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PRESS RELEASE

Eureka-NAACP requests HSU cease recruitment in Minority-Majority Populations

Eureka, CA (April 25th, 2018) The Eureka Branch of the NAACP exists to support, protect, and amplify the communities of color in Humboldt County. Students of color at Humboldt State University have shared with us their experiences of racism in many forms including micro-aggressive behavior in HSU classrooms, overt racism on the streets, systemic racism in the pursuit of housing and employment, and institutional racism in the form of more punitive measures than their white counterparts. We hear them.

The October 6th 2001 murder of Corey S. Clark, a Black male HSU student, remains unsolved as does the April 15th 2017 murder of David Josiah Lawson, also a Black male HSU student. Many students feel that the murder of David Josiah Lawson was a racialized murder and the trauma of both his murder and of a lack of justice over one year later has many students afraid to venture far from campus or their homes.

HSU recruiters continue to travel to minority-majority communities with intent to enroll more students of color. Yet there has been no consistent presence of HSU administrators at the monthly vigils organized and facilitated by the students and Charmaine Lawson, the mother of David Josiah Lawson. There is no regular presence of HSU administrators at the City of Arcata's Dialogue on Race which takes place every 3rd Thursday at the D Street Neighborhood Center. This is unacceptable.

The California Supreme Court has ruled that colleges in California have a duty to take reasonable steps to protect their students from "foreseeable violence" on campus and in school-related activities off campus. HSU's Administration has failed to take an active role in addressing racism and safety concerns in the City of Arcata and Humboldt County thus endangering the lives of the students to whom it extends acceptance letters who have to live, shop and work beyond the boundaries of the campus.

A recommendation of the recent Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College and University Commission accreditation team visit to HSU states that "The admission efforts need to incorporate more information about the challenges as well as the opportunities for students considering HSU (i.e. present the realities of limited housing, safety concerns, racism in the community, etc.)." Students have expressed frustration and disappointment that the recruitment process did not prepare them or their families for the realities of the racial and social climate in our small, rural communities and that there are not sufficient campus resources to support them.

How can HSU in good conscience ask students of color from predominantly minority-majority locations to attend HSU as things stand? If HSU is "number one for Social Justice" as advertised, the University must accept responsibility for the negative impacts of its actions and inactions on students of color and immediately implement changes.

To that end, ***The Eureka NAACP requests of Humboldt State University that:***

- HSU honor the experiences of students of color by confronting its institutional racism and actively engaging with the campus community, the City of Arcata and the surrounding communities in speaking to the racism that students experience.
- HSU ensure that support is in place so that students of color thrive in this community.
- HSU provide budget for permanent staff and student support for the Cultural Centers for Academic Excellence
- Transparency concerning the climate of racism in Humboldt County be the top priority in recruiting and marketing
- HSU do more to serve our diverse population of students with appropriate funding and staffing for the programs that serve them
- HSU prioritize hiring more faculty of color and training current faculty and staff in "cultural competency"

Alternatively, we request that HSU cease all recruitment until these measures are met in largely minority-majority populations and forgo the social and cultural diversity and revenue these students represent.