

**CARE**

National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education



**Federal Higher Education Policy Priorities  
and the  
Asian American and Pacific Islander Community**



**APIASF**<sup>®</sup> Today's Minds,  
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Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund

## **Connecting Research to Policy and Practice**

This report was made possible by a collaborative effort between the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) and the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF), and through the generous support of USA Funds. The CARE Project engages in research that identifies and examines key issues affecting Asian American and Pacific Islander student access and success in U.S. higher education. APIASF is the nation's largest non-profit organization that provides scholarships to APIAs with financial need. APIASF strives to make a difference in the lives of APIA students by providing them with resources that increase their access to higher education which serves as the foundation for their future success and contributions to a stronger America.

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## Preface

The National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE), consisting of a national commission, research advisory group, and research team at New York University, aims to engage realistic and actionable discussions about the mobility and educational opportunities for Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and how distinctions of race, ethnicity, language, and other factors play out in the day-to-day operations of America's education system. Our goal is to provide much needed and timely research on key issues and trends related to access and participation of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in higher education.

In 2008, the CARE Project released a report titled, *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders — Facts, Not Fiction: Setting the Record Straight*, which was founded on the simple premise that educational policies and practices must be based on facts, not fiction, if they are to be of value to teachers, students, parents, and society as a whole. Through a frame of advocacy and social justice, the 2008 CARE Report is a tool for critically examining the extent to which schools are meeting the demands of an increasingly competitive and global environment. By way of new and ongoing conversations among advocacy organizations, policy centers, and higher education scholars, CARE's new report, *Federal Higher Education Policy Priorities and the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community*, focuses most intently on areas of emerging importance related to how AAPIs are positioned within the context of higher education policy priorities.

This report is guided by four propositions: first, we argue that **policy matters**: it dictates funding priorities, resource usage and federal, state, and local involvement in educational efforts. Second, we assert that **institutions matter**: what colleges and universities *do* with funding and resources has a tremendous impact

on student success. Third, **research matters**: policy makers and institutional administrators need accurate, disaggregated data that present real assets and needs of college students and their families. Finally, **strategic action matters**: now, more than ever, there is a strong public interest in institutional accountability. We are interested in identifying and studying areas of program effectiveness relative to the AAPI population to inform policymaking decisions. We challenge funders and policymakers to account for AAPI assets and needs when developing or building upon programs and policies. At the intersection of domestic need and AAPI opportunity we heed the call for equity and investment in diversity throughout the pathways from education to the workforce.

### IN ADDITION TO THE ROLE OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION,

advisory group, and research team, there are other individuals who played integral roles in the production of this report. Our thanks to Jack Tchen at the A/P/A Institute at NYU, Annie Bezbatchenko and Loni Bordoloi Pazich at the Steinhardt Institute for Higher Education Policy at NYU, and Jason Chan, Prema Chaudhari, Mariko Hughes, Manprit (Nikki) Modi, and April Rongero at the Asian Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund.





## Introduction

One of the most urgent challenges facing the United States in the 21st century is the preparation of its people for higher education and the workforce. Simply put, a postsecondary credential has become increasingly important in the labor market; the U.S. cannot sustain its position in the global community without expanding access to higher education and increasing degree production. This challenge finds its urgency in data that suggest a “flattening” of college degree attainment in the U.S. over the last four decades and, in the same time period, an increase in such attainment throughout every other developed nation; as a result, the U.S. has fallen from first to tenth in international postsecondary completion rate rankings.<sup>1</sup>

Appropriate responses to this challenge will require extraordinary efforts in both the policy and funding arenas.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps most notable are the federal investments being made in community colleges, Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and college affordability. This targeted investment in higher education by the federal government is being driven by big goals; the expectation is that colleges and universities will play a central role in helping to decrease the unemployment rate, educate and train skilled workers for the jobs of tomorrow, re-tool industry for new technology, and create “green jobs” in an effort to improve environmental sustainability.<sup>2</sup>

With a focus on making college more affordable and investing in institutions that disproportionately serve high concentrations of low-income students and students of color, it is clear that a major policy strategy is to decrease longstanding disparities in college access and degree attainment. The participation of all Americans, including underrepresented racial minority groups, low-income students, immigrants, and language minorities, is essential to ensuring that the United States can lead the

world in creativity, productivity, and achievement. It is within this context that this report draws attention to the AAPI student population and its potential role in meeting these goals. In particular, this report highlights mischaracterizations of the AAPI community that contribute to their exclusion from policies, programs and initiatives that could provide much needed attention, resources, and services.<sup>3</sup>

Given this context, the purpose of this report is to examine where, why, and how the AAPI population is relevant to America’s commitment to higher education. For key policy issues in which the AAPI population has been absent, this report describes the potential for positive, long-lasting impact for both the AAPI community and the nation at large through greater inclusion and representation. Specifically, the report focuses on three areas of higher education that are critical for AAPIs and the nation looking forward:

- ◆ **The Education and Workforce Development Needs of AAPIs:** The report examines the relationship between educational attainment and workforce partici-

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<sup>1</sup> The Lumina Foundation declared as its “Big Goal” to increase the proportion of American college graduates from its current rate of 39 percent to 60 percent by 2025. The Gates Foundation committed to doubling the number of young people who earn a postsecondary degree or certificate. The Ford Foundation is making significant investments in higher education through its “Advancing Higher Education Access and Success” initiative.

pation for AAPIs; identifies key areas of the workforce where AAPIs are underrepresented; and discusses the need for AAPI leadership in the professions.

- ◆ **AAPIs in the Community College Sector:** The report identifies and examines the differences between AAPI students at two-year and four-year institutions; compares AAPI community college students with other community college students; and provides a profile of the community colleges that serve large concentrations of AAPI students.
- ◆ **AAPIs and Minority-Serving Institution Legislation:** The report examines how and why the MSI policy strategy is an effective policy mechanism for AAPI students; the resources, opportunities, and benefits

that Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) provide students, their institutions, and their local communities; and the lessons that can be learned from AANAPISIs that can contribute to the collective strength of MSIs and higher education as a whole.

Relative to each of these issues, we provide data on a number of important factors that impact the AAPI student population, including: postsecondary access, participation and affordability; collegiate outcomes, including transfer rates and degree attainment; and higher education's relationship to the professions. Central to these data are the contextualization of realities for AAPI students and their families.

## The AAPI Student Population in Context

A considerable amount of what is known about the AAPI student population has been heavily influenced by stereotypes and false perceptions, rather than by empirical evidence.<sup>4</sup> The dominant narrative about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in higher education is that they are a model minority—a racial group with disproportionately high enrollment in highly selective, four-year institutions and such academic fields as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). When referring to underrepresented or disadvantaged students, much of the policy and academic literature focuses largely on “non-Asian” minorities, often omitting AAPI students altogether. These practices have largely gone unchecked in policy arenas, leaving the impression that AAPI students face no challenges in access to quality higher education or any problems associated with their pursuit of a college degree.

The reality is the prevailing model minority myth is inaccurate, misleading, and damaging for the AAPI population. Disaggregated data on the AAPI population reveal a wide range of demographic characteristics that are unlike any other racial group in America with regard to their heterogeneity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the AAPI racial category consists of 48 different ethnic groups that occupy positions along the full range of the socioeconomic spectrum, from the poor and under-privileged, to the affluent and highly-skilled. AAPIs also vary demographically with regard to language background, immigration history, culture, and religion.

Consider that while a significant proportion of immigrants from Asia come to the U.S. already highly educated, others enter the U.S. from countries that have provided only limited opportunities for educational and social mobility. Pacific Islanders, defined as people whose origins are Polynesia, Micronesia, or Melanesia, are a diverse pan-ethnic group in themselves, whose histories include such challenges as the struggle for sovereignty. Yet, these and other very unique circumstances are often overshadowed by being grouped with Asian Americans. Thus, while the AAPI population

represents a single entity in certain contexts, such as for interracial group comparisons, it is equally important to understand the ways in which the demography of the population is comprised by a complex set of social realities for individuals and communities that fall within this category.

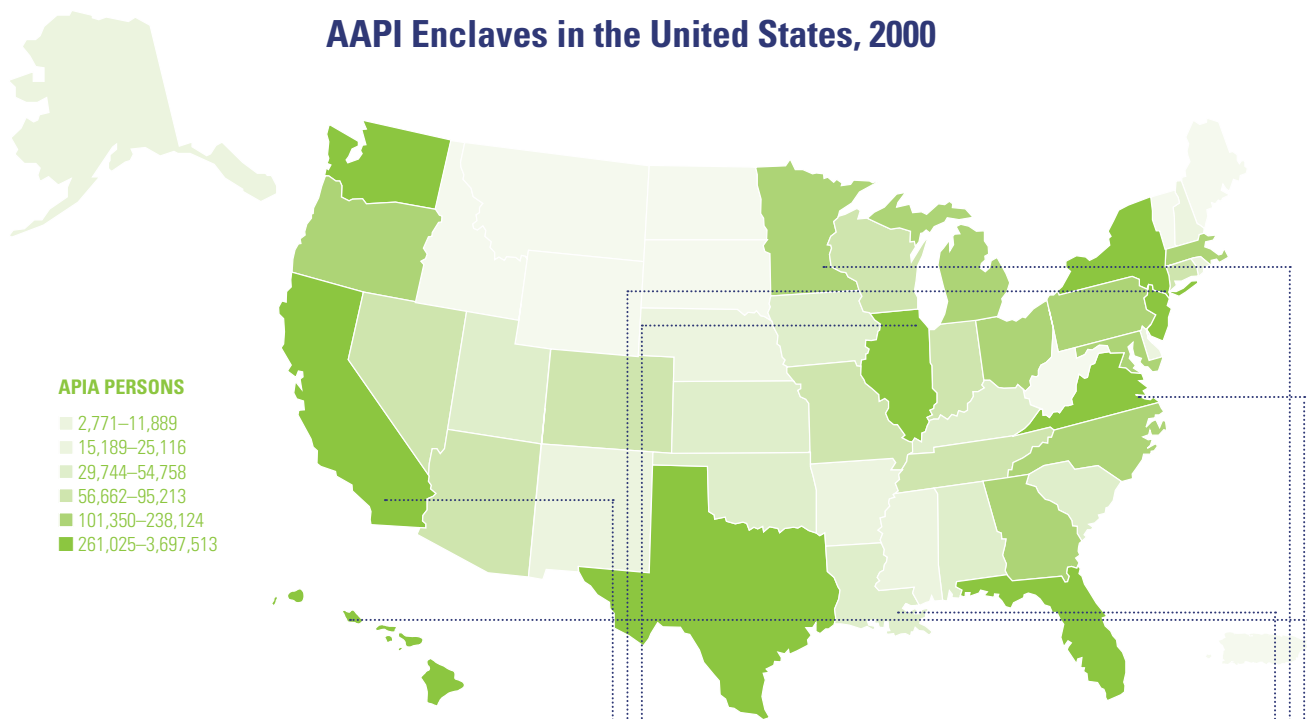
The complex demography of the AAPI population is also evident in their geographic distribution throughout the U.S. While there is a high degree of representation in California, New York, Washington, and Hawai’i, the Gulf Coast also has a number of communities with Southeast Asians and Filipinos, while pockets of the Midwest have a growing representation of Southeast Asians, South Asians, and East Asians. These residential patterns are a reflection of AAPI ethnic enclaves dispersed throughout the country. Thus, if there is any conclusion that can be drawn about the AAPI population, it is that they are an incredibly heterogeneous group of people, and there is simply no single narrative that can capture the range of educational experiences, opportunities, and outcomes they encounter.

Even a cursory review of the literature reveals an urgent need for more research and better sources of data

that capture the social realities for AAPI individuals and communities. In existing higher education research, few studies have documented the campus experiences of AAPIs, adequately disaggregated data for AAPI sub-populations, or looked at AAPIs in different institutional contexts (community colleges, public four-year institutions, predominantly White versus predominantly AAPI or racially mixed institutions, and the for-profit sector). As reported by many scholars across many disciplines, AAPIs are, in many ways, invisible in policy debates, in educational research, and in the development of campus services and programs.<sup>5</sup> The lack of at-

tention to AAPIs in the workforce is equally problematic. There is a need for greater attention to identify how expanding higher education opportunities for AAPIs can positively impact workforce participation for the population. Specifically, higher education can respond not only to key areas of the workforce where AAPIs are underrepresented, but also to the need for AAPI leadership in the professions. What follows are relevant data for understanding the various realities that the AAPI population faces relative to higher education and workforce development.

### AAPI Enclaves in the United States, 2000



#### Alhambra/Monterey Park, CA

Chinese represent 65.8% of the AAPI population (n=53,701)

#### Brooklyn, NY

Chinese represent 66% of the AAPI population (n=120,439)

#### DuPage, IL

Indians represent 43% of the AAPI population (n=31,077)

#### New Orleans, LA

Vietnamese represent 67% of the AAPI population (n=33,067)

#### St. Paul, MN

Hmong represent 71% of the AAPI population (n=34,666)

#### Virginia Beach, VA

Filipinos represent 71% of the AAPI population (n=14,533)

#### Wai'anae, HI

Native Hawaiians represent 58% of the AAPI population (n=2,864)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1, Matrix P7

## Higher Education, Workforce Development, and the AAPI Community

The recent recession has made one fact clear: higher education is a vital factor in a robust and productive workforce. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that three-quarters of the fastest growing occupations will require some postsecondary education or training. By some accounts, the top 10 “in-demand” jobs in 2010 did not even exist in 2004. Meanwhile, the occupations with the highest projected job losses are those for which postsecondary credential is not necessary.<sup>6</sup> As a result, workers without a postsecondary degree are increasingly vulnerable to these workforce trends. These findings underscore the important link that higher education plays in preparing a workforce that is competitive, flexible, skilled, and productive. The future of the U.S. workforce depends on the ability of America’s education system to both prepare students for a knowledge-based society and continuously retrain workers to maneuver adeptly within and between industries.<sup>7</sup>

The challenges presented by the current economic conditions have been met by a number of federal initiatives that aim to spur job growth and invest in degree attainment and workforce retraining. Central to these policies is the goal of attending to all areas of opportunity, including the expansion of postsecondary participation and the removal of barriers that are inhibiting students from earning postsecondary credentials. Moreover, it is abundantly clear that whether or not America can harness the strength of its diversity will be a significant factor in its ability to remain competitive in a global economy. Given these national imperatives, it is an opportune time to raise awareness for the workforce development needs of AAPIs, which has heretofore been hampered by exclusion and mischaracterizations. This section highlights ways the AAPI population is relevant to current national education and workforce development goals. Specifically, this section draws attention to the importance of expanding higher education opportunities for AAPIs by focusing on: 1) the relationship between educational attainment and workforce participation for AAPIs; 2) highlighting key areas of the workforce where AAPIs are underrepresented; and 3) demonstrating the need for AAPI leadership in the professions.

The recent recession has made one fact clear: higher education is a vital factor in a robust and productive workforce. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that three-quarters of the fastest growing occupations

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### Educational Attainment and Workforce Participation for AAPIs

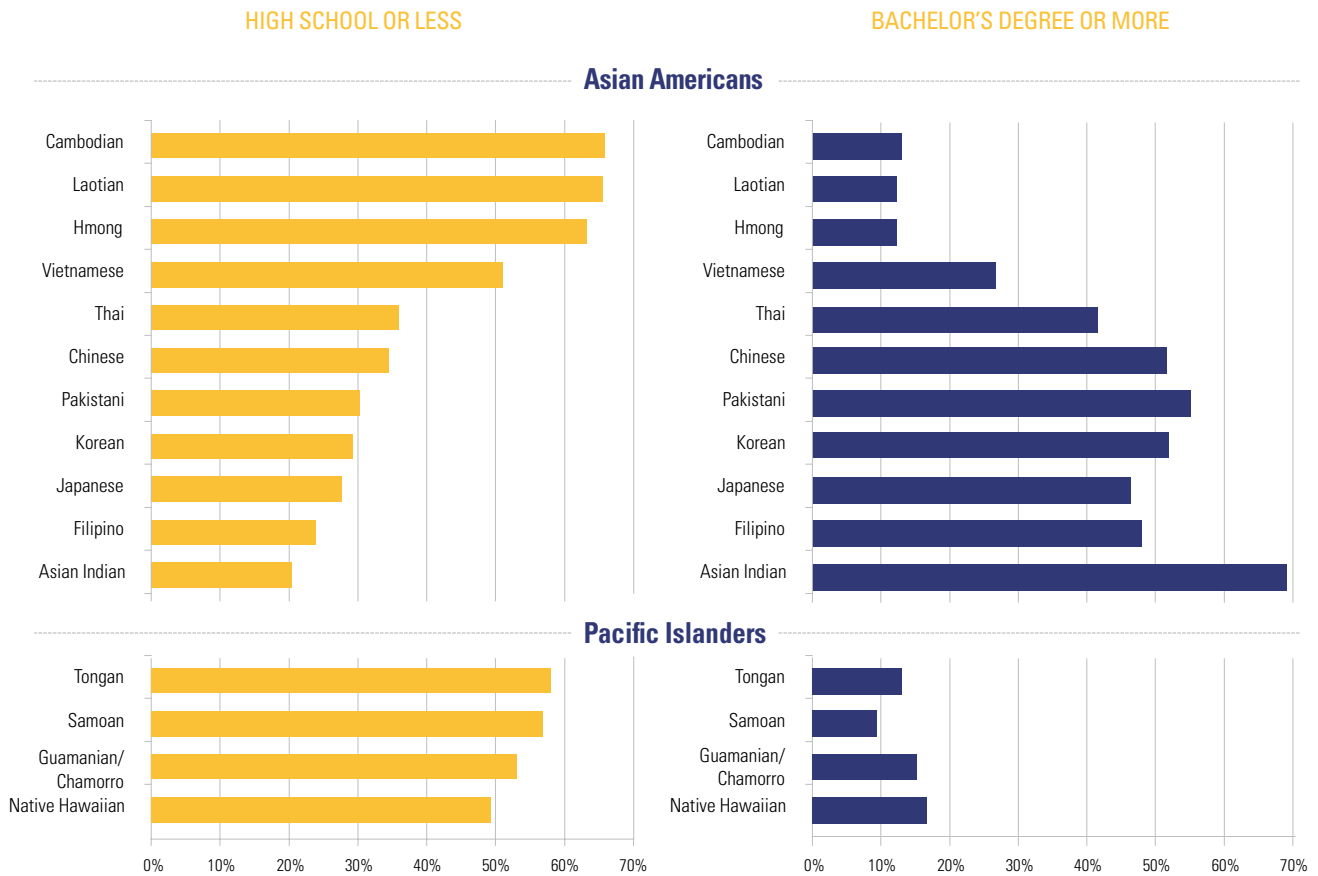
As the unemployment figures reached their highest levels in 30 years, there are assertions that AAPIs have fared relatively well compared to Whites, Blacks, Hispanics or the nation as a whole. In March 2010, the jobless rate for AAPIs was 7.5 percent compared to 9.5 percent for Whites, 12.6 percent for Latinos, and 16.5 percent for Blacks. A recent article by *USA Today* claims the “unemployment gap”—the difference between Asian Americans and the nation as a whole—can be attributed to high educational attainment, work ethnics, family ties, and cultural tradition, which are prevalent among Asian Americans.<sup>8</sup>

“My long term goal is to become a professor so I can help, mentor, and retain Pacific Islander students in higher education to outreach to younger generations.”

Male Samoan  
First-Year Student

While the article captures the important relationship between educational attainment and employment status, it does little to reveal the fundamental problem with

**Figure 1:** Educational Attainment among AAPIs (3-Year Average), 2006–2008



Note: 25 years and older | Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

the disparities that exist within the Asian American and Pacific Islander population. Despite high educational attainment rates for AAPIs in the aggregate, large sectors of the AAPI population suffer from high secondary school drop-out rates, low rates of college participation, and low two- and four-year college completion rates. Figure 1 illustrates the variation in educational attainment among AAPI students of differing ethnic backgrounds, which speaks to the challenges faced by many AAPI sub-groups in the context of America’s education system.

Along with the wide distribution in educational attainment across AAPI sub-groups, there are also large gaps between groups with regard to workforce participation.

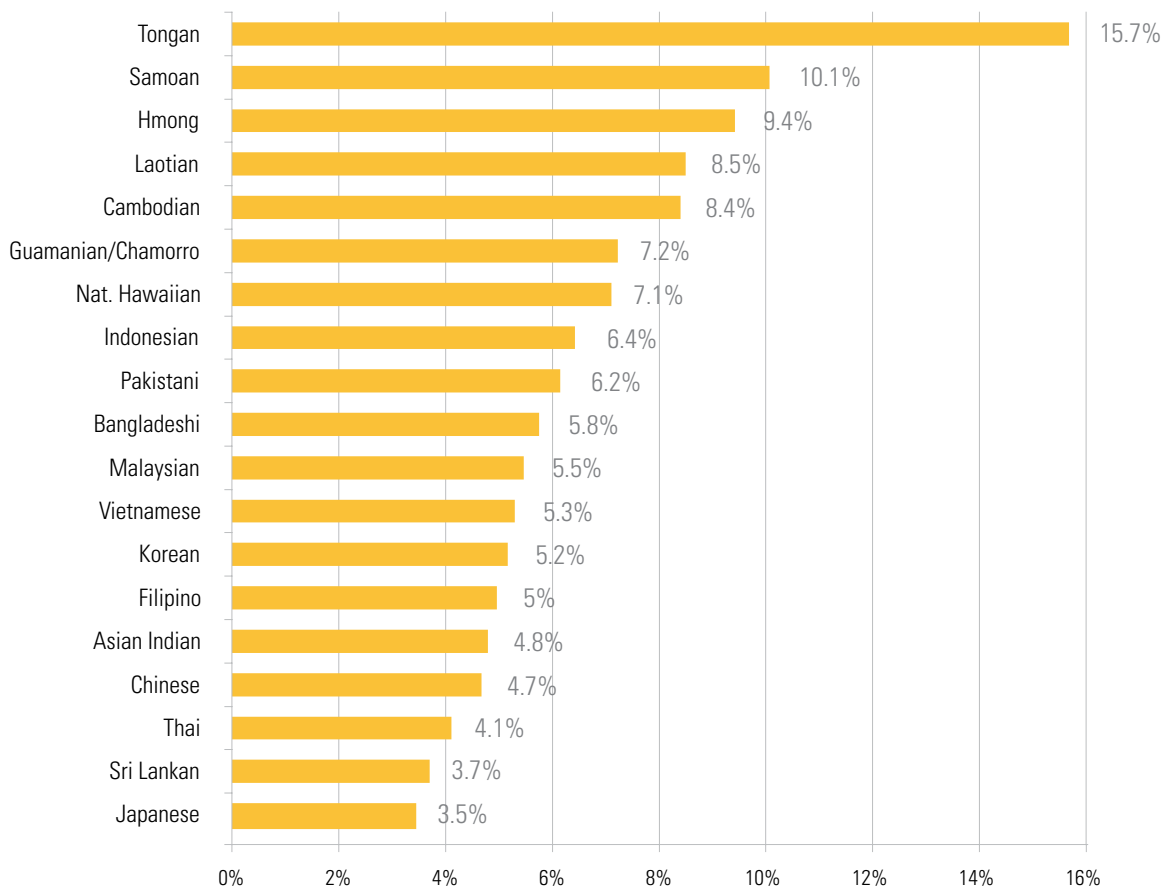
Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that AAPIs with a high school diploma or less have an unemployment rate that is two-and-a-half times greater than that of AAPIs with a bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>9</sup> This trend results in a wide disparity in workforce participation across ethnicity that is driven, in part, by differences in educational attainment between AAPI sub-groups. Three-year data (2006–2008) from the American Community Survey indicates that the unemployment rates of Pacific Islanders (Tongans, Samoans, and Native Hawai’ians) and Southeast Asians (Hmong, Laotian, Cambodians, and Vietnamese) were three to five times greater than those of Japanese, Sri Lankans, Thai, Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, and Koreans (Figure 2).

While there are large gaps in unemployment in the 2006–2008 ACS data, it has likely been exacerbated as the jobless rate continued to climb through the first-quarter of 2010. Although current data for ethnic sub-groups is not available, we do know that by the fourth quarter of 2009, the unemployment rate for AAPIs had nearly doubled since the recession began in 2007. We also know that the number of AAPIs living in poverty grew substantially during this same time period indicating that the gaps in employment have real consequences for the livelihood of individuals and families. Thus, an “average” unemployment rate for AAPIs tells only part of the story about the realities of the AAPI workforce.

### The Distribution of AAPIs in Workforce Sectors

AAPIs in the workforce are generally perceived as holding positions in highly-skilled professions, which can lead policymakers to reject that “problems” exist for AAPIs relative to workforce participation. Because policy has not been attentive to the needs of AAPIs in the workforce, the relative position of the population in different occupational sectors has also gone unnoticed. For example, as the U.S. struggles to climb out of the most severe recession since World War II, the challenges faced by minority-owned businesses have been particularly difficult for the AAPI community.

**Figure 2:** Unemployment Rate for Civilian, Non-Institutionalized AAPI Ethnic Groups (3-Year Average), 2006–2008



Note: 25 years and older; Excludes those who are not in the labor force  
 Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

This is because AAPIs have the highest rate of business ownership among all minority groups, and are the most likely to use personal family savings to start their businesses in the first place. Policymakers need to be responsive to the AAPI community when providing support for minority-owned businesses.

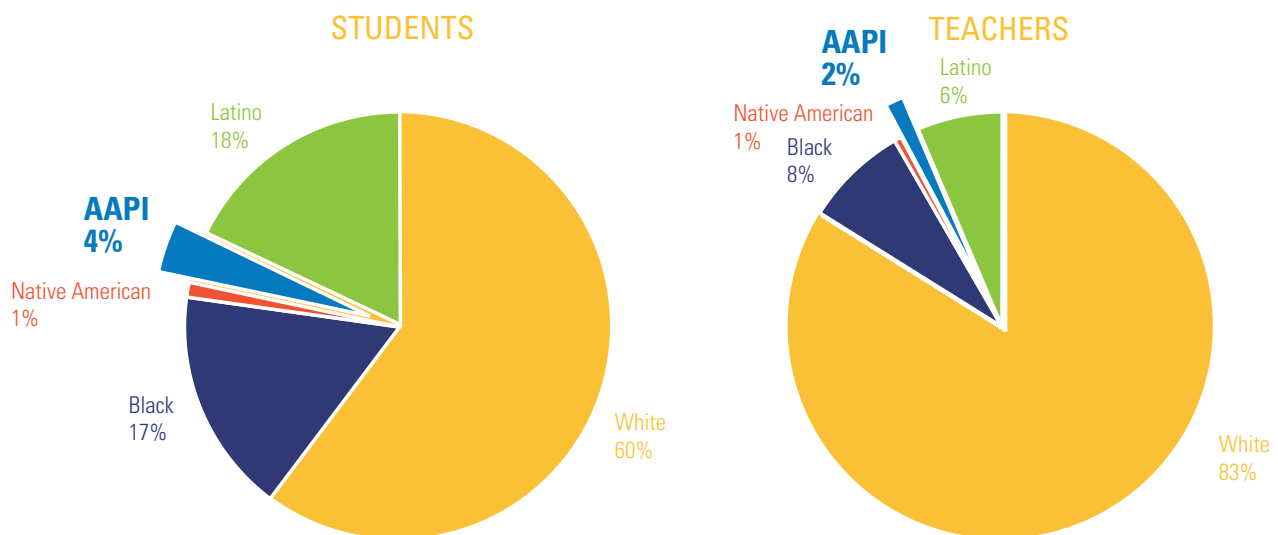
Policymakers can also focus their efforts in key areas of the workforce where AAPIs are underrepresented. A case in point is the underrepresentation of AAPIs in the field of education. For many years, research has pointed to the importance of a diverse teaching workforce, particularly in urban communities with high proportions of racial and ethnic minority students. Some studies posit that students of color respond well to the presence of mentors who look like them, who understand their background and culture, and who have high expectations for their success.<sup>10</sup> While laudable and significant efforts have been made to diversify the teaching workforce by encouraging the recruitment, training, placement, and support of teachers of color, the lack of representation of AAPI teachers is currently not positioned as an issue that requires attention or resources. While

AAPIs comprise 3.9 percent of the total enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, they represent only 1.5 percent of the teachers (**Figure 3**).

Compared to other teachers, AAPI educators also have the lowest average number of years in their positions, are the most likely to leave the field within three years, and are the least likely to pursue mobility within the field to accept administrative positions.<sup>11</sup> These trends point to the need to not only recruit more AAPI teachers, but also to retain, encourage, and support their pursuit of promotion within the field.

Increasing the representation of AAPIs in the education sector is of particular importance for certain states and districts. With nearly half of all AAPIs concentrated in seven metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Honolulu, Chicago, Seattle, and Houston), there are states with high rates of AAPI student enrollment that are not being matched by a similar representation of AAPI teachers (**Figure 4**). In California, for example, where AAPIs make up 11.3 percent of the students in elementary and secondary schools, AAPI

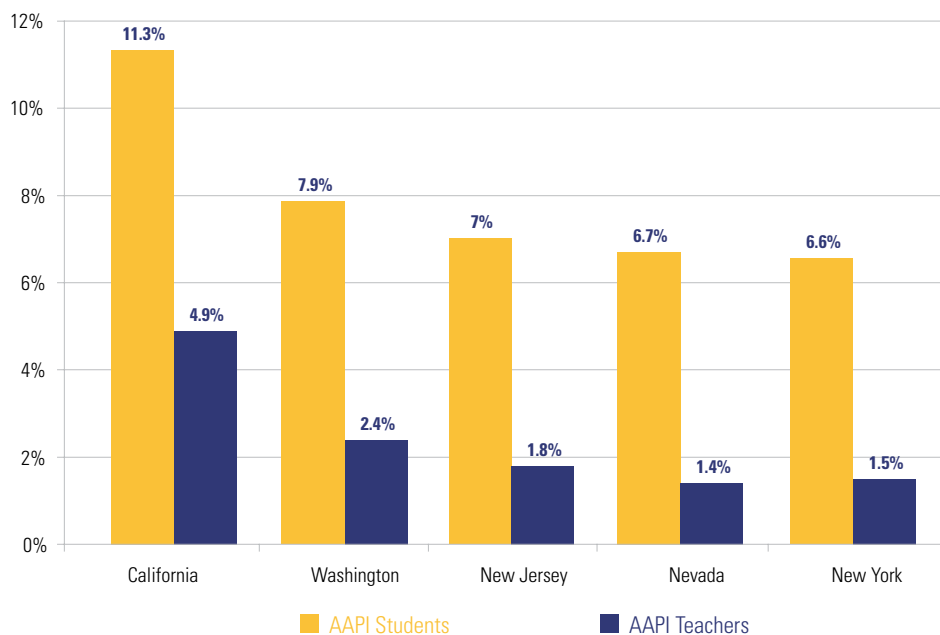
**Figure 3:** Distribution of U.S. Public School Students and Teachers by Race, 2006



Source: Common Core of Data, U.S. Department of Education



**Figure 4:** Proportional Representation of AAPI Students and Teachers in K-12 Schools for Selected States, 2003–2004



Source: Common Core of Data, U.S. Department of Education; Schools and Staffing Survey, U.S. Department of Education

teachers comprise 4.9 percent of the teaching force. In Washington, New Jersey, Nevada, and New York, where the AAPI populations are also large and growing, the gap in representation among AAPI teachers relative to AAPI student enrollment is even greater. Without attention to these important issues, it is highly unlikely that representation of AAPI teachers will reach levels similar to those found in the student populations.

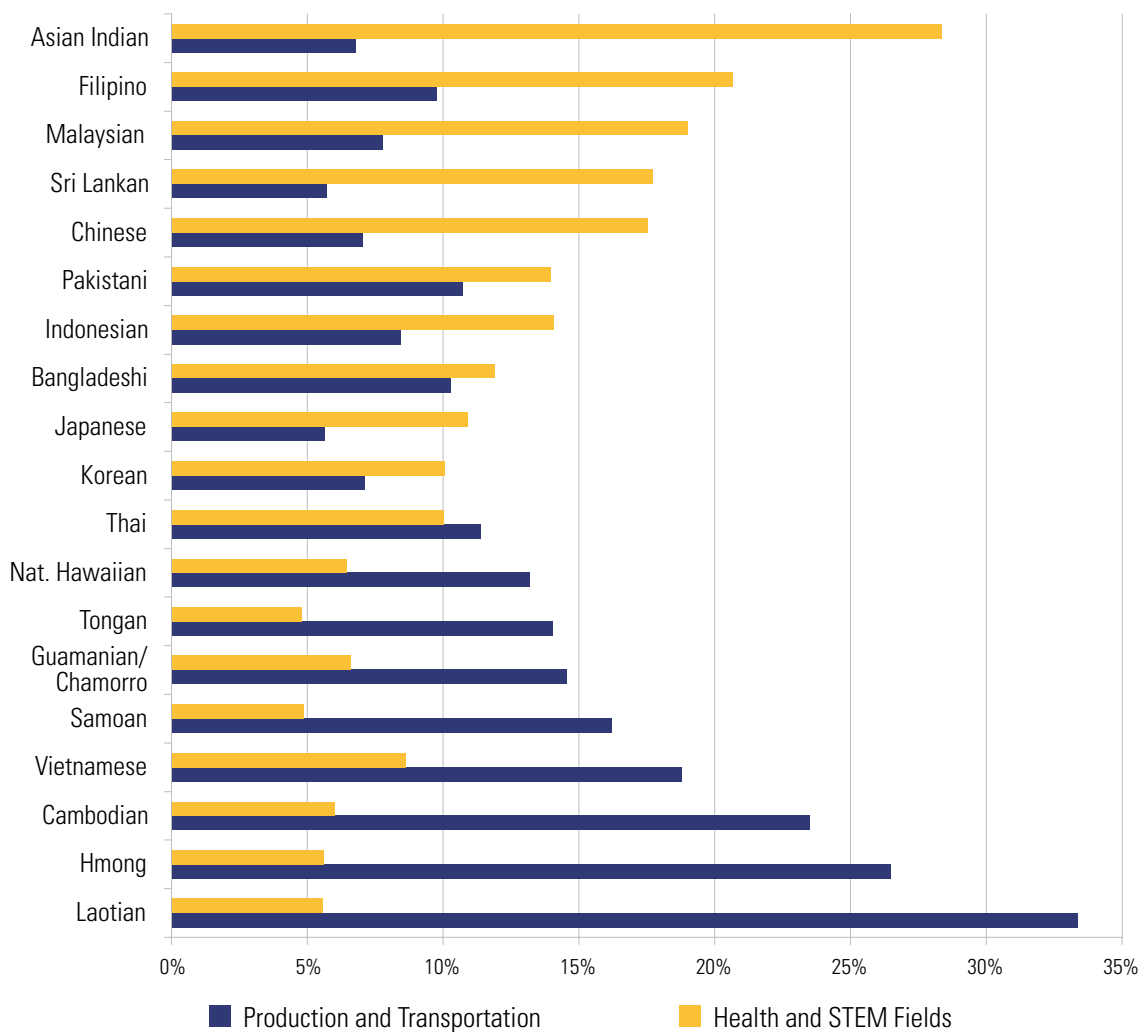
The education sector is just one example of poor representation among AAPIs. There is also a lack of representation of AAPIs in the legal field, the media field, and the government. The lack of representation of AAPIs in these sectors is increasingly problematic as the U.S. economy becomes more closely tied to nations in the Asia/Pacific region. The cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds of AAPIs position them well to contribute to America's relationships with these global partners. Moreover, research in the corporate sector by McKinsey & Company found that diversity among

corporate employees contributes to innovation, rapid growth, market expansion, and increased revenue.

Furthermore, there are significant sub-group differences in workforce participation within the AAPI population. This is demonstrated well by comparing AAPI sub-group employment in health and STEM occupations, two areas where AAPIs as a whole are well represented, compared to production and transportation sectors. Analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau indicates an inverse relationship between sub-groups that are employed in these two sectors with higher proportions of East Asians and South Asians employed in health and STEM fields, while Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders are relegated to lower paying and less secure jobs in production and transportation (**Figure 5**).

Attention to disparities in workforce participation across AAPI sub-groups is vital if policymakers are to make a difference in the employment opportunities for

**Figure 5:** Distribution of AAPIs in Selected Occupational Types by Ethnicity (3-Year Average), 2006–2008



Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

vulnerable AAPI populations. Moreover, because differences in employment across AAPI sub-groups are likely a function of disparities in educational attainment among AAPIs, it is also important to recognize differences in the opportunities and barriers that exist within the AAPI population.

### AAPIs and Positions of Leadership

In 1994, Deborah Woo reported for the Glass Ceiling Commission of the U.S. Department of Labor that AAPIs were facing barriers in access to professional jobs and po-

sitions of leadership, and that there were earnings disadvantages that did not correspond with their educational attainment.<sup>12</sup> A decade-and-a-half later, these sentiments continue to be asserted. The “glass ceiling,” defined as the adverse impact of barriers that limit women and minorities from rising to leadership and decision-making positions, affects AAPIs in the private, public, and non-profit sectors. The lack of AAPIs in leadership positions has also been found in occupational sectors where AAPIs have both high and low representation.

In the education sector, for example, there is very poor representation among AAPIs in positions of leadership. In the K–12 sector, while Whites made up 82.4 percent of principals in 2004, only 10.6 percent were Black, 5.3 percent were Hispanic, and 0.6 percent were AAPI according to data from the NCES *Schools and Staffing Survey*. Unfortunately, while AAPI administrators have the potential to bring about greater awareness and leadership to the wide range of needs of AAPI students, teachers, and the broader community, they are too few in number to effect significant change at national or regional levels.

AAPI representation among higher education leadership positions is also quite revealing; among all U.S. colleges and universities in 2003, there were only 33 AAPI college presidents, which was equal to less than one percent of college presidents (**Table 1**). AAPIs had a slightly higher representation among presidents in the four-year sector (1.2%) than was the case for the two-year sector (0.8%). In the community college sector, where AAPI enrollment is greater than in any other sector of higher education, there were only nine AAPI presidents, with only three who were women. A lack of AAPI high-level administrators often means fewer opportunities for bringing attention to the needs of the AAPI student population, especially among networks of high-level administrators who discuss institutional priorities and how to respond to emerging trends in higher education overall.

A report by the American Council on Education found that academe is the primary point of entry to presidential careers with nearly 70 percent of a 2006 cohort of college presidents who served as faculty members at some point in their academic careers.<sup>13</sup> With the pathway to presidencies firmly rooted in the faculty ranks, it is important to examine the trajectory of AAPI faculty. In examining the distribution of faculty by race in the aggregate (without taking into account rank and tenure status) in 2005, it would appear that AAPIs had good representation relative to other faculty of color at 7.2 percent of the total. However, the number of AAPI faculty is more likely than for others to include international scholars, which gives a wrong impression of opportunities for and the representation of AAPIs relative to mobility by way of the U.S. education system. Data on promotion and rank by race is also revealing. Similar to other faculty of color relative to Whites, AAPIs had a lower proportion of faculty with tenure (36.3%), a higher proportion of faculty who were on the tenure track, but not tenured (25.4%),

“I need help obtaining more information about graduate schools, career options, research opportunities, and internships with major organizations in fields of related study.”

Female Vietnamese  
Third-Year Student

**Table 1:** College Presidents by Race and Institutional Type, 2003

	2-Year Institutions	4-Year Institutions	All Institutions
White	1,011 (87.5%)	1,770 (87.8%)	2,781 (87.7%)
Black	76 (6.5%)	137 (6.8%)	213 (6.7%)
Latino	60 (5.1%)	85 (4.2%)	145 (4.5%)
AAPI	9 (0.8%)	24 (1.2%)	33 (0.9%)
Native American	12 (1.0%)	7 (0.3%)	19 (0.6%)

Note: Data is for Title IV, degree-granting institutions in the U.S. and Puerto Rico  
Source: American Council on Education, ART corporate database

and a higher proportion of faculty who were not on the tenure track (20.9%).<sup>14</sup>

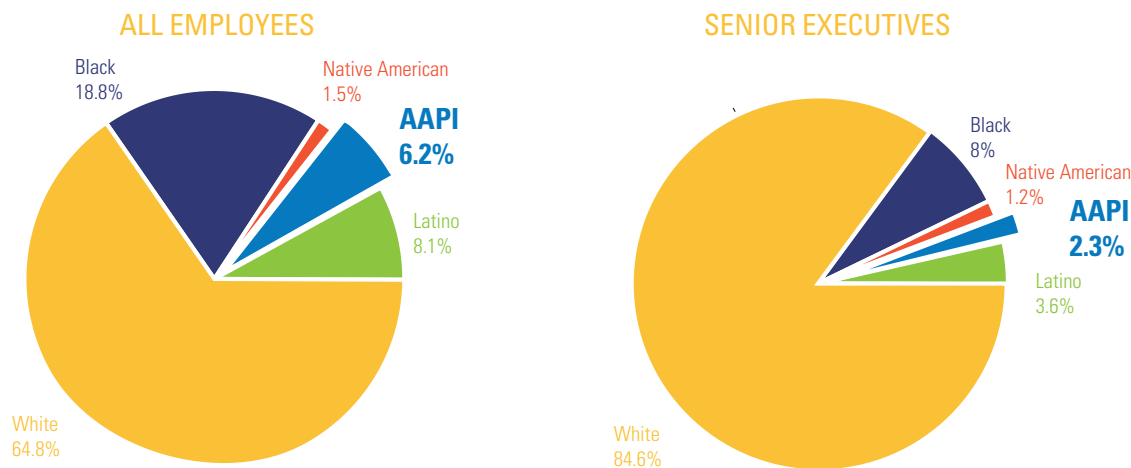
Similar to the leadership trends in the field of education, there is also a lack of representation among AAPIs in leadership positions in the government; while AAPIs made up 6.3 percent of the 2.5 million permanent workers across all federal agencies in 2008, they comprised only 2.3 percent of senior executives (Figure 6). This percentage has gone unchanged from the preceding decade.<sup>15</sup>

These disparities are even greater when examined across individual agencies. In the Department of the Defense, for example, AAPIs are 5.8 percent of the permanent

workforce, AAPIs hold only 1.5 percent of all Board seats of Fortune 500 Companies.<sup>18</sup> In the technology sector, where AAPIs make up a large percentage of the workforce, AAPIs have a low representation among management positions and often deal with “sticky floors,” which hold them at a particular level for a prolonged period of time.<sup>19</sup> Another study found that AAPIs are less likely to be promoted than Whites, Blacks, and Latinos, and receive a lower economic return when they do.<sup>20</sup> These trends indicate that AAPIs are receiving a low yield in positions of leadership.

The absence of AAPIs in leadership positions is not likely a factor of their lack of human capital, given the high educational attainment among AAPIs in the aggregate.

**Figure 6:** Distribution of AAPI Employees and Senior Executives in Federal Agencies, 2008



Source: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

workforce,<sup>ii</sup> but comprise only 1.8 percent of those in senior level positions.<sup>16</sup> In the Department of Army and Air Force Exchange, where AAPIs have a high level of representation relative to other federal departments, they make up 13.5 percent of the permanent civilian workforce, but have *no* representation among senior executives.<sup>17</sup>

In the corporate sector, there are also few AAPIs in leadership positions. Despite the fact that nearly half of AAPIs (48.2%) are employed in management and professional oc-

cupations, AAPIs hold only 1.5 percent of all Board seats of Fortune 500 Companies.<sup>18</sup> In the technology sector, where AAPIs make up a large percentage of the workforce, AAPIs have a low representation among management positions and often deal with “sticky floors,” which hold them at a particular level for a prolonged period of time.<sup>19</sup> Another study found that AAPIs are less likely to be promoted than Whites, Blacks, and Latinos, and receive a lower economic return when they do.<sup>20</sup> These trends indicate that AAPIs are receiving a low yield in positions of leadership.

The absence of AAPIs in leadership positions is not likely a factor of their lack of human capital, given the high educational attainment among AAPIs in the aggregate.

AAPIs is a significant factor in how they are treated in the context of perceived leadership qualities.

While increasing educational attainment alone will not resolve this issue, it is important to recognize the role that expanded opportunities, increased support, and greater mentorship play in developing leadership pathways for AAPI college students. AAPI mentors can serve as visible reminders that AAPIs can strive to achieve the highest levels of professional success. Analysis of a recent national survey of 723 AAPI college students found that AAPIs benefit from contact with faculty, advisors, and resource centers, yet students also indicated a reluctance to pursue support and guidance from these sources. Having more AAPIs in leadership positions on campus might make these resources more accessible. AAPIs in leadership positions can also promote research and policy that support AAPI communities, serve as advocates for the needs of the most vulnerable AAPI populations, and bring a distinct and much-needed knowledge base to America's most important institutions.

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## Recommendations

Responding to the leadership and workforce development needs of AAPIs are the following recommendations:

- ◆ The public, private, and non-profit sectors need to identify, acknowledge, and be responsive to the lack of AAPIs in certain occupational sectors, and the lack of AAPIs in leadership and decision-making positions generally;
- ◆ Colleges and universities need to hire more AAPI faculty, administrators, and student affairs professionals, along with other culturally competent staff members, to support AAPI students and families, and engage their local AAPI communities; and
- ◆ AAPIs should be included in pipeline programs that target the underrepresentation of minority students in key occupational sectors, including the federal government and state and local agencies.

“My mentor showed me that students of my background can and do succeed in our disciplines regardless of our underrepresentation. Because I could see a part of myself in her, I trusted that she would not look down upon me for my struggles.”

Female Filipina  
Fourth-Year Student

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<sup>ii</sup> Includes civilian and non-civilian employment.



## Asian American and Pacific Islander Students in the Community College Sector

New federal investment in higher education has brought attention to the American community college. Relatively accessible and affordable compared to four-year institutions, 1,200 community colleges enroll nearly 12 million students, and account for almost half of all degree-seeking college students in the nation.<sup>23</sup> Community colleges are expected to play a significant role in increasing degree attainment rates, degree production, and job placement opportunities in U.S. higher education. Though they have been described as engines of opportunity, community colleges have also been characterized as institutions with woefully low persistence and completion rates. Only about one-third of students who enter community college with the intention of earning a degree accomplish this goal in a six-year period (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).<sup>iii</sup> Significantly underfunded relative to their public four-year college counterparts, community colleges typically lack the resources they need to support their student population, which is heavily comprised of: those who lack the academic skills needed to succeed in college, those without the resources to finance a college education, working adults, parents, English Language Learners (ELL), and first generation college-goers.

The purpose of this section is to bring attention to issues of access, achievement, and outcomes of AAPI community college students, and the characteristics of the institutions that serve them. Specifically, this section provides data on the following: 1) the differences between AAPI students at two-year and four-year institutions; 2) a comparison between AAPIs and other students at community colleges; and, 3) institutional profiles of the community colleges that serve large concentrations of AAPIs.

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### Differences Between AAPI Students at Two-Year and Four-Year Colleges

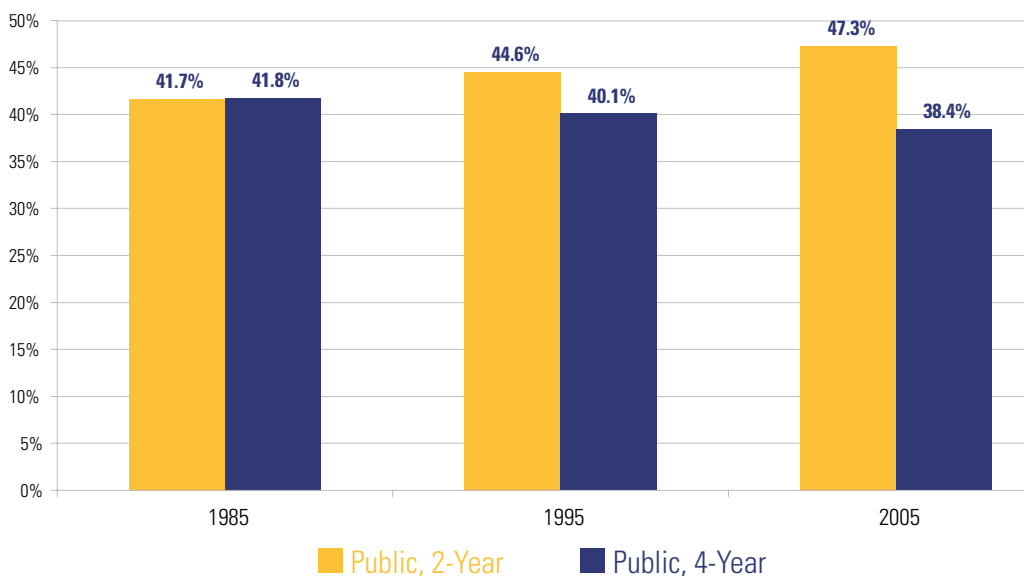
Lower tuition, open admissions, and proximity to home are all important factors in the decision to attend a community college for a sizeable proportion of

AAPIs enrolled in higher education. In fact, the largest sector of AAPI college enrollment, at 47.3 percent, was in the community college sector in 2005.<sup>24</sup> While AAPIs made up less than five percent of the national population in 2007, they represented nearly seven percent of all community college students. These trends will likely continue with AAPI enrollment at community colleges outpacing growth in all other sectors of higher education; this disparity was most notable about a decade ago, when the AAPI population at community colleges increased by nearly 73.3 percent between 1990 and 2000, compared to an increase of 42.2 percent in the public four-year institutions.<sup>25</sup> The rise in AAPI two-year student participation is notable relative to their four-year college student counterparts (see **Figure 7**).

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<sup>iii</sup> Descriptive summary of 1995–96 BPS: Six years later.

**Figure 7:** Percent of AAPI Total Enrollment in Public Two-Year and Public Four-Year Institutions, 1985 to 2005.



Source: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education, Fall Enrollment Survey

Also notable are how AAPI students in community colleges are characteristically different from their peers at four-year institutions. Among recent cohorts of AAPI community college students, 62.9 percent enrolled as part-time students and 31.7 percent delayed matriculation by two years or more (versus only 7.6% at four-year institutions who delayed matriculation).<sup>26</sup> With an average age of 27.3 years, AAPI community college students also tended to be older than their AAPI counterparts at four-year institutions. In fact, 40.5 percent of AAPI community college students were older than the age of 25 years.<sup>27</sup> These differences suggest that AAPIs at community colleges, compared to AAPI students at four-year institutions, were more likely to fit the characteristics of “non-traditional” students.

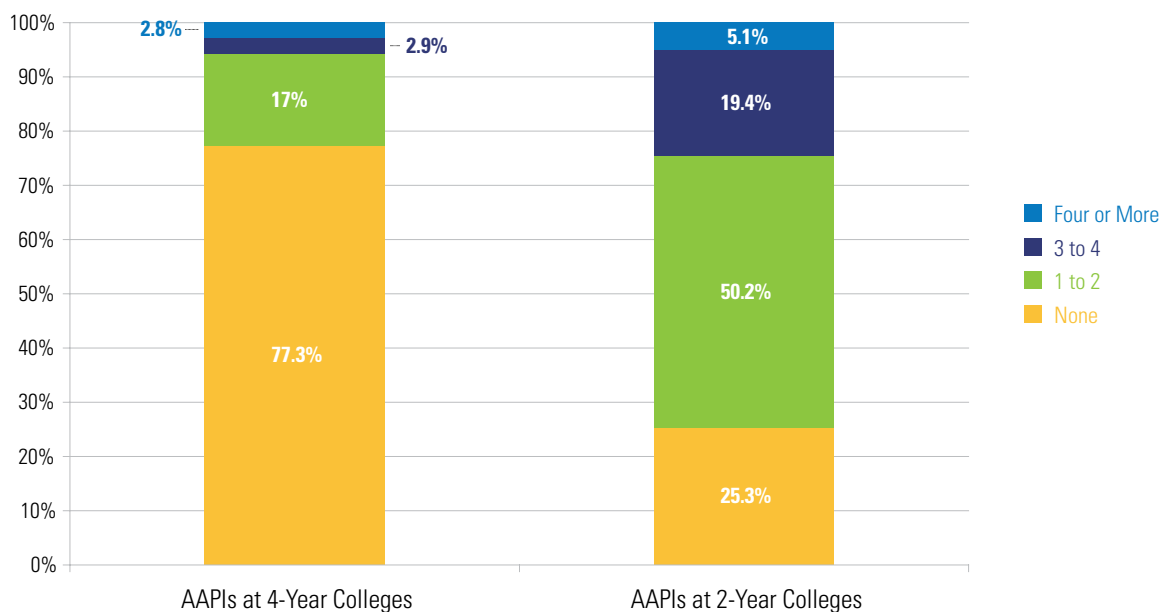
Compared to AAPIs at four-year institutions, AAPI community college students were also more likely to enter college with lower levels of academic preparation in English and Mathematics. In 2003, 55.2 percent of AAPI students entering two-year colleges had never taken a math course beyond Algebra II in high school, compared to only 12.7 percent of AAPI students en-

tering four-year institutions in that same year.<sup>28</sup> AAPI students who enter college without a demonstrated command of the English language are particularly vulnerable to policies and practices that relegate remedial English courses to two-year institutions. As state systems increasingly designate two-year institutions as the only site for English and other remediation coursework, the relative impact on AAPI English Language Learners needs further attention.<sup>29</sup> One recent study found that one in five AAPI students needed remediation in English.<sup>30</sup>

All told, AAPI students in community colleges carry many of the “risk factors” that are correlated with lower rates of persistence and completion among two-year college students. Figure 8 compares the number and type of risk factors that both two- and four-year AAPI college students face. These factors include: delayed enrollment, lack of a high school diploma (including GED recipients), part-time enrollment, having dependents other than spouse, single parent status, and working full-time while enrolled (35 hours or more).



**Figure 8:** Number of Risk Factors for Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Students by Institutional Type, 2003-04



Source: NCES, BPS Longitudinal Study, First Follow-Up (BPS:04/06)

Beyond these measures, there are other “risk factors” that are more prevalent among AAPI community college students compared to their four-year college student counterparts. AAPI community college students are more likely to be the first in their family to attend college, and less likely to have parents with college degrees.<sup>31</sup> Generally, there is a high proportion of AAPI college students who come from low-income backgrounds with one-third of first-time, full-time AAPI college students with families earning less than \$40,000 per year.<sup>32</sup>

These trends often have implications for financial planning and familiarity with tuition assistance programs. Despite the relatively low cost of two-year colleges, AAPI students are less likely than students from any other racial or ethnic group to apply for federal financial aid, and fewer AAPI students borrow from either public or private sources to finance their postsecondary education. These trends exist despite the fact that AAPI students who attend two-year institutions have

significant financial need; a large proportion of students (45.5%) have more than \$2,000 in financial need, after taking into account their estimated family contribution and all sources of financial aid. Also, 10.6 percent reported more than \$8,900 in financial need—a larger proportion than any other racial or ethnic group at two-year colleges.<sup>33</sup> These trends present many challenges for AAPI community college students when coupled with their other risk factors.

The differences between AAPI community college students and those in four-year institutions are important to consider in the context of the educational trajectory and outcomes of AAPI students. A major challenge for community colleges, relative to their four-year college counterparts, is their ability to transfer students so they can pursue a bachelor’s degree. A recent study found that community college students were 36 percent less likely to obtain a bachelor’s degree than students who begin at a four-year institution.<sup>34</sup> In fact, only 26 percent

of degree-seeking community college students obtained a bachelor's degree within nine years.

While there is no research on how AAPI ethnic sub-groups distribute among two-year colleges versus four-year colleges—nationally or for any particular system or state—research has found that AAPIs with higher socioeconomic status (SES) were three times more likely to begin college at a selective institution than low-SES AAPIs, with Southeast Asians and Pacific Islanders less likely than Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans to begin college at a selective institution even after controlling for SES.<sup>35</sup> The importance of such disaggregation can be seen in the wide variability of bachelor degree attainment rates among ethnic sub-groups within the AAPI population, from a high of 69.1 percent for Asian Indians, to a low of 9.4 percent for Samoans. These disparities may be influenced by differences across AAPI ethnic sub-groups in their likelihood of entering college in two-year versus four-year institutions. The difference in the probability that two-year and four-year institutions are pathways to a

college degree is notable when examining the disparities across AAPI ethnic sub-groups in their rate of enrolling in college, but not earning a degree, which is particularly true for Laotians (49.2%), Cambodians (48.2%), Hmong (45.5%), Vietnamese (36.7%). These AAPI sub-groups are more likely than other AAPIs to enroll in a community college after high school.<sup>36</sup>

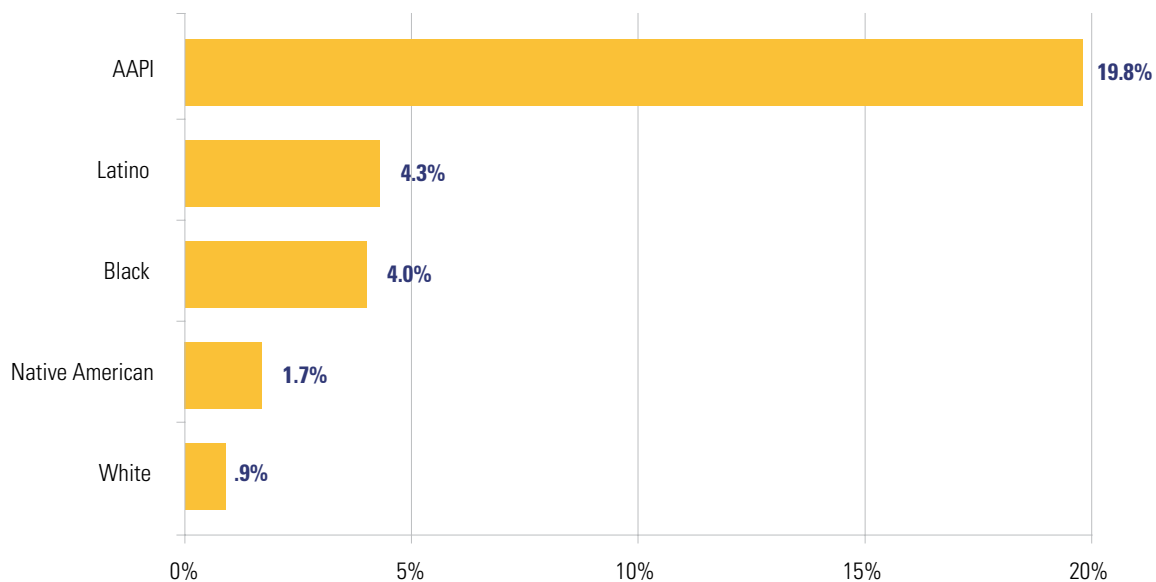
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### Comparison of AAPI Community College Students and Other Community College Students

While AAPI students at community colleges are distinct in many ways from their peers at four-year institutions, it is also important to examine the extent to which they are similar to and different from other students who attend community colleges. Based on a number of indicators, it is clear that AAPI community college students are, in some ways, quite similar to their non-AAPI peers at community colleges. Like other two-year college students, AAPI students also face challenges related to their ability to attend school full-time, obtain financial aid to pay for college and college-related expenses, and

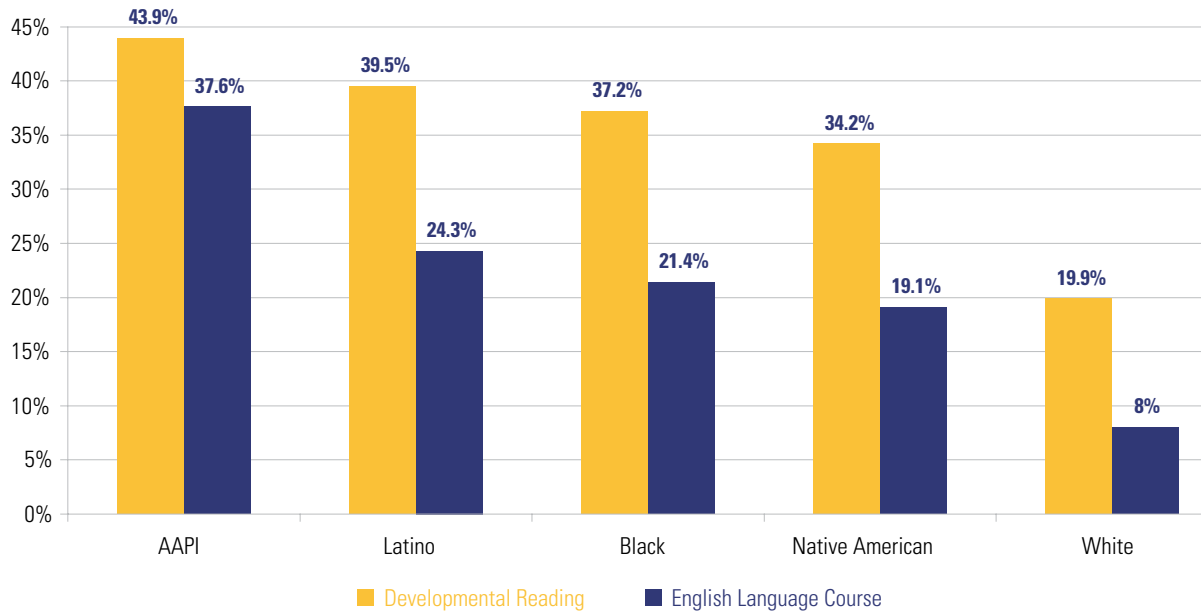
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**Figure 9:** Percent of Community College Students Who Attended High School Outside the U.S. by Race, 2003-04



Source: NCES, BPS Longitudinal Study, First Follow-Up (BPS:04/06)

**Figure 10:** Percent of Community College Students Who Have Taken or Plan to Take Developmental Reading or ELL Courses by Race, 2009



Source: Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)

prior academic preparation.<sup>37</sup> Similar to other community college students, a majority of AAPI community college students are heavily concentrated in three academic areas: the humanities (18.1%), business management (19.6%), and the health professions (17.8%).<sup>38</sup>

It is also important to recognize how AAPI students at community colleges constitute a unique population. Generally, AAPI college students are more likely to work a minimum of 20 hours per week while taking courses.<sup>39</sup> This may be a factor in AAPI students' access to and utilization of financial aid. Another factor may be that a large portion of AAPI college students are recent immigrants, which may decrease their access to information, knowledge, and resources associated with financing postsecondary education. Unlike students of other racial and ethnic groups, AAPI community college students are more likely to have recently immigrated to the U.S., and more likely to have a history of foreign schooling. In 2003–04, nearly 20

percent of AAPI two-year college students attended high school outside of the United States (**Figure 9**).

AAPI students also experience barriers related to language background at a rate higher than other students. Whether U.S.-born or foreign-born, AAPIs between the ages of 5 and 18 years were least likely among all racial groups to report English as their primary language used in their home according to the U.S. Census Bureau. These trends are consistent among community college students. In 2008, 36.8 percent of foreign-born AAPIs and 44.7 percent of U.S.-born AAPIs reported English as their primary language compared to 56.3 percent of Latinos, 91.3 percent of Blacks, 91.1 percent of Native Americans, and 96.1 percent of Whites in community colleges.<sup>40</sup> As a result, a greater proportion of AAPI community college students have enrolled or planned to enroll in English Language Learner courses and remedial or developmental reading courses than do their peers (**Figure 10**).

Beyond these demographic distinctions, studies have found that AAPI students face a variety of unique challenges on college campuses in terms of engagement, including: a reluctance to utilize support services like academic tutoring centers, career services, and counseling; difficulty finding supportive classroom learning environments; a lack of culturally relevant and/or appropriate curricular and extra-curricular activities; a perception of pervasive discrimination on campus; and the challenge of resisting insidious stereotypes of AAPI students.<sup>41</sup> These trends are true among AAPI students in both two-year and four-year institutions.

Important differences also exist between AAPI sub-groups regarding how they adjust to campus environments. Analysis of a national survey data of 723 AAPI college students found that AAPIs who were the first in their family to attend college were three times more likely to indicate that they had considered leaving college for non-academic reasons than did AAPI students with parents who had attended college (33.8% vs. 11.5%). With regard to differences for AAPI ethnic sub-groups, Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian students were twice as likely to report considering transferring for non-academic reasons than were East Asians, Filipinos, and South Asians. It is critical for policymakers and practitioners to recognize and be responsive to the differences in outcomes between sub-populations within the AAPI student population.

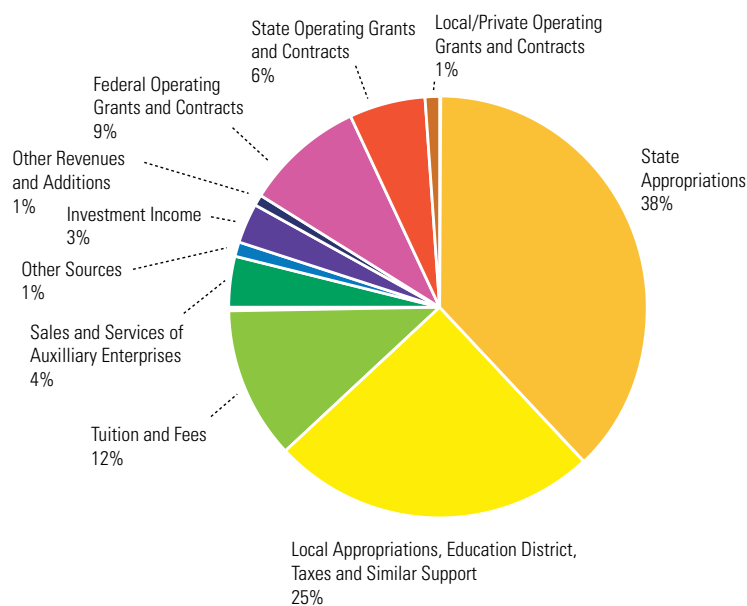
### The Community Colleges that Serve AAPI Students

AAPI community college students are concentrated in a small number of institutions; 80 percent attend institutions in just eight states, with the majority concentrated in community colleges in California, Hawai'i, and New York. Data from the 50 community colleges that educate the largest proportion of AAPI community college students are revealing. For example, these institutions derive 63 percent of their operating revenue from state and local sources, compared to 50 percent among the majority of two-year colleges, making

the institutions that serve the majority of AAPI students particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in state and local budgets (see **Figure 11**).

The 50 institutions that serve the largest numbers of AAPI community college students were also likely to be located in states that made significant cuts to their higher education budgets following the recession that began in 2007; thus, the national AAPI community college student population has been rendered particularly susceptible to the economic down-turn. California, which enrolls 55.3 percent of the nation's AAPI community college students, is a case in point. With a heavy reliance on state revenue, the decrease in state appropriations has resulted in significant cuts to both academic programs and student services. California officials recently reported an enrollment loss of approximately 21,000 students in the state's community colleges due to budget cuts.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 11:** Revenue Sources for Community Colleges that Enroll the Most AAPI Community College Students



Source: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education, Finance Survey

Another notable trend at the state level is the shifting enrollment pattern of AAPI students from degree-seeking status to non-degree-seeking status. This is particularly true in Washington, Hawai'i, Illinois, and Louisiana—all

proportional representation than any other racial group (Figure 12). Second, AAPI community college students are not attending those community colleges where AAPI faculty members are employed. Returning back to Cali-

**Table 2:** Percent Change in Degree Seeking and Non-Degree Seeking AAPI Students for Selected States, 1997 to 2007

State	Change in AAPI Undergraduate Degree Seeking Students	Change in AAPI Undergraduate Non-Degree Seeking Students
Washington	-36.9%	407.0%
Hawai'i	-16.6%	282.3%
Louisiana	-13.4%	188.3%
Illinois	-6.6%	31.5%

Source: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education, Fall Enrollment Survey

states that have large and growing AAPI student populations in their community colleges (Table 2). This may signal shifting demographic trends among the population, including growing AAPI immigrant populations, or increases among more vulnerable AAPI sub-populations.

Regardless of the causes of these trends, these shifting enrollment patterns are representative of the needs of the AAPI community college population, and demonstrate how important it is for states to be responsive to these challenges. Research reports that AAPI students at community colleges are challenged by their perceptions of the unwelcoming attitudes of instructors, discriminatory behavior by students and employees, stereotypes, and a faculty that does not reflect the diversity of students on campus.<sup>43</sup> One reason that AAPI students may be reluctant to utilize support services is the composition of college faculty and staff. Interestingly, data from the U.S. Department of Education show two important trends that may be factors in these attitudes and perceptions. First, AAPIs have very low representation among faculty at community colleges. Only 14.8 percent of all AAPI faculty can be found in community colleges—a lower

proportional representation than any other racial group (Figure 12). Second, AAPI community college students are not attending those community colleges where AAPI faculty members are employed. Returning back to Cali-

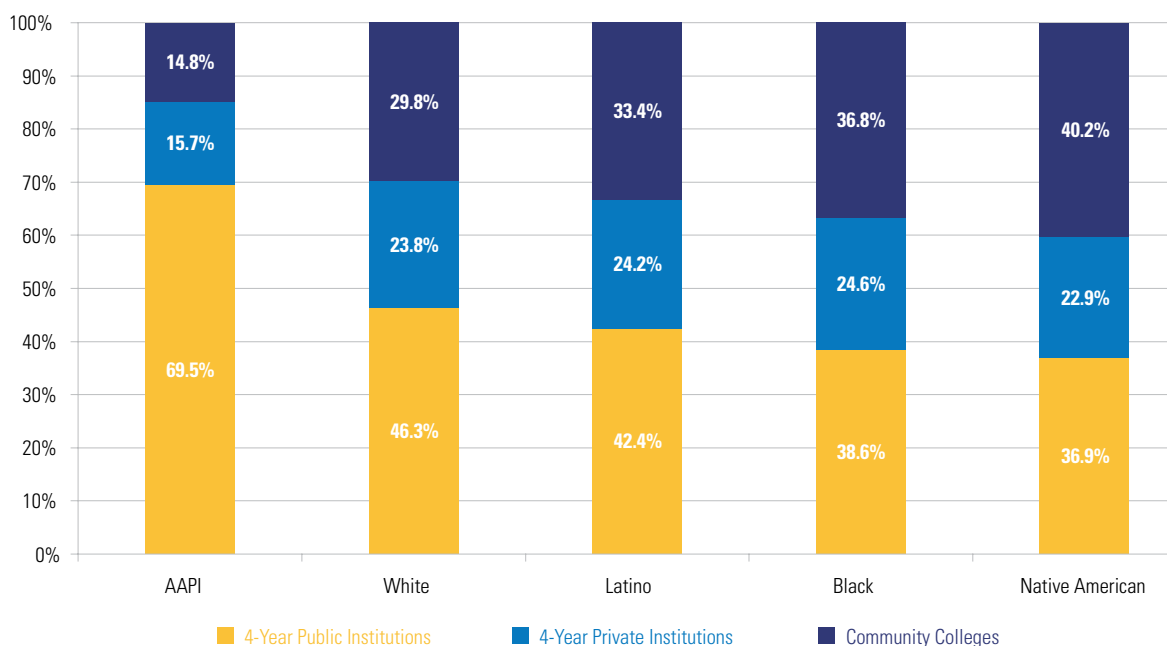
fornia, which represents more than half of the national AAPI community college enrollment, only 8 percent of the state's community college faculty is AAPI.<sup>44</sup> These research findings speak to a range of potential challenges that affect the ability for AAPI students to enroll and persist in community colleges, including differences in their levels of academic preparedness, ability to pay for college, and engagement with faculty, administrators, and other campus support services.

## Recommendations

Responding to the needs of AAPI students in community colleges are the following recommendations:

- ◆ Increase investment in research on AAPI students to better understand and respond to why gaps occur within the AAPI community college population, and between the AAPI population and other community college students in order to ensure that policy and practice respond directly;

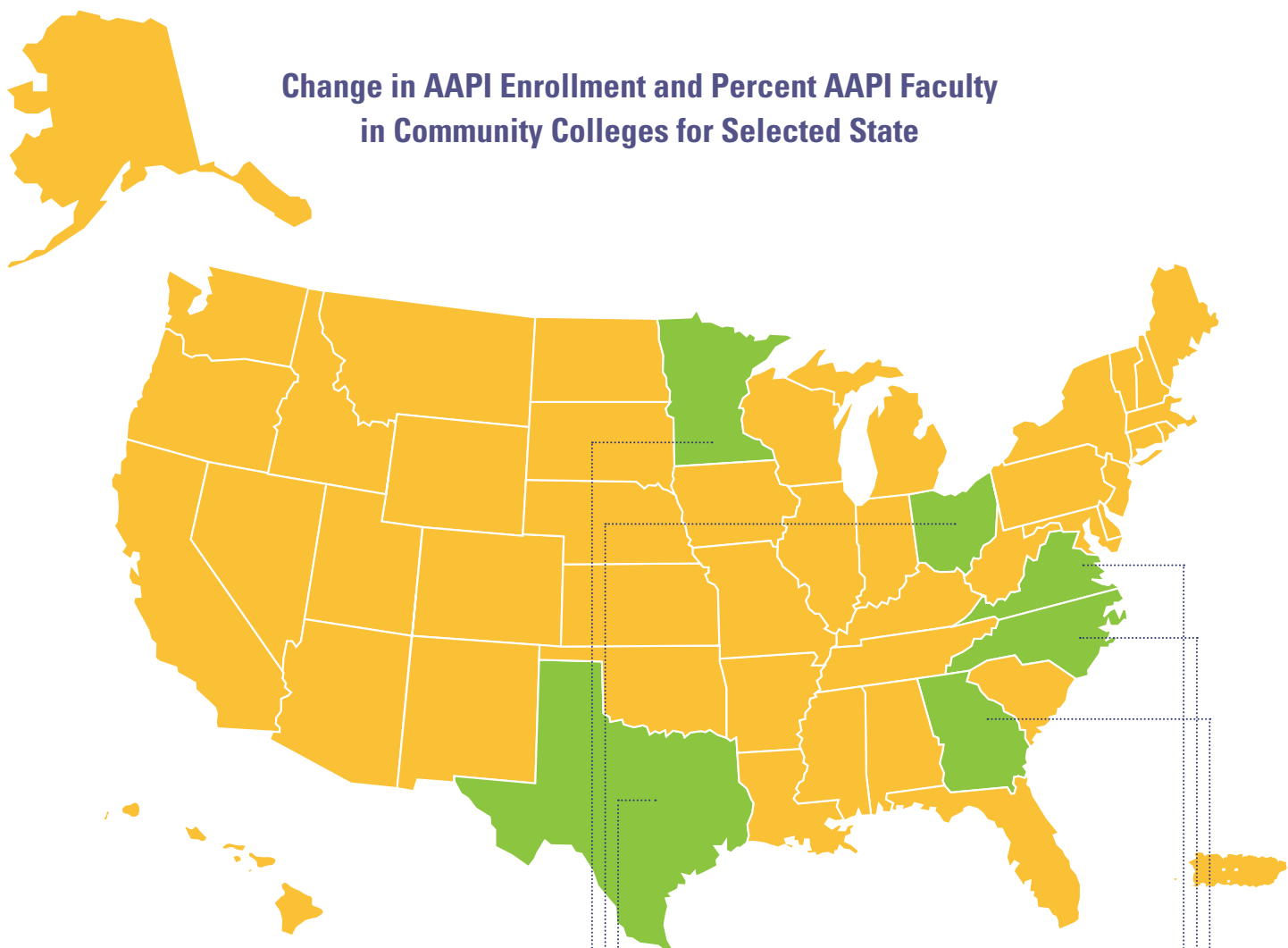
**Figure 12:** Distribution of Faculty in U.S. Higher Education by Race and Institutional Type, 2007



Source: IPEDS, U.S. Department of Education, Human Resources Survey

- ◆ Increase support for institutions and organizations that provide culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach to community college students and their families, with special focus on financial aid and FAFSA, community resources available at the college, ELL opportunities, and transfer opportunities; and
- ◆ Encourage formalized mentorship programs between first-time AAPI students, existing AAPI students, and faculty at community colleges.

## Change in AAPI Enrollment and Percent AAPI Faculty in Community Colleges for Selected State



### Minnesota

Change in AAPI Enrollment, 1998–2007 . . . .147.7%  
 Percent AAPI Faculty in 2007 . . . . .1.4%

### Ohio

Change in AAPI Enrollment, 1998–2007 . . . .33.6%  
 Percent AAPI Faculty in 2007 . . . . .2.6%

### Texas

Change in AAPI Enrollment, 1998–2007 . . . .33.1%  
 Percent AAPI Faculty in 2007 . . . . .2.9%

### Virginia

Change in AAPI Enrollment, 1998–2007 . . . .45.1%  
 Percent AAPI Faculty in 2007 . . . . .2.3%

### North Carolina

Change in AAPI Enrollment, 1998–2007 . . . .65.3%  
 Percent AAPI Faculty in 2007 . . . . .1.2%

### Georgia

Change in AAPI Enrollment, 1998–2007 . . . .87.6%  
 Percent AAPI Faculty in 2007 . . . . .1.9%

Among students attending college in the State of Washington, AAPIs were overrepresented among those with the highest level of math preparation, but were also twice as likely to be among those with the lowest level.

In the State of New York 53.4% of AAPI community college students have fathers with a high school diploma or less as their highest educational attainment.





## **Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs): Exploring Areas Of Growth, Innovation, And Collaboration**

The Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) federal program, initially authorized by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, is a policy strategy charged with expanding the capacity of institutions serving AAPI student populations. The AANAPISI program is structured as a competitive grant process for institutions with at least a 10 percent enrollment of AAPI full-time equivalent (FTE), a minimum threshold of low-income students, and lower than average educational and general expenditures per student. The competition in 2008 awarded two-year grants to six institutions: City College of San Francisco, De Anza Community College, Guam Community College, South Seattle Community College, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, and the University of Maryland, College Park. In 2009, another competition yielded two additional campuses: Santa Monica College, and Queens College. These institutions are geographically dispersed across five U.S. states (California, Hawai'i, Washington, Maryland, and New York) and the unincorporated territory of Guam, and, with the exception of three institutions, are public two-year colleges.

This section of the report aims to raise the national visibility of the AANAPISI program and link the needs of these institutions to the hundreds of similar Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs)<sup>iv</sup> across the country. Specifically, this section identifies: 1) how and why the MSI policy strategy is an effective mechanism for helping to increase AAPI participation and degree attainment rates; 2) the resources, opportunities, and benefits that AANAPISIs provide students, their institutions, and their local communities; and 3) the lessons that can be learned from AANAPISIs that can contribute to the collective strength of MSIs and higher education as a whole. This section concludes with a discussion of how to increase awareness and support for the AANAPISI program.

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### How and Why the MSI Policy Strategy Works for AAPI Students

As a group, the 2008 and 2009 cohorts of AANAPISI institutions are quite remarkable: nearly one in 10 AAPI undergraduate students<sup>v</sup> nationally attended one of these eight campuses, and together these institutions enrolled nearly 60,000 AAPI undergraduates and awarded nearly 5,000 associate's and bachelor's degrees to AAPI students in 2006–2007.<sup>45</sup> As a whole, the program is serving some of the largest AAPI ethnic enclaves, and in turn, some of the highest concentrations of AAPI college students. Given these realities, the AANAPISI program not only demonstrates a significant commitment to the AAPI community, it also provides much-needed resources to respond to specific

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<sup>iv</sup> Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Tribally-controlled colleges and universities (TCUs); and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

<sup>v</sup> Among Title IV undergraduate degree-granting, public institutions.

needs that impact college access and success for AAPI students. The effectiveness of the AANAPISI program is evident when examined relative to three demographic trends among AAPI college students:

- ◆ AAPI undergraduates are highly concentrated in a small number of postsecondary institutions — as of 2006, two-thirds of AAPI students were concentrated in 200 institutions.<sup>46</sup> The Congressional Research Service (2009) identified 116 institutions that met the criteria for AANAPISI eligibility. These institutions enroll 75 percent of the low-income AAPI undergraduate students in U.S. higher education.<sup>47</sup>
- ◆ A large proportion of AAPI students are from low-income backgrounds, the first in their families to attend college, and struggle to secure the financial resources to support themselves while in school.<sup>48</sup> Based on analysis of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (2008), AAPIs also have greater financial need than other racial groups taking into account expected family contribution and total aid.<sup>49</sup>
- ◆ A large sector of the AAPI student population consists of immigrants, non-native speakers of English, and students who often enroll in ELL programs (often geared toward Spanish speakers).<sup>50</sup> AAPI college students also have the highest rate of non-U.S. citizenship (28%) and the highest rate of speaking a language other than English as their primary language (55.9%).<sup>51</sup>

AANAPISIs represent important organizational settings for improving retention, transfer, and graduation rates for low-income, high-need, AAPI students. Analysis of U.S. Census data indicates that between 2006 and 2008, the average poverty rate for Pacific Islanders in the neighborhoods served by the University of Hawai'i at Hilo was 20.1 percent—nearly twice the national poverty rate of 12.4 percent. The communities where University of Hawai'i at Hilo students reside also had low educational attainment rates among adults — 43.6 percent of Asian Americans

and 54.7 percent of Pacific Islanders had a high school diploma or less. Similar trends in educational attainment can be found among the neighborhoods served by South Seattle Community College. Among the adult population, 57.8 percent of Asian Americans and 70.8 percent of Pacific Islanders had a high school diploma or less. The Asian Americans served by South Seattle Community College also had a high rate of adults who “do not speak English well” or “do not speak English at all” at 27.0 percent. Within De Anza Community College’s catchment area, 73.7 percent of the Asian American adult population was foreign born.

These demographic trends translate into many challenges for AAPI students and their families. At Guam Community College, for example, more than 80 percent of the students were from low-income households and eligible for financial aid in 2007. While the lack of financial resources makes it difficult for AAPI students to finance their college education, a high rate of first-generation students and a lack of educational attainment among parents present another challenge for students’ access to information and knowledge about how to navigate college. Additionally, large proportions of AAPI students are arriving on campuses underprepared for college-level work. At De Anza Community College, AAPI students account for more than half of students enrolled in remedial English and other basic skills classes.

The current cohort of AANAPISI campuses is positioned to serve high concentrations of students from communities with unique needs. In 2006–2007, the proportion of the student population comprised by AAPIs was 40.3 percent at De Anza Community College and 41.0 percent at City College of San Francisco. That same year, the proportion of the student population comprised by AAPIs was 44.0 percent at University of Hawai'i at Hilo, three-quarters of whom were Pacific Islanders.<sup>52</sup> These data indicate the extent to which the AANAPISI program can reach and be responsive to large concentrations of AAPI students with unique needs and challenges.

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## Innovation – AANAPISI Grantees Promoting AAPI Student Success

The 2008 cohort of AANAPISI awardees carried out a range of initiatives aimed at increasing access to and success in college for AAPI students.<sup>vi</sup> While each one of the AANAPISIs is using the award in unique ways, several commonalities exist among the programs. The following description explains how the six AANAPISIs are using their funding to respond to their specific campus needs. Specifically, these services were concentrated around the following areas: 1) student services, 2) curricular and academic program development, 3) leadership and mentorship opportunities, 4) resource and research development, and 5) staff development. Research suggests that each of these academic and non-academic areas increase student engagement and is correlated with direct student benefits, including positive overall student satisfaction, increases in academic performance, higher rates of student retention and persistence, positive college outcomes, and staff development.

A more detailed description of these programs is as follows:

- ◆ **Student Services.** AANAPISI funding is being used for the development of student learning communities, first-year experience programs, academic and personal counselors and advisors, and tutoring programs. At South Seattle Community College, academic cohorts were created to form clustered learning communities that provide opportunities for students to learn together, share knowledge, and support each other both inside and outside the classroom. For students at De Anza College, the student services program “Summer Bridge” has been enhanced to more specifically target AAPI students. In addition, De Anza has used the AANAPISI funding to expand their First Year Experience program to include students from targeted AAPI groups.

- ◆ **Curricular and Academic Program Development.** AANAPISI funding is being used to improve the academic quality of the education offered, increase the quantity and variety of courses being offered to students, and increase student participation in certain academic programs. Curricular and academic program development efforts are focused on AAPI studies programs, as well as programs in which AAPIs as a whole, or subgroups within the AAPI population, are currently underrepresented. At the University of Maryland, College Park, for example, curricular and academic efforts are focused specifically on the Asian American Studies Program (AAS). For the City College of San Francisco, extended faculty office hours are provided for the students and programs in which AAPIs are underrepresented; additionally, faculty-student discussions, training, and resources to support AAPI students in STEM fields who plan to transfer from two-year to four-year institutions have been developed.

- ◆ **Leadership and Mentorship Opportunities.** AANAPISI funding is being used to provide students with increased levels of access to leadership development and mentorship opportunities. This particular programmatic focus is aimed at increasing the academic and career success of the students involved, both during college as well as post-graduation. At the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, for example, a speaker series has been established to improve student participation in the University’s Pa-

“Everything I have learned this quarter has forever changed my outlook on life. I see the importance of education and always pushing to overcome obstacles.”

Student  
De Anza College

*At De Anza College, AAPI students make up 41% of the study body, 47% of the financial aid recipients, and half of the pre-collegiate English course enrollment.*

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<sup>vi</sup> At the time of this report, data for the 2009 cohort were unavailable.

cific Island Studies certificate program by providing students with opportunities to hear from leaders and potential mentors. At the City College of San Francisco, both students as well as faculty participate in the mentorship process in the college's tutoring program, particularly for students studying in STEM fields. In this program, advanced upper level students are trained by faculty and staff from their academic programs to provide weekly tutorial sessions to their peers.

- ◆ **Research and Resource Development.** AANAPISI funding is also being used to develop new research about the AAPI population, as well as resources aimed to support the AAPI population during their college years. At the University of Maryland, College Park, the first national directory of Asian American and Pacific Islander scholarships, fellowships, and internships has been created. This resource aims to advance educational opportunities for AAPI students. The Learning Resource Center was developed at Guam Community College with a goal of increasing enrollment, retention, and graduation rates by improving academic quality and learning outcomes through an expansion of the quantity of learning resource materials and the learning facility itself. A similar resource center, a virtual Asian American and Pacific Islander Higher Education Resource Center (AAPIHERC), was developed at South Seattle Community College with the AANAPISI funding targeting AAPI retention and success. Further, South Seattle Community College compiles disaggregated AAPI institutional data, which informs current and future policy and program efforts for the AAPI population and its ethnic sub-groups.

- ◆ **Staff Development.** AANAPISI funding is being used to provide staff development opportunities. The focus of these opportunities is helping current administrators, faculty, and staff better understand the

complexities of the AAPI population, and the educational experiences and needs of this population. In turn, these administrators, faculty, and staff can incorporate what they have learned into their work with the AAPI population on campus. At De Anza College, for example, 10 staff development sessions are provided per academic year. For students at the City College of San Francisco, staff development is more specifically focused on the AAPI population within the college's STEM fields. Five "STEM Ambassadors" have been hired in order to better inform high school students about college opportunities.

The activities undertaken by AANAPISI institutions illustrate the efficiency of this policy strategy for AAPI students. By allocating funding directly to the institution, AAPI student success is bolstered in two ways: 1) AAPI students participate in AAPI-targeted student programming, and 2) institutional capacity is expanded to improve the quality of AAPI students' experiences. Specifically, these programs are improving preparedness for and the transition into college-level courses, increasing the enrollment of AAPI students in certain fields (e.g., STEM degree programs), and improving student services through culturally-relevant programs for AAPI students. These innovative practices are increasing the capacity of these institutions to provide quality instruction and increased engagement among their students, both of which are positively correlated with degree attainment and other desirable outcomes for higher education.<sup>vii</sup>

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#### Areas of Collaboration – AANAPISIs & Other Minority-Serving Institutions

While AANAPISIs are like other Minority-Serving Institutions in their eligibility for federal funding to expand their capacity to serve diverse students, they are often not acknowledged as MSIs. This reality remains

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<sup>vii</sup> Since the program is relatively new, at the time of this writing, the first cohort of grantees had only completed their first year of their two-year grant. Future analyses should examine the outcomes of these projects to assess both successes and challenges in implementation and sustainability of these programs.

despite the fact that AANAPISIs share many similarities with other MSIs. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have a particularly close resemblance to AANAPISIs. Unlike HBCUs and TCUs, HSIs did not emerge from a historical mission to serve Latinos, but rather are the result of demographic trends resulting in the high concentration of Latino undergraduates in a small group of institutions.<sup>53</sup> The same trend can be observed for AAPI students where their enrollment patterns that are similarly transforming the demographics of many postsecondary institutions. Moreover, the structure of the Developing HSIs program preceded and influenced the drafting of the AANAPISI program. Both programs include a minimum enrollment threshold of Latino and AAPI students (25% and 10%, respectively), and a requirement that institutions must have lower than average educational expenditures and a minimum percentage of low-income students. Like the HSIs program, grantees in the AANAPISI program have considerable flexibility to define the needs of their institutions and propose development plans to best meet these needs.

However, because AANAPISIs are not recognized as MSIs, they are not included in a number of initiatives that are targeted at MSIs. This includes eligibility for competitive federal programs that allocate resources for MSIs, such as the \$103 million National Science Foundation (NSF) science and technology workforce program, the \$642 million program to support MSIs through the Aid for Institutional Development programs, or the Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science (COMPETES) Act that designates funding for students pursuing STEM fields at MSIs. AANAPISIs are also often not included in meetings convened by foundations and policy centers that gather MSI representatives to discuss best practices and strategies for increasing investments in MSIs and offering competitive grants to MSI initiatives. Two examples include Walmart's Minority Student Success initiative, which awards \$100,000 grants

to help build on programs that support first-generation students, and Lumina Foundation's Minority-Serving Institution Models of Success program, which awarded grants up to \$300,000. Furthermore, AANAPISIs miss out on opportunities when industry targets MSIs to offer internships for students, recruit employees, and create partnerships in response to community initiatives.

The lack of awareness about and inclusion of AANAPISIs also has implications for the broader coalition of MSI programs. Recent research suggests that collaboration and cooperation among colleges and universities that serve large numbers of students of color can yield many positive outcomes for students, as well as faculty, staff, and administrators at those institutions. The Alliance for Equity in Higher Education, formed in 1999 to promote such collaboration, recognizes the benefits of working together for MSI sub-groups.<sup>54</sup> These benefits include strengthening the voice of MSIs in negotiating with Congress, collaboratively addressing ways to increase the amount of total funding allocated to MSIs, and tackling shared challenges, such as the technology gap, at individual campuses.<sup>55</sup> The Faculty Resource Network, for example, is a consortium of institutions that is inclusive of MSIs and promotes innovative practices and collaboration around research, curriculum development, and faculty development. AANAPISIs are in a position to both benefit from and contribute to the common interests of MSIs, including the need for greater policy advo-

*"The Clustered Learning Community has dramatically increased student preparedness, participation, and learning. In my 19 years as an instructor at South Seattle Community College, I have never seen a class work so well together."*

*English Instructor  
South Seattle Community  
College*

*At South Seattle Community College, the AANAPISI funding has also been used to recruit an additional 141 students for the institution's STEM programs; 94% of students were low-income, first-generation students of color.*

cacy, promoting targeted services for minority students, and faculty development for institutions that serve disproportionately high proportions of low-income students of color.

Such collaborations will only expand resources that are available for the MSI program and lead to knowledge that can inform all of higher education as the nation's college students become increasingly diverse. And, despite the perception of greater competition between MSIs with the inclusion of AANAPISIs, evidence suggests that increases in funding to one type of MSI (HBCUs,

HSIs, TCUs, and AANAPISIs) have not resulted in decreases in funding to other MSIs. The Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998, for example, made more funding available to MSIs to support HSIs and TCUs, without decreasing funding for HBCUs.<sup>56</sup> Thus, separating AANAPISIs from the larger collection of MSIs represents lost potential with regard to a powerful partner.

“The AANAPISI program builds on our strengths in providing opportunities for active learning through research, internships, and community service for students.”

Mary A.Y. Okada,  
President  
Guam Community College

At Guam Community College, 58% of the students are Pacific Islanders and another 34% are of Asian descent. Over 80% of the students are eligible for financial aid.

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## Recommendations

Responding to the AANAPISI policy priorities are the following recommendations:

- ◆ Make it clear that the definition of “Minority-Serving Institutions” includes AANAPISIs so these institutions can gain access to opportunities and resources for designated MSIs and participate in dialogue among MSI leaders;
- ◆ Increase investment in the AANAPISI program, including funding to increase the number of AANAPISIs and a greater investment in each individual campus, and provide resources for the program to outreach to and raise awareness among other federal agencies; and
- ◆ Create a coalition of AANAPISIs or an umbrella organization that can help advocate for AANAPISI institutions, support research, and sustain contact among the institutions.

## From Awareness to Action

Through significant policy research that takes into account the experiences of AAPIs and their unique needs, we can better address the pursuit of America's federal policy priorities.

Federal, local, and institutional policies that seek to enhance postsecondary access, degree attainment rates, and workforce skills for the U.S. population should:

- ◆ Set goals to eliminate the significant equity gaps that exist by race, ethnicity, class, and gender by removing barriers and expanding opportunity in order to realize the full potential of vulnerable groups, particularly in workforce recruitment and hiring;
- ◆ Better support and scale up programs that recruit educators, community leaders, consultants, and researchers who are versed in and can adapt to America's evolving society; and
- ◆ Be based on more accurate and refined data through a greater investment in a research infrastructure that requires institutions to disaggregate and cross-tabulate data by race, ethnicity, gender, and generational status, and encourages the institutionalization of data-driven decision making.

In order for these goals to drive meaningful change for the AAPI population specifically, the following additional inter-agency goals must be pursued:

- ◆ Support sustainable research that can address the lack of information and knowledge about the policy needs and priorities for the AAPI population across all levels of government;
- ◆ Establish a common ground of information among key stakeholders to begin and sustain a shared policy agenda for the AAPI community; and

- ◆ Identify key areas of focus, action steps, and a set of benchmark activities and outcomes to shape and influence future policy efforts.

These goals should be pursued by a carefully constructed agenda. It is essential that there be meaningful and ongoing dialogue about how to most effectively increase awareness about and respond to the needs of AAPIs within our nation's higher education policy priorities. However, through a set of carefully constructed plans, along with the coupling of research and advocacy, responding to these goals will result in the following outcomes that will advance awareness about and change for the AAPI community:

- ◆ New, state-of-the-art research and best practices that can be shared with a targeted audience of key stakeholders;
- ◆ A set of actionable strategies and recommendations that key constituents can implement in their respective work efforts, including a much-needed collective voice from various stakeholders on these issues; and
- ◆ A set of measurable benchmarks toward which researchers, policy centers, advocacy organizations, and public officials can work to address key issues facing AAPIs in higher education relative to federal policy priorities.

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## Appendix: Data Source and Methodology

Data in this report were drawn from a number of sources to identify trends in two- and four-year college participation and completion, degree-attainment, workforce participation and employment, and demographic compositions within and across communities for AAPIs.

Our main source of data for demographics and community trends was the U.S. Census Bureau. Summary File 1 (SF1) is a 100 percent file that contains detailed demographic information collected from all people and households in the United States. Summary File 3 (SF3) consists of responses from a sample of approximately 19 million housing units to questions about social, economic and housing conditions of households. To examine data about AAPI subgroups in the workforce, we used the American Community Survey (ACS) 3-year Public Use Microdata Sample files (PUMS), a database that allows for the analysis of data for the nation, states, and Puerto Rico aggregated over a three year period (2006–2008). We opted to use data from this source because it contained larger sample sizes for sub-populations.

Institution- and student-level data about AAPIs in higher education were drawn from a number of different national datasets. Analyses of trends in enrollment and participation in higher education relied on the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). While IPEDS consists of full population data, and the analyses were exclusively descriptive, tests for significance were not conducted.

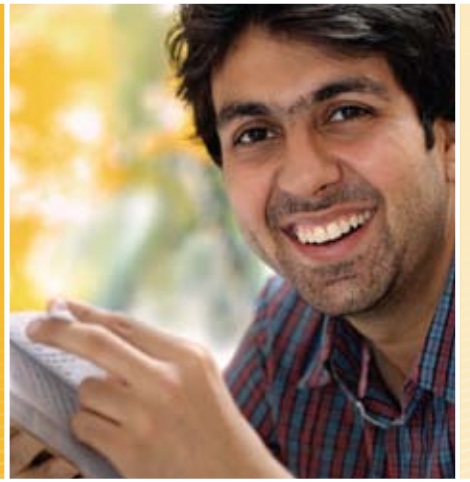
Additional analyses about students' academic programs, college preparation, and outcomes were drawn from the 2008 NCES National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey (NPSAS:08) and the 2009 follow-up of the Beginning Postsecondary Students (BPS:04/09) longitudinal study, which includes responses from 113,500 undergraduates. Some of the analysis of faculty in two- and four-year institutions relied on data from the most recent (2004) NCES National

Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF:04), which includes data about the backgrounds, current employment conditions, and attitudes drawn from a sample of 35,000 faculty and instructional staff members at 1,080 public and private not-for-profit degree granting postsecondary institutions. Finally, we report data from the 2009 Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CSSE), a survey of students at 313 community colleges in 38 U.S. states, developed by the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin. Descriptive analysis of NPSAS, BPS, and CSSE were drawn from online data systems, which precluded tests for significance. Future research with more sophisticated analysis should include such tests with these sample data files.

Additionally, we use data from the NCES Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) and the Common Core of Data (CCD) to analyze the percentages of AAPI students and teachers in U.S. public schools. The most recent administration of the SASS reports data from the 2003–2004 school year, while the CCD reports data up to the 2007–2008 school year. For figures that report only one source, the most recent data for each survey is used. When we report both data sources in a single table or figure, the 2003–2004 versions of each data set are used.

One final source of data on AAPI leadership is a survey of 729 low-income AAPI students who participate in the Gates Millennium Scholars Program or the APIASF Scholarship Program. The survey asks them to report on their campus experiences, their relationships with faculty and administrative staff members, and their leadership opportunities and experiences at school.





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