,” and “crazy” are also no-nos because they allegedly target “mental, emotional, and physical disabilities as objects for ridicule.”

But of all the items prohibited by the guide, perhaps the most absurd is the phrase “you guys,” which apparently generalizes “a group of people to be masculine,” and fails to properly address the various identities of those in the room.

The guide, like all other PC efforts, is yet another attempt at preventing hurt feelings. It contributes to students’ inflated sense of self and their delusions that they should never have to experience confrontation or differing viewpoints that they may perceive as offensive. Of course, the PC movement encourages all viewpoints to be accepted, unless they are conservative or Christian. Those are the viewpoints deemed hateful, and anyone holding them should obviously be told they are wrong.

Institutions of higher education are doing a dramatic disservice to their students by guarding them from all that can hurt their egos. Greg Lukianoff, a constitutional lawyer and the president and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, and Jonathan Haidt, a social psychologist who studies the American culture wars, addressed this very issue in the September 2015 issue of *The Atlantic* in an article entitled “The Coddling of the American Mind.”

They contend that political correctness has morphed into an even more restrictive movement that not only seeks to limit free speech but also attempts to punish anyone who interferes with those goals, which fails to prepare students for real-world scenarios. They wrote:

It prepares them poorly for professional life, which often demands intellectual engagement with people and ideas one might find uncongenial or wrong. The harm may be more immediate, too. A campus culture devoted to policing speech and punishing speakers is likely to engender patterns of thought that are surprisingly similar to those long identified by cognitive behavioral therapists as causes of depression and anxiety. The new protectiveness may be teaching students to think pathologically.

These PC efforts encourage students to avoid all that they fear and all that offends them, thereby further increasing their sensitivity to things that may otherwise have not offended them. “In the name of emotional well-being, college students are increasingly demanding protection from words and ideas



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they don't like," Lukianoff and Haidt wrote.

Schools such as the University of Wisconsin-River Falls are only too happy to comply. And as long as the students remain on campus, they may be able to safely avoid being offended, but who will protect them when they graduate?



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