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Ensuring College Access and Success for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Students

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Foreword

In the fall of 2018, I was a student organizer for affirmative action and one of eight alumni who took the federal witness stand in the lawsuit *Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*. Students and alumni fought to voice the importance of race-conscious policies, campus diversity, and solidarity among communities of color. As one of many Asian American activists involved with this case, my testimony directly opposed SFFA's claim to represent Asian American student interest in attacking affirmative action policies.

By mobilizing the model minority myth, which portrays Asian Americans as universally high-achieving students, SFFA created a cover for its anti-civil rights agenda. It convinced the public that this case was about ending discrimination against Asian Americans in college admissions by ending affirmative action for Black and Latinx students. In reality, SFFA did not bring forward a single prospective or current undergraduate student from Harvard, as a plaintiff in its case, let alone an Asian American student. SFFA relied solely on statistical analysis and non-student witnesses in its argument — a fact that was buried by inflammatory media coverage pitting Asian Americans against other communities of color.

Despite the media attention and racialized division that this case drew, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in June 2023 to ban race-conscious college admissions, and the fallout since then, have been sobering, including for Asian Americans who were swayed by SFFA. It is extremely revealing that in a case that was ostensibly about discrimination against Asian American students, the Supreme Court's decision ultimately does not offer any guidance, relief, or support for Asian American students. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) students are barely addressed at all. In pursuit of its true goal of a race-blind world, SFFA has already moved on to attack race-conscious policies in contracting, employment, and private investment.

In the years to come, advocates for education equity must grapple with the question of what comes next. As this brief illustrates, beyond the media smokescreen, Asian American and NHPI students face a diverse range of challenges on the road to college access and success. It is imperative that higher education institutions step up to bridge the gaps for marginalized students in this challenging landscape.



Sally Chen

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Student Organizer and Expert Witness for the Defense

Students for Fair Admissions vs. President and Fellows of Harvard College



Preface

Over 50% of American students in our public schools are Latinx, Black, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI), or American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN). Tapping into their talent and ensuring their access to a college education is essential to our future economic power and the success of our multi-racial democracy. Despite the historical exclusion and current underrepresentation of many Americans in our colleges and universities, in June 2023, the Supreme Court of the United States severely curtailed the use of race in higher education admissions, prohibiting the consideration of an applicant’s racial status as part of that process.

Race-conscious admissions helped ensure America’s colleges and universities were more diverse. Without it, there is a greater urgency for college leaders and policymakers to review current practices for equity, and to identify solutions that provide a fairer approach to preparing students for college, admitting them, and supporting their success. Towards that aim, the Campaign for College Opportunity is releasing a series of briefs, including this one, as part of our [Affirming Equity, Ensuring Inclusion and Empowering Action](#) initiative. The series elevates practices that support the college preparation, admission, affordability, and success of Latinx, Black, Asian American, NHPI, and AIAN students, ensuring America does not return to an era of exclusion in higher education.

Purpose of This Brief

The Campaign for College Opportunity has always been a champion of ensuring equal and equitable treatment of all students in higher education. We recognize the value and necessity of understanding the experience of all learners from diverse backgrounds by disaggregating data to explore trends, opportunities, and challenges. More importantly, we seek to bring attention to the expertise, assets, and strengths of Americans from all backgrounds, while ensuring that solutions are targeted to support these same students. This is the second of four briefs within our Affirming Equity, Ensuring Inclusion, and Empowering Action initiative that highlight practices to support students. This brief is tailored and informed by experts, best practices, and an authentic commitment to ensure that all Asian American and NHPI students can go to college and succeed without sacrificing or leaving their cultural assets behind. It follows a [brief focused on supporting American Indian/Alaska Native students through higher education](#). Additional briefs focused on Latinx and Black students are forthcoming.





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Overview

This brief focuses on the need for higher education institutions to support Asian American and NHPI students pursuing a college degree, recognize the historic racism encountered by Asian American and NHPI residents in the United States, dispel harmful stereotypes involving these communities, and dismantle the numerous barriers preventing Asian American and NHPI access and success in our colleges and universities. Drawing upon the successful outcomes achieved by Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs), this publication offers a variety of culturally responsive approaches to curricular and cocurricular design, academic support, student services, and capacity-building to increase Asian American and NHPI students' sense of belonging, self-efficacy, and academic achievement.

Introduction

The 2020 U.S. census revealed that Asian American and NHPI populations are among the fastest-growing in the nation, with 24 million Asian American and 1.6 million NHPI residents.¹ Additionally, there are over 1.7 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. who have arrived from Asian and Pacific countries. It is estimated that, together, the Asian American and NHPI populations will increase to 40 million by 2060. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Education projects that the number of Asian American and NHPI students enrolling in college will grow 12% in the next four years.²

These demographic shifts and the growth of the Asian American and NHPI populations in the U.S. come despite a long history of anti-Asian sentiment and racism. Consider the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which banned almost all Chinese immigration for 10 years, a ban extended through the Geary Act in 1892 and made permanent in 1902. These exclusion laws lasted until 1924, when Congress limited immigration based on population counts from the 1890 census.³

Following World War I, lawmakers limited immigration from Asian nations beyond China, and Congress, before the mass incarceration and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, passed laws forbidding Asians from marrying white people, attending white schools, and owning land.⁴ Researchers have written about anti-Filipino race riots and the crimes against Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus after September 11, 2001. More recently, there is ongoing documentation of serious anti-Asian hate crimes related to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ NHPI communities have also faced historic racism in the context of European and U.S. colonialism. Colonists, for example, launched assimilation campaigns designed to strip Native Hawaiians of much of their language, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices.⁶ Moreover, scholars such as Theodore Wang and Frank Wu have discussed other historical instances when, after the Civil War, Southern plantation owners planned to import Chinese workers as a way to depress wages for former Black enslaved Americans.⁷

No matter how many generations their families have been in the U.S., Asian American and NHPI people continue to suffer under the “perpetual foreigner stereotype,” often characterized as “strangers,” “un-American,” and inherently “other.” According to the Pew Research Center, 52% of Asian Americans say they have experienced at least one incident in which a stranger treated them like a foreigner.⁸ However, some Asian American groups are now mostly U.S.-born populations. Nearly six out of ten Japanese Americans and almost two out of three Hmong Americans, for example, were born in the United States. Pacific Islanders are also majority U.S.-born, as Native Hawaiians make up about one-third of the total Pacific Islander population in this country.

Historically, Asian American students have been viewed as high-achieving students who easily gain access to and graduate from elite colleges and universities. This model minority myth, which is largely built using group averages and outdated stereotypes, has been used to argue against differentiated approaches and racial equity policies in higher education. This myth also has been used to create a wedge between Asian American and NHPI groups and Black and Latinx Americans. It was central, as well, to the cases brought by Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) against Harvard College and the University of North Carolina (UNC), with SFFA claiming that Asian Americans had been denied admission in favor of applicants from less qualified minority groups.⁹

The American Community Survey (ACS), administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, includes 20 ethnicity categories within the larger Asian American, and six ethnicity categories within the NHPI demographic, also allowing respondents to mark “Other Asian” or “Other Pacific Islander”. The ACS, separate from questions on race and ethnicity, allows respondents to select from 26 Asian and 11 NHPI ancestries.¹⁰



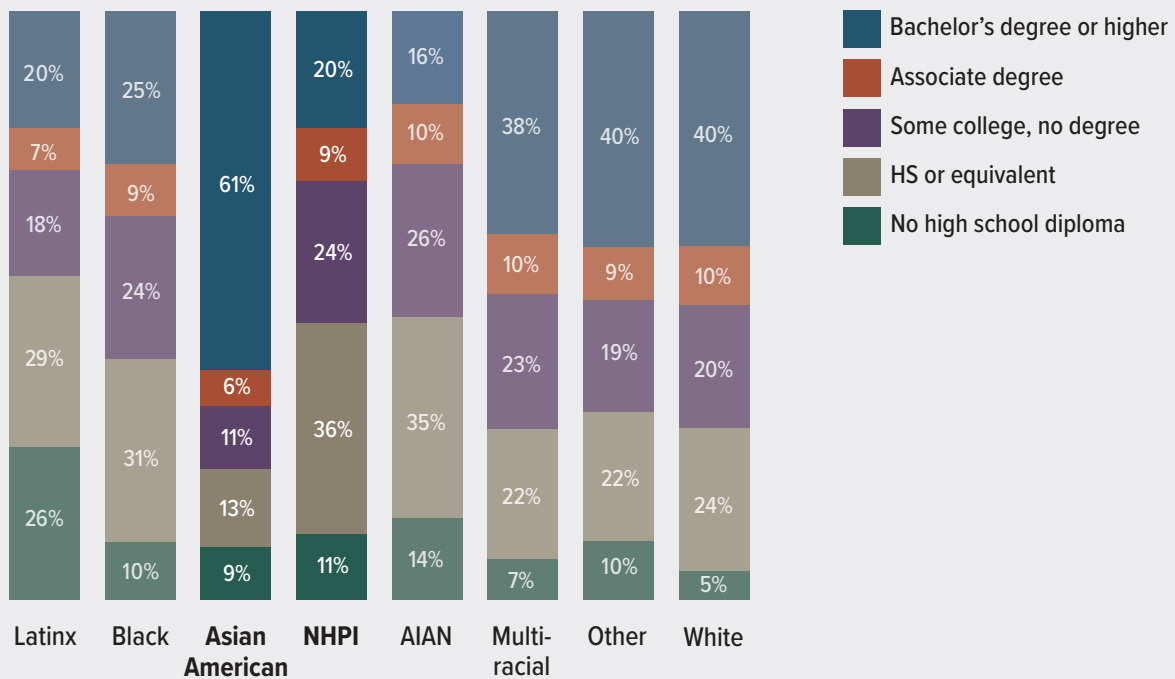
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The State of Higher Education for Asian American and NHPI Students in the U.S.

Nationally, Asian Americans have the highest educational attainment levels relative to other major racial and ethnic groups, with 61% of adults ages 24 to 65 in the Asian American workforce holding at least a bachelor's degree. As Figure 1 shows, however, there is great diversity among Asian Americans. For example, only 20% of NHPI residents hold a bachelor's degree. Nearly a quarter (24%) of NHPIs in the U.S. have enrolled in college without completing at least an associate degree.

Only one in five NHPI residents has a bachelor’s degree. This is one third the rate of bachelor’s-degree attainment seen by their Asian American peers—a difference that is often masked when data on these groups are aggregated together.

Figure 1. Educational Attainment in the U.S. by Racial/Ethnic Background, Ages 25-64.



Source: US Census Bureau. (2024). American Community Survey, Five Year Estimates 2019-2023, Public Use Microdata Sample.

Figure 1 makes it clear that grouping NHPI residents with Asian Americans would mask substantial variation in educational attainment between the groups. What these data do not show, however, is the tremendous variation in college enrollment and completion within the Asian American and NHPI communities. **Disaggregated data on educational attainment reveal a wide range of educational outcomes among the Asian national origin groups, with people of Southeast Asian origin having the lowest educational attainment levels** – 15% of Cambodian, Laotian, Burmese residents, for example, attained a bachelor’s degree, as compared to 34% of residents who identify as Japanese, 33% of Taiwanese and 32% of Asian Indian. More recent immigration patterns have seen larger numbers of refugees arriving from Southeast Asian and East Asian countries, with larger migration waves occurring

primarily from the 1970s through the 1990s in the aftermath of the U.S. occupation of Southeast Asia during the multiple tragedies of the Khmer Rouge genocide in Cambodia, bombings in Laos, and the Vietnam War.¹¹ These differences have important implications for the types and levels of support colleges and universities should look to provide Asian American students.

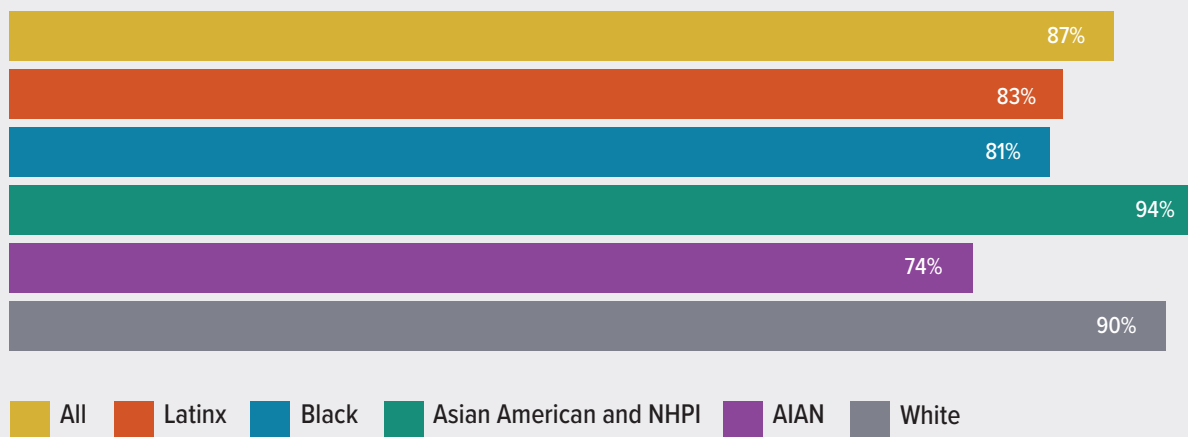
Among NHPI groups, Marshallese, the people of the Marshall Islands, had the lowest educational attainment with only 4% holding a bachelor's or higher. At 15% bachelor's-degree attainment, Chamorro (indigenous people of the Mariana Islands) and Fijian Americans are at the higher end of the attainment spectrum for NHPI Americans, but these levels are low compared to peers of other racial/ethnic backgrounds.¹² Additionally, 32% of Asian Americans have limited English proficiency, which impacts their language access and equity outcomes related to health, education, careers, and civic participation.¹³ Unfortunately, the way in which data on racial and ethnic background are collected and reported makes it difficult to obtain data with more granular information about distinctive sub groups among Asian American and NHPI students. The U.S. census collects and publishes data related to educational attainment for populations within both the Asian American and NHPI communities, but finding disaggregated information about college enrollment and success beyond these two large categories can be difficult.



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Asian American and NHPI students, together, have the highest high school graduation rates of any racial/ethnic subgroup, but several states do not disaggregate these populations when reporting their statistics to the federal government, rendering further disaggregation impossible with national data.

Figure 2. Adjusted Cohort High School Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity, 2019-2020.



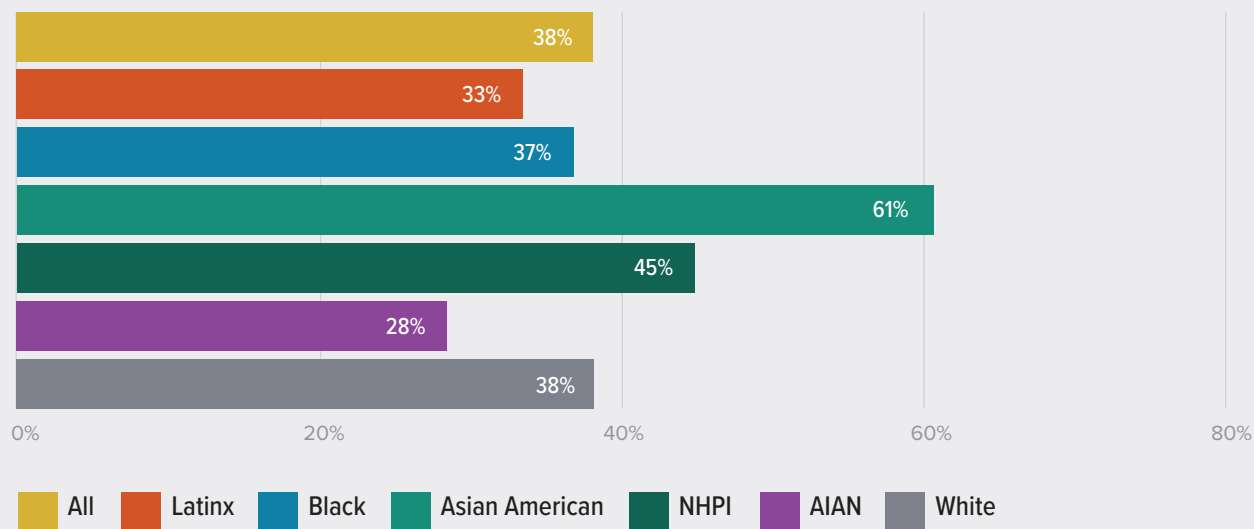
Source: Common Core of Data. (2024). Table 1. Public high school 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR), by race/ethnicity and selected demographic characteristics for the United States, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: School year 2019–20.

In Figure 2, we see high school graduation rates for students, disaggregated by racial/ethnic subgroup. These data, drawn from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), report outcomes on Asian American and NHPI students together, as there are several states that do not disaggregate these data before reporting them.

Asian American and NHPI students, as a group, do have high rates of high school graduation. But among states that do disaggregate their data for federal reporting, we see that across the U.S., in every single state for which disaggregated data are available, NHPI students are not as well-supported to complete high school as their Asian American peers, yet this information is lost when graduation rates are reported as an average for the larger population.

Six out of ten Asian Americans (61%) between the ages of 18 and 24 are enrolled in college. Nearly half (45%) of college-aged NHPI students are also enrolling in college, exceeding the national average (38%).

Figure 3. College Enrollment Rates, 18-to-24-Year-Olds, by Race/Ethnicity, 2021.



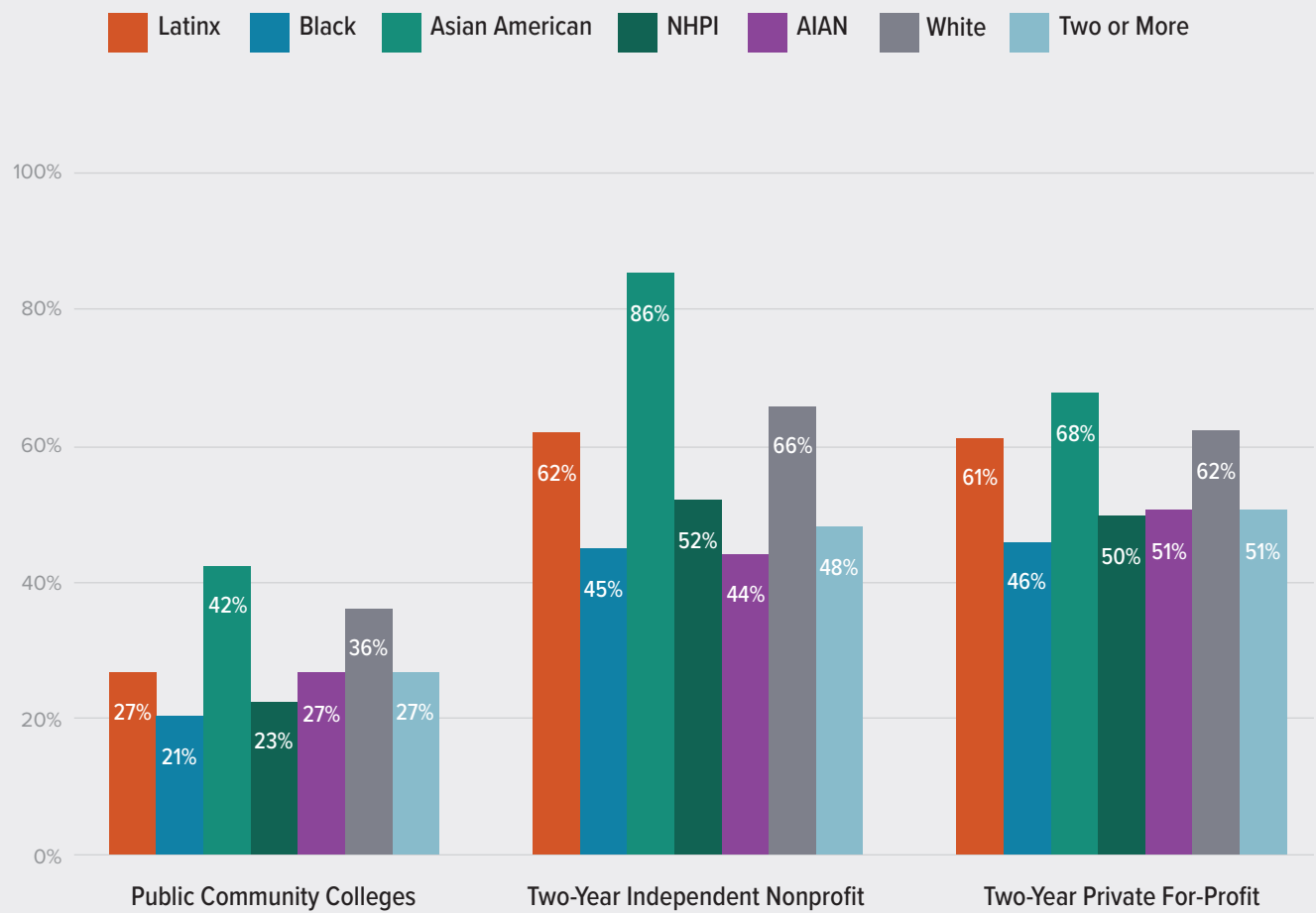
Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). Percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds enrolled in college, by level of institution and sex and race/ethnicity of student.

Asian American and NHPI students are enrolling in college at relatively high rates. More than three in five Asian Americans ages 18 to 24 are enrolled in college at either the undergraduate or graduate level. This is much higher than the share of NHPI young people enrolled in college, though at 45%, NHPI college attendance is higher than the national average.

Though Asian American and NHPI students are enrolling in college at rates exceeding the national average, colleges and universities must do more to support NHPI students who are enrolling in both two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

Public community colleges in the U.S. support fewer than one in four NHPI students to complete a degree within three years. This is roughly half the rate at which Asian American students are supported to complete a degree.

Figure 4. Three-Year Cohort Graduation Rates at U.S. Community Colleges by Race/Ethnicity, Students Enrolling in 2019.

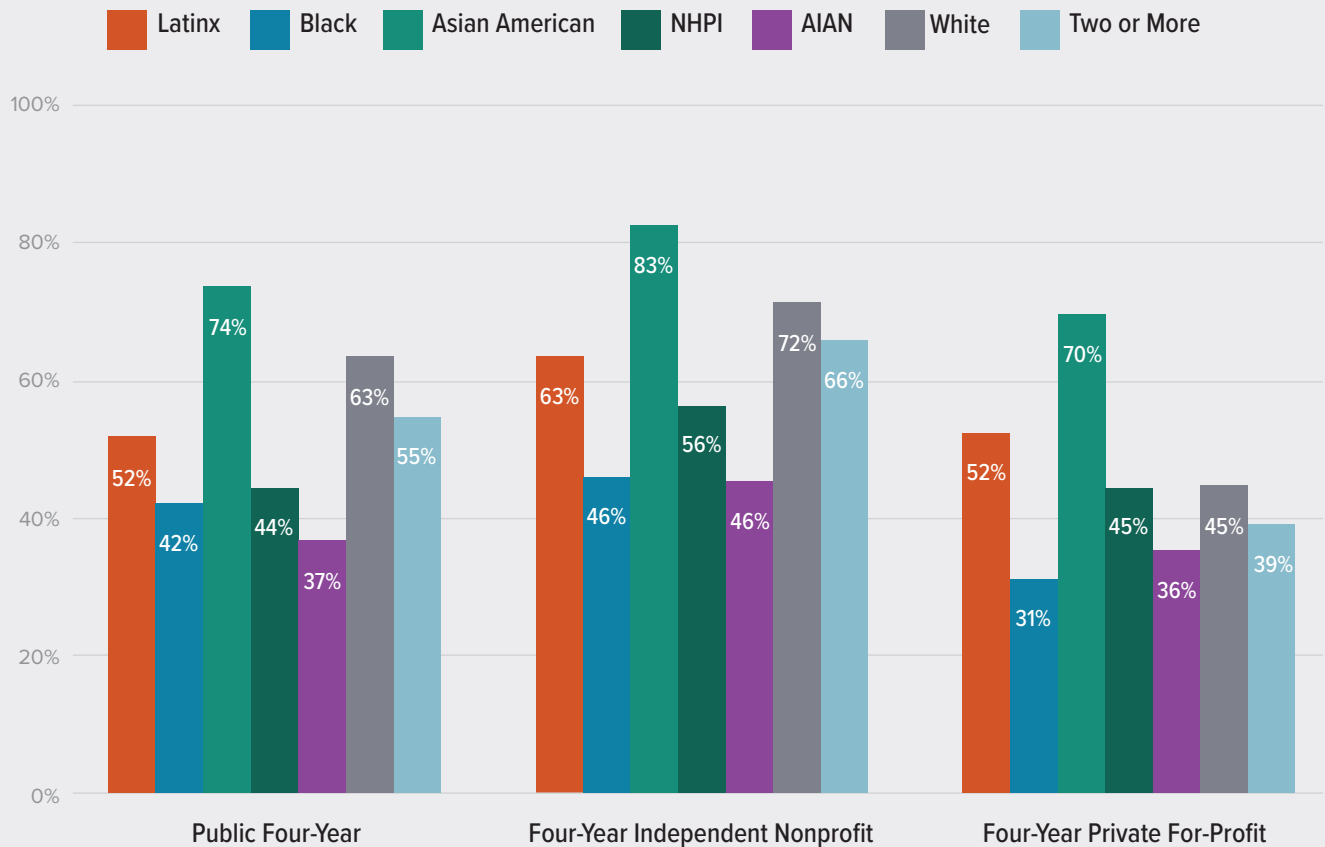


Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Asian American students have the highest graduation rates from both two-year and four-year institutions. At public community colleges, four in ten Asian American students (42%) are supported to graduate in three years.

Public colleges and universities in the U.S. support fewer than half of NHPI students to complete a degree within six years. Nearly 75% of Asian American students are supported to complete their bachelor’s degrees within six years of initially enrolling in college.

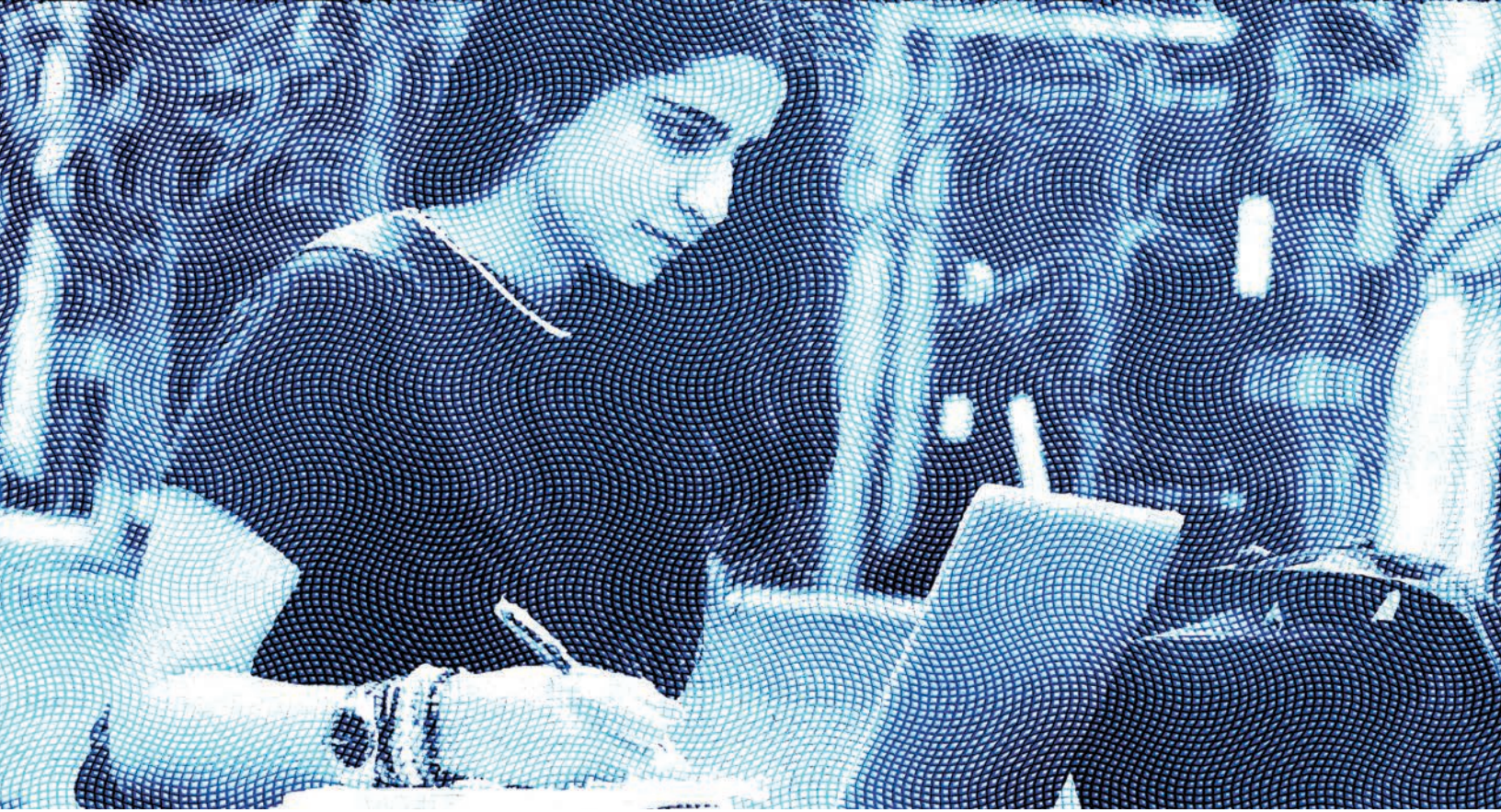
Figure 5. Six-Year Cohort Graduation Rates at U.S. Four-Year Colleges and Universities by Race/Ethnicity, Students Enrolling in 2016.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics. (2024). Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

At public four-year colleges and universities, three out of four Asian American students (74%) are supported to earn a bachelor’s degree within six years. Eighty-three percent of Asian American students at independent nonprofit institutions earn their degrees within six years.

Across the spectrum, NHPI students are not as well-supported to earn their degrees as their Asian American peers, and often have graduation rates below those of their peers more broadly at both two-year colleges and four-year colleges and universities.



Opportunities for, and Barriers to, Asian American and NHPI Success in College

If colleges and universities are going to provide meaningful, differentiated resources to their students, they must disaggregate their data on Asian American and NHPI subgroups. Doing so will ensure visibility for students from underrepresented Asian American and NHPI backgrounds, and it will help combat systemic racism and fight the stereotypes that stem from the model minority myth. Colleges and universities must also work to create welcoming campus environments that ensure Asian American and NHPI students experience a sense of belonging, allowing them to reach and achieve their full potential.¹⁴

Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions and their Contributions to Student Success

The Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program was created in response to the history of invisibility and misrepresentation of Asian American and NHPI students in higher education.¹⁵ AANAPISIs were established by Congress in 2007 by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 and later expanded by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.¹⁶

The AANAPISI program provides grants and assistance to qualifying colleges and universities to expand their capacity to serve Asian Americans and Native American Pacific Islanders and low-income students. There are two primary eligibility requirements that institutions must meet in order to become an AANAPISI. First, the institution must maintain a 10% Asian American Native American Pacific Islander undergraduate population. Second, the institution must meet Section 312(b) of the Higher Education Act's (HEA) basic eligibility criteria, including that at least 50% of the institution's degree-seeking students receive financial assistance under one or more of the following programs: the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Federal Work Study (FWS), or the Federal Perkins Loan.¹⁷

Each year, the U.S. Department of Education produces a list of institutions that meet eligibility requirements to become an AANAPISI. In 2023, there were 208 eligible colleges and universities, of which 39 received funding from the AANAPISI program. Over a third—85 eligible AANAPISIs—were in California alone: 13 California State University campuses, eight of the nine undergraduate University of California campuses, 41 campuses among the California Community Colleges, and 23 more among independent and private colleges and universities. Additionally, 15 of the 39 currently funded AANAPISIs are in California.¹⁸

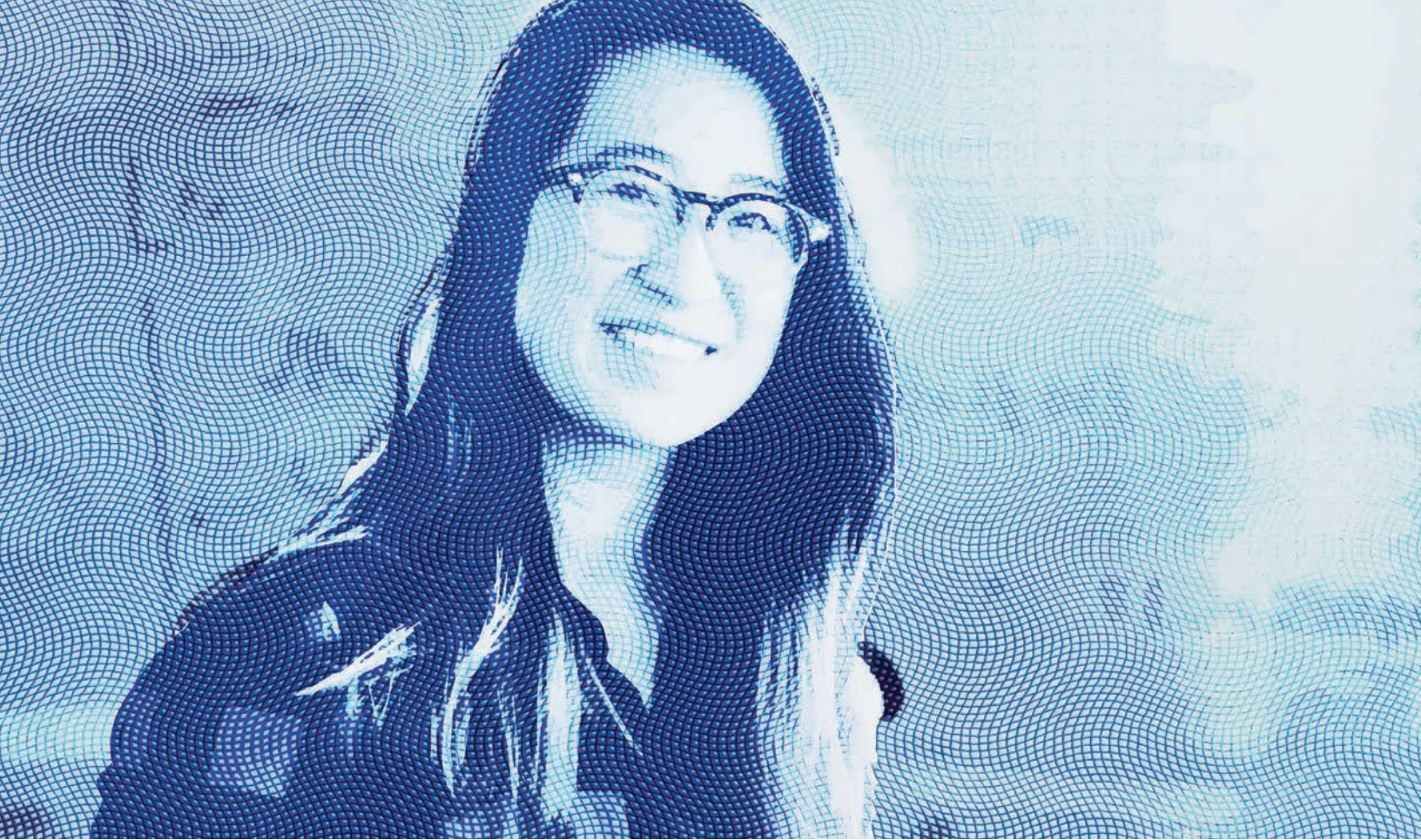
AANAPISIs account for roughly 6% of over 4,000 degree-granting institutions in the U.S. However, AANAPISIs enroll over 40% of Asian American and NHPI undergraduates. Nearly half (49%) of all associate degrees and over a third (37%) of baccalaureate degrees conferred to Asian American and NHPI graduates are awarded by AANAPISIs.¹⁹ Given these outcomes, knowledge and institutional practices

from AANAPISI colleges and universities are critical to understanding how to support Asian American and NHPI students in higher education.

Today, there is a rich body of research on AANAPISIs, with many studies showing correlations between Asian American and NHPI student success and the development of culturally responsive curriculum and cocurriculum for Asian American studies, culturally responsive communities of learning with academic and student service supports, and the establishment of cultural centers, to name a few.

Since the establishment of the AANAPISI program in 2007, the number of eligible AANAPISIs has grown significantly and will continue to as the population grows. Though the number of eligible AANAPISIs in the U.S. has increased, only a small segment has received funding from the program. Furthermore, **AANAPISIs continue to be the lowest-funded Minority Serving Institution (MSI) program**, with a little over \$78 million appropriated for the AANAPISI program in 2022. Meanwhile, over \$561 million was appropriated for the Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) program, over \$2 billion each appropriated for the American Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCU) program and the Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian (AANH) Serving Institutions program, and over \$4 billion for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).²⁰

These comparisons illustrate the inequity in funding levels for both the AANAPISI program and the HSI program. Moreover, due to the demographic shifts and rise in Asian American and NHPI and Latinx undergraduate enrollment, an increasing number of colleges and universities find themselves dually designated as an AANAPISI and an HSI. Tension has arisen within institutions because college presidents and chancellors feel forced to choose one MSI program over the other, either due to statute or due to limited resources for developing the applications. It is no surprise that many dual and multiple designated institutions will pursue the MSI program because it has greater funding. Ideally, instead of competing against one another, MSIs should support and collaborate with one another to ensure higher education access and success across all minoritized groups.



Innovations and Illustrations

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM LINKED TO ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND²¹

Developing and offering a culturally responsive curriculum linked to Asian American studies offers Asian American and NHPI students an opportunity to learn about their own identities, the diverse histories of Asian American and NHPI groups, and current issues impacting their communities. Faculty members at the University of Maryland, College Park, used AANAPISI funding to strengthen their Asian American studies program through course development, engaging students in research, and other activities. Additionally, the AANAPISI grant was used to expand the Asian American studies physical space on campus to include a conference room and resource library for students and instructors to gather for informal dialogue.²²

Among other components, the university's curricular changes included:

- Additional student research projects to counter the model minority myth and increase the visibility of the diversity of the Asian American and NHPI community.
- Expansion of the Asian American studies minor to include a transnational focus, intersectional approach, and requirement for students to engage in comparative identity courses.
- Inclusion of cocurricular activities, such as a collaborative leadership institute for Asian American and NHPI students designed to teach them about issues affecting Asian American communities, including immigration policy, mental health, and economic inequality.

The program leveraged the Asian American studies program faculty and staff members who were active in local and national organizations focused on serving Asian American and NHPI populations. Through its connections in the community, the program was able to bring civic and community leaders to campus to share their experiences in the classroom, offering opportunities for students to learn from and engage with policymakers, advocates, community organizers, and other Asian American and NHPI leaders.

With these curricular changes, Asian American studies offerings increased at the University of Maryland, College Park, from nine courses to 14 courses, Asian American and NHPI student enrollment doubled in the Asian American studies minor, and the program saw an increase in student engagement in community leadership and activism.

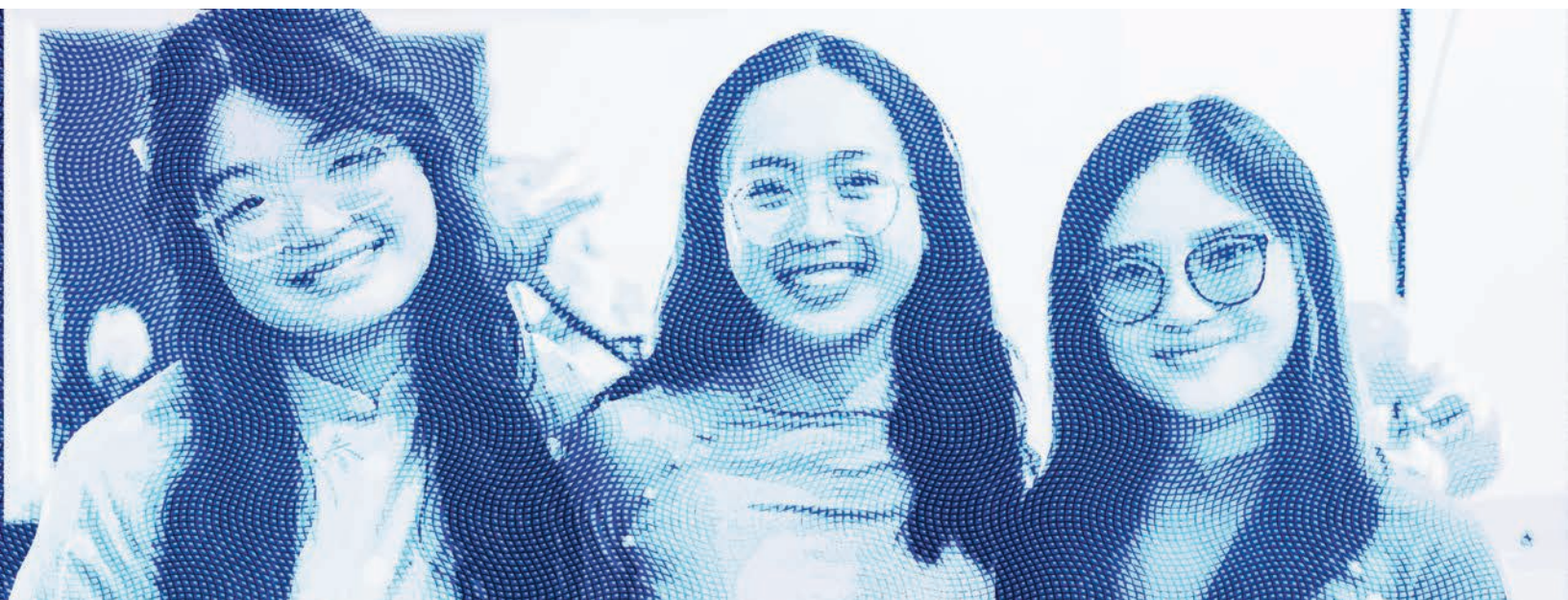


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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE COMMUNITIES OF LEARNING AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

AANAPISI grant-funded institutions in the California Community Colleges have intentionally developed culturally responsive communities of learning to increase Southeast Asian American (SEAA) student persistence, degree completion, and university transfer. De Anza College’s AANAPISI program, Initiatives to Maximize Positive Academic Achievement and Cultural Thriving of Asian American and Pacific Islander Students (IMPACT AAPI), has long been considered a model program for SEAA student success due to its holistic approach: an academic, cohort-based learning community, embedded counseling, cocurricular activities, and professional development.²³

IMPACT AAPI students are enrolled in an academic learning community that includes integrating a series of courses that satisfy general education requirements for associate degree completion and university transfer. In addition to ensuring success in math and English, new Asian American studies courses were developed so students could examine Western colonization and the impact of war and militarization in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, and other territories in the Pacific. IMPACT AAPI’s faculty team also includes an embedded counselor to provide academic, career, and personal counseling and student success workshops, helping students to stay on track and providing strategies for managing stress and anxiety.

Cocurricular activities, such as cultural and university field trips, attendance at Asian American and NHPI conferences, and presentations by SEAA civic and community leaders, also enhanced students’ engagement in their academics, campus life, and their respective communities. Additionally, IMPACT AAPI developed a robust, campus-wide faculty and staff professional development program with culturally responsive training in curriculum development and student services offered throughout the academic year. These trainings focus on SEAA immigrant and refugee experiences and the struggles of students, their families, and communities, with the goal of increasing the cultural competency skills of faculty and staff members to ensure student success.

Students in learning communities such as IMPACT AAPI have reported that their AANAPISI program fostered an environment of belonging and care in which they developed meaningful connections with faculty, staff, and students, leading to their success.



ESTABLISHING AN ASIAN AMERICAN AND NHPI CULTURAL CENTER IN THE SEATTLE COLLEGES, WASHINGTON

AANAPISI grant-funded community colleges in Seattle, Washington, established cultural centers to increase a sense of belong and cultural diversity on campus for Asian American and NHPI students.

South Seattle College's AANAPISI program focused on creating an academic and student services hub on campus that would serve Pacific Islander and SEAA students. The AANAPISI Center is also centrally located on campus, underscoring the value of the program for its faculty, staff, and students.²⁴

The AANAPISI Center provides students with several opportunities to build community with one another and find a sense of belonging within the institution. Culturally relevant courses are taught in cohort-based learning communities so students can see themselves and their communities in the readings and issues discussed in class. Pacific Islander and SEAA students also receive culturally-sensitive advising and tutoring that embraces and recognizes their cultural identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences. This supportive approach results in cultivating pride and confidence among students, and increased engagement with their academic studies.

Moreover, the AANAPISI program and center have taken on the role of expanding campus and external community knowledge of Asian American and NHPI issues by housing an online Asian American and NHPI Higher Education Resource Center that is accessible to educational and community-based professionals interested in serving Asian American and NHPI student populations. South Seattle College also hosted a national AANAPISI Engaging in Promising Practices Conference for other institutions and their program staff, faculty, and administrators. This conference facilitated the exchange of student equity and student success best practices for increasing Asian American and NHPI higher education attainment.

Research on South Seattle College's AANAPISI program and its students found that Pacific Islander and SEAA student participants were significantly more likely to graduate with a degree or certificate than non-participants.

Policy Recommendations

AANAPISI programs are making a clear and positive impact, supporting Asian American and NHPI student success at higher education institutions across the country. These campuses are deploying culturally responsive curricula and cocurricula, providing enhanced academic and student services, and establishing cultural centers to create campus environments where Asian American and NHPI students can thrive.

It is incumbent upon institutional leaders, practitioners, and policymakers to work together to strengthen AANAPISI and similar programs for the next generation of Asian American and NHPI students, since they continue to be underserved in higher education. Toward that effort, we offer a summary of recommendations to develop the important work of AANAPISIs.



Recommendations for Federal Policymakers

- ✓ Congress and the Department of Education should require AANAPISIs to disaggregate Asian American and NHPI student data in order to assess equity gaps among subgroups.
- ✓ Congress should increase its annual appropriation to the AANAPISI program by \$100 million, through a combination of both mandatory and discretionary spending, to ensure that all eligible AANAPISIs receive funding.
- ✓ Congress should remove the multiple designation barrier that prevents AANAPISIs and MSIs from accessing funding from other MSI designation programs, despite the fact that they enroll different student populations.²⁵



Recommendations for State Policymakers

- ✓ Require public higher education institutions to disaggregate Asian American and NHPI student data to assess equity gaps among subgroups.
- ✓ Target investments in higher education access, retention, transfer, graduation, and civic participation for public institutions enrolling at least 10% of low-income Asian American and NHPI students.²⁶
- ✓ Prioritize investments to increase culturally responsive professional development for faculty members to better serve Asian American and NHPI students through development of Asian American and NHPI curriculum and instruction.



Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

- ✓ Ensure that institutional research offices disaggregate Asian American and NHPI student data to assess equity gaps among subgroups.
- ✓ Increase recruitment and retention supports of Asian American and NHPI administrators to ensure diverse leadership representation.
- ✓ Increase recruitment and retention supports of Asian American and NHPI faculty to ensure diverse faculty representation.
- ✓ Fund programs and services that serve underrepresented and low-income, first-generation Asian American and NHPI students.
- ✓ Support faculty and staff members to be able to develop culturally responsive curriculum, cocurriculum, and academic and student services to increase Asian American and NHPI student retention, persistence, transfer, and graduation.
- ✓ Establish cultural centers to increase a sense of belonging for Asian American and NHPI students and to improve campus climate.



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Conclusion

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander student equity is central to any concept of higher education equity. Though the Asian American and NHPI community in the U.S. has a reputation for high achievement and high academic attainment, this reputation is built on outdated stereotypes and statistical averages that do not speak to the breadth of diversity among Asian Americans and NHPIs. Students from many communities within the Asian American and NHPI populations continue to face myriad barriers to higher education access and success. Disaggregated data has shown equity gaps in Asian American and NHPI student access and achievement due to barriers related to college affordability; curriculum, instruction, and student services; the need for an increased sense of belonging and positive campus climates; and the need for increased mental health services, especially for refugee populations, undocumented populations, and those experiencing ongoing anti-Asian hate.

The U.S. Department of Education's AANAPISI program offers institutions of higher learning over 16 years of knowledge and practice from across institution types — community colleges and public and private colleges and universities. Engaging AANAPISI researchers and practitioners will be critical to understanding how best to support Asian American and NHPI students in higher education. Moreover, with the U.S. Department of Education's projection of growth in postsecondary Asian American and NHPI student enrollment, the number of eligible AANAPISIs is also projected to grow. This speaks to the need for increased federal investment in the AANAPISI program and removal of the multiple designation barrier that limits funding.

Endnotes

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