Resolution Supporting The Creation Of A ME/NA Racial Category

We, the Student Government of the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), support efforts to implement creation of a Middle Eastern and North African (ME/NA) racial category on all University documents that collect racial and ethnic demographic data.

The Middle Eastern and North African community has historically raised a concern that there is a lack of official recognition of their identity and existence on campus, having to identify as white on the Census, CommonApp, Graduate school applications, University job applications, etc. The Islamophobia Working Group (IWG) on campus has identified this issue as a key area of concern, pointing to the lack of institutional memory, documentation, and recognition regarding the historical presence of the ME/NA community on campus. The inability to collectively identify ME/NA students is problematic for a range of issues including allocation of funding, official ceremonies, and bias incident reporting. These consequences further illustrate the severity of prohibiting ME/NA students from properly self-identifying to the University and a disempowerment of the ME/NA community more broadly.

This conversation is especially pertinent at this time, as the University has demonstrated a commitment to implementing its plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). As cited by the DEI plan, "our strong tradition of student activism and striving for change" has "led us to this next concerted effort to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment for our entire campus community." We believe that efforts to include a ME/NA category on University documents is a natural extension of the DEI plan and mission, and can even further the underlying aspirations of the DEI initiative.

Kirstie Hostetter, President
Natalie Payer, Vice President & Treasurer
Mark Green, Sustainability Chair
Malavika Sahai, Vice President of Diversity
Allison Miller, First-Year Representative
Tyler Fitch, Careers Chair
Charlotte Weinstein, Vice President of Internal Affairs
Param Singh, Alumni Chair
Kevin Bosma, First-Year Representative
Katie Williamson, Academics Chair
Priscila Papias, Health and Wellness Chair
Calli VanderWilde, Community Chair
Tara Mahon, Communications Chair