

Fundamental Standard Form

Accused Student: Nicholas N. Wallace

Date: January 25, 2021

Email: [REDACTED]

Time: 8:38 a.m.

Narrative:

On January 25, 2021, at 8:38 a.m., Nicholas Wallace sent an email to Stanford Law School's "Law Talk" email list-serv, where he impersonated the Stanford Federalist Society, a student group, through a false event flyer and attributed false and defamatory beliefs to persons he listed on the event flyer.

The Stanford Federalist Society hosts events frequently, typically once a week. The emails sent to advertise these events usually follow a similar template, which is recognizable to students. There is no Stanford Federalist Society email address; each week, different students send out the event flyers. As such, many students would not be tipped off that the email was an impersonation based on the sender. And although the email was sent from Wallace's email address, his email implied that the officers of the Stanford Federalist Society had approved the event and were responsible for creating the flyer.

Wallace clearly impersonated the Stanford Federalist Society through his event flyer. First, he included a line at the top of the flyer saying that "The Stanford Federalist Society presents" the advertised event. Second, he included the Stanford Federalist Society's logo near the bottom of the flyer. Third, the body of the event flyer identified the Stanford Federalist Society as the host. Moreover, he used the same distinctive template that the organization uses to advertise its other (real) events. This template is easily recognizable to other students. Nowhere in his email, nor on his flyer, did Wallace explain that these representations of identity were false.

Wallace defamed the student group, its officers, Senator Josh Hawley, and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. Wallace, impersonating the Stanford Federalist Society, wrote on the flyer that "Riot information will be emailed the morning of the event," insinuating that the student group was encouraging and hosting a riot. He also wrote that Attorney General Paxton advocates for "overturn[ing] the results of a free and fair election" by "calling on a violent mob to storm the Capitol." And he wrote that Senator Hawley believes that violent insurrections are justified.

The false event flyer was shared later that day on social media. Another Stanford student, [REDACTED], posted the false event flyer to Twitter without mention that Wallace created or

distributed it. The tweet, with a capture of Wallace’s flyer, received significant attention, including from Twitter users who believed it was a real event sponsored by the Stanford Federalist Society. The flyer was also posted on a public Facebook group with more than one hundred thousand members, where it received hundreds of comments. Again, many Facebook users believed that the event was real and criticized our organization for “hosting” it. The deceiving flyer was shared so widely, and so many who saw the flyer believed it was real, that a prominent media outlet — USA Today — did a fact check story on it to confirm that it was fictitious.

Many who saw Wallace’s flyer impersonating the Stanford Federalist Society were deceived. Various Stanford community members replied to Wallace’s email stating that they thought the flyer was created and sent by the Stanford Federalist Society. One student, [REDACTED], denounced the Stanford Federalist Society as having “poor judgement” for putting on the event advertised on the flyer, then later replied that he “thought this was a real event.” Another student, [REDACTED], also replied on the email chain to say that “like [REDACTED] [she] initially thought this was real too.” And although Stanford community members eventually understood that the Stanford Federalist Society was being impersonated, the harm had already been done. Other student groups have asked to cancel joint events planned with the Federalist Society as a result of the controversy created by this email. And we, as officers of the organization, feel that our individual reputations have been harmed.

Signed,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]