



February 26, 2021

Dear Members of the University Community,

During a recent Community-Based Learning Talk, the Black Scranton Project reported on research into a national and regional trend from the past in which mock “slave auctions” were held as fundraisers. The research identified that student groups and offices at The University of Scranton participated in this practice from the 1950’s up until 1990 to raise funds for campus programs.

These offensive activities trivialized the grave history of chattel slavery and systemic anti-Black racism in this country. We apologize for pain caused at the time by the racist and sexist character of these events and today as our campus community, especially Black students and employees, and the local Black community are reacquainted with them. This is an opportunity for institutional reflection, learning and, most importantly, action.

Information about these past events is contained within the University’s online archives, which are maintained by the Weinberg Memorial Library. This and other historical information remains available to help us understand and grow from our past.

Over the past year, the University has prioritized and accelerated actions to address racial injustice, including through our Strategic Plan, hiring practices, discrimination policies, training, programming and curricular changes. We are committed to combating systemic racism on our campus and in our nation, and recognize – especially during this season of Lent and in keeping with a Jesuit examination of conscience – that a truthful airing of past wrongs is necessary for present-day justice, healing, solidarity and reconciliation.

Sincerely,

Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D.

Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs