



March 17, 2021

### Rising Up for Our AAPI Communities

“Racism is one of the biggest taboos in our culture, yet most discrimination against Asian Americans goes largely unnoticed. It’s blown off by the media as a joke...as in “Look at them. They get all up in arms over nothing.”

- Margaret Cho

Hello, Colleagues:

I want to take some time to uplift the voices of our Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, especially in the wake of the shootings in Atlanta that targeted and killed six Asian women last night. Within the last few months, this violence has also been directed towards beloved elders in those communities – to include an alarming rise in anti-Asian violence here in our own [State of Washington](#).

Racism can be incredibly stealthy and viciously cunning. The [Model Minority](#) stereotype was created to drive a wedge between races by touting Asians as being able to overcome discrimination and succeed, unlike other minoritized groups. It also served to create an illusion of safety from racism and discrimination within Asian communities. The stereotype is a myth that has endured and caused long-lasting harm to race relations in the United States, particularly with our Black and Brown communities. The racial wedge of the Model Minority Myth has only worked to uphold the white dominant structure, not protect the Asian communities in the center of it. Claire Kim’s [racial triangulation theory](#) also helps to highlight this racial hierarchy that has structurally constrained racial groups, and illustrates how its ingenious trappings served to maintain a white dominant culture by pitting one racial group against another.

With the rise in anti-Asian incidents, it has been made appallingly clear that Asians are very susceptible to racial discrimination and hate crimes. While businesses across the U.S. have faced financial hardship during the pandemic, the impacts on Asian-owned businesses have been disproportionately worse. This heightened violence, discrimination, and harassment is borne of long-standing racist ideologies (see also [Yellow Peril](#)) that have been carefully crafted and insidiously cultivated for many years. It is a particularly vicious trap for AAPI womxn who are caught in a web of complex stereotypes that diminish their power, personhood, and agency.

Last June, in an effort to stand in solidarity and combat acts of aggression targeted at our AAPI communities, our Presidents and Chancellors issued a [resolution](#) against anti-Asian discrimination. I would like to ask this collective, my esteemed SBCTC colleagues, to stand (even stronger) in solidarity with our AAPI administrators, faculty, staff, and students by continuing to work together to disrupt racism and intolerance in all its forms.

Here are some small, but meaningful, actions to take in support:

- Check in on your AAPI friends and colleagues. Oftentimes, a simple text and quick connect goes a long way. (Katie Rose and Jamie Traugott – my accomplices, my friends, thank you for this simple, but beautiful act today);
- Work to build and maintain authentic relationships with members of the AAPI community;
- Educate yourself on the long history of anti-Asian bias and discrimination in the United States;
- Consider taking a [bystander intervention training](#) to learn how to intervene when you see or hear acts of harassment and discrimination.

I am honored to be in this community with all of you as we rise up together against hate and intolerance.