November 14th, 2019

To the Student Body at Florida State University:

The Florida State University Student Government Association is based on the motto ‘unity & diversity.’ As an organization and as an administration - we believe that our strength as an institution, with a student body of over 42,000 students, is founded on our individual student experience and the wide-ranging diversity of every single student that makes the fabric of Florida State University unique.

A few weeks ago, the Student Government Association was made aware of a vendor present at Market Wednesday selling a wide array of flags that included flags displaying anti-Semitic imagery and symbols. Our administration condemns hate speech of all kinds, especially on our campus. Hate symbols, anti-Semitism, and all forms of discrimination are deplorable and should not and will never be acceptable within the Student Government Association.

Florida State University encourages free speech and expression on campus, as our institution relies on the freedom to exchange ideas to grow as students and intellectuals in our society. However, we are appalled by the despicable choice to carry and sell these flags. The flags being sold at Market Wednesday represent not only a violent history, but a hateful, racist, and discriminatory present. Upon being notified of these flags being sold at Market Wednesday, Student Body President Steinberg met with administration to advocate for a potential resolution on this issue. The Florida State University administration is examining vendor practices and guidelines moving forward.

We were reminded of a statement from Florida State University President Doak Campbell “Education can wield power that is selfish, cruel, greedy, materialistic, or power that is beneficent, compassionate, and humane.” Student Government is often said to be a laboratory of democracy and ideas, and we believe this holds to our student body. We embrace the narrative of opposing viewpoints, open-mindedness, and the ability to converse with one's peers. We recognize the importance and constitutional right of the freedom of expression, and we also recognize the even greater importance in ensuring discrimination and hate are not tolerated on our campus.
We want to remind the Florida State University community of the importance of taking care of and looking out for our fellow Seminoles. We encourage students to lean upon one another and to be cognizant of the variety of resources at Florida State University, including the University Counseling Center, report.fsu.edu, and the Dean of Students. In an age where anti-Semitism and discrimination are prevalent, we must be steadfast in our commitment to diversity, love, and respect.

In Seminole Pride,

Evan Steinberg  Stephanie Lee  Caleb M. Dawkins
Student Body President  Student Body Vice President  Student Body Treasurer