



Boston College
UGBC Student Assembly (Senate)
Tiffany Brooks '21, Executive Vice President

A Resolution Concerning the Institutional Preventive Measures Against Coronavirus Risks, Racist Sentiment, and the Provision of Adequate Mental Health Care

Sponsors:

Sen. Mengru Crystal Pu, LSOE '20
President pro-tempore

Sen. Dennis Wieboldt, MCAS '23

Cosponsor:

Sen. Alex Eishingdrelo, MCAS '20

LEGAL PREAMBLE

Whereas: Article 4, Section 2, Sub Point B of the UGBC Constitution states that “The Student Assembly shall be the final authority on all matters of policy, which concern the UGBC.”

Whereas: Article 4, Section 2, Point E of the UGBC Constitution states that “The Student Assembly shall have the power to make recommendations to other legislative and administrative bodies and officials concerning the welfare of the General Student Body.”

SITUATIONAL PREAMBLE

Noting: As of February 4, 2020, at 12:00 GMT, there have been 20,696 confirmed cases of Coronavirus, of which 2,790 patients are in critical condition¹. The death toll reached to 427, and 97% of all fatalities took place in Hubei province².

Further Noting: The Massachusetts Department of Public Health confirmed on February 1, 2020, that a man in his early twenties has confirmed a novel Coronavirus infection after returning to Boston from Wuhan on January 28, 2020³.

Further Noting: The viral incubation period is believed by researchers to last up to 14 days for infections of the Novel Coronavirus 2019-nCoV⁴.

Further Noting: As the number of confirmed Coronavirus cases continues to grow globally, local and mainstream media⁵ have reported a rise in racist stereotyping, abuse, and sentiment against Chinese people and people of Asian descent in public areas and on college campuses.

¹ *Wuhan Coronavirus Outbreak*, worldometers.info; *Coronavirus Live Updates*, baidu.com/act/newpneumonia

² *Coronavirus: UL Advises British citizens to leave China*, The Gaudian (February 4, 2020); *China admits “shortcomings” as coronavirus infects more than 20,500*, CBS News (February 4, 2020)

³ *Boston Has Its First Confirmed Case of Coronavirus. Here’s What You Should Know.*, wbur.org

⁴ *Scientists Zero in on the Novel Coronavirus’s Incubation Period*, The Scientist (January 31, 2020)

⁵ *Fear of Coronavirus fuels racist sentiment targeting Asians*, Los Angeles Times (February 3, 2020); *Harmful Xenophobia Spreads Along with Coronavirus*, Time (February 3, 2020); *Students report racism, xenophobia in wake of Coronavirus concerns*, The State Press (January 31, 2020)

OPERATIVE TEXT

Therefore, be it resolved, the Undergraduate Government of Boston College calls upon the University to implement the following measures to support the physical and emotional wellbeing of its students during the global coronavirus outbreak.

The following action items are proposed and passed by the Student Assembly (Senate):

- 1) Individuals who have recently returned from China should have timely access to University Health Services and all other requisite administrative services. Deans, professors, and academic advisors should work closely with those students choosing to self-isolate to make appropriate academic arrangements that will ensure they are not disadvantaged because of this choice.
- 2) The University should adopt a travel disclosure form similar to that which has been adopted by other Boston-area institutions⁶ to ensure that it can actively respond to any concerns raised by its students.
- 3) The Office of Health Promotion and/or other administrative departments should make hand sanitizers, tissues, and facemasks available for free across campuses, destigmatize the use of these products by students, and advocate for rigorous sanitary practices, as well as employ other necessary precautions to prevent cross-infections among its members.
- 4) The Office of International Students and Scholars and University Counseling Services should partner with all parties concerned, including the Chinese Students and Scholars Association, Chinese Students Association, and Asian Caucus. Together, the organizations should actively reach out to and engage with students who have family members in the affected Chinese regions or who are experiencing increased anxiety or stress related to concerns about their families in China or about the deteriorating situation in their home-country.

The University should ensure students with increasing emotional stress aware of the mental health support from staff psychologists and peer mentors. Moreover, it should encourage faculty, academic advisors, and staff proficient in Mandarin Chinese or familiar with Chinese cultures and values to provide extra office hours for students to be able to discuss their worries and anxiety in their native language.

- 5) The Office of International Students and Scholars, the Office of Institutional Diversity, and related University departments should proactively combat undergraduate students' potential fear, racial bias, xenophobia, and anti-Chinese sentiment fueled by the spread of Coronavirus infections towards students of Asian descent on campus. Additionally, the University should take a firmer stance on the oversight and adjudication of incidents of racial discrimination against Asian (-American) students as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

⁶ Travel Registration Form for 2019 novel coronavirus, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), https://mit.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4VAuWaLc73TtTWI

The Office of University Communications should send out urgently-needed messages to the Boston College community regularly to alleviate students' concerns, clarify facts and information, and provide transparency on the health situation analysis of the campuses and the measures taken by the University.

The related University departments should initiate events to educate the student body on self-protection from coronavirus, to demystify the risks of contagion from interacting with members of various groups, and to eradicate the opportunities for students to use coronavirus as an excuse for racist and xenophobic comments.