



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

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JACL Troubled By “Compton Cookout” attended by UCSD Students

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation’s oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization and its youth component, the JACL National Youth/Student Council, are disgusted by a “Compton Cookout” party attended by students from the University of California San Diego (UCSD) last week.

Invitations to the event, sent out through the social networking site, Facebook, encouraged female attendees to dress as “ghetto chicks,” characterized by gold teeth, cheap clothes, “nappy” hair and a “very limited vocabulary.” Male party-goers were required to wear urban clothing and other accessories stereotypically attributed to Black urban culture. Watermelon and fried chicken were served as refreshments. Most egregious is that the students used this event to mock Black History Month.

The JACL is outraged by the shocking lack of judgment and racial insensitivity displayed by the students who organized and participated in this event. Whatever the intent of the hosts, racially-themed parties serve only to perpetuate derogatory and demeaning stereotypes while alienating students of color. It is appalling to find that a group of students participated in what can only be described as a pattern of racist behavior in the planning and coordination of this event.

The JACL is pleased that UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox reacted to this incident by issuing a statement and scheduling a “teach-in.” While we concur with Chancellor Fox’s statements that reinforce the value of multicultural diversity and an acknowledgement that our society is weighted with a dark history of race prejudice and bigotry, we are equally concerned that the university reinforce clearly and unequivocally that it rejects racial intolerance to help allay current fears among minority students related to feelings of isolation and vulnerability; that it meaningfully address the offending actions by individual students who organized this event; that it engage the student community in a series of diversity efforts calculated to engender multiracial understanding and cohesion, and; that it review the effectiveness of its internal policies respecting race, hate incidents and hate crimes.