



June 21, 2021

## Building of a Safer Deaf Space

[Statement in International Signs \(click here\)](#)

The Organizing Committee would like to address an incident that took place yesterday at 10<sup>th</sup> Deaf Academics and Researchers Conference. We take this incident seriously and consider it important to share what happened with the conference delegates in order to recognize harm caused and prevent this kind of incident from happening again.

Following an inappropriate presentation which addressed difficult issues, an exchange took place during the question period and afterwards in the virtual lounge between the presenter and the conference delegates. This exchange included a sharing of differing points of view. Sadly, the presenter felt that he had to defend his position and dismissed points of view expressed by those who were Black and IBPOC with notable disrespect. Upon recognizing this continued oppression throughout the discussion, we asked the presenter to leave. He was then unenrolled and is no longer able to access the conference as a result. This was done to ensure that the DAC is a safe space for all Deaf attendees.

We wish to acknowledge that racism can take many forms. Invalidating a racialized person's experience is one of its manifestations that occurred yesterday. When a white man invalidates the experience of oppressed Black women and their conception of intersectionality and refuses to recognize and acknowledge his privilege as a white man, this contributes to unequal power relations. *Strengthening Deaf Agora* is chosen as a theme of the 10<sup>th</sup> DAC, so the DAC Committee wants to reconfirm the importance of recognizing and deconstructing privileges in order to build a safer Deaf space.

### **Here are some actions we took yesterday to address the incident:**

1. Revoked the presenter's access to the rest of the conference;
2. Met the individuals who experienced oppression today to validate their experiences, to express our regrets about the incident and to explore different solutions to respond to the situation to reduce harm caused;
3. Shared a reminder on Attendify, Twitter, and the Virtual Lounge that racism and any oppressive comments or behaviours are not tolerated during the conference.

We will contact the presenter to inform him the reasons for the action undertaken against him and the necessity of maintaining a safe space for all delegates.

### **We will proceed with following actions to ensure that this work is carried over to the Organizing Committee for future Deaf Academics and Researchers Conferences. These include the following:**

1. Review the Call for Papers Review process for the next DAC conference in 2023.
2. Closely monitor live presentations for any racist, offending, and harmful behaviours and comments.
3. Develop DAC's Inclusion and Diversity Policy, which would include actions to be taken should any racist or oppressive incident occur.
4. Ensure that DAC is committed to focusing on promoting the continuous growth of diversity and inclusion on scientific committees, amongst presenters, as well as DAC overall.
5. Continue to work on promoting and fostering a more diverse and representative scientific and organizing committee and to deconstruct white privilege.

We would like to reiterate that we are taking this incident very seriously and that we appreciate your feedback and support in making DAC a safer space for each one of us. In this regard any suggestions or ideas are welcome.

Thank you for your collaboration.

The DAC 2021 Organizing Committee