

ASIAN CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER

AT VIRGINIA TECH®

ACEC Center's Statement of Purpose

The Asian Cultural Engagement Center (ACEC) is a division of the Cultural and Community Centers under the Virginia Tech Office for Inclusion and Diversity (OID). The ACEC's mission is to advocate for the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) communities, including Virginia Tech faculty, staff, students, and alumni. We also aim to educate the campus community on issues centered around or related to our communities. All members of the campus and local community are welcome in the ACEC and can participate in the ACEC's events, programs, and activities, whether in-person or virtually..

Interested in financially supporting the ACEC so that it can better serve the APIDA community? Please consider donating here: [ACEC Donation Page](#).

Thank you for your consideration!

Student Spotlights

Undergraduate Student: Sadaf Sizdahkhani

Sadaf Sizdahkhani is a rising senior majoring in Hospitality and Tourism Management. She is originally from Herndon, VA, and studied culinary arts prior to attending Virginia Tech. She is half Korean and half Iranian, and loves food, her cat, Goose, and traveling. Sadaf is heavily involved in her sorority, Alpha Kappa Delta Phi, an Asian interest sorority at VT.



As an APIDA at VT, Sadaf feels she is able to represent APIDAs in her industry (Hospitality and Tourism Management) and offer her unique perspective in a field that is global and interconnected. Learning how different cultures interact and about their social norms helps her feel more educated and prepared for her roles in the future.

Before coming to VT, Sadaf expressed how she felt confused about her identity while growing up. She often felt like an outsider until she joined Virginia Tech's alpha Kappa Delta Phi sorority and found her own community.

"Befriending many like-minded individuals with diverse backgrounds who were extremely accepting of myself in the organization made me feel at home and comfortable in my own

skin. I've never been a part of a group of people who made me feel that way! I had people who shared the same experiences as I [did] growing up, which made all the difference."

Sadaf's advice for incoming undergraduates is to not be afraid to challenge yourself or try something you haven't done before. Whether it's joining different organizations, talking to your classmates, or taking up any opportunity Virginia Tech has to offer, be sure to take advantage of these experiences because they won't last forever.

(Caption: Sadaf Sizdahkhani. Florence, Italy, Winter 2019)

Graduate Student: Emily Kim

Emily Kim is a second year Ph.D. student in the Department of Psychology with a focus on Industrial Organizational Psychology, which is essentially the study of human behavior in organizations or the workplace. For the Industrial-side, this could range from recruitment and selection and on the Organizational-side, it involves the "softer-skills," such as leadership and diversity. In this area of study, being scientist-practitioners is emphasized and Kim tries to find a balance by working in both sides/areas. Before coming to Virginia Tech, Kim attained her undergraduate degree at the University of Maryland and worked for a few years in Washington, D.C. Currently, Kim is working on a proposal to develop an instrument that measures microaggressions against Asian Americans.



In order to acclimate to VT, since she started her graduate career during the pandemic lockdown, Kim sought community by seeking roommates who have become her friends. She also stressed doing outdoor activities while wearing masks, like hiking, and planning excursions with people in her academic cohort. Kim's advice to incoming first-year graduate students is to be "open-minded, keep trying new things, meet people from other departments, [and] don't be afraid to ask for help." On a related note, Kim suggests that faculty who have APIDA graduate students should also be open-minded and to not allow biases based on previous interactions to cloud their judgments in teaching new students.

Additionally, Kim stresses that finding community is huge because graduate students aren't forced to be together like undergraduates. Thus, seeking a shared community is important. For example, Kim notes that to be a part of the APIDA community, it's about "Having that shared sense of community and culture [that] can be really reassuring and supportive, especially when a lot of us graduate students are away from home. It also means you can share certain experiences or struggles and have people understand them on a much deeper level. But as many of us know, racism and discrimination against APIDAs has been on the rise, and as a community, we need to continue to support, uplift, interact, and reach out to each other. Also, one community may not always be enough. You need to surround yourself with different perspectives, different people, and for different purposes."

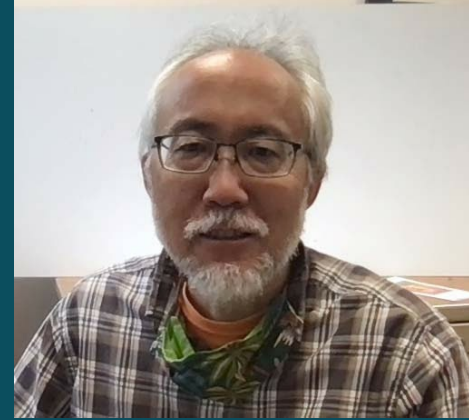
Finally, Kim plugged the new Graduate APIDA Student Organization called GAPIDAs that is currently being formed. Please reach out to Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu for more information.

(Caption: Emily Kim, photo taken by Chelsea Cereghino)

Faculty: Dr. Jim Tokuhisa

Dr. Jim Tokuhisa is a faculty member in Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech. He was born in Chicago, Illinois and grew up in the suburbs. He started a Bachelor's of Science degree at the University of

Wisconsin-Madison and finished it at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in Botany. After getting his Ph.D., he did postdoctoral research in Japan, Australia, Washington state, and Germany before getting a position at Virginia Tech. Dr. Tokuhisa now teaches a three-credit intermediate-level course in cell biology and co-ordinates a six-credit laboratory course in BioChemistry at Virginia Tech.



Dr. Tokuhisa has always been interested in research. He expressed how he's had a deep interest in it since grade school. He had a professor who was often encouraging students to ask more fundamental questions, and it inspired him to continue being curious and asking questions.

Most of Dr. Tokuhisa's current work involves teaching his Intermediate Cell Biology course. He enjoys it because it's his area of research and it allows him to focus on plants rather than animals. Dr. Tokuhisa prefers to teach it as an active learning course rather than a class focused on memorization. He believes that the issue at the forefront of Biology is climate change, and that we'll be dealing with things we've never dealt with before.

Dr. Tokuhisa's advice for APIDA students is to find your passion and try to take courses that you are passionate about. "I feel like APIDA students have added challenges, and need to remember this. We need to find support and comfort, and connect with others that may be going through the same experiences."

(Caption: Dr. Jim Tokuhisa, photo from Dr. Jim Tokuhisa)

Alumni: Alan Liu

Alan Liu was born and raised in Fairfax, VA and now resides in Seattle, WA as a Software Engineer at Microsoft. He was a student at Virginia Tech starting in 2016, and graduated in May of 2020. He graduated with a degree in Computer Science and started working at Microsoft after he graduated.



During his time in college, Liu connected with the APIDA student organizations at Virginia Tech the most, such as the Chinese American Society, Korean American Student Association, and others. He thought of his involvement in those student organizations as the highlight of his college career because it allowed him to find a sense of community that allowed him to learn more about his culture and find a supportive community.

Liu decided to attend Virginia Tech because he felt that the campus has a sense of community that is hard to find at other college campuses. He was also extremely interested in VT's Engineering program.

Liu advises incoming undergraduates to make the most of their college experience, and to try to find a balance between their academic and social lives.

"College is really what you make of it, and you can spend 24/7 studying or partying, but the key is to just find a balance for what works best for you. I also think it's really important to set a goal for each year. Time will fly by very quickly, and by having this short list of goals, you can track your progress as you go. Oh, and say yes to every opportunity you get, even if it's out of your comfort zone!"

(Caption: Alan Liu, picture taken by Alec Fong)

Organization Spotlight- Alpha Kappa Delta Phi

Alpha Kappa Delta Phi at Virginia Tech (VT aKDPHi) is an inclusive, Asian interest sorority under the council, UCFS. The sisterhood of alpha Kappa Delta Phi provides women with a sense of belonging that nurtures genuine friendships, develops self-empowered leaders, and strengthens communities through service, scholarship, and Asian-Awareness. VT aKDPHi aims at providing a welcoming community for anyone, not only members of the Asian community, to be their genuine selves, celebrating each member's unique culture, identity, and beliefs. Not only is our organization focused on our philanthropy of Breast Cancer Awareness, academic excellence, and being involved on campus and in the community, but our chapter strives to develop and strengthen our internal sisterhood and relationships in order to make aKDPHi a fulfilling experience for all our members. Some of our chapter President's- Sadaf Sizdahkhani- highlights of joining aKDPHi are the amazing relationships she has made with other sisters at VT and especially her big, giving her the much needed community that she was seeking out as a new transfer student- a "home away from home." We have a lot of very exciting and fun events lined up for this semester such as a sisterhood retreat and BCA events/fundraisers in October! We can't wait to meet all of you at Gobblerfest and at our in person rush events, starting September 7, 2021!

Please connect and reach out to us on our social media platforms:

Instagram: @vtakdphi

Facebook Page: VTakdphi

Or reach out to our President, Sadaf Sizdahkhani, with any questions, concerns, or to learn more:

Email: vt.akdphi.pres@gmail.com or sadaf3213@vt.edu

Phone: (703) 901-1286

(Caption: Recruitment Flyer)



ACEC's New Faces

Meet the new ACEC Faculty Fellow for 2021-2022 Academic Year: Dr. Carola Haas



Dr. Carola A. Haas is a Professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, College of Natural Resources and the Environment, at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia. She received a B.A. in Biological Sciences from Wellesley College, a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Cornell University, and did postdoctoral training at Yamanashi University, Kofu, Japan and the Wild Bird Society of Japan Research Center. Dr. Haas is an Associate Faculty Principal at the Residential College of West Ambler Johnston and a co-advisor for the Virginia Tech chapter of Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences. She is interested in breeding and movement behavior of amphibians and reptiles (including birds). She studies wild populations on managed landscapes, with a goal of improving land use practices to conserve native biodiversity while achieving landowner goals. Much of her current research focuses on restoration of wetland habitats for rare and endangered amphibians, including the reticulated flatwoods salamander at Eglin Air Force Base.

Photograph by Olivia Coleman.

Meet the New ACEC Programming Assistants:

Hello, my name is Rayane ALHAJJ (She/Her). I am an international graduate student majoring in Architecture. This is my first year at VT. I graduated in 2020 from the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut-Lebanon, with a B.A. in Interior Architecture. I chose this field because of my passion for designing and creating spaces and interiors that are functional yet creative and esthetic at the same time. Also I love to discover new interests, cultures, and skills. Therefore, I am currently learning new languages. Looking forward to working with all of you this upcoming academic year.



Photograph by Batoul Elhajj.

Hi everyone, my name is Sharan Srinivasan (He/Him), and I am a current first year graduate student in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering (ISE). I completed my undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering from Anna University in Chennai, India and started my program at VT in the month of January 2021. I chose this program as I wanted to integrate my experience in a core engineering field along with courses that focus on a more quantitative approach. If not studying or completing assignments, you would definitely find me in front of the television watching sports (mainly soccer, cricket, and tennis) or Netflix. I also love to travel and explore local cultures and cuisines. Hoping to have a wonderful semester at the ACEC along with all of you!



Photograph by Ravichandran Krishnamurthy.

Hello! My name is Vivian Hong (She/Her), and I am a senior majoring in Graphic Design. If I'm not at the ACE Center, you can probably find me wandering around campus or in my room where I'm probably working on my portfolio or binging something on Netflix. I am very passionate about my work, and I love learning new things everyday. I enjoy playing video games and having picnics with my friends, and I am also a huge fan of coffee. I'm so excited to continue working at the ACEC this year!

Photograph by Kimberly Han.



Hi everyone! My name is Johnny Lin (He/Him) and I'm a sophomore majoring in Business Information Technology with a concentration in Decision Support Systems. I chose this major because it incorporated my interest in technology and business into a curriculum that I find very challenging, yet interesting. While on campus, one of my favorite places to study has got to be the New Classroom Building. It's really nice to be able to get my work done while having such a pretty view of the academic side. During my free time, I like watching Netflix. I'm currently catching up on the latest season of *The Flash* and *Grey's Anatomy*. In addition, I enjoy cooking or attempting to, and trying out new recipes, but nothing compares to grabbing something from the dining halls, which is much more convenient and tastier. Lastly, I like hanging out with my friends and going on spontaneous adventures. I'm excited to work at the ACEC and alongside everyone this school year!

Photograph by Johnny Lin.



Hello! My name is Michelle Tran (She/Her), and I am a sophomore majoring in Business Information Technology with a concentration in Cybersecurity and Management Analytics. I chose this major because I was always interested in learning about technology in the field of cybersecurity. In today's society, technology is always advancing, and I believe that this major will be useful in the future! I chose to study cybersecurity because I wanted to go into the field of cyber crime, specifically. I have always been interested in forensic investigations, and I believe that this path is the best for me. If you can't find me at the ACE Center, you'll probably find me in Torgerson Bridge or at Newman Library. During my free time, I will either be playing video games to escape reality or hanging out with my friends. I am excited for what is to come at the ACE Center and the upcoming school year!

Photograph by Linh Huynh.



APIDA Caucus

The APIDA Caucus serves as an advocacy and support group for faculty, staff, and graduate students at Virginia Tech and Blacksburg/NRV community members who self-identify as APIDA, or allies who are interested in participating in conversations relevant to the APIDA community. We also serve the APIDA community at other Virginia Tech

campuses (Washington, D.C. area, etc). The Caucus acts as a liaison to the university administration and is committed to supporting the needs of all APIDA individuals. Our events are open to faculty, staff, graduate & undergraduate students, and community members.

To be added to our new email listserv (apidacaucus-g@vt.edu) and to get more information, please contact Rommelyn Coffren at rconde@vt.edu. Want to get involved? Find us on Twitter [@VTAPIDACaucus!](https://twitter.com/VTAPIDACaucus)

APIDA Faculty and Graduate Student Mentorship Program

The APIDA Caucus, in collaboration with the ACEC, recently started a mentorship program for APIDA faculty and APIDA graduate students. The program was spearheaded by Ph.D. student, Hana Chan, to provide mentors for APIDA graduate students who traditionally have difficulty finding mentors and role models in their respective fields and who also self-identify as APIDA. The purpose of the program is to create connections between graduate students and faculty within the APIDA community who share similar identities and experiences, and to create safe and culturally sensitive environments for graduate students to seek guidance and support.

Please reach out to Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu for more information.

APID Alumni Society

The Asian Pacific Islander Desi Alumni Society (APIDAS) of Virginia Tech is an organization dedicated to fostering community for all Asian/Asian American and Pacific Islander alumni. In addition to building a community of alums, we strive to foster mentorships with current undergrad and grad students, provide networking opportunities, and give back to our alma mater from wherever we are. If you are interested in learning more about us or would like to join, please email apidasvt@gmail.com.

Instagram: [apidas_vt](https://www.instagram.com/apidas_vt)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/apidasvt>

AASU

The mission of the Asian American Student Union is to serve the Asian/Pacific Islander/Desi American (APIDA) communities within Virginia Tech. It shall act as an umbrella organization over the branching undergraduate APIDA organizations. It shall strive to enhance and further the individual, cultural, and ethnic diversities that exist in the APIDA communities. It shall make efforts to address the problems, issues, and concerns of the APIDA communities to the administration and other fellow student organizations.







ACEC Events



ASIAN CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER

Save the Dates!

Stay updated on our upcoming events this month.

-  **SEPTEMBER 2 @ 8 PM EST (VIRTUAL)**
NIGHTTIME GUIDED MEDITATION
-  **SEPTEMBER 10 @ 5-7 PM EST**
WELCOME BACK PICNIC
Location: GLC Lawn; In-person
-  **SEPTEMBER 13 @ 12-1 PM EST (HYBRID)**
LEARNING LUNCH
Featuring Dr. Jim Tokuhisa
-  **SEPTEMBER 20 @ 4 PM EST (HYBRID)**
APIDA MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP
-  **SEPTEMBER 21 @ 5 PM EST (HYBRID)**
INSPIRASIAN SERIES: FACULTY
-  **SEPTEMBER 24 @ 10 AM - 3 PM EST**
CRITICAL RACE THEORY SYMPOSIUM
Location: Commonwealth Ballroom B; In-person

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu between 9 am - 5 pm EST at least 10 business days prior to the event. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu



APIDA WELCOME TO/BACK

**SNACKS, GAMES, KITES,
& FACE-PAINTING!**



**REGISTER
IN-ADVANCE
FOR FOOD
OPTIONS!**



**SEPT
10
5-7 PM
EST**

GLC LAWN

290 College Ave
Rain location:
Asian Cultural Engagement Center,
Squires Room 140

[RB.GY/6Y0MFI](https://vt.edu/rb.gy/6Y0MFI)



IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT DR. NINA HA
NHA@VT.EDU

Asian Cultural Engagement Center and
Hanako Baker, M.S. invite APIDA community
at VT to



THURSDAY LUNCH WITH A THERAPIST

Please feel free to come chat with Hanako if you're...
- Feeling unsure about being in therapy
- Wanting to know what Cook Counseling Center offer
- Needing to just talk with someone
- Wanting a quick tip for relationship/life stress

or just happen to be at ACES during the time :) You can be eating
lunch/snack during the chat!

**THURSDAYS
12:15- 1:15 P.M.**
at Asian Cultural Engagement Center
(Squires Student Center, Room 140)

Hanako Baker is
- a doctoral intern at Cook Counseling Center
- a Japanese immigrant
- a former international student
- has a master's in Marriage and Family Therapy
- loves connecting with students!





SEPTEMBER 21, 2021 | 5 PM - 6:30 PM EST |
ACEC, SQUIRES STUDENT CENTER, ROOM 140, AND VIRTUALLY

Light refreshments will be provided.

INSPIRASIAN SERIES: FACULTY PRESENTATION



Dr. S. Moon Cassinelli is an Assistant Professor in the English Department and for the Women's and Gender Studies Program. He will present a brief description of recent transnational adoption narratives, and discuss how these newer works approach themes of belonging and Asian American identity.



Dr. Theodore C. Lim is an Assistant Professor of Urban Affairs and Planning in the School of Public and International Affairs. He will talk about balancing citizen engagement with state-of-the-art data and modeling resources to support environmental decision-making.



Dr. Vincent Wang is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics (BEAM). Within Virginia Tech, he serves as co-chair of the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIA) Caucus as well as faculty advisor of the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE). He will present an overview of his lab's approaches to detect and treat orthopedic soft tissue injuries.

Register in advance



<https://rb.gy/ngtyuy>

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation or have any questions, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu between 9 AM-5 PM EST at least 10 business days prior to the event.



CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT) ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM

What is or is not CRT?

Friday, September 24, 2021

Doors open at 9:30 am EST

Location: Commonwealth Ballroom B

For Virginia Tech community only!

Lunch & light refreshments will be served for the first 120 people!

Schedule of Events:

10:00 am - 10:30 am: Welcome and Introductions

10:30 am - 12:00 pm: CRT - Morning Panel

12 pm - 1 pm: Break for Lunch

1:00 pm - 2:30 pm: CRT - Afternoon Panel

2:30 pm - 3:00 pm: Closing Remarks



Registration Required

Link: <https://rb.gy/uhxk54>

For questions about this event, please contact either Dr. Rebecca Hester at rjhester@vt.edu or Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu.

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu between 9 AM - 5 PM EST at least 10 business days prior to the event.

ACEC Presents: Nighttime Guided Meditation with Vivek Rajan

Thursday, Sept. 2, 2021 at
8pm EST



Vivek Rajan was trained and certified as a meditation teacher at the Art of Living Center in Washington D.C. in 2009 and has led these programs for hundreds of people nationally.

Scan Here:

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu between 9 am - 5 pm EST at least 10 business days prior to the event. For questions, contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu

Zoom Link: <https://rb.gy/s4ypt9>



CCCs Events and Collaborative Events

Save the Dates

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Sept. 15th - Oct. 15th

- **COMIDA Y COMUNIDAD**
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15TH @ 12 PM
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13TH @ 12 PM
- **L.A.S.O BBQ**
SATURDAY, SEPT. 18TH @ TBD
- **SALARY NEGOTIATION WORKSHOP**
TUESDAY, SEPT. 21ST @ 5 PM
- **CPD RESUME WRITING**
THURSDAY, SEPT. 16TH @ 12:30 PM
- **COLLEGE OF SCIENCE COMM. NIGHT**
MONDAY, OCT. 4TH @ 5:30 PM
- **J.P BRAMMER**
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13TH @ TBD
- **GRAD HISPANIC/LATINO CONNECT LUNCH**
TUESDAY, OCT. 5TH @ 12 PM
- **EATING EASTER MOVIE EVENT**
DOCUM.
THURSDAY, OCT. 14TH @ 4 PM
- **L.A.S.O GALA**
SUNDAY, OCT. 17TH @ TBD

Save the Date



ASIAN CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER


Save the Dates!

Stay updated on our upcoming events this month.

 **OCTOBER 12 @ 4 PM EST (HYBRID)**
APIDA MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP

 **OCTOBER 14 @ 5-8 PM EST (IN PERSON)**
COLLABORATION WITH EL CENTRO & AIICC
Eating Up Easter Documentary

 **OCTOBER 15 @ 12-1 PM EST (HYBRID)**
LEARNING LUNCH
Featuring Dr. Daphne Yao

 **OCTOBER 21 @ 6 PM EST (VIRTUAL)**
COLLABORATION WITH LGBTQ+ RESOURCE CENTER
Featuring Amy Sueyoshi

 **OCTOBER 26 @ 6 PM EST (VIRTUAL)**
COLLABORATION WITH LGBTQ+ RESOURCE CENTER
Featuring Angela Chen

 **OCTOBER 28 @ 8 PM EST (VIRTUAL)**
NIGHTTIME GUIDED MEDITATION

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation or have any questions, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nhaevt.edu between 9 am - 5 pm EST at least 10 business days prior to the event.



New and Updated ACEC Videos For Viewing:

[APIDAHM: A Virtual Mini-Symposium: APIDA Leadership in Higher Education. Part 1, Morning Session](#)

[APIDAHM: APIDAs in Political Leadership](#)

Social Media

