



LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

Department of Psychology

December 8, 1984

LAFAYETTE COLLEGE
Dean of Students Office

DEC 11 1984

Herman C. Kissiah
Dean of Students
219 Markle Hall

Read by.....

File.....

Dear Dean Kissiah:

On Wednesday, November 28, 1984, Delta Upsilon fraternity displayed from its flagpole a nude female inflatable form with a noose around its neck. This object remained in full sight of the entire campus all day, until Dean Frits demanded its removal in late afternoon. We would like to charge Delta Upsilon fraternity with sexual harassment, and specifically with creating an atmosphere that is offensive and demeaning to women.

Although to any individual with a modicum of sensitivity and maturity, such a charge should need no explanation, the actions of said fraternity suggest that such sensitivity and maturity are lacking among many of its members. The display of a nude female form in and of itself is offensive and demeaning to women because it objectifies the female body, thereby dehumanizing women. The literal "hanging" of this object is even more offensive and demeaning to women because it symbolically "kills" us.

Violence against women is a serious and increasing problem in today's society, as statistics on rape, wife abuse, and sexual abuse of women and girls reveal. Violence against women also is a problem on this campus, as recent reports of attempted rapes and assaults have indicated. Displaying a hanging nude female object fosters an atmosphere in which acts of violence against women are thinkable, "do-able", and, indeed, considered to be "funny" or "humorous." Since these acts are neither funny nor humorous, displays which suggest them cannot be either; they are a form of harassment.

We would like to see appropriate action taken against Delta Upsilon fraternity. Its members' behavior cannot be condoned anywhere, particularly on a college campus where all individuals are supposed to become informed, aware, and responsible citizens. This particular fraternity's record of offensive actions in the past suggests that educational sanctions are insufficient to change its behavior. One individual member may have put the object up the flagpole, but no one else in the fraternity removed it until they were instructed to do so by the Dean's office. The entire fraternity therefore should be held responsible for the display.

We hope that prompt and serious action will be taken against this group.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Basow on behalf of
The Professional Women of Lafayette

SAB/lm

Easton, Pennsylvania 18042