



Mean Green Family,

On the evening of Thursday, November 7th, during the “When Hate Comes to Campus” panel, UNT System Assistant General Counsel, Caitlin Sewell, stated the n-word in its entirety to the crowd.

“If I said something offensive - you know, you can say a lot of offensive things in here because it’s impossible to talk about the First Amendment without saying horrible things. Um, you know, **‘You’re just a dumb n--r and I hate you.’** That alone, that’s protected speech.”

The explicit use of the racial slur was beyond shocking. Despite the phrase being used as a hypothetical in an educational setting, the cultural incompetence and ignorance was displayed in full light. While Sewell elected to censor other words, for example by using the term “f-word”, there was no hesitation nor immediate remorse about using the n-word. Additionally, in an attempt to apologize after multiple students and audience members called Sewell out at the event, she stated “I have never said that word in a *public* setting.” Which negates the question - why does the differentiation on the setting in which the epithet is used is as an excuse for Sewell?

Simply put, Sewell displayed a clear lack of understanding of the long-standing history of the racial epithet and its impact on the diverse array of students, faculty, staff, and all those who were present at the event. Furthermore, what is beyond frightening is that as this individual failed to understand the cultural and structural burdens that are unduly placed on the very communities she is paid to defend on legal matters as an Assistant General Counsel for the UNT System.

While as of the morning of November 8th, 2019, Caitlin Sewell’s resignation is effective immediately by notification of a joint message from the Chancellor and the President, this incident highlights the need for institutional change across UNT System.

Therefore, the Student Government Association of the University of North Texas, in conjunction with the UNT Black Student Union and UNT’s chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, call for the following demands:

- 1) We **DEMAND** that the UNT System creates and enforces comprehensive racial awareness and inclusion curriculum throughout all campus departments and units, mandatory for all faculty, staff, and administration. This curriculum must be vetted, maintained, and overseen by a board comprised of students, staff, and faculty of color.
- 2) We **DEMAND** that the university institute a mandatory cultural competency course required of all students either in a first year seminar or a stand alone course integrated within Orientation and Transition Programs.

- 3) We **DEMAND** that the university creates a specific outline to address diversity and inclusion practices in the strategic plan that will increase retention rates for marginalized students, sustain diversity curriculum and training, and promote a more safe and inclusive campus.
- 4) We **DEMAND** that by the academic year 2021-2022 the University of North Texas increases the percentage of black, brown, and other marginalized identities among the faculty and staff campuswide to match the demographic representation of our student population.
- 5) We **DEMAND** the University will allocate new financial resources towards the expansion of the multicultural center and the entirety of the Division of Equity and Diversity. We believe our students deserve a building just like the greek life center to accommodate the needs of individual minority groups.

A finalized strategic plan of demands will be released by Monday, November 11 and presented to the President of UNT Denton Neal Smatresk.

We are students. It is not our responsibility to have the knowledge and expertise on how to execute these demands - that's what we pay you for. Will the University once again stand for slogans and promises? Or will the University stand for its students? This is not a teaching moment, but one that deserves swift action.

Respectfully,

The UNT Student Government Association Executive Board

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Demands continued:

-faculty, staff and students of color should be involved in the hiring process of Caitlyn Sewell's replacement

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