

Asian Pacific American Students at CCSF

About Us

I. Background

Asian Pacific Americans (APA) comprise 31% of the residents in the City and County of San Francisco according to the 2000 Census. Of the major urban centers in the U.S., San Francisco has the second highest percentage of APA's in the United States surpassed only by Honolulu, Hi. In California 11% of the population identified themselves with one Asian group, which is three times the ratio when compared with the rest of the U.S. Asian Pacific American (APA) students make up the largest minority group at CCSF. The population of Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean, Southeast Asian, Asian Indian, Asian Pacific Islanders, and Pilipino students make up 40% (20,409) of the credit students enrolled at CCSF (51,135) (Decision Support System 2001-2002).

II. Needs Statement

Despite the sizable population of APA students at CCSF, few services aimed at addressing their specific academic needs have been developed or made available. These students have been largely neglected. Reasons for this neglect may be due to:

1. The Myth of the Model Minority

APA students have been stereotyped as successful or "model" students who do not require additional institutional support or services. In reality, there are many "at risk" APA students at CCSF. An examination of current student outcomes reveals alarming data about APA students at CCSF:

- **Basic Skills:** Annually, over 1,100 credit APA students entering CCSF are placed in one or more basic skills courses in Math and English/ESL (F2000-SP001).
- **ESL:** APA students constitute 70% of the credit ESL population and 53% of the non-credit ESL population at CCSF.
- **Probation:** 43% of all students on academic probation (over 1,800 students) are APA (F2000-SP2001). 38% of all students on progress probation (over 1,000 students) are APA.

2. Stereotype that all APAs make up one monolithic group

Students of the various APA groups that comprise the APA community are often lumped together. However, studies show that certain Asian ethnic groups (on the aggregate) achieve greater academic success than other Asian ethnic group.

For example, while Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Asian Indians have demonstrated high achievement in college, Laotian, Samoan, and Filipinos have struggled in their academic achievement. Differences in academic preparation and success can be attributed to variables such as income level and recency of immigration to the U.S. (Hune and Chan, 1997).

3. Lack of political assertiveness among APA communities

Culturally, historically, and politically, the APA community has not been as assertive or strategic in articulating the needs of its students as other ethnic student groups on campus. The primary reason for this lack of political activism maybe that two-thirds of the APA population are non-native English speaking immigrants who have difficulty advocating for their needs. This initiative is an attempt to articulate to the College the particular needs of APA students.

III. Recommendations for Action

Section 9.3 of the CCSF Strategic Plan calls for the College to:

Provide leadership to staff in the development and implementation of an integrated program to improve the retention and success rates of Hispanic, Asian, Pilipino, and African American Students.

The College has implemented programs designated to improve the retention and success rates of Hispanic and African American students. We recommend that the college now begin the process of developing and implementing specific programs to improve the retention and success rates of Asian and Pilipino students at City College of San Francisco.

Specifically, we recommend the following:

1. Convene a Steering Committee comprised of APA students, faculty, staff, and administrators charged with developing a plan to address the needs and implement effective services to APA students on campus.
2. The Steering Committee would meet regularly during the Spring Semester 2003 and submit a report with a set of recommendations to the Chancellor and the Board towards the latter part of Spring Semester. We request that the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees strongly consider these recommendations as a top priority and commit to allocating resources for implementing of the recommendations.
3. Begin implementation of the program in Fall 2003.
4. Garner full support of the College, including the Board of Trustees, Chancellor's Office, and Senior Administration.

IV. Conclusion

The community that CCSF serves looks to all of us to provide leadership in developing retention and student success programs for all of its students. Given that Asian Pacific American (APA) students comprise the largest ethnic student group on campus, it is incumbent upon the College to devote time, energy, and resources to study the academic and student service needs of APA students and to develop a plan of action to respond to these needs.

CCSF must realize that the myth of the APA students as the model minority has limited the resources that are made available to them. While many APA students have excelled at CCSF, closer examination reveals that a great number of APA students also struggle academically.

CCSF prides itself in addressing the needs of its diverse student population. This proposal should be viewed as a positive, proactive initiative that begins to respond to the needs of a segment of the student body that has been largely invisible and ignored in the past.

V. References

City College Fact Sheet 2002

Office of Public Information Hune and Chan

The Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans, 2000

U.S. Census 2000, Washington D.C.