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CFA Calls for Support for Asian and Pacific Islander Communities as COVID-19 Spreads

The California Faculty Association (CFA) Asian & Pacific Islander (API) Caucus and statewide officers call on our academic institutions to support safety, health, and wellness for all members of our communities by dispelling anti-Asian stereotypes and rejecting “yellow peril” rhetoric that associates Asians with illness—especially amid growing concerns about the [novel coronavirus](#) (COVID-19).

Our California State University (CSU) API students, staff, and faculty deserve a safe and healthy learning and teaching environment, one without fear of harassment. We urge our academic leaders to not only learn the long histories of [orientalist](#) anti-Asian violence that have been justified by “medicalized” imperatives in the western world, or as [Nayan Shah](#) has coined “contagious divides,” but also communicate with campus communities to address how Asian immigrants and refugees and Asian Americans are often seen and treated as perpetual foreigners.

We ask our CSU faculty colleagues to create a safe space in their classrooms and offices, as well as their work in supporting students and colleagues across campus.

Some things to take note of:

- Community members who wear [masks](#) may do so for various reasons, from protection against pollution to precaution against allergens and germs.
- People of all geographical areas and cultural backgrounds can be vulnerable to COVID-19. Avoid terms like “Wuhan virus” or “Chinese virus” that perpetuate racist rhetoric and inaccurate information.
- While the model minority myth has perpetuated notions that Asians and Asian Americans are “honorary whites” or “white adjacent,” proliferation of recent xenophobia again demonstrates how racial wedges serve to silence the embedded nature of orientalism and racism.
- Understand the very real impacts of “yellow peril” rhetoric on Asian American communities. Here are just a few examples: bullying, harassment, loss of patronage and income to Chinatown and Asian-owned establishments (many of which employ some of the most vulnerable communities).
- If you are concerned about possible spread of COVID-19, take precautions as you would with other, and statistically more deadly, communicable diseases like the flu. Keep abreast of best practices from reliable resources like the [Centers for Disease Control](#), such as frequent handwashing.

Remember, racism, profiling, or discrimination that targets anyone of Asian descent hurts everyone by creating more fear and anger towards ordinary people instead of awareness about the disease.