UCARE (University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity) was founded in 2018 as part of Queen's University's response to a 2016 incident involving a racist costume party that was held off campus. Following that incident, the Principal’s Implementation Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (PICRDI) was formed in 2017. Prior to its dissolution, the Committee produced a report now commonly known as the PICRDI report which included dozens of recommendations to promote an inclusive and welcoming campus for all members of the Queen’s University community. UCARE was established to coordinate, monitor, and report on the progress of University-wide initiatives to address racism and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Council helps to shape the vision and strategy of the University and serves as a critical voice for diversity and inclusion at Queen’s. Then Principal and Vice-Chancellor Daniel Woolf declared in 2017 that “Establishing UCARE is a crucial step towards PICRDI implementation and towards building a more inclusive campus community.”

On February 1, 2020, another racist ‘COVID-19-themed’ party was held off campus at Queen’s University. This incident was incredibly distasteful, hurtful and insensitive to members of the Queen's community who are of Chinese heritage, as well as those whose loved ones may have died from or are currently afflicted with the virus. Principal Patrick Deane and Dr. Ann Tierney, Vice Provost and Dean of Student Affairs, have issued strong statements condemning this party and subsequent acts of racism against Chinese students. On Thursday, February 6, Principal Deane met with concerned students who expressed their distress and anger at the insensitivity of such an incident. Since then the Undergraduate Trustee has resigned but the community is still shaken by this incident. UCARE condemns the actions of the party organizers. It is important for the University administration to demonstrate that such actions have serious consequences. The Council also implores those who attended the party to reflect on how their actions have perpetuated racist attitudes and created an unsafe environment for others.

As a community we should be compassionate and cognizant of the impact of COVID-19 on people across the globe, especially within Chinese and Asian communities. We should be aware of the harms of conflating the origins of the COVID-19 virus with people of Chinese and Asian descent. We condemn any actions that seek to make light of the suffering caused by the virus or use it as a platform for bigotry. We would like to express our support for the Asian community here at Queen's and in Kingston. We also need to take strong action to stop this pattern of events, by ensuring that this type of incident does not keep repeating itself. It is obvious that we need continuous open dialogue and extensive education on anti-racism and inclusion so that students comprehend the pain that such targeted "parties" cause and, thereby, how they violate the mandate and inclusivity policies of Queen's University.

For further information, visit the following online resources:

https://www.queensu.ca/humanrights/home

https://www.queensu.ca/inclusive/initiatives/picrdi/

https://www.queensu.ca/inclusive/