



2010 APIASF HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT **SUMMARY REPORT**

CARE
National Commission on Asian American and
Pacific Islander Research in Education

APIASF® Today's Minds,
Tomorrow's Future®
Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund

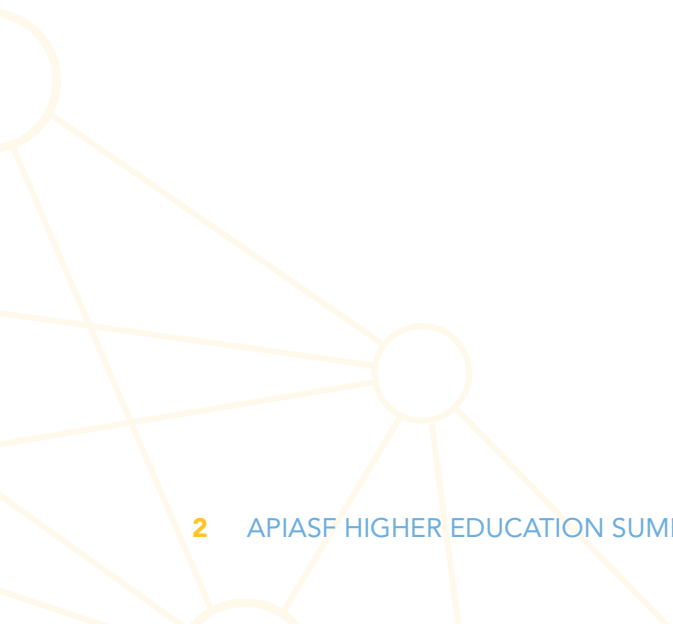


Made possible by the generous support of:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW: 2010 APIASF HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT	3
Underserved Students:	4
Barriers to Access & Success in Higher Education	
Minority-Serving Institutions & Asian American Native American	6
Workforce & Leadership Development	8
WAYS TO GET INVOLVED	10
2010 APIASF HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT TESTIMONIALS	11



OVERVIEW: 2010 APIASF HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT

Compiled by the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund and the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE)

INTRODUCTION

Wednesday, June 23, 2010 marked a significant day bringing together a professionally and culturally diverse group of individuals to not only discuss the needs and issues of our AAPI communities, but to generate a case for needed federal policies, increased investments, and improved research and data collection. The Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) successfully did just that, by convening its first annual Higher Education Summit at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. A multicultural group of more than 300 political and policy leaders, higher education experts, community organizations, business leaders and students attended the Summit. Keynote speakers such as Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter, Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA), and Executive Director of the White House Initiatives on AAPIs, Kiran Ahuja, repeatedly emphasized the importance of the Higher Education Summit as a platform for helping our AAPI communities succeed educationally and professionally.

Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to speak with some of the country's experts on minority-serving institutions (MSIs) and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs); underrepresented and underserved AAPI students; higher education, AAPI and

education research; federal policy; and, leadership and workforce development. A networking lunch allowed participants build connections across each of the various sectors. The day concluded with a reception held in partnership with the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) to recognize the members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) for their commitment to access and education for all students.

Participant conversations in three concurrent working group sessions around education policy, investments, and research were based on the 2010 National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) report. The report, publicly released at the 2010 APIASF Higher Education Summit, focuses on the AAPI population's relevance to the America's commitment to higher education and highlights three key areas of that are vital for AAPIs: the education and workforce development needs of AAPIs, AAPIs in the community college sector, and AAPIs and minority-serving institution legislation.

The following section summarizes the recommendations and action items from the three working groups, which build upon the recently released 2010 CARE report. The three working groups were:

- Underserved Students: Barriers to Access and Success in Higher Education
- Minority-Serving Institutions and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions
- Workforce and Leadership Development

The 2010 CARE Report can be found at: www.nyu.edu/projects/care/2010CAREReport.pdf

More information about the 2010 APIASF Higher Education Summit can be found at: www.apiasf.org

UNDERSERVED STUDENTS: BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs), representing a diversity of backgrounds, continue to face existing historical, social, and structural barriers that prevent them from effectively accessing (i.e., enrolling) and succeeding (i.e., graduating) in higher education. Hampered by policies and perceptions that characterize AAPIs as model minorities and the perception of population as a monolithic group, AAPI students are frequently underserved and misunderstood throughout the

The Underserved Students: Barriers to Access and Success in Higher Education working group centered on the educational pipeline of three particular underrepresented, underserved student populations within the AAPI umbrella, Pacific Islanders, Southeast Asians, and South Asians. Presenters identified specific communities within these sub-groups that face a multitude of barriers associated with the educational success of these communities, including their

“Ridding our educational system of these race-related equity gaps will take time and significant effort, but it is possible. As a former educator for 30 years, this is a lifelong goal of mine. By helping vulnerable minority groups pursue and complete higher education, we simultaneously address socio-economic disparities and racial inequalities, increase the competitiveness of America’s workforce, increase our tax base, and provide sustainable alternatives to the ill-fated options that youth tilt toward today,” said Congressman Mike Honda (D-CA). **“We can only do this if we look past the assumptions we hold, dig deep for better data that better represents our reality, and act quickly on that data to correct any disparities. The summit underscored, correctly, these critical concerns—now we must address them.”**

socioeconomic status, language backgrounds, social support, financial literacy, educational resources, identity, and stereotypes. Participants discussed strategies to challenge the perception of AAPIs as a monolithic group, addressed the obstacles of pre-college preparation and success in higher education for underserved and underrepresented AAPIs, and identified the agents of change to undertake the necessary actions to effectively serve the underserved and underrepresented

sent AAPI students and secure a sustainable educational, workforce and leadership pipeline.

This discussion led to the following action items:

Raise awareness about the needs and challenges faced by vulnerable AAPI sub-groups

- Create capacity for more accurate and refined data collection disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, and generational status.
- Increase investment in research on AAPI sub-pop-

education pipeline. These issues persist despite efforts by researchers, advocates, and policymakers to highlight how sub-groups with the AAPI community have different experiences and face unique challenges. In the context of this working group, the term underserved was recognized as a broader term shaped by, but not limited to, the following factors: ethnic background, generational status, immigration history, socioeconomic status, and English language proficiency.

ulations to better understand how and why gaps occur within AAPI students, especially for those enrolled in the community college sector.

Position the AAPI community within the broader debates about equity and social justice

- Support research and outreach efforts to bring attention to the most vulnerable AAPI student populations (e.g., low-income populations, language minorities, undocumented students, etc.) to better understand the dimensions and implications of the problem.
- Draw attention to the discrimination and hate crimes experienced by members of the AAPI community.
- Work with allies outside the AAPI community to address social justice issues, including challenges faced by undocumented status, ending discriminatory practices, and prosecuting hate crimes.

Leverage relationships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to better meet the needs of the AAPI community

- Link CBOs with community members, high schools, and postsecondary institutions to provide information about the importance of college enrollment and how to access resources, especially financial aid.
- Institutions that serve AAPI populations with greater needs or those institutions that lack personnel with the relevant language skills should be targeted for partnerships with CBOs.
- Promote partnerships between CBOs and research organizations or data collection agencies to ensure that more accurate and reliable data is collected on AAPIs, especially for the most vulnerable AAPI communities.

UNDERSERVED STUDENTS: BARRIERS TO ACCESS AND SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION WORKING GROUP LEADS

Sponsor Representative

Krissann Pearce, *Vice President, Congressional Relations, USA Funds*

Session Framer

Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo (*D-GU*)

Facilitators

Sefa Aina, *Director, Asian American Resource Center, Pomona College*

Audrey Yamagata-Noji, Ph.D., *Vice President Student Services, Mt. San Antonio College*

Presenters

Sefa Aina, *Director, Asian American Resource Center, Pomona College*

Monica Thammarath, *Education Advocate, Southeast Asian Resource Action Center*

Vega Subramaniam, *Director of Programs and Partnerships, South Asian Americans Leading Together*

Advisors

Walter Allen, *Allan Murray Cartter Professor of Higher Education, Higher Education Organizational Change, University of California, Los Angeles*

Frank Chong, *Deputy Assistant Secretary for Community Colleges, U.S. Department of Education*

Matt Finucane, *Senior Liaison to Asian American and Pacific Islander Community, National Education Association*

Shirley Hune, *CARE Commissioner; Professor, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, College of Education, University of Washington*

Mary Okada, *President, Guam Community College*

Monica Thammarath, *Education Advocate, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center*

Victor Thompson, *Executive Director, National Pacific Islander Education Network*

Doua Thor, *CARE Commissioner; President and Executive Director, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center*

Ronald Williams, *Vice President, College Board*

MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS AND ASIAN AMERICAN NATIVE AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER-SERVING INSTITUTIONS (AANAPISIS)

In 2007, as a part of the *College Cost and Reduction Act*, the Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) legislation passed Congress. Six institutions were awarded in 2008, followed by two more institutions awarded in 2009. Each grant cycle funds institutions for two years, in which institutions may reapply for funding upon the end of the two-year cycle. For more information about the AANAPISI legislation visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/aanapicraa>. Below are the institutions who have received the federal AANAPISI grant.

CURRENT AANAPISIS

2008

City College of San Francisco (CA)
De Anza College (CA)
Guam Community College (GU)
South Seattle Community College (WA)
University of Hawaii at Hilo (HI)
University of Maryland, College Park (MD)

2009

CUNY – Queens College (NY)
Santa Monica College (CA)

As a newly federally funded group of institutions that serve Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, there is a recognized need to secure long-term outcomes and sustainability of AANAPISIs. Additionally, while AANAPISIs closely resemble other minority-serving institutions (MSIs), they are often excluded from initiatives that invest in long-term support for these institutions. AANAPISIs are poised to not only contribute to the larger success of MSIs generally, they can also leverage lessons learned by other MSIs, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), to successfully increase capacity, as-

sist underserved AAPI students, and help strengthen the AAPI educational, workforce, and leadership pipeline. For more information about minority-serving institutions, visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/edlite-minorityinst-lite.html>.

The **Minority-Serving Institutions and Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions** working group focused on discussing the landscape of current AANAPISIs, best practices learned by MSIs, and relevant federal policy priorities. Presenters set the context for participant discussions through presentations on current AANAPISI and MSI legislation, institutions, and programs. Attendees discussed challenges of the current AANAPISI program, as well as the lack of awareness that exists about the AANAPISI program, and the lack of funding for the program, which is a challenge for existing AANAPISI campuses, as well as emerging campuses and the program as a whole. In addition, the working group honed in on how and why MSI policy strategy is an effective policy mechanism for AAPI students, the resources, opportunities, and benefits that MSIs and AANAPISIs provide their students, institutions and local communities, and the lessons learned from MSIs to discuss how AANAPISIs can contribute to the collective strength of MSIs and higher education as a whole. Participants generated a set of action items to enhance long-term sustainability and outcomes for AANAPISIs and its movement towards MSI policy inclusion.

This discussion led to the following action items:

Make it clear that the definition of “Minority-Serving Institutions” includes AANAPISIs

- Request immediate change to the Department of Education website that lists minority serving-institution designations absent the AANAPISI designation; the AANAPISI program must be listed with other MSIs.

- Better promote the AANAPISI program. Current marketing strategies at the federal level are insufficient and ineffective in promoting awareness. Ensure that federal agencies and private foundations are aware of the AANAPISI designation so that these colleges and universities can be eligible for additional funding that is currently limited to known MSIs.
- Greater awareness of AANAPISIs as MSIs will also lead to more collaboration between AANAPISIs and other MSIs (HSIs, HBCUs, TCUs, etc.).

Create a coalition of AANAPISIs, or an umbrella organization

- Create an umbrella organization that can support the work of AANAPISIs, advocate on their behalf, support research, sustain contact among the institutions, and assist in coordinating efforts and communication across campuses.
- This organization can also advocate on behalf of AAPI college students generally, including the need for disaggregated data on AAPIs to find out how and what student groups are gaining access to with regard to services funded by federal funding.
- This organization can also liaison with other minority umbrella organizations such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) and National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO).

Increase investment in the AANAPISI program

- Increase investment to increase the number of AANAPISIs.
- Greater investment in each individual campus, providing resources for the program to outreach to and raise awareness among other federal agencies.
- There needs to be more exploration for combined MSI funding for institutions that enroll higher percentages of more than minority group. Some institutions that are designated as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) also have very large proportions of AAPI students that would otherwise meet AANAPISI eligibility; because of current policy, these institutions may be unable to sufficiently meet the needs of these AAPI students in the absence of AANAPISI grants.

MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTIONS AND ASIAN AMERICAN NATIVE AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER-SERVING INSTITUTIONS WORKING GROUP LEADS

Sponsor Representative

Mark Espinoza, *Senior Director of Corporate Affairs, Walmart*

Session Framers

Congressman David Wu (*D-OR*)

Cynthia Swann, *Director and Senior Advisor, National Education Association*

Facilitators

Mark Mitsui, *CARE Commissioner; President, North Seattle Community College*

Howard Wang, *Associate Vice President, Student Affairs, California State University, Fullerton*

Presenters

Robert Underwood, *CARE Commissioner; President, University of Guam*

Gumecindo Salas, *Vice President, Governmental Relations, Hispanic Association for College and Universities*

Advisors

Michelle Asha Cooper, *CARE Commissioner; President Institute for Higher Education*

Marybeth Gasman, *Associate Professor, Higher Education, University of Pennsylvania*

Larry A. Griffith, *CARE Commissioner; Vice President, United Negro College Fund, Gates Millennium Scholars Program*

Mae Lee, *Director AANAPISI Grant Project, De Anza College*

William T. Pollard Jr., *Program Manager, New Concepts Management Solutions, LLC*

Gumecindo Salas, *Vice President, Governmental Relations, Hispanic Association for College and Universities*

Dee Stevens, *President and CEO, New Concepts Management Solutions, LLC*

Minh-Hoa Ta, *Director of Asian Pacific American Student Success Center, City College of San Francisco*

Elsa Tung, *Legislative Assistant, Congressman David Wu (D-OR)*

Robert Underwood, *CARE Commissioner; President, University of Guam*

WORKFORCE AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Recent projections by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and a 2010 report produced by the Center on Education and the Workforce indicate the fastest growing and most in-demand jobs will require some level of postsecondary education or training. Ensuring a pipeline of diverse workers and future leadership is critical to the success of corporations, government, education, community groups, and the American society as a whole in an increasingly global economy. Acknowledged by the 2010 CARE report and those who attended the 2010 APIASF Higher Education Summit, disaggregated data is a vital factor in dispelling the assertion that all AAPIs are faring well educationally and in the workforce. Large disparities within the AAPI population exist with regard to high school dropout rates, college attendance, college completion rates, workforce mobility, and obtainment of leadership and decision-making positions in the workforce.

The **Workforce and Leadership Development** working group consisted of a cross-sector panel comprising of representatives from the federal government, higher education, the non-profit arena, and corporate. Panelists provided a broad overview of the current landscape of the leadership and workforce pipeline for AAPIs, beginning from college to workforce. Participants then engaged in cross-sector discussions revolving around similarities or differences in the barriers faced within each sector to develop collaborative strategies and recommendations in cultivating a strong AAPI leadership and workforce pipeline. More specifically, the working group tackled the challenges the AAPI community faces with regard to misconceptions about the educational attainment disparities among AAPI groups and how this affects workforce participation, the disproportionate representation of AAPIs in key areas of the workforce, and the low representation of AAPIs in senior leadership positions across sectors but specifically in higher education, the corporate sector and in the government sector.

This discussion led to the following action items:

Pool resources for professional development

- Several organizations across sectors already provide opportunities to develop AAPI professionals.
- By identifying all of these organizations and programs, a national directory can be created to conglomerate the opportunities. A national directory should also make publicity of these organizations and programs easier and more uniform to ensure that the resources are better utilized.
- A dissemination strategy is needed to get these resources connected with the appropriate audiences.

Encourage internship and mentorship programs

- There is a need to connect talented and accomplished emerging AAPI professionals with professional networks that offer valuable internship and mentorship opportunities.
- The previously mentioned directory of AAPI organizations can be leveraged to better promote these types of opportunities for emerging professionals.
- Building opportunities for the younger generation of AAPI professionals addresses the pipeline issue and connects them to seasoned mentors in various fields.

Encourage, develop and make more accessible leadership opportunity programs

- There is a lack of AAPIs in the leadership pipeline.
- The lack of AAPI professionals at the executive levels can be addressed through national leadership opportunity programs such as through the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP), among many others.
- Industries that currently do not offer executive leadership training can leverage current professional organizations and networks to develop such programs.

Create AAPI advocacy groups on the campus level

- Higher education is a key place for promoting change in the workforce.
- Students can benefit greatly from connecting with mentors at their colleges and universities. Staff and faculty can offer valuable personal, academic advice and professional guidance.
- Having AAPI students, staff and faculty organized on campus can also provide a political bloc that can advocate for institutional change that makes the campus more responsive to the needs of the AAPI community.

WORKFORCE & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP LEADS

Sponsor Representative

Anna Powell, *Community Affairs Manager, Social Responsibility Group, Wachovia, A Wells Fargo Company*

Panelists

Brad Baldia, *National President and Chairman of the Board, National Association of Asian American Professionals*

Carson Eoyang, *Emeritus Professor, Naval Post-graduate School, Monterey, CA*

Carolyn Teich, *Senior Program Associate for Workforce and Economic Development, American Association of Community Colleges*

Facilitators

Linda Akutagawa, *Senior Vice President, Resource and Business Development, Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc.*

Bob Suzuki, *President Emeritus, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona*

Advisors

Gailda Pitre Davis, *Associate Director, Center for Advancement of Racial & Ethnic Equity, Division of Programs & Research, American Council on Education*

Carol Jackson, *Vice President, External Affairs, Macy's Inc.*

Tim Johnson, *CARE Commissioner; Executive Director, Office of Hawaiian Affairs*

Michael C. Lin, *Chair, Board of Trustees, Montgomery College*

James Meng, *CARE Commissioner; STEM Executive, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Navy, United States Navy*

Mee Moua, *CARE Commissioner; Minnesota State Senator*

Don Nakanishi, *CARE Commissioner; Professor/Director Emeritus, Asian American Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles*

Christine Shimizu, *Vice President, Raytheon*

Richard Shurtz, *President, Stratford University*

Kehaulani Vaughn, *Project Coordinator, PLUS, Student Support Services, Academic Advancement Program, University of California, Los Angeles*

While the 2010 Higher Education Summit made significant headway toward raising awareness about the many challenges faced by AAPI students, dispelling the 'model' minority myth, and highlighting the need for better policies and research, there remains significant work if we are to reach the goal of increased access and academic success for all AAPI student. The recommendations developed by Summit participants provide an important starting point by identifying some of the key steps needed to positively impact the most vulnerable populations of AAPIs.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

To create the systemic change needed to accomplish the recommendations developed during the 2010 APIASF Higher Education Summit, students, educators, community organizations, and institutions of higher education must each take steps to help improve the educational experience for AAPIs and develop a diverse pipeline of future leaders.

Here are suggestions that participants shared throughout the day on ways that each group can get involved.:

STUDENTS

- Schedule a meeting with the student affairs officers and college administrators to discuss programming opportunities that would support the success of AAPI students.
- Send an e-mail to your Congressional Representative asking them to support increased funding for the AANAPISI program.
- Seek out professional mentors and leadership development opportunities to prepare for your chosen career.
- Serve as a mentor for high school students and/or younger siblings encouraging them to pursue higher education. Share information about scholarship opportunities and other resources that may help make college more accessible.
- Participate in the next APIASF Higher Education Summit and help shape policies and plans to improve the educational experience for AAPI students.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Become a community supporter for the next APIASF Higher Education Summit and encourage participation among members of the staff, board of directors, and interns.
- Share information and research about the experience of AAPI students with other change agents in your community.
- Expand or strengthen programming efforts that serve AAPI students, especially those within communities with lower rates of educational attainment.
- Advocate for federal and local policies that better support AAPI students.

- Educate policymakers about the unique challenges faced by AAPI students and the intricacies of the community.

EDUCATORS

- Read the 2008 and 2010 CARE Report.
- Encourage and support AAPI students who are interested in pursuing a career in education. This will help develop a pipeline of talented AAPI educators.
- Consider the needs of AAPI students when developing academic support and other resources for English language learners.
- Partner with community-based organizations that support underserved AAPI communities.
- Leverage the social and cultural views of AAPI students in leadership programming and other campus activities.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- Learn about the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) designation and identify if your college or university is eligible to apply for funding. For more information visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/aanapicraa>.
- Encourage faculty members to apply for funding through the AANAPISI Program.
- Work to ensure that the diversity of the AAPI community is properly represented in data collection and new research.
- Develop hiring practices that support the selection and retention of a diverse and culturally – competent faculty.
- Create programs that will increase that will increase degree completion rates for students from the most underserved AAPI communities.

CORPORATE REPRESENTATIVES

- Support professional development opportunities for AAPI employees.
- Create internship opportunities and scholarships for AAPI students that will help facilitate a diverse pipeline of talented employees.
- Invest in programs that help AAPI students obtain academic success and degree completion.
- Explore ways to use AANAPISIs in recruitment efforts to increase recruitment among the most underrepresented AAPI communities.

2010 APIASF HIGHER EDUCATION SUMMIT TESTIMONIALS

With the gracious donations of Southwest Airlines, 11 APIASF/GMS scholarship recipients attended the 2010 APIASF Higher Education Summit. Below are reflections on their experiences at the Summit.

“The Summit has helped put everything in perspective. As a member of one of the highlighted underserved minorities’ communities, I was deeply moved to realize that the difficulties facing Southeast Asians were being recognized. My community has been ravaged by war and genocide and my family has a shared refuge experience with other Southeast Asians. They have been through and still are undergoing trauma. And so do their children as they struggle to adjust and adapt. The statistics depict this with high levels of poverty paired with low levels of educational attainment. Though not surprising, they still are sobering and just as heartbreaking. However, to know that we were not a forgotten or forsaken group was a significant enlightening experience. It was at this moment that something changed within me. Now my responsibility is to nourish it and direct it towards the promotion of the education and advancement needs of my Cambodian and broader APIA community. It is now my purpose to stoke the fires that are smoldering within other younger members of my community so that we all may be agents for change and progress. So that our future generations will have the right to opportunities in education and growth and not have to struggle for it as if were a privilege. Everyone has a right to education and by all means, they should have it.”

– **Varaxy Yi, APIASF/GMS Scholar,
Graduate Student, San Jose State University**

“Throughout my academic career, I have attended many conferences and have essentially become burnt out from talking over and over again about the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity that exists within and between AAPI ethnic groups. I have become quite jaded from hearing these issues repeatedly and feeling as if no real change was being made... until the APIASF Higher Education Summit.

The speakers and breakout groups did an amazing job of connecting the facts about AAPIs to timely and relevant policy changes, namely the White House Initiative on AAPIs. Participating in this summit was the first time that I actually felt as if we were contributing to a larger purpose and actually taking real steps toward changing the experiences of AAPIs for the better.”

– **Tu-Lien Kim Nguyen, APIASF/GMS Scholar,
Graduate Student, University of California, Los Angeles**

“Being a biochemistry major, pre-med student, education seems distant from my interests. However, I was also an Asian American who was deeply involved with her Vietnamese heritage and culture. Thus, I told myself that I would try to participate as fully as I could with the knowledge that I have. At the end of the day, I felt so caught up in the issues of higher education with regards to APIs that I was disappointed the Summit was coming to an end. As only a rising sophomore in her undergraduate studies though, the Summit opened a new door for me; instead of just being pre-med, I am now considering public health, where I will be able to work with policy affecting a population rather than just the individual.”

– **Linda Huynh, APIASF/GMS Scholar,
Freshman, University of Southern California**

"As a science major, I was not fully aware of all the lobbying and bills that are being passed, specifically towards the Asian and Pacific Islanders. This summit was a great opportunity for me to gain more understanding about the political standing and progress that are taken place. My knowledge about politics and issues that students are facing in accessing education was further developed when I participated in the Underserved Student discussion panel. As a first-generation college bound student, I can relate to many of the issues that were being raised. I firmly believe that every student should have equal opportunities to access education despite of their background. From this belief, I took an active role in the discussion group by sharing my personal experience and the struggles I have overcome. I found the discussion group to be very effective, since everyone in the group had similar visions and all wanted to find possible solutions to solve the issues. After attending the conference and hearing everyone's input in the discussion, I'm very eager to see all the recommendations being executed within the near future. Leaving the conference, I see myself as a better leader for my peers and underclassmen. I want to help promote other Asian and Pacific Islander students to access higher education and help them reach out to community resources that are available."

**– Thuan Vuong, APIASF/GMS Scholar,
Freshman, University of Washington**

"Coming to the APIASF conference has really opened my eyes to all the issues that affect the API community. The time spent with other scholars showed the value in giving voice to each community as discrete groups with their own special needs. Though there is strength and power in the unity of the Asian-American bloc, merely calling the whole community "API" is an issue that deserves attention and change at the governmental level. The conference really helped me contact many progressive individuals who could really move and shake the community that they live in. Now as a result of the conference and meeting wonderful people, I have been inspired to work in Washington DC as part of my school's internship program. I hope to work on the team that deals with the issues discussed in the conference and possibly be part of the team that passes new legislation. I recall that the keynote speaker noted the daunting goal presented in the mission: "to improve the lives of all Asian-Americans". When I heard this, I thought to myself, "Well, if that is the case, then an extra hand could not hurt." That is the sort of direction that I gained from this conference, a perspective gained from a packed day in the nation's capital and one that will guide me for quite some time."

**– Huy Dao, APIASF/GMS Scholar,
Sophomore, Stanford University**





APIASF[®] **Today's Minds,
Tomorrow's Future**[®]
Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund

1900 L Street NW, Suite 210, Washington, D.C. 20036
www.APIASF.org | 202-986-6892