



Karol V. Mason
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March 19, 2021

To: The John Jay College Community
Re: Confronting Anti-Asian Attacks, Violence, and Rhetoric

Tuesday's deadly attacks—in which the accused specifically targeted three Asian-run businesses in the Atlanta area—took the lives of eight innocent people, including six Asian women. This senseless loss of life is heartbreaking and horrific, but the impact is even greater on our Asian-American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. Whether the attacks are officially categorized as “racially motivated” or not, the unsettling effect remains the same; AAPI communities are left reeling from understandable feelings of fear, anger, anxiety, and sadness.

This unspeakable tragedy comes at a time when there has been a sharp increase in reports of anti-Asian racism and violence throughout the coronavirus pandemic. In 2020, hate crimes against Asian-Americans spiked [nearly 150 percent](#) at the national level. In New York City, anti-Asian attacks increased by [833 percent](#). Over the past year, a shocking number of AAPI women and elderly people have suffered appalling physical acts of violence and harassment. AAPI businesses have been vandalized with racist graffiti. And, members of the AAPI community have continued to shoulder the emotional toll that this relentless increase in discriminatory acts has had on them. If anyone in our community needs help processing these traumatic events, I strongly recommend making use of the counseling resources available. Students can set up a confidential meeting with a trained mental health professional, free of charge, through our [Wellness Center](#). And, through the [CUNY Work/Life Program](#), faculty and staff can access free, confidential, emotional health and wellness services.

We know that the hostility toward the AAPI community has escalated since the start of the pandemic, but anti-Asian rhetoric and attacks are not new to our country. Throughout American history, Asian-Americans have long been the target of acts of bigotry and anti-Asian policies.

Hate is deadly and we cannot be silent when we see it. Instead, we must stand together and confront the rising anti-Asian racism our country is witnessing, while educating ourselves about the history of anti-Asian racism in America. As an institution whose core values incorporate diversity, equity, respect, and integrity, it's absolutely critical that we show our support to the AAPI community, and use our voices to continually fight hatred, bigotry, racism, and xenophobia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Karol V. Mason".

Karol V. Mason
President