



OFFICIAL STATEMENT: *President LeBlanc's Remarks*

February 2, 2020

*Executive Board, GWCD*

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The George Washington University College Democrats fully condemns the racially unconcerned analogy allegedly produced by University President, Thomas LeBlanc in a recently released video. President LeBlanc's analogy is not only insensitive, but damaging to an already non-inclusive, predominantly white institution. LeBlanc's statement exemplifies the lack of consideration and respect towards GW's black community, particularly with its occurrence on the first day of Black History Month. LeBlanc's analogy of people of color and violence is particularly dangerous considering that the aforementioned community is so greatly affected by it. Never should the president of a university utilize acts of violence on a college campus as an analogy or example, especially towards minority students.

Furthermore, we disagree with President LeBlanc's opinion that climate change denial is a legitimate academic position. GWCD recognizes freedom of academic speech, but the climate crisis is agreed upon by 97% of scientists, and its disregard is unacceptable. Scientists have consistently proven there is a climate crisis currently occurring, and denial is harmful to ourselves, our planet, and our future. Allowing climate change denial to occur on this campus is a further demonstration of the blatant privilege of this university, namely due to the fact that minority ethnic, racial and socio-economic groups are most affected by climate change. Additionally, President LeBlanc's comments about a claimed 3% of funding being allocated towards fossil fuels translates to millions of dollars, which is unacceptable.

GWCD continues to uphold and acknowledge the legitimate concerns of minority groups on campus, as well as working towards divestment within GW. We stand in solidarity with the Black Senators' Caucus, as well as other black organizations and students on campus who are affected by LeBlanc's statement and any other exploitations of white privilege on campus. We call on President LeBlanc to acknowledge and apologize for the insensitivity of his remarks and to advocate against similar rhetorics and statements.

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