

Resolution # 69-20

**The Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA)
The Pennsylvania State University**



of the 69th Assembly
April 15, 2020

Be it decided by the Assembly of Elected Delegates,

**Condemnation of COVID-19 Related Discrimination and Harassment against
the Asian Community**

(Decided: [Y / N / A])

1 **Nature of the Situation:**

2
3 The COVID-19 crisis has spurred racism rather than tolerance and understanding across the United
4 States. Fueled by the president’s repeated naming of the COVID-19 virus as the “Chinese virus”,
5 racist acts against people of Asian descent (and those perceived to be of Asian descent) have
6 escalated in the past month, including verbal abuse and assault.¹ One non-profit--Asian Americans
7 Advancing Justice--reported over 650 instances of racism and xenophobia in one week.² The Asian
8 Pacific Policy Planning Council additionally reported 1,135 instances of targeted harassment in
9 the first two weeks of reporting. Women are reported to be harassed twice as much as men and
10 harassment of minors makes up 6.3% of all reported cases.³ Many of these incidents are taking
11 place around essential businesses, making it exceedingly difficult for people of Asian descent to
12 feel safe in their communities. Notable incident types include being barred from entering

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/us/chinese-coronavirus-racist-attacks.html>

² <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/asian-americans-report-nearly-500-racist-acts-over-last-week-n1169821>

³ www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Press_Release_4_3_20.pdf

1 establishments or using public transportation, being coughed or spit upon, physical assault,
2 shunning, in-person and online harassment, vandalism, and many other forms of discrimination.⁴
3

4 Members of the State College community are not sheltered from this harassment. The Graduate
5 and Professional Student Association--along with the other Penn State student governments -- was
6 recently made aware of acts of discrimination against students of Asian descent in our community.
7 Though we cannot explicitly discuss individual instances due to individuals' privacy, GPSA
8 emphatically condemns these actions against members of our community and beyond the confines
9 of Happy Valley. Additionally, we aim to take a proactive approach to prevent these acts of
10 intolerance in order to help and protect vulnerable members of our community. GPSA will
11 continue to monitor discrimination in the community and provide support in any way we can to
12 affected parties.
13

14 **Recommended Course of Action:**

15

16 By adopting this resolution, the Graduate and Professional Student Association formally joins the
17 Penn State Student Body Presidents in condemning discrimination and prejudiced actions against
18 members of our student community of Asian descent.
19

20 The Graduate and Professional Student Association also recommends the following actions to the
21 Penn State administration:
22

- 23 ● **The Penn State administration formally condemn racist and bigoted actions made**
24 **against members of the Penn State and State College communities through a**
25 **statement sent to all members of the community (faculty/staff/students).** We also ask
26 that the university investigate these acts made against or by members of the Penn State
27 community.
28
- 29 ● **The administration create an easy and secure submission tool for members of the**
30 **Penn State community to report abuse and discrimination related to COVID-19.** This
31 submission form should include the option for anonymous submissions, as many people
32 who experience harassment and discrimination may not feel safe providing personal
33 information. Even if the information is not submitted anonymously, the administration
34 should ensure individuals' privacy and protection from retaliation. This tool will help the
35 administration and relevant parties understand the scope of discrimination and harassment
36 in the community. We propose that all students/faculty/staff, currently residing inside or
37 outside the confines of State College, should be allowed to access this form and report
38 discrimination. This reporting mechanism can be within the existing Report Bias system,
39 but efforts need to be made to highlight this reporting mechanism in the context of
40 COVID-19.
41
- 42 ● **The administration publish reported acts of intolerance linked to COVID-19,**
43 **updated regularly with results from the aforementioned secure submission tool.** This
44 tracker should include information such as the date of the act, the location, a description

⁴ www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/Stop_AAPIO_Hate_Weekly_Report_4_3_20.pdf

1 of the act, whether perpetrators are known, and what response is planned. It is imperative
2 that all acts of intolerance linked to COVID-19 against any protected group are tracked --
3 not only acts against those of Asian descent (or those perceived to be of Asian descent),
4 but also against those who may be targets of intolerance due to disability, immigration
5 status, and other protected characteristics. This tracker is vital to provide up-to-date and
6 accurate information to the State College community. By providing complete information,
7 this tracker would serve to promote understanding of how pervasive these acts are,
8 legitimize the concern among those of Asian descent in the State College area of being
9 victims or witnesses to acts of intolerance, and empower the community to collectively
10 respond in solidarity and with compassion.

- 11
- 12 ● **In instances where these acts are perpetrated by an identified Penn State student,**
13 **faculty, staff or affiliate we recommend immediate action be taken by the governing**
14 **office of conduct.** This will ensure the parties involved are made aware of any and all
15 violations and make certain that proper action against perpetrators is taken, whether that
16 be in the form of disciplinary, and/or an educational manner.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Kelling
President, GPSA

Amanda Burton
Delegate, College of Agricultural Sciences

Adilson E. Gonzalez Morales
At-Large Delegate, Donald P. Bellisario College of Communications

Diego Hernandez
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President _____ Affirm Veto

The Graduate and Professional Student Association