As Humboldt State University (HSU) strives to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) that is based off of the increasing population of Latin@ students who have been, and apparently still are, underrepresented in White Serving Institutions (WSI). Populations who apparently now have to pay or indebt themselves for an education that does not promise much but a semi-comfortable spot in this settler colonial project that is the United States of AmeriKKKa.

The problem that we as students have with this painting is not that it is the first and only painting that is publicized to portray the daily lives of what appears to be predominantly Latin@ workers. The problem is that this same painting was located after Winter break of 2013 in the cafeteria, commonly known as the “J”, where the population of low wage paid student workers is predominantly students of color. The painting was purchased through the Presidents Purchase Award which has been awarded to a student annually since 1988 to be added to HSU’s permanent collection. The question then arises about why is it that in a time when the population of Latin@ students is increasing, and Humboldt State seeks to reap benefits from becoming an HSI, a painting of brown people working in a wage labor job is chosen to welcome the increase of students of color into this institution? Is Humboldt State really trying to become a Hispanic Serving Institution? or is it only ready to claim a title that will only help it acquire certain grants?

As one might or might not know, HSI grants apply to the whole school and therefore should seek to serve populations who have been, and apparent-ly still are, underrepresented in White Serving Institutions (WSI). Populations who apparently now have to pay or indebt themselves for an education that does not promise much but a semi-comfortable spot in this settler colonial project that is the United States of AmeriKKKa.

As students we voiced our opinions to Michele McCall-Wallace and Ron Rudebock about the frustration that was caused by the painting and the mis-representation that we felt. The painting was agreed to be taken down during that same week and students pushed for it to not be portrayed anywhere because of the lack of conscience that took place when it was first placed, not because students want to censor it, as was claimed by staff. Soon, Spring break came across and as students contacted Dean Kenneth Ayoob, replies were received by students. These replies said, in summary, that the painting, based on freedom of speech would go back up no matter what but it would only change location moving from the “J” to the Library because maybe in the library, a placed presumed for critical thinking, students would acknowledge the piece of art as a great addition to the predominantly white male portraits of past University presidents. Following Spring Break students once again met with Michele McCall-Wallace, Kenneth Ayoob, Gabrielle Gopinath, Teresa Stanley, and Jennifer Eichstedt to discuss our concerns and the reasons that had been first stated on why we did not want the painting to be portrayed. After a discussion, students compromised that this response would be written in order to let our voices be heard and that there would also be an open forum in the following weeks in which students can come and find out about the issue and/or come voice their opinion about the painting.

One has to ask if it is really freedom of speech or is it a way to cover up for the fuck up that administrators had in not taking into consideration that they were mis-representing students. Historically speaking freedom of speech was invented and has also been predominantly over used by white colonizers to quiet the voices of people of color. So as it has been predominantly owned by only one side of the population, one has to ask why it is that it is once again, in a color blind society, serving the same population? and the visceral crumbs of freedom of speech is once again left for the underrepresented to write a response hoping that it will stand out more than the painting.

**Proposals by students to be represented:**

1. A Mural that represents our cultures (painted and created by students of color).
2. Better representation in Administration (hire staff of color who are not white-washed and that won’t let this shit happen again).
3. Raise the wage of students of color who work in The (People’s) Depot, The J, Creekview Market and other food providing places.

**Contact if forum doesn’t happen like they said it would on May 1st:** Michele McCall-Wallace, Kenneth Ayoob, Gabrielle Gopinath, Teresa Stanley, and Jennifer Eichstedt

F.R.E.E

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“There is in fact no such thing as art for art’s sake, art that stand above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics.” -Mao

“I used to wonder (I used to wonder) about people who don’t believe in themselves
But then I saw the way that they portrayed us to everyone else
That cursed us, to only see the worst in ourselves
Blind to the fact the whole time we were hurting ourselves”

- Immortal Technique