

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center
University of Michigan
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To Whom It May Concern:

Each year the University of Michigan's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) holds a campaign on sexism in advertising to educate the campus community on the cultural impact of sexist and misogynistic imagery. This year, SAPAC volunteers chose Wakeboard Nebraska's advertisement on the online community Facebook as one of the most sexist ads of 2007.

I, _____ find your advertising strategy to be particularly offensive because of the ways in which you:

- Objectify women in a way that reduces them to body parts, implying that women solely exist to physically satisfy men. This characteristic, shown in all sexist advertisements, is exemplified in Wakeboard Nebraska's as the viewer is only able to see bikini-clad torsos with paper bags covering the heads of the models. By reducing the women to mere bodies, Wakeboard Nebraska hints at what a so-called perfect woman might be in a society which values women for their bodies, rather than for their strength of character.
- Use sex-role stereotypes to portray women as submissive and subordinate. By placing paper bags over the heads of models, Wakeboard Nebraska implies that a woman's role in life is to be seen and not heard. This message not only continues to propagate the sexist stereotype that woman should be submissive and subordinate to male authority, but even more importantly, this idea of submission also contributes to what many scholars call a "rape culture."

Rape culture is a term used to describe a culture where rape and other forms of sexual violence is normalized and excused by the media. While it is not say that your advertisement is going to cause a person to immediately go out and rape someone, it is believed that images such as Wakeboard Nebraska's on Facebook help creates a culture where objectifying women into mere objects is deemed as acceptable. Once a person is deemed an object rather than a human being, violence against that person can be seen as excusable.

I am writing to ask that Wakeboard Nebraska be more conscientious about the images that are chosen to represent the company. The advertisement in question, and others like it, is offensive and degrading to women. It is quite possible to advertise your website and sell your equipment without the use of sexist imagery. In the future, please be aware of the effects of this type of advertisement; we can work together to change the prevalence of sexism in advertising.

Sincerely,

Signature _____