

Answering White House call, UCLA Asian American Studies Center publishes new research and policy recommendations on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Meeting the Needs of the Fastest Growing Racial Group in America

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Answering President Barack Obama's call to increase participation by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in federal programs, UCLA's Asian American Studies Center has published a pioneering journal examining the needs of under-served and under-represented groups. The center is spotlighting ways to improve education, health, employment and housing for traditionally under-represented groups, like Native Hawaiians and Hmong Americans, in a new issue of its highly-regarded AAPI Nexus Journal.

The special double issue, "Forging the Future: The Role of New Research, Data, and Policies for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders," coincides with the second anniversary of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), established in October 2009. It includes policy briefs offering ways for federal agencies like the Department of Labor or the Department of Education to identify the needs of under-represented groups and engage them.

In partnership with the Center for American Progress's Progress 2050 and the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islanders, a special presentation of the new journal will take place on **Friday, October 28, 2011 from 9am-2pm, at the Center for American Progress in Washington DC**. The event can be viewed via streaming video at:

<http://www.americanprogress.org/events/2011/10/aapi.html/streaming.html>.

UCLA Professors Paul M. Ong and Marjorie Kagawa-Singer will join Obama administration officials, including, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Assistant to the President and White House Cabinet Secretary Chris Lu for a policy discussion including journal authors and community leaders.

"This special issue of AAPI Nexus Journal offers tremendous insight into challenges faced by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders – challenges that our government needs to address," said David K. Yoo, the Center's director. "We applaud President Obama's leadership on this issue and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center is proud to showcase engaged scholarship that comes from detailed study and informed debate."

The “Forging the Future” issue is arguably the most comprehensive publication to date on how Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) are impacted by demographic data trends and federal policy. It includes policy briefs on Civil Rights, Economic Development, Education and Health issues by over 50 leading AANHPI scholars, applied-researchers and community leaders from all over the nation. **A complimentary electronic copy can be downloaded at:**

<http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/nexuscollection.asp>

According to the U.S. Census, single-race Asian Americans were the fastest growing racial group in the nation from 2000 to 2010—a 43 percent gain from 10.2 million to more than 14.7 million during that period. Single-race Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHPs) grew 35 percent from 2000 to 2010. By the year 2050, it is projected that Asian Americans (alone and in combination) will nearly double to constitute 9 percent (40.6 million) of the total population, up from 5.6 percent in 2010. These trends hold important implications for both policy and politics, as public and private sector leaders face increasing demands to provide services relevant to a wide array of new populations, particularly those with different economic circumstances, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds.

Findings include how nail salon workers—who are largely Vietnamese immigrants—are being exposed to unsafe amounts of toxic chemicals. Research by authors Julia Liou, Catherine A. Porter, and Thu Quach found the presence of methyl methacrylate, a compound banned by the FDA, and that the average level of toluene was double the amount recommended by the California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA) for indoor air. As a result of this research, the WHIAAPI created the first interagency working group on nail salon worker health and safety. With the collapse of housing prices after 2007 and the subsequent foreclosure crisis, the housing burden for Asian Americans has increased much faster than non-Hispanic whites. In 2009, the proportion of Cambodian, Vietnamese, Thai, Hmong, Korean, and Pakistani households—ranging from 52 to 57 percent—were paying 30 percent or more of their income toward housing costs, compared with 34 percent for non-Hispanic whites, as noted by author Melany De La Cruz-Viesca. With regard to educational attainment, the rate of South East Asians with less than a high school education is considerably high (Hmong, 59.6%; Cambodian, 53.3%; Lao, 49.6%; and Vietnamese, 38.1%), as author Dina Maramba points out in her brief.

Until 2000, the U.S. Census did not count certain groups into separate racial and subgroup categories, like Native Hawaiians or Hmong Americans. Even today, large federal agencies responsible for serving less fortunate Americans are not counting these groups in their surveys, leaving many in these categories largely detached from basic education, housing, employment and healthcare services they desperately need.

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