

Combating Stigma Associated With COVID-19

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. In this time of crisis, it is essential that we lift up our commitment to the values of inclusivity within our campus.

The University does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran, and takes steps to ensure that students, employees, and third parties are not subject to a hostile environment in University programs or activities.

The U.S. Department of Education issued a notice to all higher education institutions across the nation regarding concerns of discrimination and bias related to the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, commonly referred to as coronavirus. The notice detailed an increase in the number of reports regarding stereotyping, harassment, and bullying directed towards students and faculty perceived to be of Chinese-American or, more generally, Asian descent.

Stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is infected or at risk for the disease. Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem.

The University of Pittsburgh is committed to maintaining a campus environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment. Please use the Bias Incident Response Guidelines detailed on this [website](#) if you witness or experience a bias incident so that the University may promptly and effectively respond. The University recognizes that each incident is unique and must be addressed as such. As a result, the information listed on the website is merely a guide. All incidents should be assessed in light of the fact that the University is deeply committed to addressing bias on campus.

For complete details on the University's Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy (07-01-03) and Sexual Misconduct Policy (06-05-01), please visit the [Policies, Procedures, and Practices page](#).