

Tuesday, February 13, 2018

The Black Alliance, in no uncertain terms, condemns the planned lecture series by the Traditionalist Workers Party (TWP), scheduled to begin on February 17, 2018, and we implore the University of Tennessee President Joe DiPietro and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Chancellor Beverly Davenport to stop this from happening due to the TWP's racist, sexist and homophobic views and propensity for violence. According to the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#), the Traditionalist Workers Party "is a white nationalist group that advocates for racially pure nations and communities and blames Jews for many of the world's problems. Even as it claims to oppose racism, saying every race deserves its own lands and culture, the group is intimately allied with neo-Nazi and other hardline racist organizations that espouse unvarnished white supremacist views." The TWP is part of the rebranded racist "[alt-right](#)," which is responsible for killing or injuring more than 100 people since 2014.

If the TWP initiates its lecture series, will the University of Tennessee become the next [Charlottesville](#)? Will overt white supremacists and Nazis be a normal feature on UT's campus due to the lack of resistance from the administration?

Since the [defunding of the Office of Diversity of Inclusion by the Tennessee General Assembly](#) in 2016 and the election of Donald Trump as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, the University of Tennessee has become fertile ground for continued racist actions and divisive white supremacist rhetoric that will find recruits among members of the campus community. Furthermore, we are disappointed and disgusted that this event is scheduled to begin during Black History Month.

If this lecture series goes on as planned, the University of Tennessee will be underwriting overt white supremacy and promoting more white extremism, which may encourage the withdrawal of black students, faculty, and staff from the campus. Additionally, the lecture series potentially poses a serious disincentive in the recruitment of prospective black students, faculty, and staff.

**Inaction is unacceptable** in the face of the actions planned by the TWP. **Do not let them speak here President DiPietro and Chancellor Davenport.**

We need **courageous leadership** at this moment that will uphold the core values of [advancing diversity and inclusion](#) that UT espouses, but falls woefully short of achieving.

**Please do the right thing and cancel this event.**

UT Black Alliance

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