

MSU Students Non-Compliant with the State Constitution, Demand University Action

Community meetings lead to list of demands, students motivated to
resist Affirmative Action ban

EAST LANSING, MI- Friday, 17 November 2006

In a letter sent to the administrators at Michigan State University (MSU) on Friday, 17 November 2006, the Coalition for Equal Opportunity stated their non-compliance with Michigan's State Constitution and MSU. The letter also contained a list of five demands and a pledge to disrupt the normal operations of the university if the demands were not met.

The letter sent to MSU's administration contains a list of five demands that were generated by students through a series of community meetings held on campus. "We as a community collectively created these demands," said Isabel Machie, a Human Biology Junior at MSU. "If any of the demands are not met, then a course of action will be taken by the students."

The Coalition for Equal Opportunity is a newly formed group of MSU students angered and concerned by the pending ban on Affirmative Action in the state of Michigan.

Student outrage at MSU has come from the passing of Proposal 2, a constitutional amendment in Michigan that will ban Affirmative Action programs in state-sponsored colleges and universities that help recruit, retain, and provide supportive services to women and people of color. "Proposal 2 is a racist and sexist proposal," said Bavisha Bhalsod a Marine Biology Senior at MSU. "It's the equivalent of saying racism and sexism doesn't exist, and that's just not true."

On Friday, 10 November 2006 a group of 150 MSU students angry about the administration's lack of concern about the Affirmative Action ban stormed the monthly Board of Trustees meeting and demanded that university officials listen to their concerns.

To: The administration of Michigan State University

We, the students at Michigan State University concerned with the passage of Proposal 2, hereby declare our non-compliance with the Constitution of the State of Michigan. We will not comply with the Constitution of the State of Michigan or Michigan State University because we believe that Proposal 2 will deny equal opportunity to women, racial and ethnic minorities, and people of diverse national origins in this state. As a state institution, we realize that the administration of Michigan State University has to deal with an electorate that passed a ballot measure that will deny equal opportunities to women and racial/ethnic minorities.

We will resist any efforts on the part of the State of Michigan, the administration of Michigan State University, or any other group that acts or plans to act to limit the scope or funding of programs or efforts to recruit, retain, or render assistance to women, people of color, ethnic minorities, or people of diverse national origins at Michigan State University.

The students concerned with the passage of Proposal 2 demand that the administration of Michigan State University do the following:

1. That the administration and Board of Trustees of Michigan State University takes a public stance against Proposal 2.
2. That the funding, services, and opportunities provided by any program that could be affected by Proposal 2 be preserved. We will not allow any programs that provide services to women, people of color, ethnic minorities, or people of diverse national origins be eliminated or under-funded.
3. That the administrators of Michigan State University join with the legal actions initiated by the University of Michigan to resist Proposal 2.
4. That the administration of Michigan State University informs and includes our coalition of students in the dialog and decision making of the proposed modifications to the existing programs within the constraints of the law.
5. That the administration of Michigan State University not only protect existing programs, but also provide funding and resources for future programs that serve the potential needs of women, people of color, ethnic minorities, or people of diverse national origins at Michigan State University.

If our demands are not met in full, we will take appropriate action to ensure that the rights of women and people of color on this campus are protected. If our demands are not met in full, we pledge to interrupt the normal operations of the university through our rights of noncompliance. With this letter, we hereby give notice to the administration of Michigan State University of our intentions and request an immediate and appropriate response to the concerns raised by the students of Michigan State University.