

Resource Paper

# AANAPISI Campus Challenges and Opportunities: Confronting COVID-19 and Inclusive Social Justice

Timothy P. Fong and Winnie Hung

*“Our ultimate objective in learning about anything is to  
try to create and develop a more just society.”*

Yuri Kochiyama

*FCP (Full Circle Project) has empowered students  
in such a way that they are not afraid of speaking  
up, they are not afraid to fight for their rights!*

Khalid Shah (Full Circle Project student from Cohort 3)

## ABSTRACT

This article will focus on ways the Sacramento State campus community is working to build a strong inclusive sense of community amidst the multiple challenges from anti-Asian hate, COVID-19, attention to police violence, the renewed emergence of Black Lives Matter, as well as heightened awareness of social justice and increasing economic inequality. Particular attention will focus on how Asian American and Pacific Islander students, staff, and faculty are stepping up to the call for engagement and organizing on campus. Current events were the spark for increased activism among AAPIs on our campus, but it did not emerge in a vacuum. Having the Full Circle Project (FCP), our established Asian American, Native American and

Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) program on campus was, in fact, foundational for the rise of social action we are witnessing today.

## INTRODUCTION

There are several periods in our nation's history and in our individual lifetimes that chart the course for our collective futures. We experienced this altering period in 2020 and the effects continue to this day. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has taken the lives of more than 600,000 Americans, exposed deep social inequalities. There are disproportionate infection and death rates among Black, Brown, Pacific Islander, and Native people. There are dangerous working conditions for immigrants who are also essential workers, especially those who are undocumented. Virtual education exacerbated the digital divide and unequal access. The poor, who are disproportionately people of color, are clearly the most harmed by the sudden economic downturn.

At the same time, the killing of George Floyd brought to the forefront the seemingly endless cycle of Black lives lost to racist police brutality or vigilantism. We also witnessed the rise of anti-Asian rhetoric during 2020 presidential election, and we saw an increase in anti-Asian hate and violence targeting the elders, women, and immigrants and refugees in the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. Stop AAPI Hate received more than 6,600 reports of anti-Asian incidents nationwide as of March 2021. About 40 percent have taken place in California with several recent reports in the Sacramento region (Jeung et al., 2021).

This article focuses on how AAPI students, staff, and faculty stepped up to the call for engagement and organizing around these issues at California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento State). Current events were the spark for increased activism among AAPIs on our campus, but this did not emerge in a vacuum. Having the Full Circle Project (FCP), our established Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) program on campus was, in fact, foundational for the rise of social action. FCP was first funded in 2011 and was consciously rooted in Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies as a transformative project with the intention of changing the campus culture and raising the visibility of AAPIs in the campus community.

## Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at Sacramento State

Sacramento State, is the sixth-largest university in the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system, enrolling a student body of more than 31,000. As California's Capitol University, Sacramento State's mission is to "Transform lives by preparing students for leadership, service and success." Sacramento State is the second-most diverse regional university in the western United States, according to *U.S. News and World Report* (2021 rankings) and is designated as an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) and a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The student population includes 34 percent Hispanic, 26 percent White, 20 percent Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), and 6 percent African American. Forty-two percent of our students also come from low-income households and are eligible for Federal Pell grants, and 31 percent are the first in their families to attend college.

Table 1 shows that in the fall of 2020 incoming freshmen AAPIs had a higher percent of *both* low-income (50 percent) and first-generation (32 percent) students relative to the university overall (42 percent and 31 percent, respectively). This is especially true for select Asian American groups; for example, 71 percent Hmong American students are low-income and 42 percent are first-generation college students. This is starkly different from Filipinx students who were 31 percent low-income and just 7 percent first-generation college students. Countless studies show a well-documented equity gap in higher education in which colleges graduate low income, first generation, and students of color at lower rates than their peers from majority populations (Cahalan et al., 2019; Gewertz, 2016). These gaps signal current general campus practices and procedures do not effectively support all student groups.

**Table 1.** 2020 Freshman Cohort: Pell and 1st Generation by Select AAPI Groups

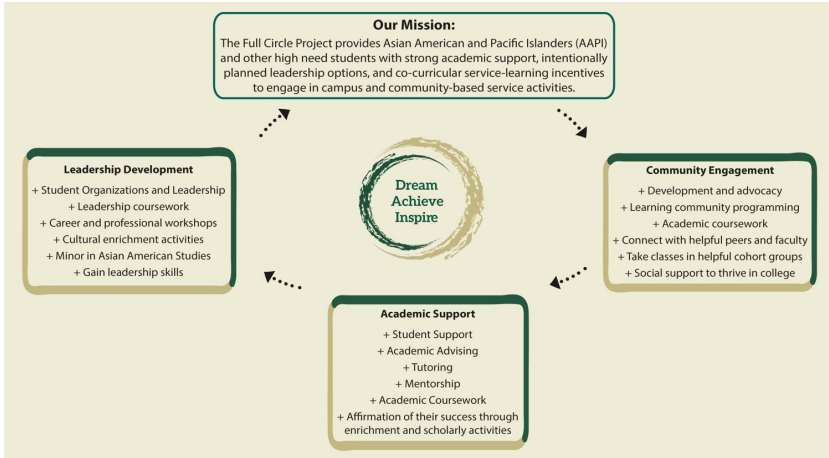
	Univ.	AAPI	Asian Indian	Cambodian	Chinese	Filipinx	Hmong	Laotian	Vietnamese	Pacific Islander
Pell	42%	50%	44%	56%	48%	31%	71%	54%	59%	45%
1st Gen.	31%	32%	38%	36%	40%	7%	42%	32%	48%	32%

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning (OIREP).

## THE FULL CIRCLE PROJECT AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Full Circle Project (FCP) at Sacramento State started in the fall of 2012 with initial funding from a U.S. Department of Education Asia American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) grant. FCP was conceived after early conversations with campus faculty, staff, students, and administrators to specifically address the needs of AAPI and other low-income first-generation students at Sacramento State. The following themes emerged and were implemented: creating connections to the campus community, introducing concepts of Ethnic Studies that give context to student experiences, collaboration with campus partners, engaging research on learning communities in higher education, aligning course content with General Education requirements, and clear communication of the FCP student learning objectives. Figure 1 shows FCP’s strategically focused approach to assisting AAPI students throughout their entire college careers by offering academic support, providing leadership development, and creating opportunities to engage in community service both on and off campus to enhance their university experience.

Figure 1. FCP Strategic Focus Approach



The signature element of FCP is its two-semester Freshman Learning Community for 100 students each year. FCP students are from all majors, but the learning community is fundamentally grounded in Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies. The two Ethnic Studies courses offered in the fall are ETHN 14 (Introduction to Asian

American Studies) and ETHN 21 (Freshman Seminar). Both courses meet the General Education requirements students must take to complete their undergraduate degrees. FCP was built to facilitate timely graduation and does not burden students with extra unnecessary units. In the spring semester, FCP students take ETHN 22 (Contemporary Issues and Social Change), which serves as a lower-division elective. ETHN 14 and ETHN 21 prepares students for ETHN 22 in the spring, which requires a community service project. This aligns with one of Sacramento State's strategic goals to engage the community by building enduring partnerships that strengthen and enrich the region and to be an "anchor university" (Nelsen, 2018).

Understanding the structure of the FCP program explains why FCP is the foundation for institutional change at Sacramento State. In ETHN 14 students learn about the history, purpose, and development of the field. The course also covers the Asian American movement and the establishment of Asian American Studies in higher education. At the heart of the Asian American movement is activism and community. ETHN 14 purposefully aligns with ETHN 21, which is focused on six themes: (1) Recognizing Diversity, Striving for Equality; (2) Linking Knowledge, Power, and Representation; (3) Questioning the Role of Education; (4) Navigating Institutions and Systems to Advance Agendas; (5) Building Community to Promote Self-Determination; and (6) Forming Coalitions to Affect Change.

Students in ETHN 22 participate in Sacramento State's Leadership Initiative (LI). The LI is a certificate program designed to (1) develop students' leadership and professional skills; (2) provide a foundation for involvement in campus life; and (3) promote retention, academic success, and graduation. The LI is based on the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Burns, 1978; Komives et al., 1998; Rost, 1993) that encompasses three sets of values individuals build upon to become social change agents: individual, group, and societal/community. The sequence of courses blends student development theory and Asian American Studies and empowers students to take ownership of their learning (Fabinar, 2020).

Throughout the two semesters, FCP students also engage in a series of activities centered on developing writing skills. They post a weekly reading blog and write reflective essays on course content, future academic and career goals, and what they learned in FCP-sponsored community forums. FCP students also create an online portfolio in which they publish a personal profile and develop essays

on contemporary social issues of importance to them. Toward the end of the first semester, students share portfolios with their peers. Students also create a list of important social issues they want to explore and identify peers with whom to work. This serves as the basis for organizing coalitions to engage in a group community service project for ETHN 22 in the spring.

The FCP was named a Model of Success by the Center for Minority Serving Institutions (2015) and was featured in *What Works Now* from the Campaign for College Opportunity (2015). FCP is also highlighted in books (Conrad and Gasman, 2015; Maramba and Fong, 2020) and academic reports (Museus et al., 2018; Nguyen et al., 2018). The success of FCP students is illustrated in Table 2, which shows the most recent four- and six-year graduation rate of FCP students with comparison groups. Since the inception of FCP at Sacramento State, the overall graduation rate for AAPI students has improved 13.7 percentage points from a 4.3 percent graduation rate in 2013 to 18 percent in 2020. This is a 318.6 percent increase compared to the 210.8 percent increase for non-AAPI students during the same period. More importantly, the graduation rate from 2013 to 2020 for AAPI students who are low income and first generation—the *population FCP works with most directly*—grew from 2.4 percent to 16.6 percent, which is a 600 percent increase.

**Table 2.** AAPI Graduation Rates

Year/ Freshman cohort	University Total	Non-AAPI*	AAPI	AAPI (Pell +1st Gen.)**	FCP
2020					
4-yr. (2016 cohort)	22%	23%	18%	16.6%	22.2%
6-yr. (2014 cohort)	53.6%	53.1%	55.3%	52.3%	53.1%
2019				12.4%	
4-yr. (2015 cohort)	20.4%	21.3%	16.6%	59.6%	14.6%
6-yr. (2013 cohort)	55.3%	53.4%	59.5%		70.4%

Source: Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, and Planning (OIREP).

\*Non-AAPI includes Whites, African Americans, Hispanic/Latina/o, Native Americans, Two or More Races, and Unknown.

\*\*Pell recipient and neither parent completing a four-year college degree.

The institutional data showing positive results together with academic studies and several prominent features in the local newspaper (Koseff, 2015; Lyles, 2016; Wong, 2020a; Yu, 2019), all brought a great deal of visibility and credibility to FCP. These were strengthened

even more with the partnership with APIA Scholars (formerly APIA Scholarship Fund) in their AANAPISI Scholarship Program that annually provides thousands of dollars in scholarships to Sacramento State students (APIA Scholars, n.d.; Reid, 2016b). This national partnership led to four endowed scholarships for FCP students provided by local donors. In addition, FCP students are active on many social media platforms highlighting the virtues of their FCP experience, and the significance of being an AANAPISI (Ortiz, 2020). FCP also has its own YouTube channel.

The first FCP freshman cohort started in the fall of 2012 (Cohort 1) and over time FCP grew stronger with each succeeding cohort. In spring 2020 there were 350 FCP students from earlier cohorts who were completing their undergraduate degrees, and dozens more were still at Sacramento State earning postbaccalaureate credentials or graduate degrees. Many of these FCP students serve as the vanguard for AAPI student leadership on campus. FCP students were active in Sacramento State's Census 2020 outreach because they understood they the importance of being seen and counted. The students were also preparing for university's voter registration efforts in this important presidential election year (Reid, 2020; Yu, 2020a).

## **CONFRONTING A DEFINING TIME**

Absolutely no one could have predicted what the next year and a half would be like. The following section focuses on the sequence of events and role of FCP and AAPI faculty and staff in response to a time of great uncertainty, chaos, and calamity.

### **Rise of COVID-19 and Racism**

Sacramento County reported the first case in the Sacramento region on February 21, 2020, and it was the fourteenth case discovered in the United States. "The risk of COVID-19 to the U.S. public continues to be low," said Dr. Peter Beilenson, director of the Sacramento County Department of Health Services (Anderson and Yu, 2020). However, the virus spread largely unimpeded while infections and deaths grew across the nation. On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a National Emergency that freed up as much as \$50 billion in financial resources to assist Americans affected by the outbreak (Smith-Schoenwalder, 2020). Days later Trump began using the term "China virus" in speeches and in tweets. The following week saw an increase in anti-Asian hashtags and a rise in hate crimes. AAPI leaders and the

World Health Organization (WHO) warned referring to COVID-19 as the “Chinese virus” could lead to racial profiling against Asians and encourage xenophobic behavior (Gstalter, 2020). The deliberateness of the wording was made clear when a photographer captured the script of one of his speeches where Trump had crossed out the word “Corona” (COVID-19) and replaced it with “Chinese” (Smith, 2020).

Local news in Sacramento soon began to report on anti-Asian hate incidents, such as children being taunted in school. California State Senator Richard Pan (D-Sacramento), who is also a medical doctor, said bullying and stigma around the pandemic is a public health issue because it could cause individuals to not report symptoms because they are afraid of harassment or physical attack. “If someone has symptoms that might indicate infection, and we want them to come forward,” he said (Yu, 2020b).

Then, on March 12, Sacramento State announced plans to transition courses to online delivery for the remainder of the spring semester. All instruction (face-to-face, online, lab, studio, exams, and assignments) was suspended between March 16 and March 19 to provide faculty time to prepare and transition their courses completely online. On March 19, California Governor Gavin Newsom issued an order mandating all residents to stay at home except to go to an essential job or shop for essential needs (Office of Governor, 2020).

Everyone at Sacramento State did their best to adjust to suddenly transitioning from face-to-face instruction and events to everything being online. In the spring of 2020 students in the FCP freshman cohort (Cohort 8) in ETHN 22 had to complete their contemporary issues coalition projects in a virtual space. At the same time, Census 2020 continued as the focus of FCP’s campus and community activities, in partnership with local AAPI organizations and agencies. FCP students who were already educated and knowledgeable about the importance of the census were seen as trusted messengers to their families and communities. Many local AAPI census leaders described the importance of this partnership to increase organizational capacity and enhance the ability to reach additional hardest-to-count communities. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Census 2020 efforts in Sacramento County were successful with a 74.5 percent response rate, up from 70.9 percent in 2010 percent (Burke, 2020; Hubert, 2020a).

The spring semester just ended when George Floyd was killed while under police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Several cell phone videos showed Floyd handcuffed and face down on the



ground with police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes. Floyd called out he could not breathe and was afraid he was going to die. After several minutes, Floyd stopped breathing. Chauvin did not remove his knee from Floyd's neck until paramedics ordered him to do so. Floyd's death quickly sparked massive protests nationwide and across the world against police brutality and institutional racism (Rahim and Picheta, 2020). What happened to Floyd brought back painful memories of Sacramento's own police killing of Stephon Clark, an unarmed Black man shot and killed by Sacramento police in 2018. Sacramento was the site of several days of demonstrations by various groups in several locations that led to clashes with the police, breaking windows in downtown business, and stopping traffic on major freeways. Stevante Clark—brother of Stephon Clark—led a march and rally denouncing the lack of police accountability (Stanton et al., 2020).

Throughout that summer FCP students were active witnesses to events going on all around. They could understand the historical experiences of Asian Americans from their learning communities, see how anti-Asian hate can emerge in social and political condition, and connect the Stephon Clark killing with the George Floyd killing. At the same time, they were had to confront the complexities race in in U.S. society, and that Floyd's death was more than just black and white. Hmong American Tou Thao, one of three other Minneapolis police officers at the scene of Floyd's death, was immediately fired and later charged with aiding and abetting second-degree murder. Sacramento has one of the largest Hmong American populations in California, and there were concerns about how those inside the community and others outside the community would react. "Our community members are really struggling to situate themselves in this moment of uncertainty," said Mai Vang, a Sacramento School Board member and candidate for City Council. "It reminds me we have so much work to do" (Wong, 2020b). Vang acknowledged the Floyd killing led to sometimes painful conversations addressing the roots and effects of anti-Blackness in Sacramento's Hmong American communities. Mai Vang taught courses in the FCP learning community before embarking on her political career.

### **Resilience and Building a Campus Community**

The start of the fall 2020 semester was filled with great anxiety and fear of the unknown. Sacramento State's incoming freshman class for fall 2020 was the first to begin a semester during a public health

pandemic, and the first to start classes in a predominantly online learning environment. Administrators at Sacramento State and at colleges across the country were bracing for a significant drop in enrollment because of the effects of the pandemic and the switch to mostly online coursework. But final enrollment saw only a slight dip in admissions compared to the previous year. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 threat, a mostly empty campus where students, staff, and faculty were working from home, looming potential massive budget cuts, and raging wildfires in Northern California that darkened the skies, the focus for fall steadfastly remained providing a quality education to all students while emphasizing safety during the pandemic and attention on fostering an antiracist culture at Sacramento State.

In the face of everything around us, this process began in the summer planning for the inaugural Fall 2020 Convocation, *Advancing Our Commitment to Antiracism*, intended to bring together the campus community for important discussions and presentations on moving forward on the path to antiracism and inclusion. The convocation was held on September 29 featuring keynote speakers Ibram X. Kendi, author of the national bestseller *How to Be an Antiracist*, and Shaun Harper, director of the University of Southern California's Race and Equity Center. It also will include twenty breakout sessions showcasing the insights of dozens of students, faculty, staff, and community organizers on issues around racial injustice and bias (Hubert, 2020b).

FCP faculty, staff, and students played a prominent role in the convocation planning process to insure AAPI perspectives were included. One breakout session featured Russell Jeung, professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State and cofounder of Stop AAPI Hate. His session addressed why and how Asian Americans have been scapegoated and targeted in relation to COVID-19 and how the Asian American community has resisted racism. Another session by Sacramento State Asian American Studies faculty and FCP learning community instructors focused on AAPI antiracist activism from 1969 to 2020. The session traced the evolution of Asian American and Ethnic Studies student movements to present-day incarnations (Black Lives Matter solidarity, Asian Pacific American Labor Association, anti-Asian racism amidst COVID-19). The session concluded with the experiences of AAPI students at Sacramento State (Fall 2020 Convocation).

Along with the Fall Convocation, Sacramento State began forming an Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan that will consider input and feedback from individuals from across the university. Through

acknowledging the various ways racism takes place, this process targeted seven areas of focus led by seven corresponding Action Planning Groups: (1) Mattering and Affirmation; (2) Cross-Racial and Inclusive Engagement; (3) Antiracism Learning and Literacy; (4) Antiracism Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Assessment; (5) Encounters with Racial Stress and Bias; (6) Institutional Commitment; and (7) Impact of and on the Sacramento Region. The development of the plan involved nearly eighty students, staff, faculty, and administrators, addressing hiring practices, employee retention, curriculum development, bias reporting, campus transparency, and many other topics. FCP staff as well as members of the newly formed Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Faculty and Staff Association (APIDAFSA) were actively engaged with this plan and the various subcommittees (Sacramento State, 2020).

The fall 2020 semester also saw Sacramento State working toward implementation of Assembly Bill 1460 (AB 1460), which was passed and signed into law on August 18, 2020. AB 1460 requires all California State University campuses provide Ethnic Studies courses starting in the 2021–22 academic year and made taking an Ethnic Studies course a graduation requirement for students completing their degrees in the 2024–25 academic year. The final passage of AB 1460 took nearly two years, because the bill was opposed by the California State University Chancellor and Board of Trustees. However, recent events along with dedicated lobbying by students, including Ethnic Studies majors and FCP students, working together with the California Faculty Association and supportive legislators clearly paved the way for the Ethnic Studies requirement. “This has been a priority bill for us,” said Assemblymember David Chiu (D-SF), Chair of the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (Zinshteyn, 2020).

### **The Impact of AAPI Activism at Sacramento State**

The accomplishments over the challenges from the fall semester served to strengthen the campus community. We knew virtual instruction would continue in the spring of 2021, but there was initial cautious optimism that the worst was behind us and there was light at the end of the tunnel. The 2020 presidential election resulted in the ouster of Donald Trump, despite his continued false claims of massive voter fraud. The various subcommittees of the Antiracism and Inclusive Campus Plan were working diligently to complete the formal report by the end of the semester (Sacramento State, 2021). Also, implementation plans for AB 1460 were finalized at a Faculty Senate meeting on April 1

that showcased student activism. This Faculty Senate met virtually, but the number of participants was double due to the students attending to observe and speak. One speaker, Yee Thao, a first-year student at Sacramento State and part of the FCP Cohort 9, eloquently argued for AB 1460, telling everyone:

Ethnic Studies is about teaching students to value and appreciate different narratives that are brought to the table. It provides us the chance to be more aware of the experiences of those around us (especially the marginalized), giving us the skills to abolish systems of oppression. Most of all, our university should champion the opportunity to be prepared to make a difference. As an interdisciplinary scholarly field, Ethnic Studies is about self-determination and self-respect. (Thao, 2021)

The Senate voted to approve the campus implementation plan for AB 1460 and with this final step, the Asian American Studies program was able hire two new faculty members to support the expansion of course offerings to meet the needs of the upcoming fall 2021 freshman class.

However, escalation of anti-Asian hate and violence remained omnipresent and reached a horrific peak on March 21, 2021, when eight people were shot and killed at Atlanta-area spa businesses, six of whom were Asian women. An official spokesperson for the county sheriff's office investigating the case downplayed any possible racial motivation and added insult to this deadly crime by describing the suspect as having "a really bad day." It was later discovered the spokesperson promoted t-shirts that labeled the coronavirus an "IMPORTED VIRUS FROM CHY-NA" (Kornfield and Knowles, 2021). The response from Sacramento State was immediate starting with a message from President Robert Nelsen. "I am horrified by this tragic violence and my heart is broken for the victims and their families," he wrote in a campuswide statement. "I have learned from members of the campus community that yesterday's incident harkens painful memories and prior experiences. I am greatly saddened to know that members of our Hornet Family are experiencing ongoing and now fresh trauma due to such hatred" (Nelsen, 2021). One incident President Nelsen was referring to was the 1989 mass shooting in nearby Stockton, when an outside intruder wearing military camouflage clothing and armed with an assault rifle opened fire into an elementary schoolyard full of children. Five children were killed, the youngest was six and the oldest was nine, and all were from Southeast Asian refugee families. Seventy percent of all students at the school were Southeast

Asian (Korte, 2021). The other incident took place in the adjoining city of Elk Grove, when in 2011 two elderly Sikh men were gunned down during their daily afternoon walk (Cleary, 2021).

A campuswide “Beginnings of Healing” webinar was held on March 30 sponsored by the Student Academic Success and Educational Equity Programs (SASEEP). The intent of this event was to acknowledge the pain of community members who, directly and indirectly, have been affected by anti-Asian hate. “We see you, and we acknowledge your pain, your anger, your sadness,” said Jeannie Wong, the university’s senior associate vice president of communications. “You are not invisible.” Wong remembered seeing and hearing racial taunts when she was a young child and noted that a teacher in an area high school recently used similar gestures in an online class with her students (Hubert, 2021; Wong, 2021). Seunghye Wie, professor of family and consumer sciences, acknowledged the shooting in Atlanta was personal to her as a Korean American woman. “If you are surprised by the anti-Asian violence in Atlanta, Georgia, that happened two weeks ago, you haven’t been listening to us,” Wie said. Similarly, Winnie Hung, who teaches several Asian American Studies courses, including ETHN 14 for FCP students emphasized how Asian women have been historically sexualized and that may have prompted prejudice-based attacks (Hall, 2021). Hung added she held processing spaces in all her classes and shared the sentiments of many of her students who said it’s time for institutions to put the money where their lip service is and invest in student services. According to Hung, students were tired of resolutions, statements, proclamations, and condemnations. True to her words, Hung helped organize an April 13 forum with the Asian American Studies program, FCP, and Alpha Kappa Delta Phi, a campus dedicated to promoting sisterhood, scholarship, leadership, and Asian American awareness in both the university and community. This campuswide event was titled “Abolish Anti-Asian Violence! Community Activism & Coalition Building.”

Individuals from FCP were interviewed the university’s multimedia student news outlet, *The State Hornet*, about how they have navigated anti-Asian racism in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Asialyn Lee, a senior majoring in Political Science and a student assistant with FCP, said the campus needs to continue creating intentional spaces for students of color to discuss racism and not solely rely on the Ethnic Studies Department to do the work. “It’s just performative after a while,” Lee said. “[President] Nelsen emails are not going to stop

anti-Asian racism, or anti-Blackness. We are not serving our students of color enough, and it's hurting us." Marietess Masulit, a program coordinator for FCP and newly elected president of the Asian Pacific Islander American Faculty and Staff Association acknowledges it can be difficult for Asian Americans to ask for help when they face micro-aggressions or racism and understands the constant anxiety in her community since the pandemic started. "There's often a notion of not knowing how to ask for help within Asian American communities due to the cultural aspect of wanting to save face," she said (Nunez, 2021).

Along with the heightened advocacy and visibility of FCP students, faculty, and staff, FCP is impactful because it continues to successfully bring in money to the university. Sacramento State received a second AANAPISI grant in the fall of 2016 (\$1.75 million) to increase graduation rates for low-income and first-generation AAPI and other high-need transfer students (Reid, 2016a). In the fall of 2021, our campus received a \$2 million AANAPISI cooperative grant to partner with six community colleges in the region: (1) American River College, (2) Cosumnes River College, (3) Delta College, (4) Folsom Lake College, (5) Sacramento City College, and (6) Sierra College (Reid, 2021). The goal of this grant is to develop a model of transfer student services focusing on increasing the academic success, retention, and community college transfer rates to Sacramento State for underrepresented and underserved AAPI students. This new expansive FCP effort will strengthen the capacity of all institutions in collaboration to support student graduation with a bachelor's degree in a timely fashion, help them enter the workforce, positively impact their lifelong earnings, and strengthen our local economy. With this new grant FCP now has a broader regional reach and is the longest-running AANAPISI program in the California State University system.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that FCP has been instrumental to the recent activism by AAPIs at Sacramento State. This activism extends out to FCP students who have already graduated. There is now a focus on creating an Asian Pacific Islander American Student (APIDA) Center. "I am happy and proud to say this effort was led by FCP students and alumni along with non-FCP APIDA students," said Khalid Shah from FCP Cohort 3 who graduated with a degree in Computer Engineering. "These students went out of their way to hold the administration accountable to ensure the successful, resourceful, and stable APIDA Student Center. FCP is

providing the boldness, confidence, awareness, and voice to the APIDA community that they have been lacking for a long time now!" Shah is an example of FCP's motto, "Dream, Achieve, Inspire." When FCP was first created, we assumed students had a *Dream* to complete their college degrees and begin professional careers. It was always FCP's job to help students *Achieve* their dreams. What we ask of FCP students is they *Inspire* others who come after them. Shah adds, "This is just the beginning of Coming to Full Circle. In the next few years, FCP alumni will lead the change across every sector of society!" (Shah 2021).

*"You cannot change any society unless you take  
responsibility for it, unless you see yourself as belong-  
ing to it and responsible for changing it."*

Grace Lee Boggs

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DR. TIMOTHY P. FONG is Professor of Ethnic Studies at California State University, Sacramento. He is also the Project Director and Principal Investigator for the Full Circle Project funded by the U.S. Department of Education AANAPISI grant. FCP is a comprehensive approach to implement a strategically focused, campuswide effort to improve retention and graduation rates of low-income and first-generation Asian American and Pacific Islander students.

DR. WINNIE HUNG has taught Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies for the Full Circle Project at California State University, Sacramento. She received her Ph.D. in Cultural Studies from UC Davis and is interested in Asian American intersectional feminism, transformative justice, and liberatory education. Dr. Hung is now the inaugural faculty member in the Department of Ethnic Studies at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento.