March 20, 2021

RE: Statement on the Atlanta Massacre

Dear Community Partners, Faculty, Staff, and Students:

Like many of you, I am growing weary. It is re/traumatizing to constantly see people who look like us, our grand/children, other relatives, and/or our spouses in various news media (and within our institutional contexts through, for example, curricular representations) as carnage, collateral, non-existent, and/or subhuman- not just sporadically, but across several generations.

First, rest in peace Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez, and Paul Andre Michels (first attack at Young’s Asian Spa); Soon Chung Park, Hyun Grant, and Suncha Kim (second attack at Gold Spa); and Yong Ae Yue (third attack at Aromatherapy Spa). I also am sending light and love to their loved ones, Atlanta’s Asian/American community, and others who are constantly living in fear of ongoing racialized violence because of what we do and who we are.

Second, educators and leaders have a unique responsibility to better understand how the formal, hidden, and null curricula with/in our institutions, as well as current knowledge systems and ideologies, play into the motives for how and why a young White male decided to racialize, sexualize, and then casually decide that Asian/American people are disposable. Most Americans of all backgrounds go through their K-12 and university years not learning about the complexities of Asian/American experiences, histories, and identities. Moreover, U.S. imperialism and various interventions throughout Asia have led to the displacement of millions of bodies, especially over the past several decades. For me, what is compelling is how these interventions and wars occurred in lockstep with monumental legislation including Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka of 1952, The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Immigration & Nationality Act of 1965, The Refugee Act of 1980, and others. BIPOC activists and their allies have long forged solidarities to push for equity and justice for all and not just some.

Third, I occasionally write to campus leadership at UW Tacoma about current events as they relate to our campus climate and culture. I included most of my note on the next page to offer more sociocultural context of the Atlanta Massacre and some additional resources for those who wish to engage in more self-learning. However, I will also add another resource (a community blog post) from my dear friend, Dr. Stanley I. Thangaraj from the City College of New York; he is one of the most brilliant activist-scholars I know.

Please take extra care during these challenging times.

Respectfully Yours,

Rachel Endo, Dean & Professor
Note From Rachel Endo to UW Tacoma’s Executive Leadership Team

In summer 2020, some of us attempted to engage in critical reflection about the cycles of racialized violence leading up to the murder of George Floyd that also had clear connections to UWT’s climate and culture. The recent massacre in Atlanta inspired many of us to further reflect on what progress we have/haven’t made since summer 2020.

Rather than talking about camping trips, self-care, and/or spring break, we might benefit from being more other-focused during a time when our campus community sorely needs us. During these precarious times, campus leaders must courageously interrupt cycles of racialized violence (including the ones we inflict irrespective of our intentions) that mirror the very ideologies that fuel everything from racially motivated hate crimes to more subtle forms of racism including erasure, exclusion, and objectification.

Ongoing self-learning is vital to understand how Asian/American experiences in the U.S. are directly connected to the lives and livelihoods of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Pacific Islander people. Eric Nam published “If You’re Surprised by the Anti-Asian Violence in Atlanta, You Haven't Been Listening” in TIME that may be a useful resource for you and/or your leadership team(s).

While the recent massacre in Atlanta shouldn’t surprise us, it should outrage us enough to at least admit that our campus has not sufficiently acknowledged and/or tackled the stronghold of, among others, interlocking ideologies of anti-Black racism, Orientalism, and White-supremacy culture.

PBS published a list of suggested action items for those wishing to take some action including getting bystander-intervention training and self-learning tips. For everyone else: it's better not to claim to be about and/or for DEI.