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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA ALERT

"We at the National Justice Network are highly disturbed by the reports of posts from former Florida State University professor Deborah O'Connor, and the apparent lack of concern coming from FSU's administration. The breadth of bigotry expressed was extraordinary, targeting the President, African-Americans, homosexuals, Muslims and northerners. This hateful tirade was not shared on O'Connor's personal Facebook page and network, but rather in a public form where her hateful messages could widely target specific individuals. Not only did O'Connor seek out people to offend, she explicitly cited her FSU professorship to support her hateful ideology.

Adner Marcelin, the president of the Tallahassee Chapter of the National Justice Network and a FSU alum, says that he has spoken with many Tallahassee residents today who all fear that these allegations will not be investigated and as result would conceal any record of this incident from O'Connor's FSU employment records. Such actions would allow her to continue to spread her hateful ideology elsewhere with the implied support of FSU. Many of the people Professor O'Connor expressed disdain for have put much of their lives into supporting and building FSU, and it would be a gross miscarriage of justice to allow their efforts to be appropriated into attacks on them and their communities.

Further, Professor O'Connor's use of the term "rodent" to describe Muslims echoes the Nazi rhetoric of the "rodent Jews", and is particularly problematic in the context of increasing hate crimes against Muslims in America," said Marcelin. O'Connor's comments were not only extreme and outrageous, but specifically created emotional distress for entire groups of people and specific individuals. FSU can not sit back and wait for these issues to be sorted out; the administration must be proactive in addressing how these emerging issues will affect university governance.

We advise the FSU administration to adopt a proactive approach to forming information age policies that ensure protections for free speech while also maintaining vigilance against bullying and threats of violence. The first step in this process is to protect FSU's reputation by investigating professor O'Connor's statements and making the results of that investigation a part of her employment record with FSU, therefore ensuring that she is not able to continue to bring shame on the university with her shameless behavior."