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Dear NAME Community:

The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) was saddened to learn on Monday, March 9, 2015 of a video being circulated on the social media that featured members of the University of Oklahoma chapter of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity participating in a racist chant. This racist act happened at a mainstream public university and we feel a special responsibility to support the university in addressing this racist incident. NAME applauds the swift and decisive actions of David Boren, President of the University of Oklahoma to ban the SAE fraternity from the campus and order members of the fraternity to move out of their residence. President Boren also expelled two students that were identified on a video that surfaced that showed SAE members singing a racist chant and repeatedly using a racial slur. Although the expulsion of these students is a start, NAME feels that more needs to be done to counteract and eradicate the insidious culture of racist thinking and behavior in American society. Moreover, this regrettable incident has provided an important opportunity for enhanced discussion and action regarding the challenges of inclusion and difference across the U.S.

Even the OU football team was compelled to sacrifice spring practice football days to protest this racist action on their campus. In accordance with the history of race relations in the U.S., this week's racist incident at OU was not the first racist incident involving OU's SAE chapter. In *A People's History of Our University*, the Teepee Incident (1994) tells the story of SAE members urinating on a Native American teepee and another incident (1996) where three SAE students at OU who were suspended after they admitted taking a teepee from the campus, desecrating it and leaving it on an OU sorority house lawn.

On its website, the SAE boasts that nearly all of its 400 members during the Civil War fought for the Confederacy. The fraternity was the first college fraternity founded at the University of Alabama in 1856. The fraternity's founding and southern loyalty may help to explain the reason for the race consciousness of this fraternity.

Racist incidences on college campuses like that at OU and many more across the country can and should serve as a catalyst to a collective mindset there is much diversity work to do throughout the nation. Diversity work means providing space for the opportunity to engage in activities that promote empathy, hope, and agency. When we recognize how our words, actions, and thoughts affect others then we understand that we are the problem and the solution. Today is a critical time for multicultural educators to offer pedagogical tools that will give teachers, students, and administrations to stand up to racism. Clearly, we once again find our country facing critical cultural crossroads and the road we choose should lead toward more

humanity for all. NAME is fortunate to have members among its ranks who have extensive experience, knowledge and skills working with institutions confronted with evidence of racism and other forms of bias. NAME encourages the OU community to consider the following actions:

1. Implement a powerful and meaningful multi-day workshop for incoming students to prepare students to understand issues of bias and the requisite skills needed to flourish in a global economy and diverse workforce.
2. Provide programs for faculty, staff and students to become leaders in efforts to recognize and combat bias.
3. Offer multicultural curriculum transformation workshops to assist faculty.

NAME strives to achieve peace, security, respect, and safety for all humanity, not just citizens of the United States. And as this situation emphasizes a pivotal multicultural teaching moment, NAME offers our guidance through the challenges and opportunities that interculturalism brings about in all of us. In this, we will continue to work not only with local chapters, but with all who desire to further develop cultural competence on campuses, in classrooms and in ourselves.

Respecting our communities,

National Association for Multicultural Education