

W (AACL)

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Request for Records

Hello,

This is Michael A. Ayele sending this message though I now go by W and I prefer to be referred to as such. I am writing this letter for the purpose of filing a records request with your office. The basis for this records request is the February 2025 complaint filed by Ella Stapleton demanding a tuition refund from Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts).¹

I) Requested Records

What I am requesting for prompt disclosure are records in your possession detailing your discussions about [1] Ella Stapleton as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree graduate of Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts) who (i) had in the 2025 – 2026 Spring Semester taken an “*Organizational Behavior*” class to satisfy the necessary prerequisite to earn a business minor; (ii) was at the very beginning of her “*Organizational Behavior*” class informed that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for academic purposes was strictly prohibited; (iii) had in the month of February 2025 noticed that Northeastern University was enabling its faculty members to adopt a “*Do as I say, not as I do*” attitude with regards to the use of AI; (iv) has in the month of February 2025 filed a complaint (with her alma mater) demanding a tuition refund from Northeastern University for the many double standards she witnessed on matters related to the use of AI as well as academic integrity; [2] Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution (i) which had in the 2025 – 2026 academic year approved, supervised and exercised oversight over the “*Organizational Behavior*” class Ella Stapleton needed to graduate with a business minor; (ii) that would most likely have imposed harsh disciplinary sanctions upon undergraduate students if they had used AI for academic purposes; (iii) which was between the months of February and May 2025 reminded by Ella Stapleton that the failure to impose sanctions and disciplinary measures upon faculty members who use AI would constitute an unacceptable form of double standard that legitimizes selective policing in higher education; (iv) which has in the month of May 2025 contacted Ella Stapleton (within 48 hours of her graduation) to inform her that they would not impose any sanctions or disciplinary measures upon faculty members who had used AI; (v) which has in the month of May 2025 contacted Ella Stapleton (within 48 hours of her graduation) to inform her that they would not be issuing her a tuition refund for the double standards she had witnessed and shed light upon at her alma mater; (vi) which has in response to Ella Stapleton’s complaint retroactively changed policies on the use of AI in academic settings; (vii) which has (during the processing of Ella Stapleton complaint) exhibited cognitive dissonance between their professed commitments to equal treatment and the double standards they have codified to legitimize selective policing in higher education; [3] the term “*cognitive dissonance*” being defined as a “*state of mental discomfort that occurs when a person holds beliefs or opinions that are inconsistent, or that conflict with an aspect of their behavior;*” [4] the policy(ies) implemented by your local/state government agency with regards to the use of AI; [5] *Melissa Jennings v UNC*; [6] *Christine Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools*; [7] *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education*.

II) Request for a Fee Waiver and Expedited Processing

The facts presented in my records request do/will demonstrate that [1] Ella Stapleton is a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree graduate of Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts) who (i) had in the 2025 – 2026 Spring Semester taken an “*Organizational Behavior*” class to satisfy the necessary prerequisite to earn a business minor; (ii) was at the very beginning of her “*Organizational Behavior*” class informed that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) for academic purposes was strictly prohibited; (iii) has in the month of February 2025 noticed that Northeastern University was enabling its faculty members to adopt a “*Do as I say, not as I do*” attitude with regards to the use of AI; (iv) had in the month of February 2025 filed a complaint (with her alma mater) demanding a tuition refund from Northeastern University for the many double standards she witnessed on matters related to the use of AI as well as academic integrity; [2] Northeastern University is a postsecondary academic institution (i) which had in the 2025 – 2026 academic year approved, supervised and exercised oversight over the “*Organizational Behavior*” class Ella Stapleton needed to graduate with a business minor; (ii) that would most likely have imposed harsh disciplinary sanctions upon undergraduate students if they had used AI for academic purposes; (iii) which was between the months of February and May 2025 reminded by Ella Stapleton that the failure to impose sanctions and disciplinary measures upon faculty members who use AI would constitute an unacceptable form of double standards that legitimizes selective policing in higher education; (iv) which has in the month of May 2025 contacted Ella Stapleton (within 48 hours of her graduation) to inform her that they would not impose any sanctions or disciplinary measures upon faculty members who had used AI; (v) which has in the month of May 2025 contacted Ella Stapleton (within 48 hours of her graduation) to inform her that they would not be issuing her a tuition refund for the double standards she had witnessed and shed light upon at her alma mater; (vi) which has in response to Ella Stapleton’s complaint retroactively changed policies on the use of AI in academic settings; (vii) which has (during the processing of Ella Stapleton complaint) exhibited cognitive dissonance between their professed commitments to equal treatment and the double standards they have codified to legitimize selective policing in higher education; [3] the term “*cognitive dissonance*” is defined as a “*state of mental discomfort that occurs when a person holds beliefs or opinions that are inconsistent, or that conflict with an aspect of their behavior;*” [4] *Melissa Jennings v UNC* is case law that is cited for the principle that (i) complaints filed by female undergraduate students should be taken seriously (by American colleges and universities) when they involve provocative conduct that create hostile environments; (ii) it’s unlawful to harass and provoke female undergraduate students in academic settings; [5] *Christine Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools* is case law that is cited for the principle that female students may obtain monetary relief if they are ever subjected to incidents of chauvinism, misogyny and sexism in academic settings; [6] *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* is case law that is cited for the principle that it’s unlawful to retaliate against people (i) who espouse anti-racist and anti-sexist convictions; (ii) participate in demonstrations opposing racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

In my judgment, the facts presented in my request for a fee waiver and expedited processing will not bolster public confidence in the activities, the engagements and the priorities of Northeastern University because of the manner in which they have processed the complaint filed by Ella Stapleton in the month of February 2025.

At the time Ella Stapleton filed a complaint with Northeastern University (in February 2025), she had a very reasonable expectation that her alma mater would [1] issue severe disciplinary reprimands upon any undergraduate student who used AI for academic purposes; [2] have a zero-tolerance policy for double standards that enabled faculty members to use AI for academic purposes while at the same time prohibiting undergraduate students from doing the same; [3] impose meaningful sanctions upon the

faculty member who used AI (while telling undergraduate students not to use AI); [4] reimburse her tuition money to avoid the appearance of selective policing in higher education; [5] recognize that faculty use of AI – while barring undergraduate students from doing so – constitutes a form of provocation that creates a hostile academic environment; [6] process her complaint in accordance with the legal principles set in *Melissa Jennings v UNC* which held that (i) complaints filed by female undergraduate students should be taken seriously when they involve provocative conduct that create hostile environments; (ii) it's unlawful to harass and provoke female undergraduate students in academic settings; [7] would not exhibit any cognitive dissonance between their professed commitments to equal treatment and double standards that legitimize selective policing.

Most frequently, during college and university graduation ceremonies, a keynote speaker is invited to inspire undergraduate students to apply the skills and knowledge they have gained “*into the real world,*” encouraging them to trust their intuitions, uphold their values, and demand fairness in the institutions they engage with. However, Ella Stapleton’s experience with Northeastern University makes a mockery of that traditional message. Indeed, instead of being met with the message that integrity matters and that postsecondary academic institutions are accountable for the standards they impose, Ella Stapleton was contacted within 48 hours of wearing her cap and gown (and accepting her Bachelor’s Degree) to be told that her legitimate complaint would lead to no substantive actions, no sanctions and no remedy (in the form of a refund). What makes Northeastern University’s response even more perturbing is that after enforcing a strict zero-tolerance policy for the use of AI in academic settings during the very semester she took her “*Organizational Behavior*” class, the university then retroactively revised its policy – only after her complaint was filed – to say that AI use is permissible so long as proper attribution is provided. For me, this abrupt policy reversal constituted a capricious retroactive decision deliberately intended not to address the issues Ella Stapleton raised in her complaint. When Northeastern University reached out to Ella Stapleton the day after her graduation to inform her that no sanctions would be imposed and that no refund would be issued, they communicated an unwillingness to confront double standards that legitimize selective policing in higher education. In my opinion, this sequence of events (as reported by the New York Times May 14th 2025 article) undermined public confidence in Northeastern University’s commitment to equal treatment because it gave the appearance that the institution prioritized administrative convenience over accountability that is neither arbitrary nor capricious.

The core issues presented in this records request are as follows. 1) Have you had conversations about Ella Stapleton as a Bachelor of Arts (B.A) Degree graduate of Northeastern University (Boston, Massachusetts) who had in the 2025 – 2026 Spring Semester taken an “*Organizational Behavior*” class to satisfy the necessary prerequisite to earn a business minor? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 2) Have you had conversations about Ella Stapleton as a B.A Degree graduate of Northeastern University who was at the very beginning of her “*Organizational Behavior*” class informed that the of artificial intelligence (AI) for academic purposes was strictly prohibited? If yes, will you disclose those records? 3) Have you had conversations about Ella Stapleton as a B.A Degree graduate of Northeastern University who had in the month of February 2025 noticed that Northeastern University was enabling its faculty members to adopt a “*Do as I say, not as I do*” attitude with regards to the use of AI? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 4) Have you had conversations about Ella Stapleton as a B.A Degree graduate of Northeastern University who has in the month of February 2025 filed a complaint (with her alma mater) demanding a tuition refund from Northeastern University for the many double standards she witnessed on matters related to the use of AI as well as academic integrity? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 5) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution which had in the 2025 – 2026 academic year approved, supervised and exercised oversight over the “*Organizational Behavior*” class Ella Stapleton needed to graduate with a business minor? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 6) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution that would most likely have imposed

harsh disciplinary sanctions upon undergraduate students if they had used AI for academic purposes? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 7) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution which was between the months of February and May 2025 reminded by Ella Stapleton that the failure to impose sanctions and disciplinary measures upon faculty members who use AI would constitute an unacceptable form of double standard that legitimizes selective policing in higher education? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 8) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution which has in the month of May 2025 contacted Ella Stapleton (within 48 hours of her graduation) to inform her that they would not impose any sanctions or disciplinary measures upon faculty members who had used AI? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 9) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution which has in the month of May 2025 contacted Ella Stapleton (within 48 hours of her graduation) to inform her that they would not be issuing her a tuition refund for the double standards she had witnessed and shed light upon at her alma mater? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 10) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution which has in response to Ella Stapleton's complaint retroactively changed policies on the use of AI in academic settings? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 11) Have you had conversations about Northeastern University as a postsecondary academic institution which has (during the processing of Ella Stapleton complaint) exhibited cognitive dissonance between their professed commitments to equal treatment and the double standards they have codified to legitimize selective policing in higher education? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 12) Have you had conversations about the term "*cognitive dissonance*" being defined as a "*state of mental discomfort that occurs when a person holds beliefs or opinions that are inconsistent, or that conflict with an aspect of their behavior?*" If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 13) Have you had conversations about *Melissa Jennings v UNC* as case law that is cited for the principle that complaints filed by female undergraduate students should be taken seriously (by American colleges and universities) when they involve provocative conduct that create hostile environments? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 14) Have you had conversations about *Melissa Jennings v UNC* as case law that is cited for the principle that it's unlawful to harass and provoke female undergraduate students in academic settings? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 15) Have you had conversations about *Christine Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools* as case law that is cited for the principle that female students may obtain monetary relief if they are ever subjected to incidents of chauvinism, misogyny and sexism in academic settings? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 16) Have you had conversations about *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* as case law that is cited for the principle that it's unlawful to retaliate against people who espouse anti-racist and anti-sexist ideals? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 17) Have you had conversations about *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* as case law that is cited for the principle that it's unlawful to retaliate against people who participate in demonstrations opposing racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records? 18) Has your local/state government agency implemented policies with regards to the use of AI? If yes, will you promptly disclose those records?

The public has a compelling and legitimate interest in this information because:

- 1) The requested records will significantly contribute to public understanding of how a federally funded post-secondary academic institution (Northeastern University) developed, implemented, and selectively enforced its policies on AI and academic integrity.
- 2) The requested records will significantly contribute to public understanding of the double standards that arise when postsecondary academic institutions prohibit students from engaging in specific conduct – such as the use of AI for academic purposes – while enabling or excusing the same conduct among faculty and administrators.

- 3) The requested records will significantly contribute to public understanding of how American colleges and universities are integrating AI into academic practices without enabling discriminatory or inconsistent standards, particularly where male faculty members are permitted to use AI in circumstances where female undergraduate students would be punished for doing the same.
- 4) As previously noted, Northeastern University is a federally funded postsecondary academic institution, and the public is entitled to understand whether it maintains consistent, non-discriminatory, non-arbitrary policies when it comes to the use of AI.
- 5) The requested records will significantly contribute to public understanding of the policies your local/state government has implemented with regards to the use of AI.

Expedited processing is justified because:

- 1) The facts surrounding Ella Stapleton's complaint directly implicate issues of equal treatment in higher education, particularly the enforcement of academic integrity rules that appear to be applied more aggressively toward undergraduate students than faculty members. A postsecondary academic institution's willingness (or unwillingness) to address such double standards is a matter of public concern.
- 2) The handling of Ella Stapleton's complaint raises concerns about selective policing in higher education.
- 3) The handling of Ella Stapleton's complaint raises concerns about the very strong likelihood that female undergraduate students who report misconduct or policy violations are not taken seriously by their alma mater. This is directly relevant to public confidence in institutional accountability, especially where the conduct resembles the type of provocative, hostile and unequal treatment identified in *Melissa Jennings v. UNC*.
- 4) The decision of Northeastern University to contact Ella Stapleton the day after her graduation indicates deliberate administrative choices that sought delays rather than confronting double standards and selective policing in higher education. This has implications for campus culture, academic fairness, and the deterrence of retaliatory practices.

Under penalty of perjury, I hereby declare all the statements I have made to be true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Be well. Stay well. Take care. Keep yourselves at arms distance.

Michael A. Ayele (a.k.a) W
Anti-Racist Human Rights Activist
Audio-Visual Media Analyst
Anti-Propaganda Journalist

Work Cited

¹ *In February 2025, Ella Stapleton, then a senior at Northeastern University, was reviewing lecture notes from her organizational behavior class when she noticed something odd. Was that a query to ChatGPT from her professor?*

Halfway through the document, which her business professor had made for a lesson on models of leadership, was an instruction to ChatGPT to “expand on all areas. Be more detailed and specific.” It was followed by a list of positive and negative leadership traits, each with a prosaic definition and a bullet-pointed example.

Ms. Stapleton texted a friend in the class.

“Did you see the notes he put on Canvas?” she wrote, referring to the university’s software platform for hosting course materials. “He made it with ChatGPT.”

“OMG Stop,” the classmate responded. “What the hell?”

Ms. Stapleton decided to do some digging. She reviewed her professor’s slide presentations and discovered other telltale signs of A.I.: distorted text, photos of office workers with extraneous body parts and egregious misspellings.

She was not happy. Given the school’s cost and reputation she expected a top-tier education. This course was required for her business minor; its syllabus forbade “academically dishonest activities,” including the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence or chatbots.

“He’s telling us not to use it, and then he’s using it himself,” she said.

Ms. Stapleton filed a formal complaint with Northeastern’s business school, citing the undisclosed use of A.I. as well as other issues she had with his teaching style, and requested reimbursement of tuition for that class. As a quarter of the total bill for the semester, that would be more than \$8,000. (...)

After filing her complaint at Northeastern University, Ms. Stapleton has a series of meetings with officials in the business school. In May, the day after her graduation ceremony, the officials told her she was not getting her tuition money back.

Rick Arrowood, her professor, was contrite about the episode. Dr. Arrowood, who is an adjunct professor and has been teaching for nearly two decades, said he had uploaded his class files and documents to ChatGPT, the A.I. search engine Perplexity and an A.I presentation generator called Gamma to “give them a fresh look.” At a glance, he said the notes and presentations they had generated looked great.

“In hindsight, I wish I would have looked at it more closely,” he said.

He put the materials online for students to review, but emphasized that he did not use them in the classroom, because he prefers classes to be discussion-oriented. He realized the materials were flawed only when school officials questioned him about them.

The embarrassing situation made him realize, he said, that professors should approach A.I. with more

caution and disclose to students when and how it is used. Northeastern issued a formal A.I. policy only recently; it requires attribution when A.I systems are used and review of the output for “accuracy and appropriateness.” A Northeastern University spokeswoman said the school “embraces the use of artificial intelligence to enhance all aspects of its teaching, research and operations.”

“I’m all about teaching,” Dr. Arrowood said. “If my experience can be something people can learn from, then, O.K, that’s my happy spot.”

The Professors Are Using ChatGPT, and Some Students Aren’t Happy About It. The New York Times.: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/14/technology/chatgpt-college-professors.html>