I Am Not Your Video Girl

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Abstract
“We need girls who are willing to be up on stage with us and who are not afraid to go HAM dancing in front of a crowd. I know at least a few of you who have the confidence/jaw-dropping dance moves to pull this off.”

Keywords
Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, dance, self expression, 2 Chainz, minorities, stereotype

Disciplines
African American Studies | Asian American Studies | Dance | Educational Sociology | Ethnic Studies | Ethnomusicology | Race and Ethnicity | Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies | Sociology

Comments
Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.
Women of color constantly face derogatory stereotypes that continually affect how we are portrayed in society. Agreeing to dance to a song that is derogatory and offensive, to not only women of color but also women in general, in such a public setting would only strengthen the already negative stereotypes assigned to women of color. Participating in this dance would be a public mockery of myself and all the women of color who struggle on a daily basis to transcend the demeaning stereotypes that place offensive and unjust limitations on our positions in society.

For many, we are seen as mere statistics in the growing number of teen pregnancies and high school dropout rates. To some, we are “video vixens”, “big booty hos,” “confidence” and “jaw dropping” moves. The list goes
on. Yet, for the women of color who reject these expectations, society often finds a way to remind us (in this case an innocent email) of the “roles” that are expected of us, despite our successes.

Maybe I was “reading way into it” or I was “seriously overreacting” as many of my friends told me. But I was reminded of what my mother always tells me: “You get back what you give out.” Shaking my non-existent “big-booty” before the entire student body would only reinforce the negative perceptions on a predominately white campus. As a black woman, I now strongly believe that I too am responsible for the messages I send out and how society and others perceive me. Therefore, it is my responsibility to break free from those stereotypes that so often cloud people’s judgment of who we are as women of color and educate them that there are more to women of color than just shaking our “big booty” to a 2 Chainz song.

I am not your video girl!

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