NAME Statement on New White Nationalist Strategy Targeting College Campuses

The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) is a strong First Amendment advocate of free speech and freedom of peaceful assembly. However, there is nothing “peaceful” about yelling fire in a crowded movie theater or wherever crowds have gathered; the threat of violence is precisely why the courts have established limits to First Amendment rights. Such exceptions must also apply to the white nationalist movement in the United States increasingly targeting college campuses and supporters of the current President as its pro-violence national marketing strategy. This is the same offensive alt-right drive that on Aug. 11-12, 2017, led to the fatal Unite the Right protest rally in Charlottesville, Va. Heather Heyer was killed when she was struck by a car driven by a white nationalist, during the rally.

The white nationalist movement’s initial college campus group, America First Students, was established in January at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan., 120 miles west of Kansas City. A K-State spokeswoman told The Kansas City Star that America First Students “is an independent student organization registered with K-State’s Center for Student Involvement.”

A 64-page Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights report titled “From Alt-Right to Groyper: White Nationalists Rebrand for 2020 and Beyond,” says the new white nationalist strategy, is “an attempt to unite ‘America First conservatives, Christians, anti-globalists and nationalists’” using “many of the same terms that have gained political ascendency during the Trump presidency.” Groyper’s purpose is to “pull disaffected reactionaries and misogynists outside the Republican Party into the white nationalist fold.” The “Groyper war,” the report notes, also “is aimed at pressing Donald Trump and Trump-backing conservatives to adopt the core issues and political framings of white nationalists in the lead-up to the 2020 election and beyond.” The Kansas City Star reports that “Groyper’ is the name of a far-right meme based on a cartoon toad — the latest mutation of the Pepe the Frog meme, a symbol used by Trump supporters and co-opted by white nationalists.” The slippery toad symbolizes the constantly changing efforts to keep the white supremacist ideology alive inside the Republican Party and among Trump supporters.

Groyper groups like America First Students, in addition to pushing white nationalism “through bold confrontations with conservatives,” are attempting to vault into the mainstream by moderating their “appearance and expressed values.” Where better to launch such efforts than on a Middle-America college campus such as K-State. The Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights report said an America First Political Action Conference is to take place February 28 in Washington, D.C.

Throughout NAME’s 30-year history we have strongly supported student political activism focused toward social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion and multicultural education. America First Students and other such Groyper groups intentionally promote racism, bigotry, hatred, violence, and white supremacy. Permitting them on college campuses fosters an anti-people climate that echoes the rise of Nazis in Germany.

NAME stands strongly against Groyper groups, America First Students and other white supremacist efforts to promote bigotry, racism, violence and encourages colleges to unite against student-driven hate. We must prevent these and other divisions in the United States and around the globe, especially in the formative minds and hearts of students.