

For Immediate Release  
February 14, 2020

**AFFIRMING ASIAN AND ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER DESI AMERICAN  
BELONGING AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY**

The undergraduate students of Michigan State University's Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) and the undersigned organizations affirm the belonging of ALL Asian and Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) students, scholars, faculty, and staff on this campus. There continues to be a rapid spread of information, real and false, regarding the coronavirus disease, COVID-19. Misinformation, such as the death toll and suggestion that the virus was lab-engineered, causes unnecessary panic and anxiety in the MSU community. Similarly, the spread of disinformation in the form of decontextualized videos and memes about Chinese and Asian people on social media have led members of our community to be labeled as carriers of the coronavirus. As members of the MSU community ignore the line between valid concerns and misconceptions, members of the Asian and APIDA community continue to be discriminated against and isolated from their rightful academic and social communities for coughing, sneezing, and wearing surgical face masks—common behaviors during our cold and flu season.

We want our MSU community to be in solidarity with and support students' rights to live, study, and engage at MSU without fear of discrimination and exclusion based on their appearance, places of origin, race, ethnicity, and/or travel record. The exclusion of any Asian or Asian American students is unwarranted and deeply rooted in xenophobia, Sinophobia, and Orientalist tropes. We condemn these actions and ideologies, as they have no place in this diverse and inclusive community. Insensitive and offensive jokes and comments targeting students who appear to be of Asian descent are intolerable acts that undermine the severity of the situation, the victims, the affected individuals, and their loved ones. We emphasize the importance of reporting any such exclusionary acts to the MSU Office of Institutional Equity ([oie.msu.edu](http://oie.msu.edu)).

As a university and campus community, we must strive to counter these exclusionary acts and statements by fostering a supportive culture through inclusion, acceptance, and compassion. We should be sympathetic to those around us and show them love. Fear does not excuse discrimination or marginalization of any group.

Given the urgency of this issue, we call on our communities to come together and support each other at a town hall on **Thursday, February 20 at 7:30pm in the International Center in Room 115**. We will discuss the recent events and collectively generate ideas for next steps. Overall, the goal of this meeting is to show how we, as students, can help and support our fellow Spartans in this challenging time to build a more cohesive and welcoming community on this campus where we all call our home away from home.

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American Student  
Organization**

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In Unity,

MSU alpha Kappa Delta Phi International Sorority, Inc.	MSU Asian Pacific American Graduate Alliance
MSU Asian Pacific American Student Organization	MSU Black Student Alliance
MSU Chinese Student Coalition	MSU Coalition of Indian Undergraduate Students
MSU Council of Graduate Students Executive Board	MSU Culturas De Las Razas Unidas
MSU dreaMSU	MSU Hmong American Student Association
MSU International Students Association	MSU Japanese American Student Association
MSU Jewish Student Union	MSU Muslim Students' Association

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