

Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	(03/18/2021)
Type of Action:	Legislation
Status/Result:	New Business

S.A. Resolution #34

A Manifesto Calling Upon Cornell to Actionably Support the Asian American Community

ABSTRACT: Calling upon Cornell to actionably support the Asian American community at Cornell by delivering on the recommendations from the Mental Health Review Final Report, reaffirming funding and academic promises to the Asian American Studies Program (AASP) and ethnic studies at Cornell, reviewing the role of Greek Life and fraternities on campus, reviewing Title IX and the Bias Reporting process, and reconsider the disarmament of the CUPD.

Sponsored by: Catherine Huang '21

Whereas, On March 16th, 2021, a white male gunman shot and killed eight people in Atlanta, Georgia, murdering six Asian American women and massage parlor laborers;

Whereas, the gunman testified to the police that he had specifically [targeted](#) Asian massage parlors;

Whereas, Asian American students make up almost [20% of the student population](#) at Cornell;

Whereas, releasing a statement condemning Anti-Asian violence is much appreciated, but also the bare minimum needed to actually support Asian American students at Cornell;

Whereas, Asian American students and communities across the country are grieving the deaths of Delaina Ashley Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Julie Park, and Hyeon Jeong Park;

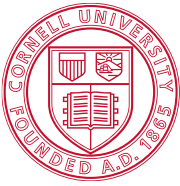
Whereas, one of the recommendations from the [Mental Health Review's Final Report](#) recommend that Cornell should "require that faculty and staff attend at least one mental health training opportunity every two years."

Whereas, this recommendation should have been a requirement ever since the start of the pandemic and it should have been implemented immediately;

Whereas, Asian American students are mourning for their community. Grief changes and the way it affects students and communities continues to evolve. Issues are never suddenly just resolved over summer or winter break or with the beginning of a new academic year;

Whereas, requiring faculty attend only one mental health training opportunity every two years is not enough;

Whereas, faculty should be required to attend a mental health training opportunity at the beginning of every academic semester;



Cornell University Student Assembly

Whereas, Andrew Dickson White, the first President of Cornell, testified in front of Congress about Chinese immigration saying, “I confess to a very deep-seated dread of this influx of Asiatics” (Feb. 1879);

Whereas, the Cornell Asian American Studies Program (AASP) and its faculty members, such as Professor Derek Chang, teach the invaluable histories of Asian Americans at Cornell and across the country, which students would receive nowhere else;

Whereas, the Cornell AASP Program and faculty members serve so many Asian American students, creating [safe spaces](#) for the AAPI student community, and the AASP deserves more support;

Whereas, Cornell administration must craft and declare its plans to continue supporting the Cornell AASP, whether through funding, hiring, or academic support;

Whereas, students have advocated for Asian American Studies, Latino/a Studies and American Indian studies to be offered as majors since [2016](#).

Whereas, these demands have recurred year after year but have been stymied for years, with repeated arguments from administration that there supposedly just isn’t enough student demand for these studies;

Whereas, how can there ever going to be enough student demand if these programs are underfunded, undersupported and underpublicized because of the fact that they are restricted to minors?

Whereas, this argument is a blatantly and frustratingly cyclical one that shows that Cornell simply does not care enough to invest in its ethnic studies programs and its students of color;

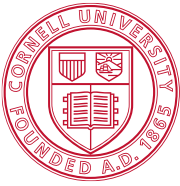
Whereas, Cornell should reconsider the investment in and creation of Asian American studies, Latino/a Studies, and American Indian Studies majors;

Whereas, six of the victims killed by the white male shooter were Asian American women;

Whereas, the women were massage parlor workers which directly relates to the sex work industry and the lack of protections for working class Asian American women laboring in lower-paid jobs;

Whereas, in an article in The New York Times, [it reads](#), “The gunman told the police that he had a “sexual addiction” and had carried out the shootings at the massage parlors to eliminate his “temptation,” the authorities said on Wednesday. He also said that he had frequented massage parlors in the past and launched the attacks as a form of vengeance. All but one of the victims were women, the police said.”

Whereas, Asian women have been disproportionately targeted in anti-Asian violence;



Cornell University Student Assembly

Whereas, Asian women are 2.3x more likely to report victimization and accounts of interpersonal violence.

Whereas, Asian American women everywhere suffer from the racialization of our bodies and the disgusting fetishization of the white male gaze that so easily turns into white male violence;

Whereas, Asian American female students at Cornell are also subject to these violent racializations;

Whereas, deadly white male violence begins at home, on college campuses, dorm rooms and [fraternity houses](#) (fraternity men are three times more likely to commit rape than their non-Greek peers);

Whereas, Cornell is even letting a fraternity that's nationally nicknamed [Sexual Assault Expected](#), and who killed a student through hazing in [2011](#), back onto campus;

Whereas, a [2019 survey](#) found that over 25% of undergraduate women reported an incident of sexual assault. For the majority of that demographic, the most common location for the "most serious incident of nonconsensual sexual contact" was an on-campus fraternity house;

Whereas, fraternities at Cornell perpetuates misogyny, transphobia, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and rape;

Whereas, Cornell has an obligation to protect its Asian female students and survivors of sexual harassment and assault;

Whereas, issues of gender justice on campus and sexual assault in Greek Life spaces all intersect with the mistreatment and racialization of Asian American women;

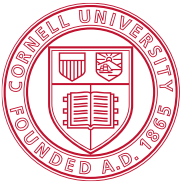
Whereas, even if victims of bias and survivors of sexual harassment or assault report to the Bias Reporting or the Title IX Office, a [national study](#) has found that "Seventy percent of student survivors who report to their school experience adverse effects on their safety and privacy. Thirty-nine percent of survivors who report to their school are forced to take a leave of absence, transfer to a new school, or drop out of school altogether."

Whereas, Cornell needs a complete review of its Title IX Office and Bias and Response Team and procedures, to ensure that victims of racial bias and sexual harassment or assault get the accountability they receive;

Whereas, President Pollack rejected the student call to disarm the CUPD last semester;

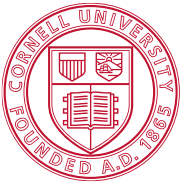
Whereas, Cornell is overly reliant on the CUPD and its weapons;

Whereas, in the Atlanta shootings, the police did not save the Asian American women who were shot and killed;



Cornell University Student Assembly

- Whereas,** Georgia officials are declaring that it's "[too early](#)" to tell if this shooting was a hate crime (despite the fact that he told them that he specifically [targeted](#) Asian massage parlors);
- Whereas,** the police officers involved with the case are quick to defend the killer and justify his actions, extending him empathy that they never offered to the victims;
- Whereas,** [Police Captain Jay Baker](#) of the Cherokee County Sheriff's Office attempted to excuse the actions of the Atlanta killer by saying the killer was "fed up" and just had "a really bad day."
- Whereas,** this same Police Officer, the [Police Captain Jay Baker](#), was [found](#) to have posted racist images of China and coronavirus on his Facebook;
- Whereas,** the events of the past year, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others, the deaths of Delaina Ashley Yaun, Paul Andre Michels, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Julie Park, and Hyeon Jeong Park, all serve to remind us that the police do not protect or serve marginalized communities;
- Whereas,** the death of [Sarah Everard](#), whose death at the hands of a [police officer](#) in the UK is sparking [global conversations](#) about gender justice, shows that the police do not protect women either;
- Whereas,** [Christian Hall](#) was a 19 year old Chinese American boy, suffering from a mental health crisis. He was killed when he was shot by the police 19 times;
- Whereas,** [Angelo Quinto](#) was a Filipino American man, and a Navy veteran who sustained a head injury and needed mental health support. His mother hugged him on the floor until the police arrived. When they arrived, the cops killed him. One put a knee on his neck for 5 minutes, while another officer held his legs and he suffocated to death;
- Whereas,** Cornell's refusal to even consider disarming its police is a clear statement that Cornell will prioritize the supposed comfort of white students over the literal safety and lives of women, Asian American women, and its BIPOC students;
- Whereas,** Cornell University is not above reproach in how it supports or fails to support its Asian American women and students;
- Whereas,** anti-Asian hatred and violence against Asian American women is enabled at Cornell;
- Whereas,** fighting against anti-Asian hate intersects with issues of mental health, academia and pedagogy, policing on campus, and social life at Cornell;
- Be it therefore resolved,** the Student Assembly supports Asian American students and the AAPI community at Cornell by advocating for the following changes;



Cornell University Student Assembly

Be it further resolved, the Student Assembly formally calls upon Cornell University to implement the following changes:

Demands to Support the Asian American Community at Cornell

1. Following the many recommendations of the Mental Health Review's Final Report, Cornell University will require all faculty to attend a mental health training opportunity at the beginning of every academic semester, effective immediately.
2. Cornell administration must craft and declare its plans to support the Cornell AASP, whether through funding, hiring, or academic support, to be delivered to the Student Assembly by the end of the 2021 academic year.
3. Cornell University and the Provost will reconsider the investment in and creation of Asian American studies, Latino/a Studies, and American Indian Studies majors;
4. Cornell University should revoke Sigma Alpha Epsilon's return to campus, effective immediately;
5. Request Cornell University review policies and action items over fraternity system, including reform, disband or abolish to make sure Cornell campus would protect Cornell community, especially Asian and other vulnerable communities.
6. Cornell University will require Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life to perform a yearly review of all fraternities and any fraternity accused of sexual harassment or assault will be placed on probation or have its recognition revoked;
7. Cornell University will perform a complete review of its Title IX Office and Bias and Response Team and procedures, to ensure that victims of racial bias and sexual harassment or assault get the accountability they receive;
8. Cornell University will continue reviewing the legality of disarmament and reconsider disarming the Cornell University Police Department (CUPD);

Be it finally resolved, Cornell administration respond to these demands and testify as to how it will make the changes needed to take action and support the Asian American community at Cornell University.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Huang '21
President, Student Assembly

(Reviewed by: Executive Committee, 5-0-1, 03/18/2021)