

# Student who posted video ‘no longer enrolled’ at HSU

June 29, 2020

ABILENE—Hardin-Simmons University initiated a disciplinary process involving a student who posted a “deeply disappointing and unacceptable social media post” that mocked attitudes toward interracial violence, HSU President Eric Bruntmyer said.

In a [video message](#) posted June 26, Bruntmyer said while privacy issues and legal restrictions prevent HSU from releasing details about steps the university took, “We can confirm the student associated with this incident is no longer enrolled at Hardin-Simmons University.”

In a brief music video posted on TikTok, an unidentified student in an HSU T-shirt contrasts perceived overreaction to the deaths of Black individuals by white people to apparent lack of concern about white deaths at the hands of Black people or Black-on-Black killing.

“The message shared by this student is not reflective of the Christian values of our institution or the vast majority of our community,” Bruntmyer said in his video message. “What the student did was wrong.”

The attitudes expressed in the video do not reflect the Christian values and heritage of Hardin-Simmons University, he stressed.

“First and foremost, at Hardin-Simmons University, we affirm the God-ordained truth that Black lives matter,” Bruntmyer said. “This truth is actually foundational to our Hardin-Simmons history.”

He noted the “fervent faith” of founder James Simmons led him to dedicating his life to the abolition of slavery and to provide educational

opportunities for people of all races.

Bruntmyer said he learned about the social media post by a student on Tuesday evening, June 23, and “immediately took action to address the situation,” beginning the disciplinary process.

“The views we express on social media should express the values and beliefs we uphold as followers of Christ,” he said.

## **Hate speech ‘completely unacceptable’**

Bruntmyer acknowledged “the hurt and pain” the students’ video caused.

“Hate speech or racist comments by anyone are completely unacceptable,” he said. “And we do not want to condone speech that questions people’s worth, their value, their dignity or their equality.”

Bruntmyer posted his video message the day after more than four dozen HSU faculty issued an [open letter](#) expressing solidarity with students of color, demanding that their voices be heard and rejecting “any suggestion that their lived experiences are baseless or invalid.”

“We recognize that, as educators, we have a responsibility to have hard conversations in our classrooms, to elevate the voices of those who have gone unheard, to approach conversations about privilege and racial justice with humility and with a posture to listen and to learn, and to teach students to do the same,” the letter stated.

“We commit to the work of anti-racism in our classrooms and to work alongside the administration as they prioritize anti-racism education for our entire campus.”