

## A RESOLUTION OF THE DUKE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT COUNCIL ON LINGUISTIC RACISM AT DUKE UNIVERSITY

The Graduate and Professional Student Council is deeply disturbed by the emails sent on Friday January 16, 2019, which revealed that some faculty in the Masters of Biostatistics program identify and target international students for speaking Chinese in the student lounge area, intending to withhold internship and employment opportunities on the basis of speaking their native language in a social context.

GPSC would like to underscore the following central issues:

- The email by Dr. Megan Neely is unprofessional and reflects poorly on her performance as Director of Graduate Studies, since the primary purpose of that role is to advocate for students. While Neely's intention might have been to warn students of other faculty members' discriminatory practices, the *effect* of her email was a dangerous codification of unacceptable behavior. There should be no place at Duke University for racist threats, which is what the stated intention of withholding opportunities based on language amounts to. When any form of racism or bias is discovered, the parties responsible should be held accountable, and that system of behaviors which negatively targets certain students should be disrupted rather than merely warned against.
- The two faculty members alluded to in Dr. Neely's email have still not been identified, nor have they been penalized for their discriminatory practices against international students. Such practices violate Duke's policies on diversity and inclusion, and most importantly violate the dignity and humanity of these students.
- Finally, as GPSC outlined in our Resolution Against Hate and Bias in November of 2018, this incident is not isolated, but is part of a larger culture at Duke in which such behaviors are neither uncommon nor unexpected; the roots of this harmful atmosphere lie in deep historical and structural inequalities that will require continuous and committed effort to dismantle.

GPSC stands in support of Duke University students of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds and emphasizes the professional and personal benefits that arise from environments that embrace diversity and inclusivity. We would like to recognize and echo the [joint statement](#) that the Duke University Asian Students Association and Duke International Association have put forth, as well as the [Petition to Investigate Professor Megan Neely's Discriminatory Emails](#) that urges the University to produce a full report on the incident and the faculty members involved. We urge all students and faculty members to engage in upcoming forums and town hall discussions that facilitate and promote safe discussions on language, diversity, and inclusivity, particularly as they relate to issues arising from this incident.

Therefore, GPSC strongly requests:

1. Duke, at all administrative levels, implement lasting changes to its policies that will demonstrate to students, faculty, and staff that the university is committed to equity and respect, and that discriminatory and racist behaviors will result in consequences. Please refer to our recommendations from the GPSC Resolution Against Hate and Bias ([here](#)).
2. For the benefit of our colleagues in Biostatistics, the two faculty members should be identified so that their discriminatory practices cannot cause further harm to the students they teach and to the colleagues they work with. The administration should also ask the students who were affected what they would like to see in terms of consequences.
3. The Duke community recognize that these incidents are making the university an intimidating environment for ethnic and racial minorities in general and international students in particular. The Duke community should work on supporting these students from their first day of orientation—through actions, not simply words—so that they, too, feel as though they are full, welcome members of the Duke community. For example, Duke should recognize that many international students will be experiencing racism for the first time, and offer resources to international students on actions they can take when facing discrimination.
4. All faculty receive mandatory Diversity and Inclusion training to acknowledge the systemic issues within the Graduate community resulting from a pervasive lack of education.