Resolution # 70-19
The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)
The Pennsylvania State University

of the 70th Assembly
February 3, 2021

Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,
Response to Insurrection on January 6th, 2021
(Decided: [ Y / N / A ])

Nature of the Situation:

In considering our responsibility to grapple with the meaning and effects of the January 6th insurrection, it is also important to keep in mind Penn State’s identity as Pennsylvania’s land-grant institution—particularly since debate over the certification of the state’s electors became a key tension leading up to and following the Capitol invasion. Eight Pennsylvania Representatives—including a number who are Penn State alumni (Perry, Joyce, Reschenthaler, and Thompson) and/or represent districts home to PSU campuses—ultimately voted to reject the certification of the presidential electors¹, fanning the flames of the insurrection and seeking to disrupt a peaceful transition of power. The State Representative for the 33rd district (home to Penn State’s York campus), Doug Mastriano, helped to organize and partially fund a bus trip for constituents to join the “Stop the Steal” rally², some of whom have been identified as having breached the Capitol. In recent weeks, news has also emerged that Penn State alum Scott Perry (US House Representative for the 10th District, home to the Penn State Dickinson Law campus)

played a significant role in persuading ex-President Trump to contest the results of the 2020 election and may be facing calls for removal.

In addition to the events of January 6th, we must also consider the implications of efforts by State Senator Jake Corman (34th District, home to Penn State’s University Park campus) and other state representatives a day earlier. On January 5th, Corman, a Penn State graduate and active member of the Alumni Association, led a coalition of Republican senators to remove Lt. Governor John Fetterman from his position as President of the Pennsylvania Senate, which resulted in Corman stepping into leadership as the President pro tempore. Corman then used this power to refuse to seat a democratically elected congressman from Allegheny County, despite the fact that the election had been certified and was in accordance with rulings from the PA Supreme Court. On the evening of January 5th, Corman co-authored a letter with Republican colleagues alleging that there were inconsistencies in the PA electoral process and requesting that Congress delay the certification of electors. Former President Trump widely circulated this letter on social media and referenced it twice in his remarks prior to the storming of the Capitol.

At an even more local level, we are also aware of at least a small number of current Penn State students, faculty, and staff who attended the “rally” in D.C. on January 6th, and may indeed have participated in the storming of the Capitol. At least one State College resident has been charged with entering a restricted building, engaging in disorderly conduct on Capitol grounds to impede government business, disorderly conduct in the Capitol and demonstrating in the Capitol buildings. He was arrested and then returned to the community. Given the sheer size of the Penn State community (and the hotly contested nature of the Pennsylvania electoral process in 2020) it is likely that the actual number of university-affiliated attendees and supporters is both significant and unknowable. Naming this reality forces us to recognize that not all members of the Penn State community “witnessed and watched this event unfold with intense sorrow, anger and fear” (from President Barron’s 1.6.2021 response statement) but rather hoped for its success and even participated in its undertaking. Recognizing this reality means grappling with implications about the safety and security of community members and recognizing that calls for ‘healing’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘civil discourse’ are empty gestures if not supported by accountability.

The Pennsylvania State University prides itself in providing safe learning spaces for ALL of its students. The sad reality is that we are not safe, and will not be safe until the administration commits to rooting out hate, white supremacy and the active spread of misinformation on all its campuses. If the allegations are true, the individuals mentioned

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7 [https://news.psu.edu/story/622178/2020/06/03/president/message-penn-state-president-eric-j-barron](https://news.psu.edu/story/622178/2020/06/03/president/message-penn-state-president-eric-j-barron)
above are a stain upon our institution. Our school’s continued employment of insurrectionists poses a threat to all students, especially students belonging to marginalized communities.

**Recommended Course of Action:**

- We, the 70th Assembly of the Graduate and Professional Students Association, call on the University to leverage its institutional power in the fight for the preservation of our democratic institutions in the face of the following threats:
  - Active spread of misinformation including but not limited to the safety of our electoral system.
  - White supremacy.
  - Fascism.

- Specifically, we demand an investigation is immediately opened into any Penn State faculty, staff, or students that may have participated in the insurrection on January 6th.

- For the safety and betterment of our students, as well as for the continued good reputation of PSU, the University must take any and all adverse action possible against proven insurrectionists in its employ, and have this information be made public to the university community.

- We recommend the creation of an anonymous tip line where reports of alleged participation in the insurrection on January 6th can be made.

- We recommend the University work with local and federal agencies to make a good faith effort in accurately and appropriately holding accountable any current student, faculty or staff who participated in the events of January 6th.

- We recommend that all information regarding participation of any current student, faculty or staff, in the events on January 6th, be made public to the university community.

- The University should immediately begin a thorough assessment of threat, risk, and safety protocols as it relates to possible attacks on behalf of white supremacy groups.

- We demand the University immediately provide a detailed accounting of any and all past relationships, terminate all ongoing relationships, and justify any continuing relationships with State Senator Jake Corman and US Representative Scott Perry, and that administrators at the highest levels make a public statement condemning their behavior and acknowledging their vicious disinformation campaigns across the commonwealth. We question the ability of these individuals to teach and evaluate all students in a fair and unbiased manner. We question the critical thinking skills and intellectual acumen of conspiracy theorists. We question the values of an institution that employs accused insurrectionists without any inquiry into the matter.

Respectfully submitted,

**Diego A. Hernandez**
Advocacy and Diversity Committee Chair
Delegate, College of Liberal Arts

Ali Watts
Delegate, College of Education

Eli Fields
Delegate, Penn State Law

President _________________________________________________________   Affirm

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The Graduate and Professional Student Association