



Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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A Statement on the Continued Violence Against the APIDA Community **For immediate release:** February 28, 2021

To the APIDA and Virginia Tech Community:

We, the Asian American Student Union, representing 15 constituent organizations, would like to shed light on the considerable increase in anti-Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) violence that threatens the daily lives of members in the APIDA community.

APIDA targeted violence and hate crimes have substantially increased by 1900% according to a New York Police Department report¹ since the emergence of COVID-19 in the United States. These hate crimes and violence have gone under-reported for a year and only recently have received national coverage. This month, House representatives have taken the initiative to urge both the Biden administration and Congress to take firmer action.

The White House has acknowledged anti-Asian sentiments and issued a public memorandum condemning the violence². Although these heinous and hate-fueled crimes have been denounced, the memorandum essentially reacts as a mere list of suggestions rather than a mandate of action. We must step up and continue to bring attention to the previous and ongoing attacks against the APIDA community.

¹https://www.qchron.com/editions/queenswide/anti-asian-hate-crime-jumps-1-900-percent/article_f007a05b-f43e-54ca-a3c6-1b5493333dea.html

²<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/26/memorandum-condemning-and-combating-racism-xenophobia-and-intolerance-against-asian-americans-and-pacific-islanders-in-the-united-states/>

The model minority myth has persistently harmed and oppressed APIDAs. It has perpetuated this false notion “that Asian Americans have class privilege, that they have high socioeconomic status and education, and that any discrimination doesn’t really happen or feel legitimate,” stated Bianca Mabute-Louie, a racial justice educator. The APIDA population has too long been neglected and perceived as a community that is not underserved.

It is imperative that the Virginia Tech community, an institution dedicated to the excellence of the *Ut Prosim* motto – that I may serve – become vigilant and aware of the rise in xenophobia. Doing so is to engage actively in the practice of combating racism, a central component of practicing anti-Racism in our daily lives.

Crucially, now more than ever, the APIDA community must bridge the intra-ethnic and intra-racial boundaries whereby ethnic and racial solidarity is further divided by investing in abstract, rugged individualism. We must instead work *with* our BIPOC peers to advance the well-being of a community oppressed by the inherent structures of white supremacy. As witnessed in the animosity and misunderstanding that some in the APIDA community have held following the murder of George Floyd, we must dismantle practices that ultimately uphold any sentiment of white supremacy- whether it be covert or overt. This includes standing in solidarity with others to not only promote more policing practices, but also reforming/reimagining our criminal justice system to dismantle the prison industrial complex altogether. Lastly, we urge our membership and the broader Virginia Tech community to actively combat matters of injustice by speaking out and to continually support each other during these times.

To report a bias incident or hate crime, please refer to these resources:

<https://stopaapihate.org/>

<https://www.oag.state.va.us/programs-initiatives/no-hate-va>

https://dos.vt.edu/express_a_concern.html

In Peace and Solidarity,

The Asian American Student Union