

Dear Dr. Gutmann,

My name is Clay Graubard and I am a junior in the College of Arts and Sciences. For nearly four months and well over 400 hours, I have been independently researching and documenting the University of Pennsylvania's connection to slavery and the slave trade. I have been to archives all across the state and even the ones at Princeton to piece together this significant part of Penn's history. Along the way, I consulted and conferred with the University archivists, but the research was mine alone. The archivists viewed my work as great scholarly work, worthy of publication.

From the beginning, it has been clearly understood between myself, the archivists, Joann Mitchell, and the Provost's working group that my paper would be published through the University Archives and Records Center. Over a week ago, the paper was sent to Joann Mitchell and the Provost's working group along with the intention of publication this week, but myself and the archivists heard radio silence.

Yesterday, on April 17, I became aware that the archivists would not be permitted to publish my paper per instruction of their supervisor. This came as a complete and total shock.

Despite my best efforts, I have received no explanation for preventing publication. I have asked but not received any reasons for this abrupt decision. Joann Mitchell has not responded to my emails, except for stating that the group would get back to me in two weeks. I feel like this is far too late, as that will be during finals, immediately after which I leave for South Africa as the co-leader for Team South Africa of the Penn Microfinance club.

Moreover, Ms. Mitchell suggested in a one sentence message that I publish independently through the library. I feel like that would remove the legitimacy and quality that my work deserves and would have received if published through UARC.

I came to the University of Pennsylvania because I felt it was an institution that valued the academic curiosity and independent thinking of its students; it was a place that supported, encouraged, and even celebrated the work done by its students to pursue knowledge. Therefore, it is from my point of view that this feels like an attempt by the University to suppress my work. I believe that an institution with the history and prestige that Penn has would celebrate and acknowledge the voluntary and unique accomplishments of its undergraduates.

The intentions and goal of my paper have always been to present, in the most even-handed of approaches, the facts regarding Penn's connection to slavery to facilitate a dialogue dealing with this reality in an open, free, and well researched manner. A few of my emails to individuals in the administration may appear incendiary, but that was no more than my natural reaction to this sudden prevention of publication. I felt abandoned, betrayed, saddened, and devastated by my own University.

I hope that a resolution can come to this situation. I stand proudly behind my work and the rigor of my research. The paper is a quality documentation of Penn's connection to slavery, and I hope that it can be released to facilitate a dialogue on campus regarding this aspect of Penn's history. If my questions regarding the prevention of publication are left unanswered, I can only assume like this is an attempt by the University to suppress my research. I am already in contact with several mainstream media publications in anticipation of this paper's release. I would be forced to tell them the truth of what I have experienced over these past couple of days if my questions remain unanswered.

I hope that you will take the time to read the paper, discuss it with me if you'd like, and ultimately allow for its publication.

Best,
Clay Scott Graubard
CAS '19: Economics Major, Mathematics and Anthropology Minor