

## In Support of LGBTQIA+ and Asian and Asian Americans

5 April 2021

“The process of through is ongoing”

From the poem “[On Trans](#),” by Miller Oberman

The Department of English at the University of Rhode Island stands in solidarity with LGBTQIA+ and Asian and Asian American students, colleagues, and community members. As scholars of literature and culture, we are attentive to the uses and resonances of language. When egregious claims and harmful equivalencies are made, our responsibility as educators to teach students to make ethical arguments becomes urgently clear. People remake the world with and through language. We know that language is essential to social and individual struggle, the liberation of one’s mind and spirit, and justice across race, gender identity, gender expression, social class, and sexual orientation.

We are deeply concerned about the recent violent attacks upon Asian Americans and the concerted legislative movements against transgender youth across the country. The Department of English condemns the way language has been used, before and since these incidents and initiatives, to disparage and dehumanize Asian American and transgender people. When trans identities are dismissed as “fantasy,” or when women of Asian descent are continually represented as fantasies of sexual availability and disposability, the consequences for these members of our community are real, devastating, and sometimes deadly. Much of what has alarmed us about the incidents over the past few weeks and days has been the way that intersecting identities—Asian American women, transgender people—have been targeted.

As scholars, educators, and community members, we appreciate and cherish the complexities of identity. We welcome and encourage those who boldly grapple with the full dimensions of their being. We richly value their integrity and rebuke any statements that diminish the complexity or reality of their and our experiences.

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