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Maine Campus Responses to racist attack

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Response

Lick urges end to intolerance of racism

To The Editor:

Incidents during the past weeks have painfully brought our attention to the very real effects of racist language and violent behavior on the sense of emotional and physical safety afforded people of color at the University of Maine. Through this letter we wish to appeal to the university community to recommit itself to the basic values upon which a university must be predicated: Mutual respect, a valuing of personal and intellectual differences,

and a sensitivity toward intercultural communication.

A university is at once a place, an idea and an ideal. On all three of these levels of its existence, the university recognizes the inherent worth of the individual. Indeed, respect for the individual and his or her rights to think, write and speak freely is the quintessential core value of the university. We cannot honor this value, we cannot be a university, in an atmosphere in which individual members of our community must live in fear of

harassment and violence stemming from their ideas, ideals, or identities. To be a university is to respect each member of our community and to affirm his or her right to teach and learn free from fear of threat, intimidation or violence. We cannot tolerate behavior which violates codes of civility and respect for all members of our community. Thus, an attack on our students is unacceptable at the University of Maine not just because it is illegal and immoral, but because, if tolerated, it deprives us

of our identity as a true university.

We wish to reassure minority students who are members of our community that we will work to ensure their right to a safe environment, their right to dignity and self worth. We will advocate for these rights, continue to strengthen our on-and-off-campus efforts, and enhance our educational, cultural, and social programming to promote non-violence and racial tolerance.

We wish to clearly state that acts of verbal and physical violence based on racial, ethnic, religious

and cultural hatred of any kind have no place in the university and will not be tolerated.

We call upon every person in this community to consider the ways in which they can help make clear that this is a community that welcomes and supports its students, faculty and staff of color and abhors the acts of those who would, through their words or behavior, say otherwise.

Dale W. Lick
President

African-American Student Association makes statement

Editor's note: The following is a letter from the African-American Student Association, circulated to several local officials and newspapers.

To The Editor:

Racism is a very big problem here at the University of Maine. Today many people feel that we have come a long way in dealing with racism. This is partially true; but we still have many improvements to make a university without racism.

In order to improve race rela-

tions here at the University of Maine, we feel that the university president and members of the administration should take steps to improve the situation.

Many people reading this letter may feel that the university is fine just as it is now. Well, we felt likewise until this past weekend. Two African-American students were leaving a party on Penobscot St. in Orono, when they were both verbally and physically assaulted by about ten white men who yelled "kill those black niggers!"

Also in the student union, racial slurs were posted on the bulletin

board provided for anyone to write comments regarding Saudi Arabia and the war in the gulf. Someone wrote "kill those sand niggers."

We thought that students at the University of Maine were above racial problems. Now our eyes are opened up to what we as students have to face and deal with. If we are going to stop racial problems here at the university, we have to first stop it in ourselves and in our colleges and universities.

African-American Student Association
Jamal Williamson, President

Racism must stop

To The Editor:

We have got to do more to stop racism on this campus.

I have heard many people say, "There's racism on this campus?" Yes, there is, and there is too much of it.

Two of my friends were beaten very badly on Saturday night essentially because of the color of their skin. What kind of ignorance is this? There was nothing they could do considering it was two against nine. And to the nine guys that did it,

what makes you think year are any better than my friends because you are white?

This incident is the type of thing that keeps racism alive. Do we really want this kind of ignorance on our campus? Do we want people to feel they can't go out at night unless they are with an army of friends? It does not matter if you are black or white - we are all equal. Please help the fight against racism.

Grethen Lahey

Lowe's denial is the minority view of majority

To The Editor:

It was Monday evening in the Bangor lounge of the Memorial Union. I sat a few yards away, studying two faces I could barely make out, yet they were faces of friends, friends who over the years have become brothers. Especially in times of adversity.

On the other side of the room, a mother leaned on her husband's shoulder, tears streaming down her cheeks, struggling to listen to a

voice she once knew and could abruptly recognize, her son's.

Consoled by his friend Aaron Phillips, also a victim of the pounding by white men, Quester Hannah Jr. strived to fight back his tears just like his old man who sat several seats away painfully listening to the horrifying experiences reminiscent to his son's coming from the audience. Hannah Jr. heaved and coughed, sparing no pain to express his desolating

emotions.

Approximately eight feet away from Hannah Jr. and Aaron, sat another man, a man appointed to serve and protect a community which Hannah Jr. and Aaron are a part of.

Appalled, flabbergasted and with disgust I watched and listened to Daniel Lowe, Chief of the Orono Police Department, commending the competence and manner in which his men handle

matters such as Hannah Jr.'s and Aaron.

In an arrogant tone and without any remorse, Chief Lowe insisted that the forementioned incident was not racially motivated, rather alcohol related, in spite of the disturbing testimony he heard, and which no one should absorb.

It goes without saying that it is characters like Chief Lowe that continue to paint such a negative image on the civilized majority

and minority, maintaining beliefs that should have checked out centuries ago — a deplorable attribute to his race and this community.

Those of us who are victims of such imbecility shall not resort to ferocity but continue to pray for those like Chief Lowe, who need Jesus in their hearts.

Brothers and sisters, we shall overcome.

Harold Kamanyi