SWANA Campaign "Check it Right!" Presentation

Here is the script for the presentation. Feel free to add or delete parts but make sure that people are receiving a well-rounded explanation/education on the subject. Good luck!

*Title slide:*
- Introduce yourselves
- How did you get involved in this campaign?
- It is our responsibility as UC students to take action on this issue. Changing the application would give the Middle Eastern community the tools they need engage with issues such as under-representation, recruitment, and retention. It is also essential to give the Middle Eastern community the agency to define their community based on agreed upon terms, and not an inaccurate and imposed upon racial classification.
- The term "Middle Eastern" is also a colonial/orientalist term, so Southwest Asian/North African better represents the area we are talking about.

*The current application:*
- This slide is just for you to point out how the application looks right now.
- Make sure to point out how Middle Eastern is listed under the term White/Caucasian
- Caucasian has become a word that is synonymous to white even though many of those who call themselves white are not actually from the Caucas area.

*Map:*
This is an example of an old map grouped and colored based on physical appearance. Africa, Asia, Europe. It basically represents the type of classifications we still use today on the applications. This was developed in Europe a few centuries ago. It show how this theory is formed. Purely based on physical form.
As you can see, Africa is brown (skin color), but Asia is yellow.
Basically for the Middle Eastern community, you're not white in the same way as Europeans view themselves, but you don't really fit into any of the other races either.

*Historical context (this is an BIG part):*
the ethnicity portion of the application gives students and the administration the ability to gage diversity and underrepresentation on all UC campuses but in order to challenge these imposed identities and take active steps toward solving issues we need to understand the history of how this came to be

History of why Middle Easterners/ North Africans are classified as "Caucasian"
- Early racial classification comes from the 3 race theory (African, Asian, Caucasian) because Middle Easterners don't look african or asian, they became caucasian. Middle easterners don't have a racialized white identity even though they have been grouped as white.

History of Racial Classification
- 1899 courts classified Syrians and Palestinians white by race.
- 1910 these groups were classified as "Asiatic" but citizenship was still rejected. Early 20th century court cases primarily involved Christian Syrians/ Arabs, Armenians, South Asians

because they tended to be better off and could afford to come. Education was the reason a lot of the time. These communities tried to be classified as white because you could then vote and have civil rights. And if you were white, you could be citizens.
- 1914 South Carolina judge says Syrians are not white; only Europeans are white
- 1915 found that Arabs are part of the "Semitic" branch of the Caucasian
    - 1960s civil rights movement and 1970s classification: for the first time census data used to meet needs of under-privileged communities.
    - South Asians were included, but Middle Easterners were not
- 1965 Voting Right Act where the 1924 quotas were removed — Egyptians, Jordanians, Palestinians and Iraqis come, government needed detailed demographic info, forms used by schools, health services, social service agencies, and most businesses
- 1977 African American, Asian, Native American/Alaskan, Hispanic, white were the categories on the Census. Middle Easterners had no spot on the Census because history had shown them constantly trying to associated themselves with the white racial category.
- 1980 Heritage form revealed gap in data collection (sent out with the census)
- Health service is a big issue in this county: you are likely to have a bone marrow match with ethnicity. But even the whole grouping of middle eastern doesn't do anything. The government has no record. You have no registry.
- 1988 in a study of 8th graders the Asian Pacific Islander category incorrectly included 15% Middle Easterners
- 1997 tried to get an Arab box but due to the existence of ethno-religious groups, a consensus did not exist. If you think about it, even Hispanic was considered to be a white ethnic group because of this 3 race theory. African, Asian, and everything else. They changed hispanic to hispanic/latino, separated Asian and Pacific Islander groups
- Arab groups working with OMB to work on changing the census. There is currently ADC advocacy for changing the census.

*Problems with the classification:*
The ethnicity portion gives communities the tools they need to engage with issues such as underrepresentation recruitment and retention. We need to define our community based on agreed upon terms, not an inaccurate and imposed racial classifications.

*Next slide:*
- the classification of "Middle Easterners" as Caucasusian was implemented in the 1977 when the government standardized the use of racial and ethnic categroies and recognized four racial groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacfific Islander, Black and White
- Post 9/11: It stratified the minority status of Middle Easterners and South Asians. Sate-sponsored profiling of the community. It changed public discourse in addressing Middle Easterners and South Asians

- Personal identity of these communities isn't "white"
- Inaccurate racialized identity (violation of civil rights esp. Post 9/11), model minority myth
- Federal standards are adopted by most institutions in the county
- Prevents advocacy on an administrative level (program areas, calsses, faculty, health services)

- "other" data is useless — not recorded and doesn't address the issue of "Caucasion"
- We need data in order to effectively track recruitment and retention efforts (eventually will expand)

Accurate research, evaluation, and analysis on a population and the "usefulness" of such data without the existence of a pre-existing category to record such research is impossible, because the number of those who check "Caucasian," "Asian or Pacific Islander" or "African" in lieu of writing in their specific ethnicity in an "Other" category is unknown;
Persons who select "White/Caucasian" and specify that they are "Middle Eastern" or "Arab," etc. are still recorded by the U.S. Census as "White;"
Because of the lack of representation in the United States, the Middle Eastern community has formed into an "invisible" minority, or a minority group that faces issues similar to other minority groups (such as a lack of access to resources and low socio-economic status) but does not receive recognition as such; and,
Due to this status as an "invisible minority," the Middle Eastern community is often excluded from programs centered on diversity and multicultural communities on a national and institutional level;
MIddle Easterners tend to not identify as white because of this imposed identity. They haven't had the same experiences as others that classify them as white
In an academic realm, that affects us too because we don't even qualify for minority scholarships or a lot of other opportunites and resources. This is why it is disempowering and in turn, why our communities are somehow disorganized and a lot of times groups themsevles around religion.

*Bill slide:*
This is pretty self-explanatory

*UC-Wide Issue*:
In 2006, the "Count Me In" Campaign led by the Asian Pacific American Coalition was successful in changing the University of California application to better reflect the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities by creating 23 Asian American and Pacific Islander categories and reporting Pacific Islanders separate from Asian Americans; and,
Motivations behind the "Count Me In" Campaign included highlighting the discrepancies between different Asian American and Pacific Islander communities in terms of access to education and admittance to the UC system; and,
The Middle Eastern American community faces a similar issue of discrepancies between certain more privileged communities and less privileged communities under the broader identity of "Middle Eastern;" and,
The term "Middle Eastern" is too broad to document these discrepancies
In order to solve these institutionalized issues of advocacy and representation on a UC-wide level, it is essential to separate the "Middle Eastern" and "North African" categories from the "White/Caucasian" category in order to create a new category that will allow for further disaggregation to create more specific subcategories that reflect the diversity of the Middle Eastern community; and,
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- Ethnic data from the UC application has many uses for community and campus organizations, including the evaluation of acceptance, admittance, retention, and graduation rates;
- Recruitment and retention centers benefit greatly from the data collected from the UC application and utilize the data to measure outreach efforts to specific under-represented communities;
- We simply don't have the resources right now because we don't have anywhere to begin to even start doing this advocacy. This box can create Recruitment and Retention centers. It will be different on every campus as to HOW they use the data, but it is undebatable that the data is actually needed.

The reason I currently hold this position in the EAVP's office at Berkeley and why this is an external affairs issue is because it affects the diversity of our school. We have institutional problems. We have no clue about the retention rates of certain communities: are they graduating or not? Are they even getting admitted or not?

This can track mental health issues, public health issues, retention rates and more. There is no longer time to remain this "invisible minority"

*What's next?*

- We believe that given the scale of the campaign and the importance of the change it is proposing, it is exactly the kind of action item that would characterize a generation of students who are ready to challenge imposed identities and take active steps towards solving issues facing the UC community.
- UCSA Bill being presented and passed the first weekend of February
- Other campuses are working on passing the bill