

CSUSB Ethnic Studies Response to COVID-19 and Anti-Asian and Anti-Asian American Bigotry and Harassment

Dear CSUSB Campus Community,

The current context of COVID-19 has brought on unprecedented challenges for our CSUSB community. Many of our lives have been altered by sudden unemployment, limited access to food, supplies, and personal protective equipment, dangerous conditions for our essential workers, and challenges stemming from our immigration, housing, and healthcare policies. For many of us at CSUSB, these conditions are not new, but rather made worse because of COVID-19.

While it is important that we prioritize our collective health and safety during this time, we, as Ethnic Studies faculty, also find it important to respond to the recent surge of attacks directed at our Asian and Asian American communities in the midst of this pandemic. Through discriminatory rhetoric being circulated at the local, state, and national levels, COVID-19 has become associated with certain regions of the world resulting in an increase in anti-Asian and anti-Asian American bigotry in the form of exclusionary political discourse, racist comments, and even hate crimes. We are a campus that is home to our thriving Asian American communities as well our international Asian students who contribute to our campus culture in innumerable ways. Plainly, xenophobia has no place at CSUSB (or anywhere else for that matter).

There is a long history of racist stereotyping of Asians and Asian Americans in this country. One does not have to dig deep to encounter examples of this bigotry that cast Asian Americans as the “Yellow Peril.” For example, toward the end of the 19th century in San Francisco, Chinese Americans were depicted as unsanitary, prone to sickness, and perpetually foreign. This racialization contributed to their segregation and mistreatment and eventually became codified in the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Exclusionary rhetoric continued to take form with the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII and we see it again with the racialization of South Asian Americans as a “terrorist threat.” We can see how these racializing discourses take form in the context of COVID-19 that might look “new,” yet are linked to global practices of exclusion that have largely targeted communities of color historically and into the contemporary moment.

As Ethnic Studies faculty we are deeply dedicated to the study of race and racism as well as participating in ways to challenge and dismantle systems of oppression. We urge all of us to collectively condemn any xenophobic rhetoric that fuels racism against our communities. Universities and organizations have joined together to highlight these incidents of bigotry so that we can track these attacks and better protect each other. For example, a professor at San Francisco State University has launched a [website](#) where people can report these incidents. Others have put together a [collection](#) of essays, artwork, and resources for communities of color as they navigate not only the pandemic but the racist climate that it has produced. Also, check out this [open source list of resources](#), which, among many things, also offers a reading list to remind us of the ways our past is inextricable from the present.

We hope to find strength in our powerful stories and histories of resistance, self-care, and building a better world that is inclusive and radiant. In the words of Grace Lee Boggs, an Asian American activist who committed her life to radical politics and solidarity movements, “the only way to survive is by taking care of one another, by recreating our relationships to one another.”

Let's highlight our relationships and our stories, and during this period of remote learning, let's continue to condemn racism in all of its individual, collective, global, and systemic forms.

Sincerely,

CSUSB Ethnic Studies Faculty

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Tom Long, Interim Co-director of Ethnic Studies and Professor of History

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List of COVID-19 Resources for Students, Faculty, Staff, and Communities:

- Check out this [COVID-19 Resource Kit](#) put together by your peers at CSU Long beach.
- To support the mental and physical health and wellbeing of CSUSB students, the Student Health Center's Department of Health Promotion is hosting a series of online presentations through spring quarter focusing on gratitude, stress management, reproductive health, relationships, cooking demonstrations, etc. Go to this link for more info: <https://www.csusb.edu/student-health-center/health-promotion/wellness-channel>
- Relief funds for undocumented workers: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BoED3RrpnWTnniAltzlke6H_91ckvv0E35-wRFshtkc/edit
- How to claim unemployment benefits:
 - English: https://docs.google.com/document/d/11aS-A_o0eMZsocsR7nPvq_GiRvljnB_uMBCQhh2qzmQ/edit
 - Spanish: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZgSEZcqj4nuQRk-RSFWI-gEQoTdAdPd3d9aqP9Ledn8/edit>
- Please see link for referencing free internet, car rental fees, and U-Haul services for students. Make sure you double check on everything before you sign up for anything! https://wgme.com/news/coronavirus/spectrum-to-offer-free-internet-access-for-students-due-to-coronavirus?fbclid=IwAR26_3AtayQFkRFidh1IFpf19LFV2KOBGMPcjSmFf5xp9zcUFvJEFRG0Q
- Healthcare for undocumented folks under COVID-19: <https://unitedwedream.org/2020/03/healthcare-access-for-undocumented-folks-in-the-time-of-covid19/?fbclid=IwAR1rYFvcyvGau4C2dXbgK-EQRB2PL8TN5iVAIvhWeWernMwZUzi1QQ-Wv68>
- Covid-19 and Housing the Homeless: <https://nlihc.org/coronavirus-and-housing-homelessness>