



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 16, 2020

Students Want Professor Fired for “Sleeping” During Zoom “Anti-racist” Meeting

Whether the so-called Cancel Culture has reached peak insanity we can never know, but if it’s not getting close, the country’s in worse trouble than we thought.

Students at Marymount Manhattan College want a professor fired because she committed the unpardonable offense of falling asleep during a Zoom meeting to discuss “anti-racism.”

A petition at Change.org to remove [Patricia Hoag Simon](#) (shown), associate professor of theatre and arts coordinator of the BFA in Musical Theatre, has gathered nearly 2,000 signatures. The professor, students and others argue, is “racist,” “sexist,” and even worse, “fatphobic.”



Sleepy Time?

The upshot of the now-closed petition is that dozing off during an all-important meeting on racism could be evidence of racism itself, although Simon’s short snooze, if that’s what it was, isn’t her only problem.

Simon “does not align with the anti-racist views and actions that were promised to be adopted by the department earlier this week at the Town Hall meetings” to discuss “anti-racist” activities, the [petition creators wrote](#).

But then came the “sleeping during the Town Hall Meeting” on June 29:

This action has only capitalized on a pattern of negligence and disrespect that Patricia Simon has exhibited over and over again in her time as an Associate Professor, and Coordinator of the BFA Musical Theater Program. Professor Simon has a history of ignoring instances of racism in the form of racial profiling within the program, and enabling the racist and sizeist actions and words of the vocal coaches under her jurisdiction. She has also been known to use her power to intimidate and bully the students in her program who have made efforts to advocate for themselves or for their fellow peers. These actions have proven to the students within the program that she does not have the best interests of all students in mind, and therefore, she should not be an educator any longer.

Simon’s enemies piled on and posted flatly defamatory and perhaps legally actionable claims at the website.

“She told me that I, being Asian, wouldn’t be successful as an actor if I didn’t have an ‘Asian song’ in my book,” [one wrote](#). “She also bullies the students into not speaking up when they’re having issues (she called me needy for going to her office more than once to complain about a professor).”

Most college students these days are pretty “needy,” as the petition itself demonstrates, but in any event, [another wrote that](#) “Simon is racist and fatphobic and a toxic professor that should have been



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removed from MMC a very long time ago. Many professors have also mentioned her being problematic and specifically instances of being racist.”

Who those professors are, readers never learn, but anyway, [another claimed](#) that “I had plenty of friends and fellow classmates that had to endure her constant racist and fatphobic harassment and it is absolutely unacceptable that she continues to hold a position at Marymount.”

Another student [even complained](#) that the professor “yelled at me and some other faculty members about us overloading the elevator at school” and that “if we got on it, that it would be too much weight.”

[Another called her](#) a “disgusting excuse for an educator.”

Whether any or all of this is true is impossible to determine, although the students’ preoccupation with Simon’s “fatphobia” suggests that more than a few of the scholars at MMC might be on the chubby side.

The professor told Campus Reform that she was not asleep. “I was not asleep as is implied at any point during the meeting,” [she said](#). “The photo used was taken without permission when I was looking down or briefly resting my Zoom weary eyes with my head tilted back which I must do in order to see my computer screen through my trifocal progressive lenses. I listened with my ears and heart the entire meeting.”

Mob Rule

Writing about the attack, Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, [observed that](#) “academics cannot function in an environment where even dozing off in a meeting is evidence of racism.”

We should all engage in this national debate while retaining a modicum of fairness and toleration. This includes not assuming that a statement is motivated by racism or an image (like this one) reflects some deep-seated hostility to reforms. This could be a case of sleep deprivation or a case of sleep deprivation (or not, as claimed, sleep at all).

“Assuming that a statement is motivated by racism” is exactly what another mob at Michigan State University did when it attacked Stephen Hsu, vice president of research and innovation, and forced him to resign.

The Michigan State Graduate Employees Union, [Campus Reform reported](#), attacked Hsu as a racist on Twitter because [he wrote](#) a blog post about scientific research that showed genetically driven biological differences among the races, though genetics often drives biology. Most people who get sickle cell anemia are black, and blacks are more prone to high blood pressure and childhood sleep apnea; two-thirds of Asians are lactose intolerant and Asians suffer from a much higher risk of glaucoma than other races; Native Hawaiians are prone to cancer and diabetes; etc. This fact is so readily apparent that if a medical doctor was unaware of obvious predispositions of certain races, he should be considered negligent, yet Hsu was driven from his job for mentioning it.

“The Twitter mobs want to suppress scientific work that they find objectionable,” [Hsu wrote](#). “What is really at stake: academic freedom, open discussion of important ideas, scientific inquiry. All are imperiled and all must be defended.”

Image of [Patricia Hoag Simon](#) : [Screenshots of images at mmm.edu](#)



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