ASIAN AMERICAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER SERVING INSTITUTIONS (AANAPISIs): A RESOURCE GUIDE

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In 2018, we celebrated a decade of the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) designation and the scholarship that has shaped our understanding of these institutions. During this time, we have learned a great deal about how their values and practices manifest in the experiences and outcomes of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. Indeed, this growing corpus of work has only reinforced the importance of Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as an effective policy lever for equitable student outcomes. Much of the foundational scholarship around AANAPISIs can be attributed to APIA Scholars, the Center for Minority Serving Institutions, the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE), and the National Institute for Transformation & Equity. Because of these organizations' advocacy, commitment, and shared resources, researchers and practitioners have been fortunate with opportunities to build out this canon of work. We believe that at this celebratory juncture, future directions on AANAPISI scholarship should be a collective endeavor.

This brief provides an overview of empirical and conceptual scholarship on AANAPISIs. The content is organized by foundational questions. What we mean by "foundational" is a platform of knowledge from which new research can emerge, thereby linking seemingly distinct inquiries together. Our goal is to offer a resource that can be used as a point of entry for both new and seasoned scholars and scholar-practitioners. We have collated pertinent references—policy reports, book chapters, and peer-reviewed articles—that are compelling starting points to propose new inquiries related to AANAPISIs and MSIs, broadly. By no means are these references an exhaustive or definitive list. We envision this brief to be a working document and encourage other scholars to provide additional references that they believe to be relevant to our evolving understanding of AANAPISIs and racial equity in higher education.

Why were AANAPISIs created?

AANAPISIs were created in response to a history of invisibility among Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students in higher education. This invisibility is exacerbated by a monolithic image of the AAPI racial group held by administrators, policy makers and educators, and has historically denied resources to support the needs of AAPI students. The lack of data disaggregation further masks the complex realities of 25 Asian American and 23 Pacific Islander sub-groups who range in socioeconomic status, immigration history, language, religion, generational and legal status, and culture (Chaudhari, Chan, & Ha, 2013).

Asian Americans are continually misrepresented and misunderstood in education research and discourse due to the pervasiveness of the model minority myth (Lee, 2015; Museus, 2009; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Museus, Maramba, & Teranishi, 2013; Poon et al., 2016; Suzuki, 2002; Takagi, 1992) and insufficient data disaggregation (CARE, 2008, 2013; Museus & Truong, 2009; Nguyen, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2014; Teranishi, 2010; Teranishi, Nguyen, & Alcantar, 2015a; Teranishi, Nguyen, & Alcantar, 2015b). While the model minority myth does not directly apply to Pacific Islanders, the conflation of these two different and unique groups oftentimes renders the experiences of Pacific Islanders invisible (EPIC, 2014).

The model minority myth creates deficit mindsets that deny the lived experiences of Asian Americans and other people of color, often juxtaposing notions of universal success against presumed failure of other racial minorities (e.g., African Americans/Black, Indigenous peoples, Latina/o/x communities, and Pacific Islanders). In this way, the model minority myth maintains racist ideologies and practices among Asian Americans and communities of color at large. The creation of the AANAPISI designation was in part to combat these harmful notions by earmarking resources to support low-income AAPI students, thereby legislatively recognizing them as a population in need of support in higher education. Though Asian Americans are portrayed in media and popular culture as attending selective universities, approximately half are attending community colleges (CARE, 2013). Additionally, eligible AANAPISIs enroll over 40 percent of undergraduate AAPI students. The AANAPISI designation signals that AAPI students deserve greater attention in higher education and access to educational resources (CARE, 2011, 2012; Chaudhari, Chan, & Ha, 2013; Laanan & Starobin, 2004).

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Pang, V. O., Han, P. P., & Pang, J. M. (2011). Asian American and Pacific Islander students: Equity and the achievement gap. *Educational Researcher, 40*(8), 378-389.

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How were AANAPISIs created?

In response to the misconceptions that emerged from the model minority stereotype and in recognition of the vast and diverse needs of underserved and underrepresented AAPI groups, decades of collaborative advocacy from community organizers and students, policy makers, and researchers led to the federal designation of AANAPISIs (Gutierrez & Le, 2018; Park & Chang, 2010; Park & Teranishi, 2008).

Pivotal to this work was the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, which came to fruition in 1999 as a platform for AAPI issues. Community and student groups who led this work included, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), National Center for Asian Pacific American Community Development (NCAPACD), National Asian American Student Conference (NAASCon), and the National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) (Gutierrez & Le, 2018; Park & Chang, 2010).

Key leaders of legislation included Congressperson Robert Underwood (D-Guam), David Wu (D-OR), Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), representatives from the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and Lisa Hasegawa, who served as the community liaison for the White House Initiative (Gutierrez & Le, 2018; Park & Chang, 2010; Park & Teranishi, 2008). AANAPISIs received their designation as an MSI in 2007 through the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, which expanded in 2008 under the Higher Education Opportunity Act (Park & Chang, 2010).

Since the AANAPISI designation is the youngest of all MSIs, there continues to be a need for more research to better understand these institutions, their programs, and the AAPI students they serve. Recognizing the differences between MSIs in serving marginalized populations while appreciating their similarities as *minority serving* will help society understand how colleges and universities can promote racial equity (Conrad & Gasman, 2015).

Conrad, C., & Gasman, M. (2015). *Educating a diverse nation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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How does an institution become an AANAPISI?

In order to receive funding under the federal grant program, an institution must apply for Designation of Eligibility during December through January annually. Currently, the federal government only requires institutions to apply for Designation of Eligibility to receive the status of designated eligible, rather than two separate categories as in previous years. Prior to 2016, eligible institutions needed to apply as designated, transitioning them from eligible to designated. Once granted status as designated, institutions could apply for funding. Designated eligible institutions need to enroll 10 percent undergraduate AAPI students, with at least 50 percent of its total student population who receive financial assistance through programs such as the Federal Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Federal Work Study, or the Federal Perkins Loan (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

Six institutions were funded in the first year institutions were eligible for the AANAPISI federal designation. These institutions include: 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 (CARE, 2010).

National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education. (2010). *Federal higher education policy priorities and the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.* New York, NY: Author.

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How many AANAPISIs are there, and where are they located?

According to CARE, in 2012, there were 153 eligible AANAPISIs, 78 designated AANAPISIs, and 21 funded AANAPISIs (CARE, 2013). An updated analysis of both designated eligible and funded institutions is forthcoming.

Much like the AAPI population, AANAPISIs are concentrated in distinct regions (AANAPISI, 2016; CARE, 2013). The Western region (e.g., Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington) is home to more than half of eligible AANAPISIs. The Eastern region (e.g., New York, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Virginia) follows second while the Pacific region (e.g., Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Palau, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Northern Marianas, and Federated States of Micronesia) has the highest total number of eligible AANAPISIs per capita as a result of their high population of low-income, Pacific Islander students. A small handful of AANAPISIs are located in the Midwest region (e.g., Michigan and Illinois) and the South (e.g., Texas).

Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions. (2016). List of
    AANAPISIs. Retrieved from http://www.aanapisi.net/list_of_aanapisis.

National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education. (2013).
    *Partnership for equity in education through research (PEER): Findings from the
    first year of research on AANAPISI*s. New York, NY: Author.

What programs and services do AANAPISIs offer?

AANAPISI programs address the cultural dissonance between the backgrounds of underrepresented AAPI students and the expectations and norms of predominantly White institutions (PWIs) that privilege White, middle-class students (Alcantar, Bordolio Pazich, & Teranishi, forthcoming; Nguyen, Nguyen, Nguyen, Gasman, & Conrad, 2018). Through culturally relevant programing, advising, and wrap-around student services, AANAPISIs are connecting students to key institutional agents, providing opportunities for leadership and civic engagement, building community, and promoting a sense of belonging (CARE, 2012; Gutierrez & Le, 2018; Museus, Wright-Mair, & Mac, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2018; Teranishi, Alcantar, & Nguyen, 2015; Teranishi, Alcantar, & Underwood, 2018). By tailoring courses and programs to discuss the histories and lived experiences of AAPI students, practitioners, faculty, and researchers have been able to bring students' identities to light and identify the appropriate forms of support needed for an ethnically diverse population of students to be successful (Kiang, 2009).

For example, the AANAPISI center at South Seattle College offers a physical space where students connect with advisors, engage in robust learning communities, discuss coursework that emphasizes AAPI histories and movements, and receive support in understanding the traditional expectations that undergird higher education (Museus et al., 2018).

Similarly, the Full Circle Project at California State University, Sacramento integrates mentorship, leadership opportunities, community-based learning, and ethnic studies courses that allow AAPI students to engage with role models of similar cultural backgrounds and experiences. This project uniquely supports a high proportion of Southeast Asian students, a population rarely highlighted in educational research (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Through staff development and knowledge sharing, De Anza College's "Initiatives to Maximize Positive Academic Achievement and Cultural Thriving (IMPACT)" has built a network of AAPI students, staff, and faculty prepared to serve particularly vulnerable AAPI students. Through culturally relevant trainings, intentional assessment, and utilization of institutional resources, AANAPISI programs are improving the overall campus culture (CARE, 2013).

Adrian, L. P., Hiayani-Brown, K., & Okamura Story, N. (2018). Leadership is more than a checklist: Exploring leadership at AANAPISI community colleges. In R. T. Palmer, D. C. Maramba, A. T. Arroyo, T. O. Allen, T. F. Boykin, & J. M. Lee Jr (Eds.), *Effective leadership at Minority-Serving Institutions* (pp. 169-185). New York, NY: Routledge.

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National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education. (2013). *Partnership for equity in education through research (PEER): Findings from the first year of research on AANAPISIs*. New York, NY: Author.

Nguyen, B. M. D. (2019). *Actualizing the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI): Practical considerations to cultivate program director success*. Philadelphia, PA: Center for Minority Serving Institutions.

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Tang, S. S. (2018). *Digital stories in Asian American studies and co-producer knowledge in AANAPISI contexts*. Philadelphia, PA: Center for Minority Serving Institutions.

Teranishi, R. T. (2010). *Asians in the ivory tower: Dilemmas of racial inequality in American higher education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

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Future Directions

AANAPISIs are part of a larger debate in how racial equity is defined, understood, and operationalized. In light of contentious political events, such as Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, that are highlighting the experiences of Asian American students alongside the lack of support for Pacific Islander students, it is crucial that we continue to engage in this work—to protect, maintain, and grow the knowledge used to uplift and support Asian American and Pacific Islander students. Future research on AANAPISIs should reflect a path toward resolving conflicting perceptions of AAPI communities.

We suggest the following areas for future scholarly consideration and exploration:

Conceptualizing Methodological Approaches to AANAPISI Research
An important aspect of research is using intentional, relevant, and ethical research methods. Like many MSIs, AANAPISIs tend to be broad access and under resourced. We encourage researchers to consider how they build rapport with institutions in a manner that promotes mutually beneficial partnerships. In other words, how does our inquiry and scholarship strengthen institutional capacity? We call on researchers to widen the range of methodological approaches that critically examine these institutional contexts. The current canon of scholarship on AANAPISIs is primarily based on single institutional case studies and evaluations, making it extremely difficult to discern factors that are unique to the AANAPISI context. Future studies should consider a comparative and longitudinal approach so that observations can be made overtime; these conditions are germane to extending or generating current and new theories of organizational behavior and student achievement. Only then can we truly capture the impact of AANAPISIs, especially for the students they intend to serve.

Exploring New Programs and Expanding Services Created

At the core of AANAPISI research are programs and services created and supported by grant funding. Understanding the emerging needs of AAPI students will allow institutions to create innovative programming that will reflect a wide range of student realities. This includes, but is not limited to, access and bridge programs, student-led organizations, advanced degree attainment, and professional discernment. We have little knowledge about how these AANAPISI driven programs shape student development and trajectory. Future studies might assess how prominent student development models within the AANAPISI context can be fruitful in expanding how AAPI students perceive their institutional context and determine the extent to which they feel like they belong.

Assessing Programs and Services at AANAPISIs

Evaluating the impact of programs over time is critical for resources to be strategically, intentionally, and equitably distributed. This also allows for identification of best practices and encourages collaboration among practitioners, policy makers, and researchers. Moreover, the quality of evaluations is critical to the decisions of colleges and universities to institutionalize AANAPISI-funded programs once the grants have expired. Future studies may consider moving beyond the singular evaluation of AANAPISI programs, in isolation from their broader campus contexts. It may also be valuable to assess the impact of the AANAPISI programs on other departments and units to demonstrate the broader reach of the grant funding across campus. This could be useful as institutions make choices about institutionalizing programs and services.

Defining Institutional Identity and Classification as an AANAPISI

As more institutions become designated eligible AANAPISIs, college campuses must critically consider how this designation will impact not only students, but the institutional identity. Institutions must be prepared to examine how an AANAPISI designation will shape their practices, policies, and reputation. Co-authors, Bach Mai Dolly Nguyen and Thai-Huy Nguyen, are currently conducting the first study to address this topic, titled, "Does Institutional Classification Make a Difference?: The Case of Asian American and Native American, Pacific Islander Serving Institutions." They contend that future studies should explore how the relationship between MSI designations and organizational behavior informs and explains the achievement of AAPI students.

Understanding the Role and Impact of Stakeholders in AANAPISIs

Institutions obtain AANAPISI designations, but individuals in institutions manage and execute the grants. Understanding who these stakeholders are and how they go about the utilization of the funding is equally as important as measuring the impact of those activities. Future studies should look at the AANAPISI grant team, including the principal investigators, program directors and program staff. They not only give expression to the AANAPISI grant, they hold unique insights that reveal the opportunities and challenges of promoting racial equity in the academy.

Recommended readings:

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Museus, S. D., Antonio, A. L., & Kiang, P. N. (2016). The state of scholarship on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in education: Anti-Essentialism, inequality, context, and relevance. In S. D. Museus, D. Ching, & A. Agbayani (Eds.), *Focusing on the underserved immigrant, refugee, and indigenous Asian American and Pacific Islanders in higher education* (pp. 1-54). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

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