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The Northern Maine Coalition on Undoing Racism Papers on "A Statement about Racist Research"

Northern Maine Coalition on Undoing Racism

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A STATEMENT ABOUT RACIST RESEARCH

The Northern Maine Coalition on Undoing Racism refutes research which serves to perpetuate stereotypes of minority group members, and encourages policies and programs which promote racial harmony as an American way of life.

Racism can be defined as, an excessive and irrational belief in or advocacy of the superiority of a given group, people, or nation, usually one's own, on the basis of racial differences having no scientific validity. Racism is based on ignorance and has the power to impose bias and prejudices on individuals and institutions.

Racism is not restricted to white hooded cross burners, nor neo-Nazi skin heads. It can be found in "scientific" research as well. This form of racism is as dangerous as any overt radical movement because it comes from legitimate and well-respected members of the academic community and prestigious universities.

When research findings become public it influences the general population who are not always qualified to evaluate the validity and reliability of the scientific methods used. Racist research serves as a basis for supporting and legitimizing public policies which are detrimental to society, and most particularly to minority groups members.

For example, Dr. A.R. Jensen (1980) University of California, Berkeley, Professor of Educational Psychology, published a study in the Harvard review which argues that intelligence was genetic and the poor school performance of Black pupils was due to their supposed inherent mental inferiority. His research did not consider social, economic, and cultural factors which influence test scores, nor was he aware of the intellectual contributions of Black scientists: such as Dr. Charles Drew, a renowned surgeon who pioneered the preservation of blood plasma (blood bank) that saves so many lives, or Dr. George W. Carver, a botanist and agricultural chemist, who revitalized and revolutionized a dying agriculture in the South, or Barbara Jordan once a congresswoman and now a brilliant educator of today.

Dr. Jensens finding were supported by Prof. Schockly, a University of California, physicist who suggested that a policy limiting the birth rate of supposedly mentally inferior Blacks should prevail. This brings to mind the idea of a "superior" race which reached its peak in the 1930's when six million Jews were murdered along with other "inferior" people by the Nazi regime, because they were considered dangerous and useless to a hybridized race.

The study of the alleged physical superiority of Black athletes in some sports is another example of a racially biased research. The study was conducted in the 1930's, at a time when the KKK flourished. The study is methodology flawed as it did not measure the athletic abilities of the population at large. In fact, the research question it self encourages us to think in terms of racial stereotypes, and superior/inferior relationships between different racial groups.

People should be judged as individuals not as members of a certain group!

In order to promote harmony and understanding among the university community the Northern Maine Coalition on Undoing Racisms recommends the following:

1. A mandatory course in cultural diversity should be required of all UMO students, so that they can appreciate the importance of cultural diversity for personal and professional growth.
2. A sensitivity day to be held annually which would include the participation of faculty, administrators, and students consisting of workshops, speakers, and training sessions.
3. Research in cultural and racial minorities in Maine should be encouraged and supported by university officials.

Members of NMCUR