Fellow Mustangs,

The annual Homecoming Torchlight Parade and Bonfire events were created in 1985 as a part of the Homecoming / America’s Greatest College Weekend. Previous Student Body President, Robert Steele, stated that, “This is the first time a bonfire has been held in conjunction with the homecoming activities. We figured that it could be used as sort of a “spirit rally” for our basketball team, as they prepare to head into the playoffs.” Therefore, this event started based on a desire to enhance school spirit at Midwestern State University.

Over the summer along with over 200 Student Body Presidents across the nation, I signed a statement of solidarity on behalf of our Student Government Association condemning the hateful actions that took place on the campus of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. The document has since then remained a living testament of student bodies across our country, which denounce and do not tolerate such actions taking place at any institution of higher education.

After carefully reviewing the climate on our campus in regard to our Homecoming tradition known as the “Torchlight Parade” and “Bonfire”, the Student Government Association recognizes students’ strong desire to continue this tradition. The Student Government Association assembled a student task force with support from members of our administration, employees, and alumni; information about the tradition was collected and analyzed, and a diverse sample of our student population was surveyed to help inform what action, if any, should be taken concerning the appropriateness and efficacy of our tradition. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the results of our student survey and overall climate at MSU, and the extensive work done by our task force.

The Torchlight Parade and Bonfire tradition symbolizes the light that shines within our community. We choose to share this light and the positive energy, unconditional school spirit, and pride it represents in a manner that unifies our community and all generations of Mustangs. We as the Student Government Association fully support the clear and compelling desires of our fellow students to continue the tradition of the annual Homecoming Torchlight Parade and Bonfire. We believe continuing this inclusive tradition enhances the morale and spirit of Homecoming, and we will continually work to ensure this tradition celebrates our university values and community in a positive, welcoming, and accepting manner for every Mustang throughout the years to come.

Respectfully,

Maria Isabel Peña
Student Government Association
President, 2017 – 2018