

Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center  
University of Michigan  
715 N University Avenue, Suite 202  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Procter & Gamble  
169 E Grand Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri 63147

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 your advertisement (enclosed) as one of the ten finalists for the most sexist ad of 2006-2007.

Although this Noxzema advertisement ostensibly praises intelligent women in its "Noxzema. Pretty. Smart." slogan, this slogan is not the focus of the ad. First and foremost, the message of this advertisement is that "no" really means "yes" and that, contrary to their reactions, women actually enjoy street harassment. The ad also implicitly grants male viewers permission to make catcalls, and it tells women that street harassment is a valid and normal way to boost one's body image.

What makes this advertisement even worse is that it is targeted to teens and young women. (We found this ad on facebook.com as well as in *Glamour*.) The ad glorifies an unattainable standard of beauty by displaying an emaciated caricature of a young African American woman with incredibly long, twig-like legs, tiny arms, a small torso, and no muscle whatsoever (not to mention the conspicuous absence of fat). Equally significant, this advertisement teaches impressionable and possibly self-conscious girls and young women that validation for their beauty and intelligence must come from an external source; in this case, a suitable source can and should be a male stranger.

Finally, this advertisement plays on negative stereotypes about men in certain professions, namely construction work. The "Construction Area" sign and barricade combined with the "Get noticed." tagline implicate that if an attractive young woman passes by a construction area, invariably the men working in the area will harass her.

While most Americans claim that they are immune to the messages of advertisement, your marketing team undoubtedly understands the power of its work, which is why we are so disappointed in your current ad campaign. Your advertisement not only perpetuates common gender stereotypes, but it also explicitly instructs the viewer to act in a certain way, depending on his or her gender. We write with the hope that Procter & Gamble will be more conscientious about the images that are chosen to represent itself and its affiliates. The advertisement in question, and others like it, is offensive and degrading not only to women but also to male blue collar workers. It is quite possible to sell facial care products without the use of sexist imagery.

In the future, we hope that your team will keep in mind the effects of this type of advertisement and act accordingly.

Sincerely,

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print: \_\_\_\_\_