



Date: September 17th, 2018

RE: Statement on Campus Policy Regarding Freedom of Speech

To the USC student body,

The USC community recently received two memorandums regarding an incident involving hate speech on campus.

Let us be clear. There is absolutely no space for hate speech in the USC community. Free speech extends so far as to allow for the expression of ideas and discussion without restrictions or censorship. However, the realm of free speech is not meant to serve as a security blanket for those intending to utilize hateful rhetoric towards others.

Allowing spaces for these ‘freedoms’ to occur will only serve as the foundation for hate crimes, for marginalized communities to feel even more threatened as a result of the University validating those who choose to participate in empowering hate speech.

The Undergraduate Student Government does not tolerate any behavior that aims to discriminate against individuals or incite hatred against marginalized groups. These are instances that exceed mere bias, shifting into an active form of intolerant and dangerous provocation that is acutely aware of its own intentions.

To normalize and protect extremist hate speech, to assert that the university “cannot punish students for exercising their constitutional right to free speech” when that speech threatens the safety and security of our Trojan family is yet *another* in a long series of examples of administrative officials betraying the trust of the student body. To simply direct students struggling with experiences of discrimination and hate speech to counseling services diminishes both our concerns as well as the power of student voices.

At Undergraduate Student Government, diversity and inclusion are at the core of our mission, as we strive every day to advocate for student concerns, fight for tangible change on campus, and foster a safe and inclusive environment for our student body.

Let us provide administration the benefit of the doubt in not having recognized the severity of the situation at hand at the time of releasing the first memorandum. However, now that the threat has been recognized, it is time for us to come together as a community and work to address concrete actions to combat hate speech on our campus.

These memorandums only serve to further the *urgent* necessity for student representation on important decision-making boards such as the Presidential Search Advisory Committee, to be able to *directly* and *effectively* advocate for the safety and well-being of the student body. At the end of the day, it is only students who are able to best relay the concerns and needs of the student body.

Sincerely,

USG Executive Team