

Speaking Notes: Navigating Information and Race in the Era of COVID-19 Symposium

- Thank you, Jack, and good morning, everyone.
- As Dean of Libraries for York University, it is my honour to welcome you to this significant and timely symposium on information and race in the era of COVID-19.
- I'm pleased to see we are joined, virtually, by scholars, students, and researchers from York University, as well as several institutions and communities across Canada.
- I would like to extend an especially warm welcome to some of our distinguished guests, including:
 - **The Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy**, retired member of the Senate of Canada and Chancellor Emerita of the University of Toronto;
 - **Emily Mo**, Director of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Toronto;
 - and our symposium partners:
 - **Mary Condon**, Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School;
 - **Siobhan O'Flynn**, Director of the Canadian Studies Program at the University of Toronto;
 - **Rachel Silvey**, the Richard Charles Lee Director of the Asian Institute at the University of Toronto; and

- **Justin Poy**, President and Creative Director of Justin Poy Agency.
- Thank you to everyone joining us for this symposium.
- I hope you all share my excitement for the important, meaningful, and indeed, necessary conversations we'll be engaging in over the next two days.
- Librarianship is an information profession that is all about teaching our community of users how to discern authoritative sources, a skill set we teach that is more important now than ever, in an age where misinformation and disinformation are proliferating and being mobilized, with tremendous impact on marginalized and minority communities.
- More recently, the information literacy courses we regularly teach have expanded to include critical information literacy, which goes beyond evaluating information sources to an examination, an interrogation, of the constructs of those authoritative sources to a more expansive opportunity to discuss biases, marginalized voices, oppression, and constructions of authority and privilege that may be embedded in such sources.
- That's why I am so proud that our Libraries are hosting these critical conversations on misinformation and disinformation related to such a relevant topic.
- With this in mind, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the individuals from our Libraries who worked to bring us together for this symposium.
 - Teaching and Learning Librarians **Norda Bell**, **Thumeka Mgwigwi** and **Kalina Grewal** from York University Libraries...
 - ... as well as **Sharon Wang**, **Associate Librarian** from Osgoode Hall Law Library...

- ... all of whom have made significant contributions without which this event could not be possible.
- I would also like to acknowledge and thank **Jack Leong**, our Associate Dean of Libraries for Research and Open Scholarship, who was the principal investigator for the SSHRC Digital Citizen Research Connection Grant that made this symposium a reality.
- Jack's research on the naming of the virus, and how that has impacted specific communities, is a vital contribution to the scholarship on COVID-19 and demonstrates how the Libraries continue to be a home for expertise, knowledge creation, and critical conversations that advance a vision of an informed and just society.
- Jack has also been a champion for diversity and inclusion within our Libraries.
- As our lead of our Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team, Jack's efforts to coordinate an EDIB Plan and Framework, and embed this in all aspects of the Libraries' work, have shaped how we come together to make positive change for our students, our campuses, and our local and global communities.
- It is now my pleasure to introduce **The Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy**, and invite her to make a few remarks.
 - Vivienne is an author, historian, fashion designer, entrepreneur, and community volunteer.
 - She founded Vivienne Poy Mode in 1981, and over the following fourteen years enjoyed great success in fashion design, manufacturing, wholesale, and retail.
 - In 1998, she was the first Canadian of Asian descent to be appointed to the Senate of Canada, where she focused on gender issues, multiculturalism, immigration, and human rights...

- ...and was instrumental in having May recognized as Asian Heritage Month across Canada.
 - Vivienne is an honorary alumna of York University, receiving a Doctorate of Laws in 2014, and establishing the Vivienne Poy Asian Research award...
 - ... as well as the Bernard Luk Memorial Lecture in Hong Kong Studies at the York Centre for Asian Research.
 - She has also been a great friend and supporter of York University Libraries, notably with her work on the development of our Hakka collection.
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- I am thrilled that she has been able to join us for this symposium.
 - Thank you, Vivienne, and welcome.