

KU and Haskell Women of Color Collective- For Immediate Release

February 2nd, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the KU and Haskell Women of Color Collective, take serious issue with an article published in the Education Life section of the New York Times on February 1st, 2016. Abby Ellin wrote a piece entitled "Meet the New Student Activists" in which the story of a student group at The University of Kansas was highlighted. The title is fitting, then, because this student "activist" group is most certainly new to us. The group that was highlighted is in no way representative of the climate at KU or the real work that is being done to improve it.

This article is a complete misrepresentation of TEAMJayhawk's supposed activist work in the community; further we find it deplorable that this group would go so far as to attempt to tarnish the name of Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk. Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk has performed tireless, unpaid physical and emotional labor on behalf of the dignity of marginalized students on KU's campus. They have done so with an incredible amount of thought and foresight into the intersections of oppressions and privileges we all possess, and with a sincere commitment to making this campus better. We were unaware that organizations worthy of feature are those who are reactionarily formed. It is incredible to us that TEAMJayhawk was featured in this piece at all-their completely inaccurate "definition" of racism, tone policing, and lack of concern for the black women who lead Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk is astonishing. Their overall branding as a "tribe" is offensive to Native students, adding insult to devastating injury.

Most notably, we are shocked to see that this article has spread fictional accounts of the actions of Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk- this furthers a goal that is in no way in the interests of creating safer college campuses for underrepresented students. We will continue to publicly support the efforts of Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk, and encourage Ms. Ellin, and all other readers to do the same.

In Solidarity,

The KU and Haskell Women of Color Collective