



MOTION CONDEMNING SYSTEMIC ANTI-ASIAN RACISM AND VIOLENCE 2021-04-08

Submitted for: 2021-04-08

Submitted to:	SSMU Legislative Council	Document no.:	LEG-PUB-MOT-2021-04-08-004 (to be assigned by Steering)
Moved by:	Ayo Ogunremi <i>Vice-President (External Affairs)</i>	Current Status:	<input type="checkbox"/> FOR APPROVAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> POSTPONED <input type="checkbox"/> COMMITTED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED
Seconded by:	Noah Merali <i>Services Representative</i>		

Issue This motion seeks to advance SSMU's commitment to social justice and human rights by condemning anti-Asian racism and violence, and to take material steps to stand in solidarity with communities of Asian descent.

Background and Rationale On March 16, 2021, a white man committed a mass shooting at three massage parlours in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, killing eight (8) individuals - Xiaojie Tan, Yong Ae Yue, Suncha Kim, Hyun Jung Grant, Soon Chung Park, Daoyou Feng, Delaina Ashley Yaun, and Paul Andre Michels - six of whom were women of Asian descent.

On March 29, 2021, Vilma Kari, a 65 year-old Filipino woman, was [brutally attacked](#) by a man in Hell's Kitchen, New York, USA, who yelled racial slurs as he attacked her. These recent, high-profile attacks, are instances of a much broader and pervasive problem of systemic anti-Asian racism that permeates western society, including Canada.

In the past year, the SSMU has taken stances opposing anti-Asian racism, both in [public statements](#) and in [coalitions](#), [culminating](#) in the Montreal City Council's [unanimous approval](#) of a [motion](#) to denounce anti-Asian racism in June 2020. Despite this Executive-led advocacy, however, no specific stance, position, or mandate has been approved by the Legislative Council, leaving opposition to anti-Asian racism solely to the priorities of the Executives in office.



This motion would rectify this inadequacy by setting a clear position and mandate for SSMU to oppose anti-Asian racism from its most representative body.

Alignment with Mission

This motion aligns with SSMU's constitutional commitment to demonstrating leadership in matters of human rights and social justice, as well as similar elaborations within the SSMU Equity Policy and Sustainability Policy, which outline responsibilities to oppose racism and systemic discrimination.

Consultations Completed

This motion was drafted in consultation with the Executive Committee, who would be responsible for issuing a statement condemning anti-Asian racism, the Political Campaigns Coordinators, and the Pan-Asian Collective, one of the foremost student groups of people of Asian descent that conducts advocacy opposing anti-Asian racism.

Risk Factors and Resource Implications

This motion would primarily implicate the Campaigns department, as the Political Campaigns Coordinators would be mandated to act as a source of institutional support for political campaigns in solidarity with this cause.

Sustainability Considerations

By recognising the systemic nature of anti-Asian racism, condemning it, and adopting a mandate to support campaigns against anti-Asian racism, this motion firmly aligns with SSMU's mandate to address systemic power imbalances within society and foster a culture of anti-oppression, as per section 3.2. of the Sustainability Policy. Further, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where anti-Asian racism has contributed to economic and physical insecurity of many Asian-owned organisations, this motion also promotes economic sustainability.

Impact of Decision and Next Steps

If passed, this motion will immediately be sent for email approval to the SSMU Board of Directors, in order for the Executive Committee to receive the mandate to release a statement as quickly as possible. The public statement, which is already being written with the Pan-Asian Collective,



would then be approved according to the SSMU Public Relations Guide and published by the Communications Department.

Further, the Vice-President (External Affairs) would work with the Political Campaigns Coordinators to offer support to organisations such as the Pan-Asian Collective in their advocacy against anti-Asian racism.

If this motion fails, the Legislative Council will have rejected a call to action to adopt a solidarity mandate with a social justice cause, undermining its credibility as an organisation committed to social justice and human rights, and jeopardising its relationship with students of Asian descent and communities of Asian descent more generally.

Motion or Resolution for Approval

Be it resolved, that the Legislative Council express its wholehearted, unequivocal, and unconditional condemnation of anti-Asian racism;

Be it further resolved, that the Legislative Council recognise the distinct and systemic nature of anti-Asian racism, and express its solidarity with peoples and communities of Asian descent;

Be it further resolved, that the Legislative Council mandate the Office of the Vice-President (External Affairs) to support political campaigns against anti-Asian racism;

Be it lastly resolved, that the Legislative Council mandate the Executive Committee to issue a public statement on behalf of the SSMU expressing this position to be released before the end of the 2020-2021 academic year.

Results of the Vote

In favour	(UNANIMOUS)
Opposed	()
Abstain	()