



On Saturday, April 18th, in a public forum, former Student Senate Executive Staff employee Grant Daily made the following comments regarding his time in the role as Government Relations Director:

“The fact of the matter is I think that firing was personal and petty and the fact was that I wasn’t fired for doing private things on company’s time. They couldn’t pay me for the hours that they wanted me to work. It was modern day slavery to the nth degree.”

While we are committed to keeping the institution of Student Senate neutral in the current election, we cannot, in good faith, let a comment like this remain unaddressed. Comparing any work within the Student Senate office to being equivalent to slavery is highly inappropriate.

It is our belief that, as office managers, we have fostered an environment built on empowerment, inclusion, and individual liberty. At no point do we accept any notion that the office environment is in any way, shape, or form, comparable to slavery. As students, we understand the stressors of low-wage student jobs. It is an issue that persists on this campus, and we would like to see it changed. With that said, we have encouraged, and we continue to encourage our team to put their mental, physical, and emotional well-being above all else.

Perhaps most upsetting was the implications that occurred when a Caucasian male states that working for a Black woman equated to ‘modern day slavery’. Not only is this remark tone deaf, hurtful, and inconsiderate, it also trivialized the African-American experience and the generational trauma that has occurred as the result of the enslavement of an entire population of individuals. Slavery is a word that holds power. It is not a term that should be used lightly. The word slavery holds the notion of forced labor, of a lack of individual liberty, and of an inability to hold one’s own agency.

We condemn any trivializing of the term ‘slavery’. We reject any comparison to the office environment of the Executive Staff of Student Senate to slavery. Most importantly, we reject the whitewashing and bigotry that implicitly occurs with the use of such a heinous term in a casual setting. While we do not believe that this term was used with malice, we do believe that it reflects a carelessness and a lack of cultural sensitivity. It is not just about the intent. The impact

Tiara matters. In a nation that is still deeply divided on racial boundaries, conjuring images from perhaps the greatest racial injustice in this nation's history is so perverse and inappropriate that it leaves us speechless. We strongly condemn this form of careless language.

Slavery is not a choice. It is a power structure meant to systematically break down the individual enslaved against their will. Accepting a paid hourly University position under a Black female leader and then claiming that it was modern-day slavery is bigoted, naïve, false, and insensitive in nature. As supervisors, leaders, and adults, we will not tolerate this rhetoric.

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