

To the UMass Community,

I am writing this statement to address concerns that have been raised about posts on my private social media accounts prior to my appointment as the SGA Chair of Finance. On the afternoon of October 30, 2020, Speaker Fox was made aware of the concerns regarding statements made on my personal social media over the summer by a group of students. I would like to make one thing abundantly clear so as to avoid any misinformation that may be spreading: Speaker Fox has **never** told me to delete any of my social media posts. I did so on my own volition as I felt they could be taken the wrong way out of context.

I would like to apologize for the way the statements on my social media were perceived. At the time those tweets were written, I was not a chair or any other leadership position in the SGA and merely wrote them to be read by my 5 Twitter followers. I also did not anticipate how these tweets might have been interpreted as racist when I wrote them. I apologize for the hurt that was caused by my words and remain committed to making UMass a better place for everyone. I now understand the responsibility and expectations that come with a position of power and strive to use my social media in order to unite students, not divide. I am fully committed to participating in the anti-racism training that the SGA will have and am working towards a plan to reach out better to communities that have traditionally been underserved by the SGA.

However, I do not want this situation to mask and cover up the issues that are prevalent within the SGA. In the time I've served in the SGA, there have been two Presidents elected. Nothing exemplifies the out of touch nature of the SGA more than the legislative priorities of these two administrations. Is the average UMass student truly as horrified and distressed on a daily basis by the existence of Coca Cola in our campus vending machines as President Sullivan and Epstein make it seem? Does the average UMass student truly feel that too many students are being allowed back on campus this Spring? President Epstein sure seemed to assume so in their letter to the Chancellor about the Spring reopening plan. Does the average UMass Student believe that "professionalism is a tool of white supremacy" as vice president Chang does?

Based on my everyday experiences talking to my fellow students, I felt quite strongly that the answers to these questions was no. As such I have continued to voice my disagreement with proposed policies that I feel is not what the average UMass student wants. If we are going to talk about accountability and being representative of the student body, I hope that goes both ways because as of right now, the pressure solely seems to be on senators with dissenting opinions to that of the President and Cabinet. As a person of color and first generation immigrant in a STEM major, I am an incredibly rare minority in the SGA, which is predominantly populated by white poli-sci majors. I have consistently worked hard to make sure people like me have their needs taken into consideration with regards to the SGA's legislative priorities and to be targeted for my political views is nothing new to me as a conservative person of color. I'm used to being talked

down to and treated as some sort of caricature by hypocritical white liberals who preach tolerance and diversity, yet never seem to extend it to those whose opinions differ from theirs. I'm fully in support of holding elected SGA representatives, myself included, accountable for their words and actions as long as it is equally applied and not just targeted at those who have an opinion one disagrees with.

I'd like to once again apologize for the way my tweets have been perceived and the harm that it caused to the affected students. I will be enthusiastically participating in the SGA's anti-racism training and have always strived to reach out to communities that have been neglected by the SGA. I want to assure every UMass student that I never have and will never discriminate against any individual or group. I am **not** a racist. I request that any further enquiries or concerns about my actions as a chair be sent to me directly to my chair email address which is on the SGA website. I'm hoping that any students with concerns will agree to meet with me directly after finals are over so that we can all fully devote ourselves to a resolution. I look forward to working with students and administrators to ensure that Spring move-in goes smoothly and safely.

Sincerely,

Prabhu Rajkumar  
SGA Finance Chair