

“Date” & “Slave” Auctions

At Austin Peay State University, equality, openness, and sensitivity are strongly held values. The office of Student Life and Leadership (SLL) encourages student organizations to consider these values when planning events and activities.

Sometimes organizations want to hold “date” or “slave” auction events as a way to raise money. The SLL understands that groups who hold these events, or have held them in the past, usually do so with good intentions. We would like to challenge student organizations to think more deeply about these events, the potential unintended effects of these events, and to consider holding alternative events that could accomplish the same objectives.

“Date” or “Slave” auctions involve the process of “bidding” on a human being for their services or the ability to spend time with them. This process devalues a human being to the level of merchandise and involves a comparison of the relative “value” of each person. This process has the appearance of actual slave auctions, which are a real and tragic part of this country’s history. Furthermore, we would like organizations to consider the safety concerns that arise as a result of “Date” auctions. When a person “wins” the ability to spend time with another person, there is no way of telling what their true motives are. Given the prevalence of sexual assault in our culture, safety concerns exist if you allow a member of your organization to be compelled to spend time alone with someone that she/he may not know.

For all of these reasons, and because of the many imaginative and feasible alternatives to these activities, the office of Student Life and Leadership **recommends** that “date” and “slave” auctions should be avoided by student organizations at Austin Peay State University. Remember, the office of Student Life and Leadership is always available to help brainstorm alternative fundraising events.