

To whom this may concern,

I joined BSG in my sophomore year as a Student Senator, with the ultimate goal of creating a Bethel experience that would enable students of color to thrive in the way that I knew other white students had the chance to. I wanted to pour into the programs and spaces that meant so much to me in a way I knew Bethel was not doing, and would not do by itself. I wanted to be the representation and a voice for other students like me, that I knew I did not have myself.

In my two years as a Senator, I authored and co-wrote over 10 bills and resolutions that centered around giving funding to underrepresented groups on campus, creating clubs and spaces for other students to find community, and to open previously closed doors within BSG to more students that have not had their voices heard and represented. I have worked with students to not only listen to their needs, but to make the necessary changes in order for them to feel safe and protected at a school like Bethel. I have done my best to encourage students that it was possible to create the spaces and programs that they needed in order to cultivate their own communities within Bethel; communities that they could take pride in. It was beautiful to see the culmination of all this effort come to fruition in the form of being elected as the Chair of Bethel University's most racially diverse Student Senate, despite the broader lack of representation displayed at our predominantly white institution.

Saying that creating a more inclusive and equitable environment at an organization or university "takes time", is an excuse that allows those in positions of leadership and power to remain complacent in regards to dismantling injustices. The truth is, students should never leave our Senate meetings, Student Life, or any space within a Christian community traumatized for asking for equity, inclusivity, and respect. Students have continuously been hurt, and their feelings dismissed. The veto of Resolution 61-6 was only one example of a number of wrong, disrespectful, and racist actions that students of color have endured by the student leaders and administrators that are supposed to serve them.

After this semester, and speaking with several senators, it is the best decision for the preservation of my spirit that I remove myself from BSG, and will be stepping down as the Executive Chair of Student Senate effective immediately. I will always believe in the importance and power of representation, but I cannot in good faith, continue to ask students to give up and tell their stories in an attempt to create the change they need to feel safe and acknowledged, only to be silenced and disrespected. I do not ask for any replies, apologies, or actions in response to this, and simply ask that my decision is respected and know that it was not a decision made lightly.

Those who have signed below will also be resigning from their student senator positions. They have done so, not only in solidarity with what I have expressed above, but more importantly, as a result of their own personal reasons and experiences.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Doherty

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