

## ABSTRACT

The goal of Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) is “...to educate and graduate students from underrepresented groups, [provide] culturally sensitive programs...[for] students, and [offer]...public service... [to]... their racial and ethnic communities” (Baez et al., 2008, p.3). Thus, with the MSI federal program, there is a need and a purpose to better serve the minority student population. Among MSIs including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) and others, the newest addition is the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving-Institution (AANAPISI) program (Baez et al., 2008; Park & Chang, 2010). This study focuses on the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving-Institution (AANAPISI) program. AANAPISIs, federally designated institutions that serve a critical mass of low-income AAPI students, can be sites to understand how institutions can better serve AAPI students at community colleges. Tampa Community College, located on the West Coast in a neighborhood consisted of 33% AAPIs, serves over 20% AAPI students with Vietnamese making up the highest AAPI ethnic subgroup both on campus and in surrounding communities. As part of a larger project, this study uses organizational development and change in universities as a framework (Torraco, 2005) to analyze interviews of key institutional agents who were involved with either writing the grant or expanding the grant-funded AANAPISI program on campus. In addition, focus group study of students who participated in the grant-funded leadership program is reviewed to better understand the impact of the AANAPISI grant-funded program on students’ educational success. The findings demonstrate that AANAPISI program helped an institution to build capacity to better serve their students and how a specific leadership program helped students to achieve educational success. This study contributes to the limited research that exists on AANAPISIs and AAPI students in community colleges and provides a deeper insight to the needs and challenges of AAPI students at community college. Furthermore, the study implications extend to offering a greater understanding of the impact of MSI programs.

## BACKGROUND

- As AANAPISI program is a competitive grant process where institutions with at least 10 % enrollment of full-time equivalent Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) and a minimum threshold of low-income students that is similar to HSIs are eligible to apply for federal designation and funding (CARE, 2008; Santiago, 2006). As of 2016, 105 institutions were designated as AANAPISIs and among those federal designated institutions, 26 have received federal funding (Teranishi & Kim, 2017).
- AAAPIs are also viewed as a monolithic group when in fact, there are 48 different ethnic sub-groups within the AAPI racial category, making it the most heterogeneous group in the U.S. (CARE, 2011).
- Between 1990 and 2000, there was a 73.3 percent increase of AAPI students at community colleges compared to 42.2 percent increase at public four-year institutions (Teranishi, 2012) and in 2005, nearly half of all AAPI students enrolled at community colleges (CARE, 2011).
- Teranishi (2012) stated, “lower tuition, open admissions, and proximity to home” are all important factors in the decision to attend a community college for many AAPI students; Yet, “educators and policymakers have focused on AAPI students in highly selective institutions, [and] those in other sectors of higher education, such as community colleges, receive little attention” (p.19).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- In what ways does the AANAPISI federal designation and grant help Tampa Community College (TCC) build capacity to better serve their students?
- What are the institutional agents’ and students’ perceived effects of the leadership program, a signature AANAPISI grant-funded program at Tampa Community College (TCC) and to what extent is there evidence on students’ success ?

## METHODS

### 1. Interview

- 3 institutional agents

\*High-level Admin, AANAPISI Director, Leadership Program Staff

### 2. Focus Group

- 6 student in the leadership program

### 3. Observation

- 5 leadership class observations

### 4. Document Analysis

- Institution’s Website
- Resources from AANAPISI center

Research Question	Method
In what ways does the AANAPISI federal designation and funding help TCC build capacity to better server their students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Document Analysis</li> <li>Observations</li> </ul>
What are the institutional agents’ perceived effects of the leadership program, a signature AANAPISI grant-funded program at TCC and to what extent there is evidence on students’ success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus group</li> <li>Observations</li> </ul>

## FINDINGS

### RQ #1: Building Capacity

**Assessing the needs of AAPI students:** “ What barriers do students at TCC face? We asked all students and at all college events...one of the things we saw that students have indicate similar things as faculty and staff and one of the top three main things was access to resources, barriers in language, and lack of opportunity for student engagement...[Then] we were able to find the common theme in AAPIs...and [AAPIs] were slightly below the average of completion.

**Creating space for AAPI students:** “[Students] finally had a place to congregate, study, and this [AANAPISI center] became a *big hub*”; “*We need a place* that’s close to the [AAPI] community”; “[Before receiving funding and creating the AANAPISI center, students] could not talk out loud [during tutoring sessions because other were taking tests such as MCAT]”; “It’s a way to bridge our students to the community”

**Sharing space with non-AANAPISI programs:** “I encourage others [from outside of the AANAPISI center] to use the [AANAPISI center space] as much as they want, because I want them to feel like *home* here”

**Institutionalizing AANAPISI programs:** “We institutionalize everything. The peer mentor, leadership program. So for example, we had the student academic center and by year 3 we will take it out of the grant and pay with our own money”.

**Scaling out the AANAPISI program to serve ALL students:** “I see it as an opportunity to help students but I also see it as an opportunity to really progress the institution because a lot of people see grant as serving a growing body of students...but you scale that out and you don’t just serve one body of student...we are serving everybody but we are just measuring AAPI students...So you move the needle with the students in need and in theory, you are to move the needle for everybody”

### RQ #2: Perceived Effects of the AANAPISI grant-funded Leadership Program

**Developing advocacy skills:** “One of the things we proposed in our [AANAPISI grant-funded] programs and it’s in all of our workshop and mentorship is the ideal student...Not just a student with a 4.0 [GPA], but more based on knowledge, attitude, and skill, and we think leadership is a place to learn those advocacy skills and those organizing skills”; “We wanted students to develop into student leaders and model what leadership looks like.”

**Impact on academic success:** “When it comes to leadership it navigates resources but [also] help peers navigate resources as well and just referring and building resources as well”

## FINDINGS CONT.

### RQ #2:

“...before entering college, I kind of hated Asian people even though I am [Asian] American myself... coming to [AANAPISI] center, having connection with these people [at the AANAPISI center], my mind has really changed because I no longer see only the negative parts of my culture...because we are so proud but like [Leadership program] really has made me more aware of my own community and the positives that I have (Student).



Increasing Student Involvement

“[After TCC created the AANAPISI grant-funded center]... I am involved a lot with [AANAPISI center]... events that they have here, I like to show up and be there and just to be like, it’s kind of like a community. I am kind of like...clubs! I try to get involved with some clubs.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Findings suggest that the AANAPISI designation and funding helped an institution to effectively build capacity to better serve their students.
- When describing building capacity through federal grant, institutional agents did not only intend to serve AAPI students but everyone on campus.
- Both students and institutional agents described how the AANAPISI leadership program helped students to achieve educational success.

### Implications

- Findings point to how institutions can effectively build capacity through AANAPISI federal programs to better serve their students.
- This also informs institutional agents on how the AANAPISI grant-funded programs such as the leadership program can impact students’ educational success.

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