Much time has been spent deliberating the careless remark made by one individual on Twitter this week. The comment was hurtful and the public’s outrage was understandable. Ms. Foy’s statement and the resulting firestorm that followed generated a lot of negative publicity aimed at Sam Houston State University and misrepresented the reputation of our students, alumni, faculty and staff.

The path of least resistance would be to take disciplinary action against Ms. Foy. Many in the public have called for us to do so. But the legal rights conferred on every American citizen and the code of conduct that governs SHSU students says otherwise. A personal comment made on a private social media account, as offensive as it was, remains protected by the First Amendment. Offensive speech is still protected speech. As an institution that is responsible for educating generations of students in criminal justice and the order of law, we must stand behind those teachings.

Ms. Foy has issued an apology and will have to live with the consequences of her actions. Our response maintains both our academic integrity and upholds the Constitution of the United States of America. Sometimes the right choice is not always the most popular decision. Thank you for standing together as Bearkats and supporting the values that Sam Houston State University has honored for more than a century.

Sincerely,

Dana G. Hoyt
President