

December 14, 2010

Dear Councillors of the City of Toronto,

On behalf of the 24,000 members of the Ryerson Students' Union, we urge you to discuss and support this motion. As many of you know, Ryerson's campus is one of the most diverse campuses in Canada, and we firmly believe that all of our members are valuable and deserving of a place in academia. In fact, this is one of the reasons that we advocate for public, accessible education for all. Furthermore as students and elected representatives, we are (and MacLean's should be) particularly concerned about the *underrepresentation* of marginalized communities in post-secondary institutions. We seek to find solutions that will make higher education fully accessible to everyone, regardless of race, gender, class, language or ethnic origin.

It is equally concerning that the Maclean's article paints Asians as a homogenous identity. In fact, Asians, whether Canadian or foreign-born, are a heterogeneous group that represent a wide variety of cultures and ethnicities. In examining Ryerson's campus community or even the voters and constituents in each riding, we can all see the great diversity represented by those of Asian descent. Asian Canadians from many ethnic backgrounds have contributed to the foundation of our country and our city. This is history that we should embrace and be proud of.

According to this article, universities are a space created for the white, dominant population, and minority groups are taking away from their experiences. This notion is problematic, as it creates a divide on campuses that are seeking to build an inclusive community. As a city we must take a stand by publicly rejecting the racism perpetuated by this article. As a voter, a constituent and an elected student representative, I urge you all to support this motion. Already, the Cities of Victoria and Vancouver have passed similar motions, and several thousand Torontonians have expressed their concern and outrage for the blatant racism printed by MacLean's. It is imperative that leaders of any community, especially those that represent a community as diverse as Toronto, speak out and support the idea that members of marginalized groups are valuable and deserving of positions in academic institutions.

On behalf of the Ryerson Students' Union and our 24,000 members, I want to urge the City of Toronto to follow the lead of Vancouver and Victoria in sending a strong united message to MacLean's that their values do not represent ours, and further, to request an apology for perpetuating racism and ethnic stereotypes about our communities.

Sincerely,



Liana Salvador
Vice-President Education
Ryerson Students' Union
Local 24, Canadian Federation of Students