



Confronting Anti-Asian Racism

A case to support the Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement at the University of British Columbia

Though the systemic exclusion of Asian immigrants began in Canada more than 150 years ago, the global COVID-19 pandemic has shone a harsh spotlight on anti-Asian racism in this country. The disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on Asian Canadians — including physical attacks, economic vulnerability, and higher exposure to COVID-19 among some communities — have shown us that anti-Asian racism is our present reality rather than a historical wrong.

The rising tide of anti-Asian racism demands immediate attention and urgent response. Following UBC President [Santa J. Ono's commitment to combat anti-Asian racism and discrimination](#) and the first-ever [National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism](#), **UBC is establishing the Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement to generate and disseminate knowledge that drives change.**

The centre's focus on expanding community-engaged teaching and research will advance equity, recuperate Asian Canadian histories, and transform contemporary realities of exclusion and racism.

The Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement stands in solidarity with all racial minorities to advance our understanding of the roots of racism and its histories, and to participate in efforts to stop it. This new initiative comes at a time when events such as global protests against anti-Black violence, the recognition of hundreds of graves on the sites of former Indian Residential Schools, and an alarming increase in Islamophobic hate crimes have demonstrated the need to confront hatred, oppression, violence and injustice.

As Canada reckons with its long history of colonialism, white supremacy, and systemic racism, UBC is drawing on its established track record of research and teaching, extensive networks, and long-standing partnerships with Asian Canadian communities to play a leading role in this urgent work.



The time to take concrete action is now. **Join us to confront anti-Asian racism.**

"We know there has been a growing tide of xenophobia, discrimination and racism directed at various Asian groups since the start of the pandemic and that this continues to this very day. A new [Angus Reid Institute poll](#), done in partnership with the University of British Columbia, reveals the depth of this problem. One of the key findings of the poll is that Canadians of Asian descent aged 18-34 are the most likely to have experienced and been affected by anti-Asian racism and bigotry over this past year. This is why these difficult but much-needed conversations need to take place."

— Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of British Columbia
Excerpt from the [National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism's](#) final report



Building on *Expertise & Experience*

The University of British Columbia, recently recognized as North America's most international university, is uniquely positioned to lead the crucial conversation in Canada on how to address anti-Asian racism and steer our nation towards an equitable future.

Over the past 15 years, innovative research, teaching, and community engagement at UBC has led to milestone developments such as:

- Innovative co-teaching models led by community knowledge holders.
- Collection and documentation of oral histories involving Filipino, Punjabi and Chinese communities.
- Public facing work in partnership with the Museum of Vancouver, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site, the Chinese Canadian Museum, Burnaby Village Museum, and other organizations.
- In-depth collaborations with Asian Canadian community organizations such as the hua foundation, Bảo Vệ
- Collective, and Tulayan Filipino Diaspora Society, among many others.
- Making Canada's Register of Chinese Immigrants under the Chinese Head Tax Act from 1885-1949 accessible to family researchers.
- Redress and anti-racism policy commitments from the Government of British Columbia.

This crucial work has transformed how we understand British Columbia's history in ways that honor the struggles of older generations. Future generations can lead with the understanding of

who they are, where they live, and how this place has come to be.

A core tenet of our research strategy stems from building strategic long-term partnerships with Asian Canadian communities. Through these partner relationships, students learn from cultural knowledge holders to co-create knowledge and explore the history, culture, and contemporary development of Asian communities in Canada, and global Asian migrations. This collaborative approach develops informed, empathetic, and culturally competent graduates who are empowered and equipped to serve and play leading roles in diverse Asian Canadian communities.

The Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement will be situated amidst a group of vigorous on-campus anti-racism initiatives, including the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre; increased financial support for marginalized students; academic programs with racial justice, equity and diversity at their cores; and most recently, initiatives stemming from the first National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism.

There is no better time to leverage UBC's expertise, experience and networks in Asian Canadian research and community engagement.

UBC has a long track record of supporting Asian Canadian communities, and is proficient at deploying research and resources through the following initiatives:

- **Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies:** a unique community-based research and experiential learning model. By collaborating with local Chinese Canadian communities, students participate in the active creation of new knowledge.
- **Asian Canadian Community Engagement Committee:** represents faculty and staff across UBC who came together to build respectful and mutually beneficial engagement with Asian Canadian communities.
- **Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies Program (ACAM):** created in honor of the 76 Japanese Canadian UBC students who were forcibly removed from the university after the start of the Second World War, ACAM offers a wide range of courses and opportunities to train future leaders to address anti-Asian racism.

“ACAM’s values — rooted in collaboration, equity and justice — are the principles that inform my work as a secondary school humanities teacher and advocate for anti-racist education policy. I am inspired every year by the empathy and brilliance of ACAM graduates who are ready to apply the learnings from the program to serve the diaspora and the communities that have raised us.”

— **Dominique Bautista (BEd’16, BA’15),**
UBC Master of Education candidate



The first-ever National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism (June 10–11, 2021) brought together people across generations, sectors, and the country.



Funding Opportunities

Fundraising goal: \$15,000,000

UBC seeks a bold philanthropic partner like you who believes that racism must stop.

With your support, the new centre can build on the lessons and recommendations of the National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism, which increased awareness of anti-Asian racism in all its forms.

In order to succeed, ACRE requires a thoughtful and phased approach:

- **Phase 1: Building foundational strength and program support**
- **Phase 2: Enhancing student learning and community engagement**
- **Phase 3: Elevating research excellence**

Timing	Gift Level (Endowed)	Description
Phase 1 Year 1 and 2	\$1,000,000	Foundational Strength and Program Support
	\$3,500,000	Experiential Student Learning
Phase 2 Year 3 and 4	\$4,000,000	Community Engagement and Events
Phase 3 Year 5 +	\$1,500,000	Post-Doctoral Fellowships
	\$5,000,000	Chair in Asian Canadian Research and Engagement

Together we can collectively transform systems of oppression, support emerging leaders, and shape the communities in which we live and work.

Key *Outcomes*

Foundational Strength and Program Support – \$1,000,000

- **Launch the centre** by bringing together anti-Asian racism initiatives and aligning activities with broader anti-hate efforts across UBC.
- Advance the establishment of a **national network** of non-profit, academic, and community partners to implement the recommendations from the National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism.

Experiential Student Learning – \$3,500,000

- Increase opportunities for students to learn from **immersive coursework** that brings community experts into the classroom.
- Increase **community placement** opportunities, which give students the chance to work directly with community partners, learn from cultural knowledge holders, and advance community research priorities.
- Create a **student leadership** program that provides the focused training and leadership opportunities for select students who demonstrate community leadership potential.

Community Engagement and Events – \$4,000,000

- **Share knowledge and research** through increased events, publically accessible multimedia resources, and other innovative forms of public scholarship.
- Support new and ongoing research projects led by UBC faculty and students in response to **community identified priorities**.

Post-Doctoral Fellowships – \$1,500,000

- Offer competitive fellowships that will attract scholars to UBC and **advance research** in Asian Canadian studies.

Chair of Asian Canadian Research and Engagement – \$5,000,000

- Recruit a world-class scholar to elevate Asian Canadian research and steer **the national conversation** as we work to **confront anti-Asian racism**.

We are pleased to work with donors to recognize their generous contributions.



Since 2018, UBC student interns and community partners developed Chinese Canadian content and storytelling at the Burnaby Village Museum, British Columbia. Photo courtesy of ACAM

A commitment to advancing **equity, diversity, and inclusion**

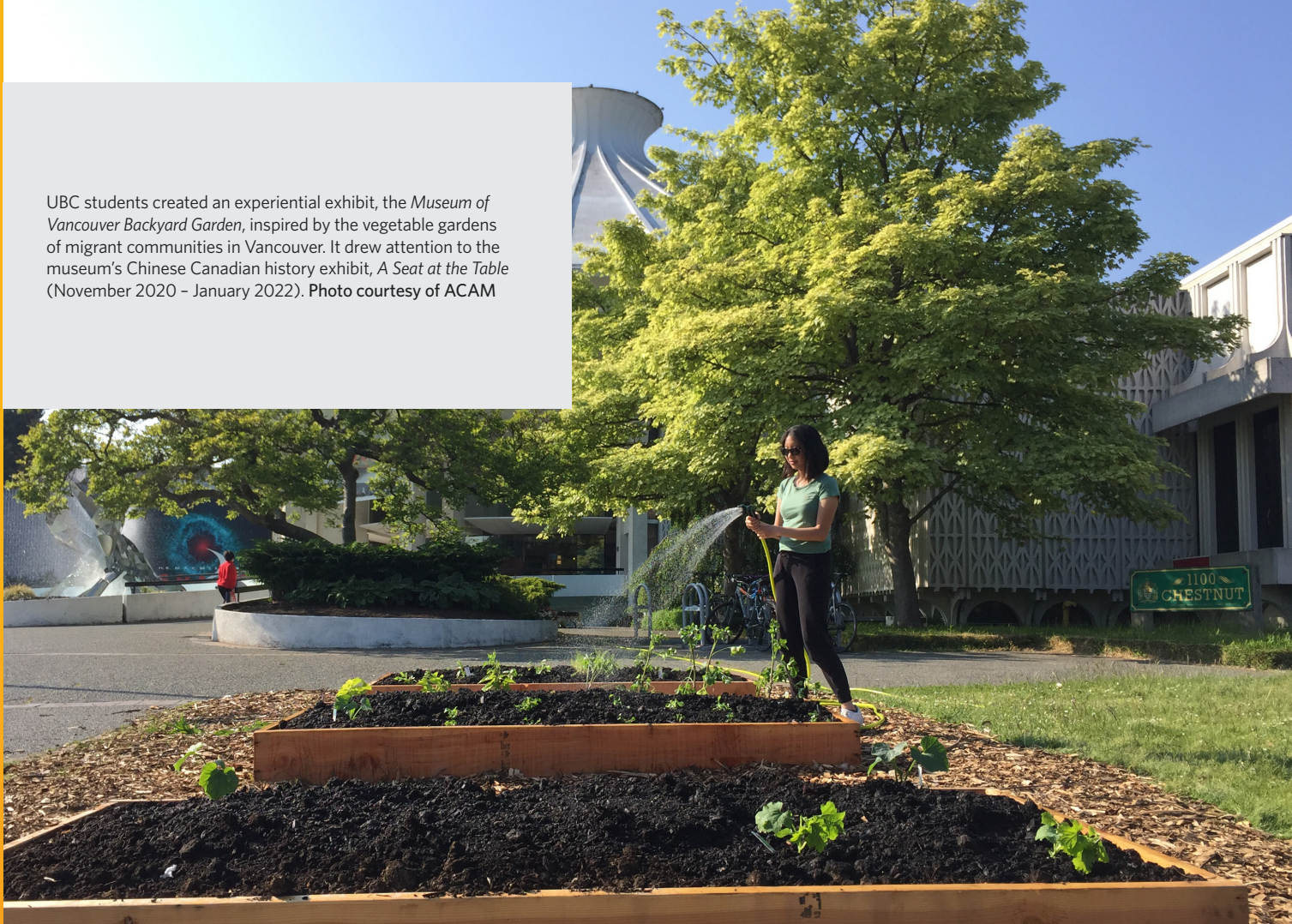
The events of the past eighteen months have clearly illustrated that racism continues to be a violent and unrelenting presence in our institutions and systems, inflicting deep wounds not only on individuals and marginalized groups, but also on society at large. Through the establishment of the Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement, we will continue the valuable work of the National Forum on Anti-Asian Racism and address systemic racism now and into the future.

"ACAM instilled a deep interest in learning about Asian immigrant groups in Canada, the policies that affect them, and the transnational politics that inform their lives. My time in the program inspired my ongoing research of Asian immigration and its ties between Canada and Asia — in my graduate studies, in my current work as a policy researcher at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, and as a community organizer in Vancouver."

— **Phebe M. Ferrer (MA'19, BA'18),**
Project Specialist, Asia Pacific
Foundation of Canada



UBC students created an experiential exhibit, the *Museum of Vancouver Backyard Garden*, inspired by the vegetable gardens of migrant communities in Vancouver. It drew attention to the museum's Chinese Canadian history exhibit, *A Seat at the Table* (November 2020 – January 2022). Photo courtesy of ACAM



For more information on the Centre for Asian Canadian Research and Engagement, please contact:

Gage Averill

Dean, Faculty of Arts
University of British Columbia
gage.averill@ubc.ca

Karen Affleck

Director of Development, Development and Alumni Engagement
University of British Columbia
karen.affleck@ubc.ca



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