

September 1st, 2017

Fellow Eagles,

On August 12th, in Charlottesville, Virginia, a group of white supremacists were using language that aligned with Nazi rhetoric, calling for the ethnic cleansing of our nation. The situation soon became a domestic terror attack when violence broke out and a young woman, Heather Heyer, was murdered. In the wake of these events, a prominent speaker whose views align with the terror group in Charlottesville, Richard Spencer, through the National Policy Institute, contacted Michigan State University in a request to speak.

It is imperative we understand that the violence which occurred by the white supremacist group is domestic terrorism. This racism and bigotry is deeply disturbing and, furthermore does not align with the values of Eastern Michigan University's Student Government. Larry and I extend our solidarity to all Eagles but especially our Eagles of color. To make clear, we are dedicated to making Eastern Michigan a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive community. The First Amendment is a pillar of our society that should be respected, yet is not a platform that allows for hateful, hurtful, and violence inciting language. Thus, any acts or language that seek to harm marginalized members of our community have no place on this campus. So, let it be known here and now, that if one of our students of color is attacked, we see it as an attack on the whole student body.

As we begin our academic year, Larry and I will advocate and work to prevent speakers or organizations who seek to hide behind yet break the first amendment by creating an environment where members of our community are not welcomed or even provoked to violence. These are trying times that will define our character, and as we toe the intricacies of the law, we challenge you all to think about this: when you address their hate with the energy of anger and frustration, you give it the fuel it so desperately desires. That hurt, rage, and contempt for these supremacists you may feel is real and valid. As your student representatives, we care deeply about all of you and encourage you to remember, when seeking ways to counter their movement, the safety of yourself and others in this university many of us call home. There are many ways to show your contempt, rage, and loathing for those that seek to oppress our friends, and we feel it is our responsibility to remind you that there are both effective and safe ways to protest that will not fuel the fire of these white supremacists. With that, if you continue to feel compelled to confront them head on, that you please inform yourself on the possibilities for harm and legal consequence. We must advocate for your safety but recognize that the method of retaliation is one you must make for yourself and we will do our best to aid you in making a thoughtful and informed decision.

Lastly, Larry and I wish to extend an invitation that if you need to grieve or seek comfort, that you are welcome to do so through Student Government. If Eastern should come under this type of pressure, we urge you to stay safe, and direct your attention in ways that seek to educate our communities in the ways of inclusivity, love, and acceptance.

In Service,



Miles Payne
Student Body President



& Larry Borum III
& Vice President