

# SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Office of Alumni & Parent Engagement

Dear friends and allies,

We have now marked the solemn first anniversary of the World Health Organization officially declaring COVID-19 a pandemic. The virus's death toll and effects have been felt internationally, albeit more starkly in underserved communities. What's more, Asian and Pacific Islander individuals and communities have endured inflammatory and xenophobic rhetoric, harassment, and violence since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic — these are not isolated and new events. There is a long history of violence against Asian and Pacific Islander communities within the U.S., including the Chinese Exclusion Act, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, the murder of Vincent Chin in 1982, and the string of anti-Muslim hate crimes occurring post-9/11. Anti-Asian violence is intersectional and should be recognized in its many distinct forms, including the sexualization and fetishization of Asian women, emasculation of Asian men, and marginalization and exclusion of Asian immigrants and Asian LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The Swarthmore Alumni of Color (AOC) Committee rebukes all forms of anti-Asian violence and stands in firm solidarity with our Asian and Pacific Islander community members across the U.S. and globally. We see these events as another manifestation of racism and injustice affecting communities of color that echo ongoing instances of anti-Blackness and overpolicing of and excessive use of force against Black individuals. The needs across communities of color are surely nuanced and distinct, but the pain experienced among us is shared.

We, as members of the AOC Committee, remain committed to supporting and advancing issues of equity, inclusion, and belonging directly affecting our alumni members, both current and future, on campus and beyond. With this mission in mind, we would like to share a [resource guide](#) that provides information on books, media, educational resources, and social media accounts dedicated to bringing awareness to anti-Asian discrimination, as well as community and advocacy organizations to donate to and support, and ways to report anti-Asian hate crimes and instances of discrimination. If you have suggestions on ways that the AOC Committee can support and serve as a resource for you or others moving forward, please let us know by emailing [AlumniOfColor@swarthmore.edu](mailto:AlumniOfColor@swarthmore.edu).

In solidarity,

## Alumni of Color Committee

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In the remainder of this newsletter, we are excited to announce new volunteer opportunities, updates from campus, and an Alumni Spotlight. We also have the good fortune of welcoming two new members to the Alumni of Color Committee, Salman Safir '16 and Luis Rodriguez '09. Full bios for Salman, Luis, and the rest of our current committee members can be found [on our website](#).

**One more thing:** If you identify as an alum of color, please add AOC to your profile "Groups" in the [Alumni Online Community](#).

Create a profile in the Alumni Online Community



## LGBTQ+ Alumnx Network Recruitment

Are you interested in becoming a member of the LGBTQ+ Alumnx Network steering committee? It's a chance to give back to Swarthmore with your time, energy, and unique sparkle. Please let us know by April 10. [Learn more about us!](#)

Cheers,

[The LGBTQ+ Alumnx Network Steering Committee](#)

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## AOC Global Citizenship Lecture Series



With the recent rise of right-wing populism and nativism around the world, it has never been more important to develop our global awareness and to act as responsible global citizens. But what does that mean in the 2020s, and in the wake of COVID-19? How have Swarthmore alumni of color been using their education and experiences, and how can they apply their expertise in careers and biographies to contribute broadly to understanding and cooperation, on the local, national, and international level?

The AOC Committee is looking for alumni of color who are committed, professionally or otherwise, to international cooperation for a planned lecture series. The series aims to share our experiences and expectations about how we alumni can promote global understanding and dialogue across borders and boundaries in a great variety of careers and contexts. By learning from each other, the AOC community and current students will hopefully be inspired to live and contribute as good citizens of the world.

Please contact Kira Alvarez '05 at [kalvarez@zedat.fu-berlin.de](mailto:kalvarez@zedat.fu-berlin.de) if interested in participating.

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## Alumni Spotlight

**Heather Hightower '09** is a practicing clinical nurse at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. Before nursing, she was an English as a second language teacher for high school students. Heather holds degrees in nursing from Johns Hopkins University and a bachelor's in religion from Swarthmore. She is a dog lover and ardent traveler who is constantly consumed by wanderlust.

Read more about Heather on our [Alumni Spotlight](#).

**Have recommendations for alumni of color to spotlight in the AOC Newsletter?** We want to celebrate alumni from all walks of life who have interesting experiences to share with the community in their personal, political, artistic, and/or professional lives. The spotlight involves a Q&A-style format that includes both standard questions and questions specific to each featured alum. Self-nominations are encouraged! [Submit your nomination here.](#)

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