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This letter is to support ~~Asian American~~ <sup>the</sup> students' proposal for consolidating Asian American Study as an integral part of education system at UT-Austin.

Asian American students have been stereotyped as "Invisible Minority" and a quiet group. It is exciting to witness Asian American students voicing their needs and become more assertive. However, their assertive voice has elicited attacks, such as Asian American Study would further segregate people with different races or deviate so-called American mainstream culture.

The arguments indicated some basic misconceptions that I would like to discuss in this letter. American society traditionally has been composed of people from every corner of the world. Taking Texas as an example, Asian American has been the fast growing minority group in Texas, next to Hispanics (25.5 percent of the population) and blacks (11.6 percent of the population). According to the census bureau, nearly 40 percent of all Texans are "minorities". Unfortunately, general public has been misled by mass media and popular culture and still regarded the marching of St. Patrick's Day parade, polka dancing, and European traditions as the only American culture. While Asian Americans' dragon dance, Philippine folk dance and other Asian ceremonies have been considered exotic foreign cultures. The reality is that Texans wear jeans and kimonos; they eat hamburg<sup>u</sup>ers, fried rice, and tacos; they speak Spanish, English, Vietnamese, and Indian, etc.

In schools, Asian Americans speak English, learn Western philosophies, study glorious European immigration history such as Mayflower, celebrate St. Patrick Day, and try hard to assimilate into mainstream culture but they were treated as foreigners just because of their appearance. Does the so-called mainstream American culture integrate Asian Americans or further segregate Asian Americans? Does the American culture validate Asian Americans' value or communicate a mixed message to Asian Americans?

Asian Americans' history, identity, literature, etc. have never included in American history, literature, or other domains and it only perpetuates Asian Americans as foreigners and Asian American cultures undesirable. Eventually, it hurts Asian Americans' self-esteem and the society as well.

Asian American Study, like African American Study and Latin American Study, would integrate Asian Americans' and minority's experiences in the education system and prepare future leaders to tackle bigotry which has been the foundation of discrimination and racism. As a leading university, UT-Astin should have the vision and take a proactive approach to prepare students for a changing and more diverse society.

~~The Students' Association has  
also overwhelmingly approved the~~

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UT staff