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Wesleyan Chinese students harassed over COVID-19 receive outpouring of support

70 students remain on campus, including 30 international students and 15 from China

Author: Liz Fabian Mercer CCJ

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MACON, Ga. — Two Wesleyan College students from China are seeing the worst and best of human behavior amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The young women were out shopping at a local store when they were singled out and harassed.

“Unfortunately, two Wesleyan international students have reported being victims of discrimination and xenophobia at a local store,” Wesleyan spokeswoman Mary Ann Howard stated in an email. “These students are thousands of miles from their homes and families and it is important to remember that being Chinese or Asian American does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.”

Howard declined to name the store, saying the establishment was not to blame.

The students encountered two different people who were rude to them, she said.

After the incident surfaced on social media, the college received numerous donations of food and snacks from the public.

“Hundreds of pre-wrapped snacks and baked goods have been delivered to campus from friends who support our students who can’t go home,” an [article on the college’s website](#) states.

Although the school has transitioned to remote teaching and learning, about 70 students remain on campus, including 30 international students and 15 from China.

Most of them were not able to go home because of travel restrictions.

“Prayers for Wesleyan!” college president Vivia Fowler posted on her Facebook page.

Wesleyan has counseling services available via video chat, phone, text and email to all students who are feeling distressed, lonely or anxious, Howard said.

Meal service continues and campus police have gates locked and are not letting anyone onto campus.

“Aside from these two unfortunate incidents, the Macon community has been extremely supportive of the actions the college has taken, and will continue to take, to keep the Wesleyan community safe and healthy,” Howard stated in her message.

Howard expressed appreciation for those who donated goodies.

“People have been sooo generous with sending snacks!” Howard wrote. “We are thankful to have plenty to last a long time.”

Contact Civic Reporting Senior Fellow Liz Fabian at 478-301-2976 or fabian_lj@mercer.edu

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