

Emily Trinh

Nade Bai

Hannah Lee

Helen Zhang

Everyone: **All of these stories were submitted by Asian students at Davidson. We are giving them a voice.**

“TIMES I WAS MICROAGGRESSED”

“WHERE ARE YOU ORIGINALLY FROM?”

“THEY HAD NO RIGHT”

“ASSUMPTIONS”

Assuming I’m good at math, at piano, at school, because I’m Asian.

I was leaving my dorm building when a random old white man approached me to ask if I’m headed to the basketball game. I told him I was going somewhere else. Then, he proceeded to ask about more specifics. I was confused at first about why this stranger was suddenly trying to talk to me. When he asked me, “where are you originally from?” I finally realized that he had probably just seen me as some rare exotic Asian girl he stumbled upon on campus.

While I was traveling, shop workers would immediately say “nihao” to me. I was walking with two other Asian women and none of us were Chinese. It wouldn’t matter even if they had correctly guessed

our ethnicities, considering that they had no right to assume anything related to that ethnicity either.

Just because I am South Asian people assume that I will educate them about India or South Asian things.

[pause] (10 secs)

Everyone:

You're *athletic* For An Asian

You're *dumb* For An Asian

You're *tall* For An Asian

[pause] (10 secs)

“EXTRA WORK”

“LIVING”

“EAST ASIAN STUDIES”

“MALAYSIAN”

Despite putting up detailed demands all over campus, on social media, and on our website, holding a dialogue series and information sessions, putting up infographics and sources, talking to faculty and department chairs, students and members of the administration constantly question us. [They] give us advice to do things we have already done or looked into doing, and criticize us as well as expect us to do extra work to educate them and defend ourselves despite making all the work and knowledge public and

easily accessible. It is frustrating being spoken to as if we do not know anything.

In high school a teacher complimented how I painted my toes and asked me whether I'd ever consider doing that for a living.

When I was looking at Davidson in my senior year of high school, I clicked on the East Asian Studies Department just to be redirected to the Chinese Studies Department.

One guy asked me “Why are you on ACAA e-board... when you’re Hispanic?” when I’m very much just Malaysian.

“CUSTOMS”

Once when my family was coming back from Viet Nam, we had to go through customs in California. My sister had to translate for my mom, to which the TSA officer asserted:

“Shouldn’t your mom know English by now?”

[pause] (15 secs)

TIMES I MICROAGGRESSED

“UNFAIR AND IRRATIONAL”

“PAKISTANI”

“CRACKHEADS”

“DIRTY”

I held some sort of inherent dislike for anyone Chinese because of history with Vietnam. I don't remember if I ever said anything to anyone directly, but I've realized how completely unfair and irrational it was of me. I think there's probably more to unpack and unlearn there.

I thought that somebody was Pakistani and mentioned it to them. They told me they are from another South Asian country. I apologized profusely after, but I still felt horrible.

Calling my friends 'crackheads' in response to their erratic behavior, and not fully acknowledging the trauma and damage the 1980's crack epidemic left behind in black and brown communities.

On a Phone call with my mom I called my black roommate dirty because her hair was everywhere... I haven't apologized... In a class I would move my desk a little to the left when a black classmate would sit next to me that I didn't know...

[pause] (20 secs)

We have been the aggressor; we have also been microaggressed.

These stories were submitted anonymously by Asian Davidson students:

People I met abroad always assumed I'm from somewhere in Asia like Thailand.

“You're feisty for an Asian girl.”

“He wanted to date you because he's never dated a Vietnamese girl.”

[pause] (10 secs)

“ASSIMILATED”

“HE SWORE HE HAD SEEN ME BEFORE”

“ANOTHER ASIAN GIRL”

“BILINGUAL”

I overheard another Asian student talking about how AAI shouldn't have put up demands because Asian students have already assimilated. We cannot be assimilated and still act as if we are oppressed.

In the second week of one of my classes the guy sitting next to me swore that he had seen me before because he thought I was in his Russian studies class...I've never taken Russian in my life.

At F this random white guy put his arm around me and said hi with a name that was definitely not mine but was another Asian girl.

As an Asian American, people ask if I speak another language when I first meet them and I tell them Spanish, which is true but also because I know what they're asking for. Sometimes I say I'm learning Korean but it really depends on my mood and what I sense from the other person's intentions.

“TAKING UP SPACE”

“A PLACE WE HAD TO VISIT”

“WOULDN'T BE THE SAME”

“NOT A JOKE”

Someone questioned why we need so many Asian organizations on this campus. She said that we don't need an organization like SASA fighting to take up space, that would be like Vietnamese people starting a Film Club and getting mad that they weren't getting resources or space.

In a Starbucks on the way to Davidson from Raleigh, a white girl at the register talked about how she wished that she had skin that was beautiful and brown like mine. Later, she recommended her favorite Indian restaurant as a place we HAD to visit.

When I was working at a 'banh mi' shop an older white man preceded to talk about his Asian wife, how she is Buddhist, and how he'd never convert her to Christianity because then she wouldn't be the person he fell in love with.

When I say I'm Korean, sometimes people will jokingly – or seriously – say “I'm assuming South?” When people ask my mom, she takes it as a joke and jokes about sneaking across the border, but I don't find it funny because I have distant family I don't know who are living in North Korea since before the war.

[pause] (10 secs)

“DOES IT REALLY MATTER?”

“DISGUSTING”

“EMBARRASSING”

“DIMINISHED”

Sometimes people ask me where I'm from and when I tell them North Carolina, they either give me a look or they say “You know what I mean...” But really why does it matter where I'm from or what my racial ethnicity is?

I was eating a cup-noodle version of pho in my first year hall lounge and a hallmate said it smelled disgusting. The same hallmate also said that another Asian food I was eating in the lounge looked disgusting a few weeks after the first incident. This happened again once or twice throughout the year. At one point, I mentioned how they had said ‘disgusting’ multiple times. At another time, I explained to them that this food was my way to deal with homesickness.

During my first hall meeting, we played an icebreaker game that required me to introduce myself and retell the name of the people that introduced themselves before me. I had difficulty memorizing American people's names and also their pronunciations. When it was my turn, I could sense the awkwardness everytime I mispronounced someone's name. People in my hall looked at me intensely and laughed if I happened to pronounce their names incorrectly. Overall, it was just an embarrassing experience.

When we, as Asian students, have come to the administration and student centers on campus with demands or ask for help, we have repeatedly been infantilized by adults in power who treat us as if we are lazy and incompetant. This happens to all marginalized students on campus. Davidson cares more about its aesthetic image than about listening to students. It happened with last year's protests, it happened with the AAI demands, and it happened with DMP. It's more important that pillars stay blank than that students are given space to justly protest and air grievances.

Why can't you take us seriously?

My 'friend' asked me, "how do you not know that person's name? She is also Asian." They then proceeded to say it was *just a 'joke.'*

People joke about coronavirus and how Asians are all carriers. They make fun of all the terrible things that are happening.

I recently got a Snapchat from someone I knew on campus. It was a picture of their package, which was from China. They added the caption “I’m finna get coronavirus from my package.” This virus has not only killed thousands of people, but also cost many Asians their jobs and businesses.

What happens when someone who microaggressed you is a professor or someone with more power? Why do I feel like I am being silenced? How can I speak up?

[pause] (10 secs)

<p>White men expect me to make room for them on the sidewalk.</p> <p>Once I got in an elevator at a hotel in Florida with my mom and brother, and the white guy in the elevator asked where we were from and</p>	<p>I have heard many comments about my accent. Whenever I would tell people that I come from China I would always get comments: “oh wow I would have never guessed”, “You don’t have a sound like other Chinese people”, “Your accent is so good”, “You</p>	<p>When I wanted to be better at something, I would always hear ‘You’re already good enough for an Asian’</p> <p>One girl in high school was asking my Korean friend about Korea and asked if they</p>	<p>Once, when walking in the town of Davidson, a random white man called out to me asking, “Hey, are you Chinese?!” I tried to keep walking, but my friend hadn’t heard what he said and stopped, prompting him to ask again, “Do you speak</p>
--	---	--	---

DMP/AAI Collaboration - Take-Over Week - Showcase in Union - Feb. 2020

<p>was shocked when we said North Carolina. He kept asking “Really? Really?”. Neither my brother nor I said anything out of shock and the uncomfortable space, so my mom had to laugh and play along saying “Yep, believe it or not they were born and raised in North Carolina” and felt pressured to explain where she was born - in Asia - and that she came to the United States as a kid. It was really uncomfortable, and we didn't mention it after</p>	<p>don't have broken English”. When I hear these comments I often feel alienated and feel the need to explain that I didn't grow up in China. Even so, people seem impressed by my accent. Sometimes I want to just lie and say I am born and raised in the U.S. just to avoid these comments that make me feel bad about being Chinese or the fact that other Asian students have some sort of an accent. These comments really alienate me from my identity and</p>	<p>have ice cream in Seoul, to which my friend and I were shocked, seeing how Seoul is one of the biggest Metropolitan cities in the world.</p> <p>When I was working at a ‘banh mi’ shop an older white man preceded to talk about his Asian wife and how she is Buddhist and how he'd never convert her to Christianity because then she wouldn't be the person he fell in love with.</p>	<p>Chinese?” I answered no, It felt violating that my ethnicity seemed to give a stranger permission to address me in public and ask invasive questions.</p> <p>When I was a kid, I remember being in a bouncy house in the mall and this other girl my age came up to me calling me by I'm assuming her Asian friend's name and her mom kept trying to tell her that I wasn't her, but she was insistent.</p>
--	---	---	--

we got off the elevator.	speaks of my identity as somehow lower than or inferior.		
--------------------------	--	--	--

[pause] (15 secs)

“INVISIBLE”

We were up until 3am, running around campus in the cold and dark, papering it with sheets of paper. The papers proudly proclaimed 1.) Our DEMANDS for the school regarding Asian/Asian American experiences and 2.) Our infographic on Asian American students (statistics, the history of Asian Americans on campus). We covered the campus with them, ready to be in everyone’s faces after weeks of quietly writing and working. Yet, the next day, students ignored the signs in front of them. The ones that were kept up, at least. The school removed a significant number of demands because they were in places posters ‘aren’t supposed to be’. Instead of just moving them, many of them were just torn down.

Because they couldn’t understand the difference between a *protest* and students *advertising an event*.

Within 24 hours of covering the campus with the demands of the Asian American Initiative, we were rendered invisible.

We were silenced.

[pause] (15 secs)

“NOT MINE, NOT MEANT FOR ME”

I wake up in discomfort knowing that this bed is not mine and this room is not mine and this institution is not mine because this place, this school, was not meant for me or built for me. It rejects me at every turn while still clutching onto the word “community” as if creating the false concept of “school family” can erase how ostracized I feel. I look at myself and see someone who is not white enough to be white, and not Asian enough to be Asian. I can assimilate into a toxic culture of drive and success that Davidson fosters, and even pretend to be fine when I am told by my male peers that “white girls hit different.” I am stared at without asking to be, never comfortable in a space because no space exists for me. Being Asian at Davidson is like signing a contract that does not render my visibility, one’s experiences cast aside as professors mix up my name with the only other Asian student in the class and feeling small in white-dominated everything.

It is almost like being displaced, seen but unseen by students and administration who will never fully understand, but won’t even try either.

All of these stories were submitted by Asian students at Davidson. We are giving them a voice.