



Graduate Public Affairs Council (GPAC) Statement on Racial Violence Against the AAPI Community

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increase in racial violence and racial hatred against the Asian and Pacific Islander community, both in the United States and internationally. We must make this clear, GPAC condemns all racism. Furthermore, we are committed to promoting racial equity at the LBJ School of Public Affairs, at UT Austin, and in the broader community. GPAC encourages the student body to learn more, engage more, and listen more to our classmates in this troubling time. In moments like these, we must ensure that our peers feel seen and heard.

In the last year, reported hate crimes against Asians in the U.S. have increased by 164%.¹ These hate crimes were driven by fear and xenophobia amidst the pandemic, and exacerbated by the former administration's use of racialized language to describe the virus. The impacts of this violence are not limited by politics, however, and both liberal and conservative communities are made less safe by these attacks. In March of 2021, a white gunman killed eight people in Atlanta, including six Asian women. This immoral act galvanized solidarity across the U.S. to “Stop AAPI Hate.” We welcome the Biden Administration's COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act to protect our country’s AAPI community. Yet we recognize that global systems of race and power have often excluded and disenfranchised Asians and Pacific Islanders, especially in this country.

Furthermore, as students tasked with creating the policies of the future, it is our duty to create policy that is anti-racist on its face and in its substance. Undoubtedly, now more than ever, the times demand a commitment to anti-racism and anti-violence. It is up to us to promote an anti-racist culture and anti-racist environment at the LBJ School and beyond. GPAC unequivocally supports the movement to Stop Asian Hate.

With hope for change,

Azeem Edwin | President, Graduate Public Affairs Council

¹ According to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at Cal State University San Bernardino