

# CMSI RESEARCH REPORT

## How Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) Are Creating the Conditions for Students to Thrive

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## MEET THE AUTHORS

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## STATEMENTS

### *Asian American and Pacific Islander Research Coalition*

The Asian American and Pacific Islander Research Coalition (ARC) is a leading research and advocacy organization conducting research relevant to policy and practice affecting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in education. ARC is a synergistic network of AAPIs in education, generating and disseminating valuable knowledge relevant to AAPIs in education, and linking theory, policy, and practice to advance the agenda of AAPI communities across the continental United States and the Pacific. The ARC focuses on producing critical scholarship in ways that recognize and reflect the value of the *empowerment* of the AAPI community, *mentoring* of future AAPI scholars and activists, *transformation* of education systems to better serve AAPIs, *collectivism* designed to advance the well-being of AAPI communities, and understanding the AAPI experience with increased *complexity*.

### *National Institute for Transformation and Equity*

The National Institute for Transformation and Equity (NITE) is a leading voice on issues of inclusion and equity in education, and assists colleges and universities in their efforts to envision as well as cultivate more inclusive and equitable campuses. The Institute creates and utilizes research and assessment tools to assist postsecondary institutions in advancing their inclusion and equity efforts.

NITE is home of the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE; pronounced *see-see*) surveys, which postsecondary institutions across the nation use to examine, understand, and foster more inclusive and equitable campus environments and maximize success among diverse student populations. The Institute is housed within the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University, which administers surveys to over 500 campuses nationally and is a national leader in survey research and assessment.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*The United States continues to become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. As national demographics continue to shift, the student populations entering the U.S. higher education system will also become progressively more racially and ethnically diverse. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are two of the fastest growing racial groups in the U.S. Given the growth of AAPI communities, it is imperative that higher education policymakers and practitioners support, develop, and offer curricula and programs that effectively serve these populations.*

*Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) are a critical fixture in U.S. higher education, and play an important role in serving diverse student populations. Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) assume a vital role in serving the nation's AAPI students. These campuses enroll approximately 40% of AAPI students in higher education, employ many of the nation's AAPI faculty and staff, and award almost half of the associate's degrees and approximately one quarter of the bachelor's degrees attained by AAPI college students. Given these realities, knowledge of these institutions is critical to understanding the national landscape for AAPIs in higher education.*

*Thus, the purpose of the current report is two-fold. First, we document the ways in which five AANAPISI programs are cultivating environments that promote the success of AAPI students in college. Second, we offer a set of recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to maximize the likelihood that they are investing resources and energy in practices that are most likely to have a significant positive impact on the experiences and*

*outcomes of AAPI students.*

*With support from CMSI at the University of Pennsylvania, a research team at NITE conducted a collective case study of five AANAPISI programs: De Anza College, Sacramento State University, South Seattle College, the University of Maryland, and the University of Massachusetts Boston.*

## Outcomes of AANAPISI Programs

AAPI students who participated in the AANAPISI programs at the five participating campuses associated these initiatives with at least five distinct positive student outcomes:

- Curricular and co-curricular opportunities that were supported by AANAPISI grants allowed students to learn about their own identities and develop a deeper understanding of the issues that exist within their communities.
- AAPI college students who were involved in AANAPISI programs at participating campuses assumed leadership roles aimed at giving back to diverse student communities on their campuses.
- AANAPISI programs facilitated AAPI students' engagement in their respective racial and ethnic communities.
- AANAPISI program participants reported developing a commitment to give back to the programs themselves.
- AAPI students reported that their AANAPISI programs fostered environments in which students developed meaningful connections with faculty, staff, and students on their respective campuses.
- Participants at the five campuses asserted that participation in AANAPISI programs was associated with increased persistence to graduation on multiple campuses.

## Elements of Programs that Allow AAPI Students to Thrive

The outcomes outlined in the previous section were reported as results of the AANAPISI programs' culturally relevant and responsive approach to designing and delivering programs and services. There were several mechanisms by which AANAPISI programs fostered these types of

environments at their respective institutions, and they are outlined in this section.

1. AANAPISI programs on these campuses helped expand the reach of Asian American Studies courses. Asian American Studies courses allowed students to develop academic skills while simultaneously learn about their own ethnic communities, leveraged diversity present in the classroom to foster learning about diverse communities, and provided space and opportunities for students to give back to their communities while developing research and leadership skills.
2. AANAPISI programs fostered culturally engaging communities of learning, which were based on teamwork and mutual success, integrated academic skill building and cultural relevance, created physical spaces for learning outside of the classroom, and included culturally relevant mentoring and tutoring.
3. AANAPISI programs provided critical culturally responsive support networks for AAPI students on their campuses. These networks consisted of educators who understood AAPI students' experiences and how to serve them, utilized holistic approaches to serving AAPI students, and provided continuous and integrated support for these students.

### Recommendations for Policy

The findings of our analysis yield several implications for federal policymakers. They include implications for funding and supporting AANAPISI institutions and programs:

1. The federal government should expand financial support for AANAPISI programs at eligible institutions across the nation.
2. Policymakers should make a more concerted effort to cultivate relationships with funded and eligible AANAPISIs.
3. Policymakers should prioritize funding culturally relevant and responsive programs that are more likely to lead to more positive student outcomes.

### Recommendations for Practice

The findings discussed in this report offer several implications for AANAPISIs and educators working at these campuses:

1. Educators should create courses, lessons, and assignments that allow students to learn about issues that exist within their own cultural communities.
2. Educators should foster connections with community leaders and organizations and collaborate with them to construct more culturally relevant curricula, such as community service learning.
3. Educators should consider ways to integrate culturally relevant courses into structured learning communities, in which students take multiple courses together as a cohort.
4. Educators should commit adequate physical space for AANAPISI programs.
5. Educators working in AANAPISI programs should spend time developing relationships with other support offices on their campuses and in the larger AAPI community. Such relationships can ensure that AANAPISI educators have the capacity to refer AAPI students to the supports, services, and opportunities that they require.
6. Educators working in AANAPISI programs should create professional development opportunities to educate other professionals on campus about the AANAPISI program and the significance of culturally relevant practices.

## SETTING THE CONTEXT

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately one-fifth of the U.S. population were people of color in the year 2010, and it is projected that over 50% of the nation will be comprised of people of color by 2050.<sup>1</sup> As national demographics continue to shift, the student populations entering the U.S. higher education system will also become progressively more racially and ethnically diverse.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are two of the fastest growing racial groups in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Between 2000 and 2010, Asian American communities expanded at a rate of approximately four times the national population, while Pacific Islanders grew at a pace equivalent to approximately three times the rate of the U.S. populace. Given the growth of AAPI communities, it is imperative that higher education policymakers and practitioners support, develop, and offer curricula and programs that effectively serve these populations.

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) are a critical fixture in U.S. higher education, and play an important role in serving diverse student populations.<sup>3</sup> MSIs emerged in response to historical racial inequities in the U.S. education system and minority populations' limited access to higher education institutions. Today, MSIs educate approximately 20% of the nation's college students. Yet, research on MSIs is relatively limited, and there is a critical need for more information about these institutions and *how* they serve diverse college student populations.

The newest category of MSIs—Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs)—emerged in 2008. AANAPISIs assume a vital role in serving the nation's AAPI students. These campuses enroll approximately 40% of AAPI students in higher education, employ many of the nation's AAPI faculty and staff, award almost half of the associate's degrees attained by AAPI college students, and confer approximately one quarter of the bachelor's degrees received by this population.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, knowledge of these institutions is critical to understanding the national landscape for AAPIs in higher education. Unfortunately, research on AANAPISIs is also difficult to locate.

The U.S. Department of Education's AANAPISI program is designed to support these campuses in their efforts to intentionally serve AAPI college students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, there are approximately 133 postsecondary institutions that are eligible for AANAPISI funding. Since 2008, only a fraction of these campuses have received approximately \$68 million in total funding from the AANAPISI program to support the design and delivery of programs that serve AAPI and other students enrolled at these institutions.<sup>5</sup>

While federal AANAPISI funding is used by different campuses in a variety of ways, these funds often support the development and delivery of programs that intentionally engage the cultural communities, backgrounds, and identities of AAPI students. While the AANAPISI program is not specifically aimed at supporting such culturally relevant and responsive efforts, many practitioners who understand the experiences of AAPI students believe that such programs are critical to effectively engaging AAPI students and creating the conditions for them to thrive. Accordingly, this research report highlights research demonstrating that AANAPISI programs are not influential simply because they offer support and services to AAPI students. Rather, the findings discussed in this report underscore the reality that AANAPISI programs have a powerful positive impact on the lives of AAPI college students because of their culturally relevant and responsive approach to education and support, which enhances these students' connections to their respective institutions, fosters their passions for engagement and learning, and cultivates their desires to give back to their community and the world.

## Purpose of the Report

Documenting how AANAPISI programs are using their funding to create the conditions for AAPI students to thrive can help other campuses learn how to maximize success among these and other populations. Such information can also inform policymakers' understanding of which AANAPISI programs are most likely to have the greatest positive impact on student outcomes. Thus, the purpose of this report is twofold. First, we document the ways in which five AANAPISI programs are cultivating environments that allow AAPI students to thrive in college. Second, we

maximize the likelihood that they are investing resources and energy in practices that are most likely to have a significant positive impact on the experiences and outcomes of AAPI students.

With support from the Penn Center for Minority Serving Institutions, a research team at the National Institute for Transformation and Equity (NITE) conducted a collective case study of five AANAPISI programs: De Anza College, Sacramento State University, South Seattle College, the University of Maryland, and the University of Massachusetts Boston. To execute the study, a team of NITE researchers visited each campus for approximately two days, interviewed approximately 163 people across the five campuses, observed spaces and activities associated with AANAPISI initiatives, and collected relevant documents to understand whether and how these programs were creating the conditions for AAPI students to thrive.

In the following section, we provide a brief overview of each of the five campuses and their AANAPISI programs. Then, we present the conceptual framework that guided the study. Next, we provide an overview of major findings that emerged from the analysis. Finally, we conclude the report with recommendations for policymakers and practitioners.

## Institutional Profiles

### De Anza College

De Anza College was founded in 1967 and is a two-year college in Cupertino, CA with a mission to provide an academically rich and multicultural learning experience.<sup>6</sup> The College aims to provide students from all backgrounds the opportunity to develop intellect and character, help them achieve their goals, and be responsible leaders in their communities and in the world. De Anza’s core values include integrity, innovation, and equity, as well as developing students’ competencies, and civic engagement for social justice.

De Anza College’s AANAPISI program was called IMPACT AAPI. IMPACT is an acronym for “Initiatives to Maximize Positive Academic Achievement and Cultural Thriving” AAPI students. The program built on existing campus

resources to provide integrated culturally relevant curricular pathways and academic support systems. The program staff placed special emphasis on Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian American students.

### De Anza College Cupertino, CA

**Established:** 1967

**Type:** Public, two year<sup>7</sup>

**Carnegie Classification:** Associate’s Colleges

**Student-to-Faculty Ratio:** 30 to 1

**Undergraduate Enrollment:** 22,512

**Percent Attending Full-Time:** 51%

**Percent Receiving Pell Grants:** 21%

**First-Year Retention Rate:** 81%

**Three-Year Transfer Out or Graduation Rate:** 62%

**Percent Female:** 49%

**Race and Ethnicity:**

American Indian or Alaska Native: Less than 1%

Asian or Asian American: 35%

Black or African American: 3%

Hispanic or Latino: 27%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: Less than 1%

White: 20%

Two or More Races: 4%

**Program Website:** <https://www.deanza.edu/impact-aapi/>

IMPACT AAPI administered three learning community sequences to prepare students for transfer to four-year institutions:

- *Readiness and Success in College-Level English* (LinC) was a sequence that included reading and writing courses with themes that are specific to AAPI communities, required participation in a summer youth Asian Pacific American Leadership Institute (APALI), and ended with a capstone course on Asian American Literature.
- *Readiness and Success in College-Level Math and English* (CREM) linked English and Math courses over three terms: the fall, winter, and spring.
- *Math Performance in STEM* (MPS) was a sequence that provided a

learning community and an orientation class to “anchor” the experience for students with the option for students to choose a STEM class. The orientation class, also known informally as the student success class, is called “AAPI Student Success and Exploring STEM.”

IMPACT AAPI coordinated five co-curricular components to support AAPI students’ success:

- *Embedded counseling* engaged students inside and outside of the classroom to facilitate progress toward their educational goals.
- *Peer mentors* provided academic support for students participating in IMPACT AAPI, focusing on transitioning to college life and success.
- *Tutors* supported students in IMPACT AAPI classes. Some tutors were alumni of IMPACT AAPI, and they all typically succeeded in the class for which they tutored.
- The *student success class* supplemented the curricular pathways learning communities and focused on community building, culturally relevant pedagogy and content, and peer mentoring and tutoring.
- *Workshops on college transfer and scholarships* were offered in partnership with the Student Success Center on the De Anza campus.

In addition to building a sense of community among students, IMPACT AAPI fostered a network of staff and instructors through a support group, which met throughout the year to share classroom practices and experiences related to serving AAPI students. Professional development events were also offered to staff and faculty on campus in partnership with various campus affiliates, such as the Office of Staff and Organizational Development, on topics that fostered awareness of AAPI issues, such as the model minority myth and the ethnic diversity of AAPIs, and skills in culturally relevant pedagogy, such as storytelling and using media to engage AAPI students. Statistics indicate that De Anza students participating in LinC earn associate’s degrees at significantly higher rates than non-participants.<sup>8</sup>

### Sacramento State University

Established in 1947, Sacramento State University is a comprehensive university located in Sacramento, CA. The university’s mission states that members of the university “strive to meet the educational challenges of

the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond, working with the community, our practitioner colleagues, and students to develop responsive systems of educational leadership and challenging learning environments.”<sup>9</sup> The university emphasizes diversity, community, and collaboration as core values of its community.

Sacramento State University used their AANAPISI grant to create the *Full Circle Project*, a program that integrated AAPI student communities, academic learning opportunities, and social support systems. The goals of the Full Circle Project were to build a pan-ethnic Asian American community, encourage individualized identity development and learning, and increase retention and graduate rates among AAPIs. The program was well-known to the local community outside of the campus due to its emphasis on community engagement.

### Sacramento State University Sacramento, CA

**Established:** 1947

**Type:** Public, four year

**Carnegie Classification:** Master’s Colleges & Universities

**Student-to-Faculty Ratio:** 27 to 1

**Undergraduate Enrollment:** 27,723

**Percent Attending Full-Time:** 80%

**Percent Receiving Pell Grants:** 21%

**First-Year Retention Rate:** 81%

**Six-Year Graduation Rate:** 46%

**Percent Female:** 56%

**Race and Ethnicity:**

American Indian or Alaska Native: 0%

Asian or Asian American: 21%

Black or African American: 6%

Hispanic or Latino: 29%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 1%

White: 29%

Two or More Races: 6%

**Program Website:** <http://www.csus.edu/fcp/>

Located in the center of campus, the Full Circle Project intentionally integrated existing campus services and resources into one program. Core elements of the program included:

- *Culturally relevant learning communities*, consisting of a series of ethnic studies courses, an Introduction to Asian American Studies course, a first-year seminar on how to successfully navigate college, and a co-curricular course in which they develop an undergraduate research project in small groups or coalitions.
- *A culturally relevant leadership development initiative*, which encouraged AAPI students to integrate their collectivistic cultural orientations into their approaches to leadership, sending a message to students that their communities and identities are an asset to effective leadership.
- *Local community partnerships* with the 65<sup>th</sup> street corridor—a community mobilization initiative on campus—encouraged students to build connections between academic and community organizations and serve their communities.

Full Circle Project students are engaged, connected, and support each other in a variety of ways (e.g., carpool, homework help, etc.). At the time, although Full Circle Project students were more likely to come from low-income and first-generation backgrounds than non-participants, they exhibited substantially higher one-year persistence rates compared to non-participants (approximately 92% and 82%, respectively) and higher grade-point averages than non-participants (3.27 and 2.76, respectively).

### South Seattle College

Founded in 1970, South Seattle College is a four-year public institution located in Seattle, WA. South Seattle’s mission indicates that it “is a constantly evolving educational community dedicated to providing quality learning experiences which prepare students to meet their goals for life and work.”<sup>10</sup> The college emphasizes an applied educational experience, training programs for labor and industry, student- and community-centered programs that value diversity and promote success, and lifelong learning.

As one of the first AANAPISI programs, South Seattle College’s AANAPISI program has served as a strong voice for AAPI students locally and nationally.

The program offered services, activities, classes, and spaces for AAPI students on campus. The South Seattle College program placed special emphasis on Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian American students. AANAPISI program staff worked collaboratively with educators across campus to build awareness of AAPI communities and students.

**South Seattle College**  
Seattle, WA

**Established:** 1970  
**Type:** Public, four year  
**Carnegie Classification:** Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges  
**Student-to-Faculty Ratio:** 15 to 1  
**Undergraduate Enrollment:** N/A  
**Percent Attending Full-Time:** 35%  
**Percent Receiving Pell Grants:** 15%  
**First-Year Retention Rate:** N/A  
**Three-Year Transfer or Graduation Rate:** 54%  
**Percent Female:** 35%  
**Race and Ethnicity:**  
 American Indian or Alaska Native: 1%  
 Asian or Asian American: 10%  
 Black or African American: 9%  
 Hispanic or Latino: 7%  
 Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 1%  
 White: 42%  
 Two or More Races: 5%  
**Program Website:** <http://www.southseattle.edu/programs/aanapisi/>



The AANAPISI program created an AANAPISI Center that is centrally located on campus. The AANAPISI Center housed educators and staff who had connections to surrounding Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian American communities, and knowledge of these populations. The AANAPISI program supported:

- *Cultural specialists* who facilitated culturally relevant study groups, which provided a safe space for students to master difficult material with tutors nearby to offer support as needed.
- *Learning communities* employing a cohort model and linking two courses (a developmental English and college success course) with peer support.
- *Study groups* led by an AAPI coordinator and facilitated by culturally sensitive tutors. The study groups were created to cultivate pride in cultural diversity and promote academic success and transfer in a supportive environment.
- *Culturally relevant courses* that addressed issues relevant to AAPI communities.
- *Culturally responsive advising* that took students' cultural backgrounds, identities, and struggles into account.
- *Campus-wide programs that promoted awareness* about AAPI issues, such as retreats focused on learning skills to engage culturally relevant practices in pedagogy and an Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) initiative, which was designed to increase cultural competency among educators across the campus.
- *Scholarships* designated to support AAPI students.

The AANAPISI program also assumed a role in expanding knowledge of AAPI issues. The program housed the AAPI Higher Education Resource Center, an online clearinghouse and community for AAPI education professionals and those who serve AAPI student populations. The program hosted a conference for representatives from other AANAPISI programs across the country to engage participants in the work of maximizing success among AAPIs in higher education. Thus, the AANAPISI program focused on supporting students, cultivating cultural competence among campus community members, and facilitating the sharing of information in the AANAPISI community. Evaluation data indicates that South Seattle

AANAPISI program learning community participants were significantly more likely to graduate with a degree or certificate than non-participants.<sup>11</sup>

### University of Maryland, College Park

The University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) was founded in 1856 and is located in College Park, Maryland. The University of Maryland is a flagship public research university with a mission to provide excellent teaching, research, and service.<sup>12</sup> The University's focus is on advancing knowledge (important to the state, nation, and world), offering opportunities for intellectual growth, and providing high-quality opportunities for all students regardless of their backgrounds. UMD identifies its community's diversity as one of its greatest strengths.

### University of Maryland, College Park College Park, MD

**Established:** 1856

**Type:** Public, four year

**Carnegie Classification:** Doctoral Universities, Highest Research Activity

**Student-to-Faculty Ratio:** 17 to 1

**Undergraduate Enrollment:** 27,443

**Percent Attending Full-Time:** 93%

**Percent Receiving Pell Grants:** 19%

**First-Year Retention Rate:** 95%

**Six-Year Graduation Rate:** 86%

**Percent Female:** 46%

**Race and Ethnicity:**

American Indian or Alaska Native: 0%

Asian or Asian American: 16%

Black or African American: 13%

Hispanic or Latino: 9%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0%

White: 52%

Two or More Races: 4%

**Program Website:** N/A

At UMD, AANAPISI funding was used to further strengthen the presence and impact of the existing Asian American Studies (AAST) program and activities. The AANAPISI grant also enhanced the AAST physical space on campus that housed a library and conference room, where students and instructors connected on an informal basis. These efforts included the following:

- *Production of research* to raise national awareness about the diversity that exists within the AAPI community.
- *Extension of the Asian American Studies minor* to include a transnational focus, which required students to examine AAPI experiences in a global context, and an intersectional emphasis, which required students to engage in a comparative identity courses.
- *Expansion of Asian American Studies course menu* from an average of 9 in the first year of the grant to 14 in the fifth year of the grant cycle.
- *Strengthening of partnership between Asian American Studies and AAPI support services.* The partnership included consistent communication between the two entities and a collaborative leadership institute for AAPI students designed to teach them about issues affecting Asian American communities, such as immigration policy, mental health, and economic inequality.
- *Scholarships* aimed at supporting AAPI students at the University of Maryland.

By offering a robust menu of courses each semester, the program housed a diverse array of adjunct instructors who were long-time practitioners in local or national AAPI organizations or serve AAPI populations in other ways.

Staff and faculty in AAST developed a strong support structure for AAPI students on campus. The AANAPISI grant provided support for student-led events and programs. In general, these events tended to be intersectional or focus on topics that integrate a few identities or disciplines. Located in D.C., AAST leveraged relationships with local and national organizations, invited leaders to serve as guest speakers in classrooms and supported instructors partnering with policymakers and community organizers. An example of this partnership was AAST's activist-in-residence program. The

inaugural activist was a long time national community organizer, whose role in the activist-in-residence program was to facilitate dialogue and build connections across UMD. The AANAPISI grant resulted in increased levels of engagement in AAST on campus. For example, enrollment in AAST courses grew by approximately 60% over the life of the grant and the number of AAST minors doubled during that time.

### University of Massachusetts Boston

Founded in 1964, the University of Massachusetts Boston (UMass Boston) is a public research university located in the southern region of Boston, MA. Emerging amid the social unrest of the 1960s, UMass Boston espouses a commitment to urban and global engagement.<sup>13</sup>

### University of Massachusetts, Boston Boston, MA

**Established:** 1964

**Type:** Public, four year

**Carnegie Classification:** Doctoral Universities

**Student-to-Faculty Ratio:** 16 to 1

**Undergraduate Enrollment:** 12,949

**Percent Attending Full-Time:** 72%

**Percent Receiving Pell Grants:** 42%

**First-Year Retention Rate:** 78%

**Six-Year Graduation Rate:** 42%

**Percent Female:** 55%

**Race and Ethnicity:**

American Indian or Alaska Native: 0%

Asian or Asian American: 12%

Black or African American: 15%

Hispanic or Latino: 13%

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0%

White: 36%

Two or More Races: 3%

**Program Website:** <https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/aassp>

UMass Boston's grant monies was primarily used to create and support the Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP), an academic support office with significant partnerships with academic and student support departments across campus. Though a separate office was created, the strategic approach of the program administrators was to work in conjunction with existing structures serving AAPI students on campus (e.g., the Asian American Studies Program and Institute for Asian American Studies) and work with "mainstream" offices to improve admissions, student services, such as academic support, and career services.

The goals of AASSP were to increase college access, retention, persistence, and graduation rates for Asian Americans from low-income, first-generation, or underserved ethnic backgrounds. The program aimed to accomplish this goal by providing ongoing holistic support that integrated education, cultural identities, and community building. This approach allowed students to simultaneously engage in learning, develop their identities, and build social support networks. Students often referred to AASSP's physical space as a place to build community with each other.

AASSP administered several co-curricular activities to support student success. A critical reading and writing specialist who shared an AAPI identity with students offered academic skill building, a peer tutoring program, and a Cambodian American writing group. Students participating in the writing group produced an anthology at the end of the academic year. AASSP managed a peer mentoring program through which upper-class students mentored first and second year students, and students who have been mentees in this program often returned as mentors. To raise awareness about the college going process, AASSP conducted college access outreach to high schools in surrounding communities and hosts college visits from these schools.

To increase culturally responsive support from other student services, AASSP engaged in ad-hoc consulting with individuals working closely with AAPI students. For example, AASSP staff and faculty worked with academic advisors on the campus to develop more culturally relevant advising practices. Sometimes this ad-hoc relationship developed into larger programmatic support. For example, an ad-hoc relationship with

career services grew into the development and delivery of an annual Asian American career development workshop series.

While the bulk of the grant monies was used to support AASSP, some funds were also used to support the creation of new seminars in the Asian American Studies Program and professional development for Asian and Asian American faculty and staff across campus. The focus of these professional development opportunities was for faculty and staff to learn about the significance of the AANAPISI designation and how they could partner or engage with AASSP. Finally, some AANAPISI grant monies were allocated to support small research grants, which provided funding for research projects aimed at advancing knowledge about issues relevant to AAPI students.

### Framework for Understanding AANAPISI Program Impact

The framework that guided our analysis was informed by the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE; *pronounced see-see*) [model](#) of college success.<sup>14</sup> The CECE model outlines the nine most critical elements of campus environments that maximize success among diverse college student populations (see Figure 1). The CECE model is built on decades of research that suggests diverse student populations thrive in environments that engage their cultural communities, backgrounds, and identities.

Federal funding was used in conjunction with existing programs and practices to create their respective AANAPISI programs at the five campuses that we studied. On all five campuses, the AANAPISI programs were designed to intentionally cultivate environments that were characterized by many of the indicators outlined in the CECE model. And, it was these culturally engaging environments within the five AANAPISI programs that our participants associated with more positive learning and development, commitment to community service and engagement, and retention and persistence outcomes among AAPI college students.

In the following section, we provide an overview of the outcomes participants associated with the AANAPISI programs on their respective campuses. Then, we outline the critical mechanisms through which the

AANAPISI programs fostered these outcomes. Finally, we offer a set of recommendations for policy and practice designed to promote the development and delivery of more effective programs and services for AAPI students in higher education.

## Perceived Impact of the AANAPISI Programs

We sought to capture a more holistic perspective regarding the positive outcomes of AANAPISI programs. AAPI students who participated in the AANAPISI programs at the five participating campuses associated these initiatives with at least five distinct positive student outcomes:

- **Improved Learning and Development**

Participants reported that curricular and co-curricular opportunities that were supported by AANAPISI grants allowed students to learn about their own identities and develop a deeper understanding of the issues that exist within their communities. These opportunities also allowed students to see their academic experience as relevant to their cultural communities, and their communities as relevant to the learning environment on their respective campuses. As a result, AAPI college students at participating

## Figure 1. Nine Elements of Culturally Engaging Campus Environments

### CULTURAL RELEVANCE

Five indicators focus on the ways that campus environments are relevant to the cultural backgrounds, identities, and communities of diverse college students

1. **Cultural Familiarity:** Campus spaces for undergraduates to connect with faculty, staff, and peers who understand their cultural backgrounds and experiences.
2. **Culturally Relevant Knowledge:** Opportunities for students to learn about their own cultural communities via culturally relevant curricular and co-curricular activities.
3. **Cultural Community Service:** Opportunities for students to give back to and positively transform their home communities.
4. **Meaningful Cross-Cultural Engagement:** Programs and practices that facilitate educationally meaningful cross-cultural interactions among their students that focus on solving real social and political problems.
5. **Culturally Validating Environments:** Campus cultures that validate the cultural backgrounds, knowledge, and identities of diverse students.

### CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Four indicators focus on the ways in which campuses take the values and norms of students' diverse cultural communities into account in the design and delivery of support programs and services

1. **Collectivist Cultural Orientations:** Campus cultures that emphasize a collectivist cultural orientation that is characterized by teamwork and pursuit of mutual success, rather than individualism and competition.
2. **Humanized Educational Environments:** Availability of opportunities to develop meaningful relationships faculty and staff who care about and are committed to those students' success.
3. **Proactive Philosophies:** Philosophies that lead faculty, administrators, and staff to proactively bring important information, opportunities, and support services to students, rather than waiting for students to seek them out or hunt them down.
4. **Holistic Support:** Whether college students have access to at least one faculty or staff member whom they trust and are confident will provide the information they need, offer the help they seek, or connect them with the information or support that they require regardless of the issue they face.

campuses indicated that their motivation to do well academically came from a continuing desire to learn about their identities and communities. Our analysis suggests that these opportunities also helped AAPI students develop their confidence and ability to express themselves.

- **Enhanced Engagement in Campus Leadership and Service**

Our analysis revealed that AAPI college students who were involved in AANAPISI programs at participating campuses assumed leadership roles aimed at giving back to diverse student communities on their campuses. For example, as a result of their involvement in AANAPISI opportunities, students became involved in Asian American student organizations on campus, served on the board of pan-ethnic Asian American student organizations, directed AAPI leadership programs on campus, assumed leadership roles in leadership certificate programs, pioneered programs on domestic violence and mental health issues experienced by AAPI women, and organized town hall meetings for women of color to share stories of their lived experiences and what changes they would like to see on campus.

“The classes offered by the Asian American Studies and the AANAPISI program have really put my own experience into perspective and my family history here in the US and really filled in a lot of gaps about this nation’s history that I was always wondering about growing up. So, it fueled my interest to become more involved with the AAPI community here on campus.”

*-AANAPISI Program student at the UMD, College Park*

- **Strengthened Commitment to Community and Community Engagement**

Participants explained that AANAPISI programs facilitated AAPI students’ engagement in their respective racial and ethnic communities. Through these activities, the programs helped provide students with the skills to build community-based programs, expand their personal and professional networks, learn about a wide range of career paths, and build coalitions with students from other marginalized communities. AAPI students in some AANAPISI programs worked

with community-based organizations to address pressing issues within these communities, resulting in some students pursuing academic and professional careers in education or related fields to give back to their communities. AAPI students also discussed how the AANAPISI programs fueled their growing interest in remaining active and involved in community advocacy after college graduation.

“I was able to assist the bilingual class and provide bilingual assistance to the students and the coordinator. It’s been impactful for me because it made me realize the importance of being bilingual and being able to... educate or have an influence on the younger generations who come from similar backgrounds as I do. Now, I want to pursue in higher education and get my Master’s in Education because I want to work with kids who come from immigrant backgrounds and who speaks a different language”

*-AASSP student at UMass Boston*

- **Greater Desire to Give Back to AANAPISI Programs**

AANAPISI program participants reported developing a commitment to give back to the programs themselves. Due to the impact that AANAPISI programs had on their experiences, these students sought ways to stay involved. They continued contributing to the AANAPISI programs by becoming a mentor to incoming students, tutoring peers, or inviting classmates and family members to engage in the programs.

“This community has given so much, which is why I’m still a part of Full Circle Project Student Association... I haven’t left because of the staff here. I actually started the first Council of Asian Pacific Islanders here with the help of Full Circle staff. They’ve been really encouraging to boost this organization. So...I try to come back whenever I can to help out, whether it’s paneling for the new cohort or just assisting in anything that the project really needs. Usually like people or whoever is at this table is one of the first people they usually contact, which is great. Not only can we rely on them but they can rely on us as well. It’s not just like a one-way relationship.”

*-Full Circle Project student at Sacramento State*

AAPI students reported that their AANAPISI programs fostered environments in which students developed meaningful connections with faculty, staff, and students on their respective campuses. Students often referred to AANAPISI programs as a “home away from home” and the people connected within these programs as their “family” on campus. In other words, these programs provided an ongoing safe space and source of support for students as they navigated the college experience at their respective campuses.

“We not only developed friendships for the entire year, but we also developed connections and we had a deeper relationship with our professors. It is not like other classes where you just go in and say “hi” and then ‘bye.’”

-IMPACT AAPI Student at De Anza College

- **Increased Retention and Persistence Rates**

Participants at the five campuses asserted that engagement in AANAPISI programs was associated with increased persistence to graduation. Some of the campuses provided data that confirmed these assertions. For example, on one campus, participation in learning communities was associated with higher fall-to-winter persistence rates (average of 96%) compared to students who did not participate in learning communities (average of 81%). On another campus, the AANAPISI cohort experienced higher rates of first-to-second year persistence rates than non-participants (92% compared to 82%, respectively).

“Look at my grades. That’s success right there. I had to drop out and I came back... So it really works to keep students of color here, especially when there are a lot of times you really feel like nobody gives a damn...”

-AANAPISI Program student at South Seattle College

## Effective Practices of AANAPISI Programs

The outcomes outlined in the previous section were a result of the AANAPISI initiatives’ culturally relevant and responsive approach to designing and delivering programs and services. There were three major mechanisms by which AANAPISI programs fostered these types of environments at their respective institutions, and they are outlined in this section.

### AANAPISI Programs Supported and Expanded Culturally Relevant Courses

All five campuses had ethnic studies or Asian American Studies programs when they were awarded the AANAPISI grant. It was often difficult to distinguish the Asian American Studies programs from the AANAPISI programs because faculty, staff, and students were often connected to both organizations on their campuses. The AANAPISI programs on these campuses helped expand the reach of Asian American Studies courses. One way AANAPISI programs helped expand this reach was through funding the development of additional courses, while they referred and connected students to these courses and instructors on their campuses. The fact that AANAPISI programs helped increase enrollment in Asian American Studies courses is significant, given that ethnic studies courses have been linked to increased engagement, stronger connections between students and their institutions, and increased success.<sup>15</sup> Three components of these courses were attributed to their effectiveness at fostering success among AAPI students:

- **Courses Focused on AAPI Communities and Concerns**

These courses allowed students to develop academic skills while simultaneously learning about their own ethnic communities. These courses often connected the curriculum to local AAPI communities and organizations through engaging on field trips, hosting class presentations in community spaces, and bringing community leaders into the classroom. The courses also centered the curriculum on the most pressing problems faced by individuals in the surrounding AAPI communities. On one campus, the AANAPISI and Asian American Studies programs engaged community organizers as adjunct instructors and a long-time organizer

as an activist-in-residence. Such efforts reinforced the notion that issues relevant to students' communities can be central to learning and education.

"Learning more about yourself, where your roots come from, where your ancestors are from, and where your parents grew up really affects you emotionally and mentally and motivates you to learn."

-AAPI Impact student at De Anza College

- **Curriculum that Links AAPI Struggles to Larger Social and Political Issues**

Asian American Studies faculty leveraged diversity present in the classroom, allowing students to learn more about their respective communities and the AAPI and non-AAPI communities of their peers. As a result, students had opportunities to learn about a wide range of AAPI ethnic communities. This curriculum also allowed students to connect issues within these communities to larger national and global problems. For example, on one campus, AANAPISI funding supported a course that required students to conduct cultural ethnographies within their own cultural communities, which led to rich conversations on national and global issues impacting the AAPI community, such as immigration, housing access, and environmental justice. On another campus, the Asian American Studies program used AANAPISI funding to redesign their minor course of study to include a transnational focus and linked topics to global issues. For some students, these experiences increased future community leadership and activism.

"Being in this class sort of pointed me to multiracial coalition building and that was huge for me. When I learned about the movement building of the Black Power Movement and the Yellow Power Movement and the Chicano Power Movement. When I learned about those kinds of interactions, I realized those sorts of frameworks are already there to organize across. That's what I wanted to do. So that has directly resulted in an organization that I helped build on campus."

-AANAPISI student at the UMD, College Park

- **Service Projects to Give Back to AAPI Communities**

Asian American Studies instructors integrated service initiatives into their courses to provide AAPI students with opportunities to give back to their communities, while simultaneously developing research and leadership skills. In one course, for example, AAPI students conducted research to examine their respective communities, identified a critical challenge facing these groups, generated research-based solutions to the problems, and presented these solutions to their respective cultural and campus communities. Students in another course built coalitions with other cultural community groups on and off campus to engage in deeper learning about an issue faced by all groups, such as discrimination, bullying, and environmental concerns. And, another course required students to interview AAPI staff across campus and shared their stories in a public forum, expanding the awareness of AAPI staff member experiences on campus.

"The first semester, we learn about ourselves. We learn about what we really care for and what kind of passions we have. Then we are put into groups with people who have similar passions and create a project...It could either be volunteering somewhere or creating a national program... We go out and create change. For example, my group we focused on improving quality of K-12 education. Through this program, we narrowed it down to helping fifth graders with science because of budget cuts in the [local] area...This project not only helps us, but it helps us help the community as well."

- Full Circle student at Sacramento State University

"For us it is important to create a curriculum that is connected and emphasizes student success, leadership development, community enrichment, and culture. I think the philosophy really is driven by the curriculum, a philosophy that reinforces who the students are as people and applies problem-based learning through internships, service learning, other opportunities that engage students beyond just the classroom walls to get them involved on campus."

- Administrator at Sacramento State University

## AANAPISI Programs Fostered Culturally Relevant and Responsive Communities of Learning

Some AANAPISI programs fostered culturally engaging communities of learning. On some campuses, this included integrating a series of courses into formal culturally relevant and responsive learning communities. These integrated courses usually satisfied general education requirements and counted towards students' progress toward graduation. In other cases, more informal communities focused on learning were cultivated inside and outside of the classroom. These communities of inquiry were characterized by four elements:

- **Integrated Courses that Center Teamwork and Mutual Success**

Some AANAPISI programs created learning communities by cohorts that took a series of integrated courses together. These learning communities promoted community building among students through a wide range of activities, such as a community wide food festival or community field trips, while simultaneously building academic skills. AAPI students in these programs referenced how they felt like they were a part of a larger family, and they often checked in with each other and studied together. This sentiment of collective success was encouraged from staff and instructors within the learning communities.

“A lot of the in-class discussion and a lot of the activities the students are doing with their smaller cohort, and we strongly encourage them to exchange their contact information with each other...A couple of years ago we had active class Facebook pages, where the students would remind each other of the homework that was due or they would ask a question...The students were helping each other.”

– IMPACT AAPI faculty member at De Anza College

- **Courses that Integrate Academic Skill Building and Cultural Relevance**

A key component of these learning communities is that AAPI students who participated in them were cultivating their math, reading, and writing skills, while simultaneously engaging with curricular content relevant to their cultural communities. On some campuses, AANAPISI learning communities offered classes focused on the transition to college,

important academic skills, and resources available on campus, and the assignments among courses in a sequence centered on a theme relevant to AAPI communities. For example, students enrolled in a curricular pathway with math and writing completed a linked assignment on water issues in Asian countries, and learned how to use statistics to cultivate understanding of this large issue. In another course, students read a novel on the Asian American immigrant experiences, chose a related research topic, and presented their research at a student conference.

“In class, we talk about how Asian Americans are perceived in media. The main message at the end of the day is that, to change the perceptions of Asian Americans, you make your own stories, you direct it, and you produce it because that's how the mainstream will change. The end product of the class is that we all have our own digital story...about our own personal...our message to someone else.”

–AASSP student at UMass Boston

- **A Physical Space for Learning Outside the Classroom**

In addition to formal learning communities, AANAPISI programs created informal communities of learning among their students. A critical component of these communities was often the programs' physical space, which provided a location for students to study and gather. The permanent physical space allowed students to build strong bonds with their peers, often housed resource libraries, and provided a venue for mentoring and tutoring to take place. On some campuses, these spaces hosted both academic *and* social activities, which led students to become more familiar with these spaces and more comfortable engaging in their coursework. The constant contact students had with their peers in these spaces led them to study together regularly and hold each other accountable throughout the academic year.

“We feel like the AANAPISI Center is really the family, and the space that we come to every Friday, and where everyone just gathers together and we have fun learning about the cultures.”

–AANAPISI Program student at South Seattle College



- **Culturally Relevant Mentoring and Tutoring**

Nearly all of the AANAPISI programs supported peer mentoring and tutoring networks. It is important to note that peer mentors and tutors in AANAPISI programs were often AAPI themselves, which allowed them to understand the experiences and struggles of the peers whom they mentored or tutored. On some campuses, third- and fourth-year students served as mentors and tutors for first- and second-year students. On other campuses, students who had previously been successful in courses were designated as peer mentors and tutors who could offer their peers advice on how to navigate course content and approach instructors for help.

“I’m Pacific Islander but that wasn’t really a part of my upbringing because I was raised in the States for most of my life...In the AANAPISI program, I was just learning about where I came from and interacting with other Pacific Islander students, because I didn’t really get that much where I was growing up either. and just knowing that a lot of the stories, a lot of our identity is the same. So, that also made me want to be a peer mentor and help other people realize that about themselves.”

-IMPACT AAPI student at De Anza College

## AANAPISI Programs Offered Culturally Responsive Support Systems

The five AANAPISI programs included in our study provided critical culturally responsive support networks for AAPI students on their campuses. Participants reported that the culturally responsive nature of these networks made them feel like an extension of their families on their campuses.

- **Educators Who Understand AAPI Students’ Experiences**

At all five campuses, many faculty and staff working in or closely with AANAPISI programs shared similar identities and experiences with the AAPI students whom they served, while others had taken the time to learn about the unique struggles experienced by AAPI, first-generation, and low-income students. This understanding allowed these educators to empathize with their students and effectively serve them. For

example, AANAPISI program faculty and staff were aware of the many responsibilities of students who belong to indigenous, immigrant, and refugee communities and provided advice on how they might balance work and school with these other responsibilities. In addition, academic advisors and counselors understood how family pressures and societal stereotypes of Asian Americans as only good at math and science might constrain Asian American students’ career choices, and they utilized this information to expose their students to diverse career paths.

“The program is about helping them see how their backgrounds will help them transfer and shape their careers, and also giving them the opportunity to see how maybe what they know from their backgrounds can translate into other careers they haven’t even thought of.”

-IMPACT AAPI faculty member at De Anza College

- **Continuous and Integrated Support for AAPI Students**

AANAPISI programs provided continuous support and integrated a wide range of services into their work with students. Regarding continuous support, students on participating campuses knew that many of the AANAPISI staff would consistently be available to provide them with support. AANAPISI staff would make extra efforts to maintain regular contact with students who were struggling academically by calling and text messaging them. In some cases, AANAPISI staff would make sure that they were providing proactive support. For example, if students did not come to the AANAPISI office for several days, some AANAPISI staff would go to their classes to check in and follow up with these students. Regarding integrated support, AANAPISI staff did not just provide academic support, but also delivered other forms of support *within* the AANAPISI programs, such as assistance applying for scholarships, career development, leadership development, and health and wellness programming.

“The staff are always keeping the students’ best interests in mind whenever there are opportunities...If we have projects, we try to get them involved. We’re always trying to connect their interest to things that we might be doing.”

-AASSP staff member at UMass Boston

- **Holistic Approaches to Serving AAPI Students**

Participants on all five campuses talked extensively about the importance of educators within AANAPISI programs serving as conduits to larger support networks. Many educators in these programs intentionally connected students to advising, counseling, and health services on their campuses. AANAPISI program staff also connected AAPI students to a wide range of local AAPI community organizations. And, several AANAPISI programs sponsored students to attend regional and national association conferences focused on AAPI community issues, such as the East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference (ECAASU), the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) Conference, and the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) Conference. These connections functioned to expand and diversify AAPI students' support networks. For some students, these connections also served to expand their professional networks.

“Before coming to this university, I was kind of ignorant about the AAPI community not only around the area but also nationwide. So, it’s been eye opening—all the issues I’ve learned about and the issues I’ve gotten involved with. It’s really great—the people I’ve gotten to meet especially outside of the university. Being a part of this AANAPISI initiative has let me go into the city and meet people, for instance, from the Organization of Chinese Americans... I got to learn about the 1882 Initiative, which is about getting a formal apology for the Chinese Exclusion Act.”

– AANAPISI Program student at the UMD, College Park

## Recommendations for Policymakers

The findings of our analysis yield several implications for federal policymakers. Recognizing the role policymakers in driving national conversations and local implications around student success, the following recommendations include implications for supporting eligible and funded AANAPISIs.

### 1. Expand Funding for AANAPISI Programs

The federal government should expand financial support for AANAPISI programs at eligible institutions across the nation. While the federal government has acknowledged the role of AANAPISIs in serving AAPI students and designated funding to support valuable initiatives at these campuses, only a fraction of AANAPISIs are receiving funds at any given point in time. AANAPISIs may have the existing infrastructure but do not have the financial support to create more robust culturally relevant and responsive support programs.

### 2. Cultivate an AANAPISI Network to Promote Increased Engagement

Policymakers should make a more concerted effort to cultivate relationships with funded and eligible AANAPISIs. For example, policymakers can convene AANAPISI faculty, staff, and students so that they can share stories of challenges and success while building networks of support. Policymakers can also provide eligible AANAPISIs guidance in the development of grant proposals that center on creating optimal programs—initiatives that are culturally relevant and responsive. Furthermore, policymakers can broker connections with other institutions that have successfully received funding to support more campuses moving through the application and implementation processes.

### 3. Prioritize Funding Culturally Relevant and Responsive Programs

Policymakers should prioritize funding culturally relevant and responsive programs that are more likely to lead to more positive student outcomes. The findings of this report confirm earlier research, suggesting that culturally relevant and responsive programs are critical to fostering success among AAPI and other underserved students.<sup>16</sup> Policymakers should also provide support for initiatives that allow college educators to better

understand how they can integrate culturally relevant and responsive practices throughout their programs. Examples of these initiatives can include research and assessment projects on AAPI students at specific campuses or in specific geographic regions, long-term engagement to transform campus environments through training and development, and strategic planning and visioning efforts to support AAPI student success.

## Recommendations for Practitioners

What is clear from our analysis is the critical role AANAPISI programs play in cultivating culturally relevant and responsive environments that allow AAPI students to thrive. The recommendations below are derived from the voices of faculty, staff, and students in these programs. These recommendations are applicable to practitioners at funded or eligible AANAPISIs, as well as other institutions where AAPI students are enrolled.

### 1. Focus on Creating Culturally Relevant Curricula

College educators should create courses, lessons, and assignments that allow students to learn about issues that exist within their own cultural communities. In addition, educators should provide opportunities for students to explore their identities and connect their lived experiences with larger social and political issues. Practitioners can also create opportunities for students to engage with their communities in curricula, by centering the pertinent issues faced by AAPI community members and creating opportunities for AAPI students to collaborate with community leaders to generate solutions.

### 2. Strengthen Students' Connections with Their Cultural Communities

One of the most effective ways for educators to cultivate environments that are culturally relevant is to engage the larger AAPI community. College educators should foster connections with community leaders and organizations, so that they can collaborate with them to co-construct more culturally relevant curricula or expand students' support or professional networks. They can invite community members into the classroom as co-instructors or guest speakers, take students on field trips to important community sites, host events in community spaces, and create course projects that allow students to work with members of their communities to solve pressing problems.

### 3. Foster Communities of Learning Inside and Outside the Classroom

Educators should consider ways to integrate culturally relevant courses into structured learning communities, in which students take multiple courses together as a cohort. Practitioners can also create communities of learning among students outside of the classroom that are based on values of teamwork and mutual success. They can do so by encouraging students to check in with each other, study together, and hold each other accountable. These communities of learning can be strengthened by creating opportunities for students to share their stories, develop relationships with each other, and foster a commitment to each other's success.

### 4. Designate Physical Space for AANAPISI Programs

Physical space is critical to building community. AANAPISIs should commit adequate and permanent physical space for AANAPISI programs, where students can formally and informally engage with faculty, staff, and each other. Such spaces are necessary for students to feel like they have a place where they can access continuous and reliable critical services and where they can develop relationships with faculty, staff, and peers who are critical sources of support. Furthermore, these spaces should be located where students can easily access them throughout their day.

### 5. Provide Holistic Support

Educators working in AANAPISI programs should provide multifaceted support and spend time developing relationships with support offices on their campuses and in the larger AAPI community. Having staff assume responsibility for providing students with emotional, cultural, academic, and social support makes it easy for students to know where to go to access such support. In addition, when staff assume responsibility for developing relationships with people across campus, they maximize their capacity to refer AAPI students to necessary offices, services, and opportunities and can ensure that they are connecting students with the resources that they need to succeed.

### 6. Provide Professional Development Opportunities

Existing AANAPISI programs should create professional development opportunities to both educate other professionals on campus about

the AANAPISI programs and the importance of culturally relevant and responsive programs and practices. Such opportunities are critical to ensuring that faculty and staff have the capacity to understand the cultural backgrounds and circumstances of AAPI students and are equipped to effectively serve them. In addition, these opportunities create possibilities for the fostering of innovative partnerships to support student success.

## Appendix A: Research Methods

This study utilized an embedded collective case study design to examine how AANAPISI programs at five institutions embodied the nine elements of the CECE model. In an embedded case study design, multiple subunits (e.g., faculty, staff, students) are embedded within a case (e.g., an AANAPISI Program), while a collective case study is employed when more than one case is examined. A case study design was appropriate for this study given our interest in understanding how culturally engaging and supportive campus environments impact the outcomes of AAPI students in postsecondary institutions.

We released a national call for proposals to solicit participation of AANAPISIs that provided culturally relevant and responsive programming and had evidence that their programs were having a positive impact on student outcomes. Five institutions responded, including (1) the University of Massachusetts Boston, (2) the University of Maryland, College Park, (3) De Anza College, (4) Sacramento State University, and (5) South Seattle College. All five campuses provided evidence that they offered culturally relevant and responsive programs for AAPI students and that participation in these programs was associated with positive outcomes. Therefore, all five campuses were designated as sites for the study, and the research team worked with AANAPISI program directors and coordinators to recruit participants on each campus. A total of 163 total participants were recruited to participate in interviews across all five campuses. Among the interviewees, 95 were students, 15 were faculty, 49 were administrators and 4 were alumni.

On each campus, semi-structured 60-minute individual interviews were conducted with key students, faculty, and administrators. Semi-structured

focus group interviews that lasted 60-minutes in duration were also conducted with AANAPISI program students and alumni. AANAPISI program staff were asked for documents pertaining to any courses, programs, and events that emerged in the interviews as relevant to answering this study's research question. Members of the research team also observed classrooms affiliated with and attended events hosted by the AANAPISI programs. These observations allowed us to witness the natural context in which AANAPISI programs created environments for AAPI students to succeed. Individual and focus group interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed.

Data collection protocols focused on four broad categories including campus environments, support, relationships, and involvement in AANAPISI programs. Focus groups and individual interviews were tailored to address experiences on campus as well as the impact of each AANAPISI program.

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