FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In the short time since the start of the 2016-2017 school year, marginalized students have been burdened with several attacks on their identities, and many struggle to survive as a result. Native students and allies have traveled to North Dakota to join the Water Protectors at Standing Rock to block government intrusion on sacred Native Land. The U.S government intends to build an oil pipeline directly through this land, placing millions of gallons of drinking water at risk of irreversible contamination. Water Protectors have been arrested, attacked by police dogs, and have even been cut off from supplies of water, food, and shelter. As they plan to stay through the fall and winter months, most media outlets have been silent about this national crisis.

The Ecumenical Campus Ministries (ECM) hung a Black Lives Matter banner from their building in solidarity with the movement’s goals of liberation for oppressed Black people and the eradication of police brutality. That banner was stolen. Prior to this Tyre King was killed by police while running away with a BB gun. In the days following, two unarmed Black men were killed by police: in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Terence Crutcher) and Charlotte, North Carolina (Keith Lamont Scott). On Tuesday night, a transgender woman of color was harassed on Jayhawk Boulevard as she walked. While entities close to her have responded, the university as a whole has remained silent about her ordeal.

These incidents, particularly those on our own campus, highlight our greater need to stand for those who are oppressed. Silence is no longer a viable option for any of us. In the wake of national campus activism, it is time to decide on which side of history we will land.

We are calling on all university officials to release statements of support for marginalized students on campus, particularly trans women of color who endure daily violence. We are calling on university leadership to enact policy that does more than bandage a much larger societal wound. We are calling on faculty to provide a supportive environment for marginalized students, and to introduce social justice education into ALL classrooms. Finally, we are calling on staff, especially those who supervise marginalized students, to provide an inclusive, safe environment to ALL students. There is more to be done. We are calling for more than “dialogue”. More than” conversation”. We care calling for inclusion and justice.

If you are especially affected by the violence against, Black, Native, and trans people in the past weeks, please know that we are available for any resources that you may need. You are valuable beyond measure, and it is up to us to treat you as such. You matter, and we see you.

Sincerely,
University of Kansas
Multicultural Student Government
2016-2017