

AFSA Statement on Atlanta Murders and Call to Our Allies March 2021

We are grieving, horrified, and outraged over the increase in anti-Asian violence in the United States and the avoidable tragedy of the murder of eight people, including six women of Asian descent, in Atlanta on March 16. These violent attacks pinpoint persistent racial discrimination and xenophobia in our society and reveal the complex intersectionality of race, gender, class, and immigration status.

Long before the Atlanta shooting, UWM Asian faculty, staff, and students were worried about the safety of themselves, their family, and friends, and called for solidarity against anti-Asian violence. Between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021, Stop AAPI Hate received reports of 3,795 incidents. In May 2020, AFSA issued a “Statement of Solidarity Against Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia”. One week before the Atlanta shooting, AFSA co-sponsored a panel, “Anti-Asian Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic,” which covered a range of topics, including concrete actions against anti-Asian violence, the perniciousness of the “model minority myth” and the harm it does to Asian and other minoritized groups, and the institutions of white supremacy that fuels racism and discrimination against minority groups. Resources shared at that panel can be found [here](#).

The Atlanta shooting demonstrates the consequences of rhetoric used and stereotypes perpetuated to describe women and the Asian community. There is an urgency for change and action to combat racism and xenophobia. AFSA is encouraged by the movement across the country and calls for action beyond written support at UWM.

Local communities and legislators have acted. Vigils and peaceful demonstrations against anti-Asian violence have taken place across the country.¹ In Milwaukee, community leaders and city officials promptly acted to mourn the victims in the Atlanta shooting together outside of Milwaukee City Hall on March 18. On the same day, the House Committee on the Judiciary held a hearing on Discrimination and Violence Against Asian Americans². On March 30, Biden announced actions to address violence against Asian Americans.

Locally and on campus, we call on allies and members of the UWM community to be in solidarity with the Asian community and to take action to learn about Asian American history, to become comfortable intervening in acts of overt aggression and microaggressions that impact Asian group members and members of other marginalized groups, engage in practices that disrupt the historic and institutional systems of oppression that give rise to these xenophobic actions, and to lend direct support to Asian business, individuals, and community organizations. We write in solidarity against anti-Asian racism and in multi-racial solidarity with our Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Muslim, immigrant, LGBTQIA, and other minoritized communities that have victims of violence. And we write in hopes that members of the UWM family will be empowered to speak out in defense of the safety and well-being of our communities.

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/protests-across-u-s-call-for-end-to-anti-asian-violence-11616273497>

² [Discrimination and Violence Against Asian Americans | U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee](#)