

\$90,000 'MISSING' FOR CHARITY

"The kids really need this."



Wharton student group allegedly withholds promised donation

DESIGN BY SOPHIA LIU

An incomplete contribution to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Philadelphia has prompted resignations in protest and an ongoing dispute over what happened to the money, according to a Daily Pennsylvanian investigation

BEN BINDAY
News Editor

For nearly two decades, the "largest philanthropic event" at Penn has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for a charity that bridges education gaps in low-income Philadelphia neighborhoods. But Wharton's graduate student government has allegedly withheld at least \$90,000 in promised donations from the event — prompting student resignations in protest and an ongoing dispute over what happened to the money.

The annual event, known as Penn Fight Night, pits graduate students against one another in boxing matches and sells tickets marketed in support of the Boys & Girls Club of

Philadelphia. Last year's event in April raised approximately \$165,000, according to multiple students, who added that the Boys & Girls Club was told that the funds would be donated shortly afterward.

However, the Wharton Graduate Association — the umbrella organization which oversees Penn Fight Night and manages its finances — only donated \$75,000 to the Club and has yet to contribute \$90,000 in promised funding, sources familiar said.

An investigation by The Daily Pennsylvanian uncovered evidence of unfulfilled promises about the donation from the

WGA to Fight Night leadership and the Club — leading to concern over the status of a donation that the Club deemed critical to support literacy initiatives for over 1,300 children in Philadelphia.

Interviews with multiple current and former leaders of the WGA and its affiliated clubs — all of whom were granted anonymity out of fear of retaliation — event sponsors, and Club employees offered insights into the circumstances and consequences of a Fight Night event that has led to nearly a

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Inside the Penn & Slavery Project's fight for greater recognition

Amid a "demonstrated record of nontransparency" by the University, the project is leading a silent push to make itself a household name

DIAMY WANG
Senior Reporter

In 2016, University spokesperson Ron Ozio told The Philadelphia Tribune that Penn had "no direct university involvement with slavery or the slave trade."

A year later, that claim came crashing down.

A group of student researchers — who formed as the Penn & Slavery Project in fall 2017 — found that at least 20 of the University's 126 founding trustees had owned slaves between 1769 and 1800, and were financially linked with the African slave trade. By May 2018, then-Penn President Amy Gutmann had acknowledged that, among other historical facts, at least 75 of Penn's earliest trustees owned slaves, and that Penn Medicine played a key role in developing prominent theories of "racial pseudoscience."

More than five years later, the Penn & Slavery Project is still relatively unknown among Penn students. As universities such as Harvard University and Georgetown University make national headlines for their institutional commitment to acknowledging their complicity in slavery, Penn has remained relatively silent — even as the University faces controversy over other issues of racial justice on campus.

The Daily Pennsylvanian spoke with multiple people affiliated with the Penn & Slavery Project about the project's findings, their attempts to gain wider visibility, and how the University has responded to their efforts.

The Penn & Slavery Project's background

In the fall of 2017, a group of five Penn students — under the guidance of history professor Kathleen Brown — began conducting archival research into the University's history with slavery and the slave trade, culminating in a presentation of their findings at the end of the semester. They found that multiple early University trustees, including William Smith, the first University provost, had owned slaves.

The project soon turned into its own course taught by Brown, now known as AFRC/HIST 3173: "Penn Slavery Project Research Seminar." In subsequent semesters, students have researched topics such as Penn Med's role in the development of early ideas of medical racism and the origins of skulls in the Morton Cranial Collections held by the Penn Museum.

One of the P&SP's flagship initiatives is its augmented reality app, which contains a virtual tour of campus with six stops that visually contextualize Penn's history with slavery.

"People are kind of amazed by it, especially when they realize undergraduates did the research and undergraduates really imagined and designed the whole thing," Brown told the DP.

Fifth-year history graduate student VanJessica Gladney — who was one of the original researchers on the project and now serves as a public historian for the P&SP — said that Penn's student-led project is a "unique" approach that differs from similar initiatives at other universities.

Publicity efforts

Members of the P&SP have worked for years to expand its reach both on and off of campus.

Fifth-year history graduate student Breanna Moore — who joined the project in spring 2018 — cited the app, on-campus panels, numerous public tours, and the website as methods of publicizing the Penn & Slavery Project.

"We've really just tried our best to let the public know

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Jewish Penn student to attend House roundtable on antisemitism today

The roundtable with students from nine universities comes as Penn continues to be investigated by the House education committee

KATIE BARTLETT
News Editor

Jewish students at Penn will discuss their experiences with antisemitism on campus at a roundtable next week hosted by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce.

The discussion about antisemitism on college campuses will take place on Thursday at 2:30 p.m. in the Cannon House Office Building in Washington. The Penn students will accompany students from eight other universities, including Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Columbia University. Wharton and Engineering junior Noah Rubin will be attending the roundtable, according to a Feb. 28 press release.

Committee Chair Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.) said in the press release that the roundtable will "help inform the Committee's next steps in the antisemitism investigation as it continues to hold postsecondary education accountable for rampant antisemitism."

"These students are dealing with antisemitism at their respective universities on a daily basis," Foxx wrote. "Their courage to speak out and share their stories will give the American people a new look at what is truly happening on college campuses around the country."

A series of controversies surrounding antisemitism at Penn began in response to the Palestine Writes Literature Festival held in September 2023. The festival sparked fear and outrage among Penn students, alumni, and community members of national Jewish groups. These feelings were compounded after the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks on Israel, after which some donors began calling for former Penn President Liz Magill's resignation.

The Committee on Education and the Workforce first launched an investigation into Penn on Dec. 7, 2023. The investigation was announced in response to Magill's testimony at a Dec. 5, 2023 congressional hearing addressing antisemitism on college

campuses.

At the hearing, Magill received national backlash for saying it was "context dependent" in a response to Rep. Elise Stefanik's (R-N.Y.) question asking whether calling for the genocide of Jewish people violated Penn's Student Code of Conduct. Magill and former Board of Trustees Chair Scott Bok resigned on Dec. 9, 2023 in the wake of the backlash.

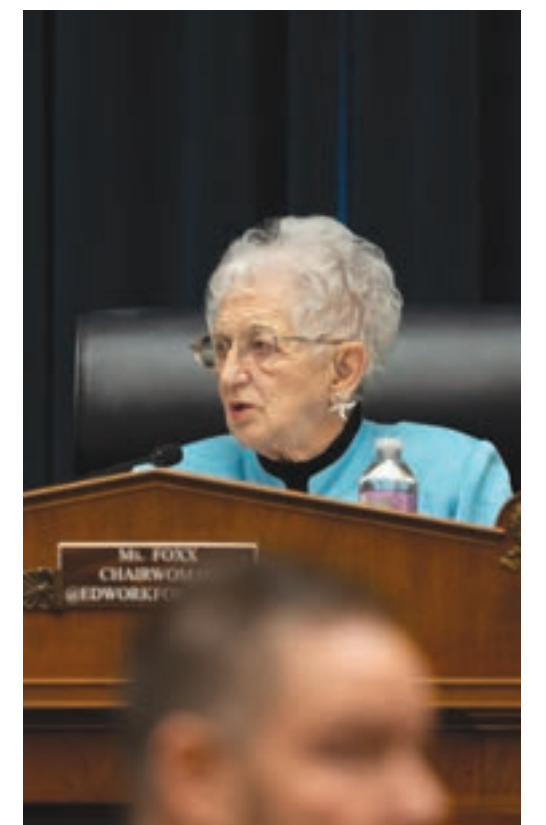
A Feb. 7 letter from the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which called for Penn to submit documents on its response to antisemitism on campus, cited multiple examples as "cases of Penn canceling or sanctioning speech it disfavored." The examples listed included action taken against University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School professor Amy Wax in 2022 and a canceled invitation from the Wharton India Economic Forum to Narendra Modi in 2013, who is the current Indian Prime Minister.

Several other probes have been launched to investigate Penn's response to antisemitism.

On Nov. 16, 2023, the U.S. Department of Education started an investigation into Penn and six other schools over reported instances of both antisemitism and Islamophobia, the first of such probes to be launched after the start of the Israel-Hamas war. The investigation has since been dismissed due to the existence of a lawsuit containing the same allegation.

In addition, on Jan. 10, the House Committee on Ways and Means called Penn's tax-exempt status into question, citing the University's "failure" to support Jewish students on campus and condemn Hamas following the start of the Israel-Hamas war.

Rubin did not respond to a request for comment.



ETHAN YOUNG | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The United States House Committee on Education and the Workforce will host a bipartisan roundtable with Jewish students at Penn and eight other universities.