

January 25, 2011

Dear Councillors of the Town of Markham,

On behalf of the 44,000 members of the University of Toronto Students' Union, we urge you to discuss and support the motion to condemn Maclean's magazine and join the community demand for an apology for its article "Too Asian". We further commend Councillor Joe Li for bringing forward this motion to Markham Council and for seeking to actively challenge racism within the media and our community space.

As a Students' Union, we serve a diverse community of students at the University of Toronto. We are dedicated to fighting for student rights and for a high-quality post-secondary education system for all. In doing so, we recognise the systemic barriers – including racism – that hinder marginalised communities from accessing the post-secondary education system, and actively work to ensure we challenge and eliminate these inequities.

As such, we reject the Maclean's article and its propagation of racist stereotyping and perpetuation of Anti-Asian sentiment within our university and community. The article continues a long history of Asians being depicted as foreigners within Canada, creating a distinction between Asians and Canadians; one that negates a century of settlement of Asian diasporas, and establishes an 'us' versus 'them' binary. This binary creates antagonism between Asian and white students in post-secondary institutions, where exclusive spaces at universities are perceived as being taken away from white students. The article also ignores the diversity of the Asian community; neglecting the various ancestral, ethnic, class, gender, religious, language, and sexual identities that exist. Let us be clear, this article portrays diversity as a threat to our society; its assertions are racist and should be rejected.

Members of the University community and community at-large have actively been participating in coalitions to organize critical masses and teach-ins, as well as writing letters and emails expressing their anger and upset. We have been connecting with communities across the country as this has become a matter of national concern. For our members and your constituents in the town of Markham, this is not about being "too politically correct"; this is an issue of the fundamental inequities that exist within our society. The cities of Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria have passed similar motions at their respective councils. We want our elected officials to denounce the offensive notions being espoused by Maclean's, and work to address systemic inequities through this motion and ongoing initiatives. We want you to reflect the ideals of diversity and inclusion we have as a community with a commitment to anti-racism. We value the identities, lived experiences and contributions of all members of our community.

On behalf of the 44,000 members of the University of Toronto Students' Union, we encourage all of you to support this motion and be a part of the anti-racism movement in our society.

Respectfully,

Danielle Sandhu
Vice-President Equity,
University of Toronto Students' Union
Local 98 of the Canadian Federation of Students



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University of Toronto Students' Union
Local 98 of the Canadian Federation of Students

January 25, 2011

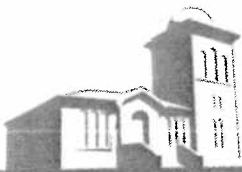
To Whom It May Concern:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the January 25, 2011 Council meeting on the item concerning the Maclean's article "Too Asian?" presented by Councillor Joe Li.

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of Markham Town Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Sincerely,

Danielle Sandhu
Vice-President Equity,
The University of Toronto Students' Union
Local 98 of the Canadian Federation of Students
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vpequity@utsu.ca



education is a right!



Chinese Canadian National Council
Conseil national des canadiens chinois

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Tel: (416) 977-9871 Fax: (416) 977-1630

January 20, 2010

To:

Mayor Frank Scarpitti fscarpitti@markham.ca
Deputy Mayor Jack Heath jheath@markham.ca
Regional Councillor Jim Jones jjones@markham.ca
Regional Councillor Gordon Landon glandon@markham.ca
Ward 1 Councillor Valerie Burke vburke@markham.ca
Ward 2 Councillor Howard Shore hshore@markham.ca
Ward 3 Councillor Don Hamilton dhampilton@markham.ca
Ward 4 Councillor Carolina Moretti cmoretti@markham.ca
Ward 5 Councillor Colin Campbell ccampbell@markham.ca
Ward 6 Councillor Alan Ho alan.ho@markham.ca
Ward 7 Councillor Logan Kanapathi ikanapathi@markham.ca
Ward 8 Councillor Alex Chiu achiu@markham.ca

By email:

Dear Members of the Town of Markham Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) to urge you to support the proposed motion by Regional Councillor Joe Li with regards to the Maclean's "Too Asian" article. CCNC and numerous organizations and individuals have communicated our serious concerns about the "Too Asian"? article to Maclean's. This article is offensive and contained numerous negative stereotypes about Asians and implicitly non-Asians as well.

There are hundreds of news and critical op/ed articles written about the "Too Asian"? article and many of them have been posted at our "Not Too Asian" facebook site: http://www.facebook.com/#!/home.php?sk=group_174514912559573&ap=1. This site has more than 750 members and 400 posts including some critical commentary from the very people who were interviewed or photographed in the "Too Asian"? article. There are just so many problems with the "Too Asian"? article that it simply doesn't meet the standard for good journalism.

Numerous groups and individuals including a number of local governments have agreed with our concerns and have passed motions:

1. Victoria City Council motion moved by Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe (passed November 25th):

<http://victoria.civicweb.net/FileStorage/33C2E417555D482A98E85FAE5C35A136-Notice%20of%20Motion.pdf>

2. Vancouver City Council motion moved by Councillors Kerry Jang and Raymond Louie (passed December 14th):
<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20101214/documents/motionb2.pdf>

3. Toronto City Council motion moved by Councillors Mike Layton and Kristyn Wong-Tam (passed December 16th):
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2011/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-34300.pdf>

We appreciate the leadership of Councillor Joe Li in bringing forward this motion.

We believe that the negative stereotypes in the Maclean's article affect all Canadians including residents of Markham and specifically Asian Canadians and university students living in your local neighbourhoods. Maclean's has refused to adequately address these concerns. While we fully respect media freedoms, we take the position that the media must take responsibility and ownership for the content.

We therefore urge the Town of Markham to support the community efforts to find a constructive resolution to the issue. If you should have any questions, please contact CCNC Executive Director Victor Wong at 416-977-9871.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Colleen Hua', with a stylized, flowing script.

Colleen Hua
National President



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
ACCREDITED BY THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

January 20, 2011

Dear City Councillor:

I am writing to you in my capacity as a professor in the School of Social Work at Ryerson University to strongly urge you to please fully support the motion being brought forward by Councilor Joe Li demanding an unqualified public apology from Maclean's magazine for their November 2010 article titled "Too Asian?".

The Maclean's article promotes racial stereotyping of Asian Canadians as perpetual foreigners, who are socially inferior and are making academic standards too high for White students. Such arguments are patently false, biased, and offensive. To argue that some Canadian universities are becoming "too Asian" recalls the historical constructions of the Chinese in Canada as the "Yellow Peril", who constituted threats to the sanctity, safety and purity of a White Canada.

The racial stereotypes of Asians promoted by the Maclean's article run counter to responsible journalism and as such fail to value the multiculturalism and historical diversity of our nation; a nation in which diverse peoples including Aboriginal, Chinese, and Blacks have historically made, and continue to make, invaluable contributions to the well being of Canada.

Both the cities of Toronto and Victoria have passed motions condemning the Maclean's article and have demanded a public apology from the periodical. Also, all faculty members currently teaching at the School of Social Work, Ryerson University have signed an open letter condemning the article and demanding an unqualified apology. The Ryerson University Senate has also issued a statement rejecting the stereotypes of Asian Canadians that are expressed in the Maclean's article.

I strongly urge you to please stand in solidarity with Councilor Li and our nation's diverse Canadians and support her motion demanding an unqualified apology from Maclean's.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gordon Pon", written over the "Sincerely Yours," line.

Gordon Pon, MSW, PhD
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
Ryerson University
416-979-5000 ext. 4786
Email: g2pon@ryerson.ca



facebook.com/tooasiantalkback

All Members of Markham Council
Markham Civic Centre
101 Town Centre Boulevard,
Markham, Ontario, Canada
L3R 9W3

Sent by fax

January 18, 2011

Dear Councillors,

This letter is written in support of Regional Councillor Joe Li's motion to request an apology from *Maclean's* magazine for its offensive and racially divisive article, titled "Too Asian"?, in its 2010 university rankings edition.

As community partners in a Canadian coalition to eliminate anti-Asian racism, which has gathered more than 100 organizational signatures in an Open Letter (available at <http://www.facebook.com/tooasiantalkback>) to *Maclean's* demanding an apology, we also endorse Councillor Li's motion.

Our coalition strongly objects to *Maclean's* use of racial profiling and racial stereotyping to misrepresent Asian Canadians as perpetual foreigners in Canada. We believe that discourse of this nature, perpetrated and perpetuated by *Maclean's* and left unchallenged by publicly elected officials, reinforces historic anti-Asian resentment and antagonism.

Racial stereotyping when used in media hurts the reputation and dignity of Asian Canadians; it also ignores the long histories of ethno-cultural communities in Canada and their contributions towards building our nation and economy.

Work by coalition members across Canada has resulted in similar motions being passed by city councils in Victoria, Vancouver and Toronto. We encourage Markham Council, as representatives of one of Canada's most diverse municipalities, to join us in demanding an apology from *Macleans* for its offensive article.

Public disapproval of *Macleans* for creating content in its writing that is offensive to several identifiable groups, including Muslim Canadians, French Canadians and now Asian Canadians, is growing. Canadians are now being asked to sign a national petition to demand that the federal government revoke *Macleans*'s eligibility to receive public subsidies under the Canadian Periodicals Fund.

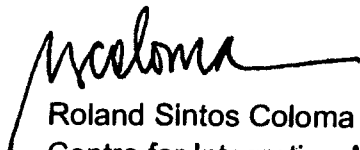
This effort is not an attack on freedom of the press, which we all value as Canadians; but it does speak to the rights of Canadians to engage their elected representatives in "talking back" to media when they are the targets of offensive content.

Markham Regional Council can make a difference in building and reinforcing the values of the Canada we want to live in.

Sincerely,



Brad Lee
Administrator, Too Asian? TALK BACK
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