

September 9, 2011

Dear Members of the USC Community:

I was recently made aware of an appalling video that was the centerpiece of a September 2, 2011 show called "The College Experiment" that was produced by Fox Sports. In the show, reporter Bob Oschack made fun of unsuspecting Asian international students at the University of Southern California (USC) by asking them questions about American football and about Colorado and Utah joining the Pac-12 Conference. Mr. Oschack singled out students who were not familiar with football and belittled them, making fun of their accents. His idea of humor and satire was inappropriate, insensitive to our Asian-Pacific American and international communities, and a form of racism.

The diversity of our community and culture of mutual respect are core values that sustain USC. Just yesterday, as I was sitting on the International Plaza of our campus center, I saw students of all backgrounds, heard a multitude of languages, and smiled to myself and thought how special it is to be a member of a dynamic, diverse community of scholars who share common values of hard work, intellectual engagement, openness to learning new things, and the USC Trojan Family.

USC is proud of the fact that soon after it opened its doors in 1880 one of its first entering classes included international students (from Japan) and it now enrolls more international students than any other university in the United States. Our students hail from 115 different countries. We have one of the largest international alumni populations of any American university and many of our faculty and staff are also from other countries. USC has offices in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, Mexico City, and Mumbai that support faculty research, recruitment of new students, alumni programs and development activities.

Fox Sports rightly cancelled the show, but not until after it aired. It should have never appeared on their airwaves. While the network did issue an apology to President Nikias and the USC community, we hope that there are actions underway at the network to assure that in the future no other individual or group of individuals will be similarly mistreated.

The Society for Professional Journalists has a code of ethics that journalists around the world voluntarily adhere to in their work. The key tenets are: Seek the truth and report it, minimize harm, act independently, and be accountable. I hope that Mr. Oschack and others responsible at Fox Sports take a refresher course on journalistic ethics and adhere to the standards of basic respect and decency.

Michael L. Jackson



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