

Inside Baylee's Brain: Canceling the Ohio University Chinese New Year celebration is racist

The Post: Ohio University

February 5, 2020 Wednesday

University Wire

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Section: OPINION; Pg. 1

Length: 260 words

Body

"Xīnnián hǎo" means Happy New Year in Chinese. You know where you might not be hearing that this year? At the annual Chinese New Year celebration held in Baker Ballroom. Why? Because of the fear surrounding the coronavirus.

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus is a recently discovered outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. Since its detection in December 2019, the disease has spread to numerous countries around the globe, including the United States. With the world death toll surmounting to over 500 people, it's understandable to be afraid. But cancelling an entire cultural celebration because of something not affecting people here is borderline xenophobic.

As of Feb. 3, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have not found any confirmed cases of coronavirus in Ohio. Two students at Miami University supposedly contracted the disease, but that turned out to be false. Unfortunately, that incident and countless other cases have led to a national fear of not only the virus, but the Asian population as a whole.

The Lunar New Year is China's most important holiday. Celebrating it in Athens gives Chinese overseas students and Chinese American families living here the opportunity to commemorate a significant part of their heritage. It's also an occasion for others to come and appreciate the rich culture of China through food, music and dance. The experience is truly all-encompassing.

The gala was supposed to take place Sunday, Feb. 9, but when I heard it was being postponed indefinitely, leaning toward cancellation, I was angry.

Load-Date: February 5, 2020