



ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER DESI AMERICAN

APIDA +
CENTER

Annual Report

22-23

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INTRODUCTION

The APIDA + Center (formerly Asian Cultural Engagement Center) at Virginia Tech advocates for the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) communities includes Virginia Tech faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

This 2022-2023 Annual Report serves to inform community members and the public about the Center's efforts to meet its mission to advocate for the APIDA communities both on campus and around the country and to educate the larger campus community on issues related to these communities. Learn about transformative programming highlighting the achievements of APIDA faculty, staff, and students on campus. Discover how visiting artists shared with diverse audiences the creative process. The APIDA + Center values its collaborators, campus partners, and community members in its continued efforts to realize its mission and goals.

NAME CHANGE



APIDA+ CENTER

The Asian Cultural Engagement Center (ACEC) is now the APIDA+ Center. The reasoning behind the name change is to more accurately reflect the communities that the Center aims to serve. To clarify the plus (+) represents people of mixed race identities, transracial and transnational adoptees, and people who self-identify but many not always feel included in the naming process.

APIDA+ CENTER LEADERSHIP



Nina Ha, Ph.D.

Director, APIDA+ Center



Teresa Wilson, M.A.Ed.

Assistant Director, APIDA+ Center



Theo Lim, Ph.D.

ACEC Faculty Fellow (2022-2023) and APIDA Caucus Co-Chair



Vincent Wang, Ph.D.

APIDA Caucus Co-Chair

MESSAGE FROM DR. NINA HA

On behalf of the APIDA + Center, formerly referred to as the Asian Cultural Engagement Center (ACEC), I am pleased to share this Annual Report for 2022-2023. Reflecting on the past year, it is amazing to witness the growth of the APIDA + Center, both in its programming capacity as well as in its outreach and continued collaborations with campus partners and the larger community.

The APIDA + Center aims to be a place to promote diversity, encourage creativity, and engage in shared experiences. Over the past year, the APIDA + Center has sponsored a multitude of events that have not only celebrated the heterogeneity of APIDA identities, but also fostered a sense of community among the diversity of its unique members. The dynamic and rich cultural tapestry that defines the Center has been showcased through various events, collaborative programming, and initiatives hosted by the APIDA + Center.

In an ever-changing world, the roles of Cultural and Community Centers have become increasingly vital. Cultural and Community Centers like the APIDA + Center serves to educate, advocate, advise, and support its members. In 2022-2023, the APIDA + Center endeavored to create an inclusive space, both virtually and in-person, that encourages dialogue, empowers voices, and promotes an environment where every member of the APIDA community as well as the greater university population felt seen and heard. In fact, the theme for the 2023 APIDA Heritage Month in April was “Making the Invisible Visible.”

The APIDA + Center’s commitment to fostering creativity and intellectual growth has been evident in the myriad of collaborations with the Moss Arts Center as well as its signature Learning Lunches with APIDA faculty at Virginia Tech or APIDA artists and community members who are locally, nationally, or internationally well known. Additionally, the APIDA + Center hosted and continues to sponsor several Support Groups, ranging from an APIDA Mental Health Support Group to an APIDA Men’s Support Group, and an APIDA Queer Questioning and Allies Support Group. All of these Support Groups have been in collaboration with the Cook Counseling Center and Hokie Wellness in recognition that mental health providers are vital

MESSAGE FROM DR. NINA HA

partners in the de-stigmatizing of mental health well-being in the APIDA community. Furthermore, the APIDA + Center has continued its virtual Nighttime Guided Meditation that it started during the pandemic in the Spring of 2020.

Significantly, in April of 2023 during APIDA Heritage Month, the APIDA + Center, in collaboration with the Black Cultural Center, brought Dr. Latasha Sarpy to conduct a four-part workshop around the Angry Out Loud Series. Since 2020, Dr. Latasha Sarpy has been facilitating workshops and giving presentations around the topic of expressing anger in a healthy and productive way for Virginia Tech; however, it was only in April 2023 that Dr. Sarpy visited Virginia Tech in-person. As demonstrated through its programs and events, the APIDA + Center has been at the forefront of promoting a holistic and enriching university experience that prioritizes the mental health of its diverse communities.

Other highlights included taking both undergraduate and graduate students to two conferences. The first journey encompassed taking nine students and one other faculty member on a road trip from Blacksburg, VA to New Haven, CT for the South Asian Youth Initiative hosted by Yale University in February of 2023. In April of 2023, I took one undergraduate and one graduate student to Long Beach, California for the annual conference of the Association for Asian American Studies. It was the first time that the undergraduate student and former AASU President, Monica Nguyen (now an alum) flew on a plane! It is my hope to continue supporting and providing students with these unique opportunities as a part of students' professional development.

Of course, it was a busy and exciting year for the APIDA + Center, especially because it added a new full-time member, Ms. Teresa Wilson, who started working in June of 2023 as its new Assistant Director. Given all of the responsibilities entailed with directing the APIDA + Center, I am quite grateful to having Ms. Wilson's support.

MESSAGE FROM DR. NINA HA

Looking ahead to 2023-2024 academic year, the APIDA + Center Team is excited about the possibilities that the future holds. Through the efforts of Dr. Melissa Faircloth, director of the Ati: Wa:Oki Indigenous Community Center, (ICC) and myself, the U.S. Department of Education recently awarded a grant aimed at enhancing the APIDA and Indigenous student experiences at Virginia Tech. This includes adding free academic tutoring in STEM related courses as well as computing and printing resources to support students academically. Additional wellness programs such as a Mixed-Race Support Group and a Women's Support Group will be created to address these populations' specific needs. The APIDA + Center aims to further strengthen its ties with the campus community through increased collaborations and partnerships and to create innovative programs that inspire, educate, and nurture belonging. Moreover, the APIDA + Center will continue to be a driving force in shaping the cultural landscape of Virginia Tech.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the dedicated individuals who have contributed to the success of the APIDA + Center throughout this year, as well as the previous ones. From the talented performers and artists, inspiring and generous renown scholars, dedicated faculty and staff, amazing campus partners, and to the hardworking student staff, your passion and commitment have been the driving force behind the achievements of the APIDA + Center.

In closing, I invite each member of Virginia Tech to engage with the APIDA + Center and the other Cultural and Community Centers actively. Your involvement, support, and enthusiasm are integral to the continued success and growth of this vibrant nexus of cultural exchange.

Thank you for your continued and essential support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Nina Ha

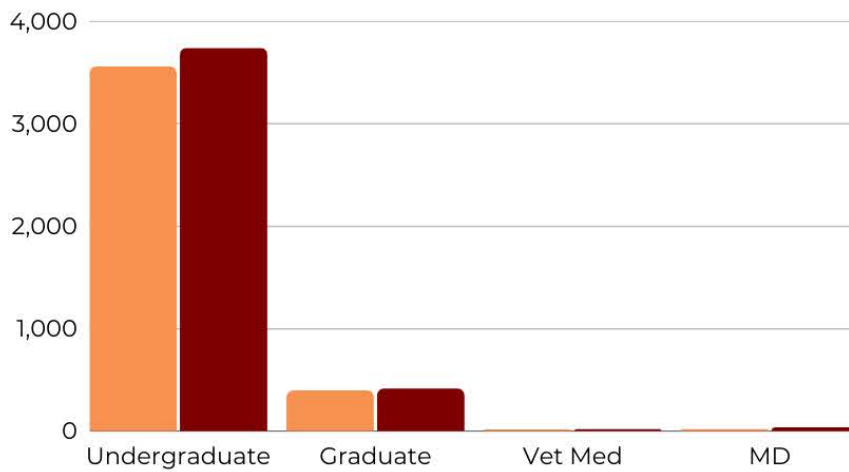
Director, APIDA + Center

AANAPISI Designation

Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution is a designation set forth by the U.S. Department of Education for institutions of higher education where at least 10% of the student population is APIDA and Native and Indigenous identifying (these numbers excludes international students). Virginia Tech is only one of four institutions within the Commonwealth of Virginia with this federal designation.

Overall Enrollment Data

Comparison from AY 21-22 to AY 22-23



	21-22	22-23
UG	3551	3733
Grad	391	409
Vet Med	12	14
MD	16	30

Key Takeaways:

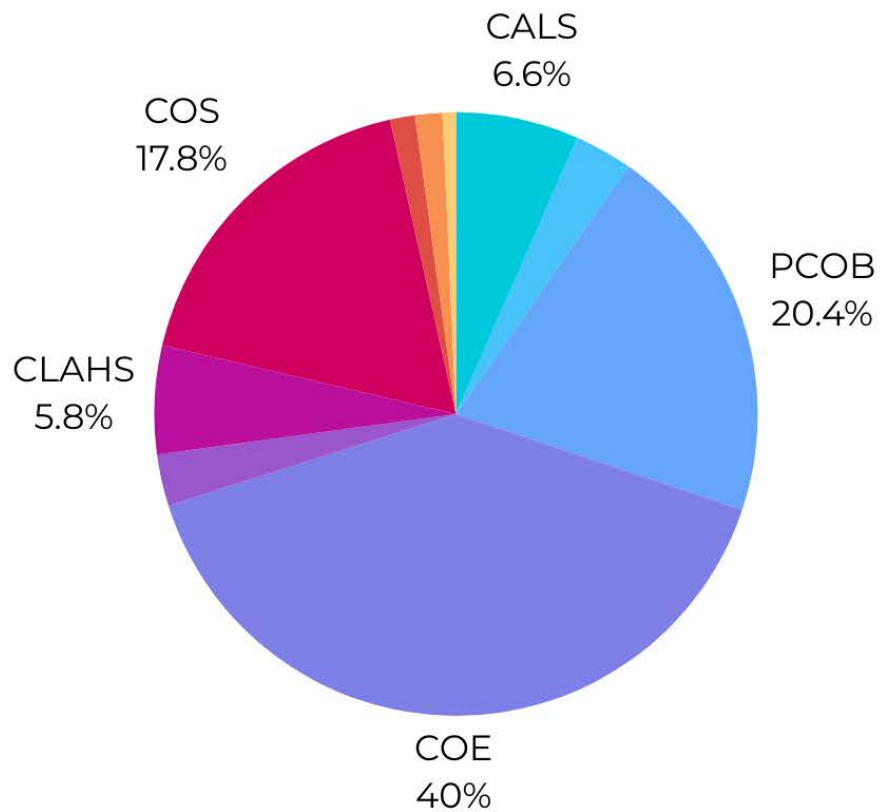
- Nearly 200 more APIDA identifying student enrolled as undergraduates.
- Slight increase in graduate and veterinary medicine student enrollment.
- Increase of 49% APIDA medical students at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

49%

Increase in APIDA student enrollment in the School of Medicine.

Enrollment Data

The chart below provides a breakdown of APIDA student enrollment within each college at Virginia Tech. Most APIDA identifying students enroll in majors within the Colleges of Engineering, Business, and Science.



- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)
- College of Arts, Architecture, Design (CAAD)
|- College of Engineering (COE)
- College Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (CLAHS)
- College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE)
- College of Science (COS)
- Interdisciplinary College (IC)
- Pamplin College of Business (PCOB)

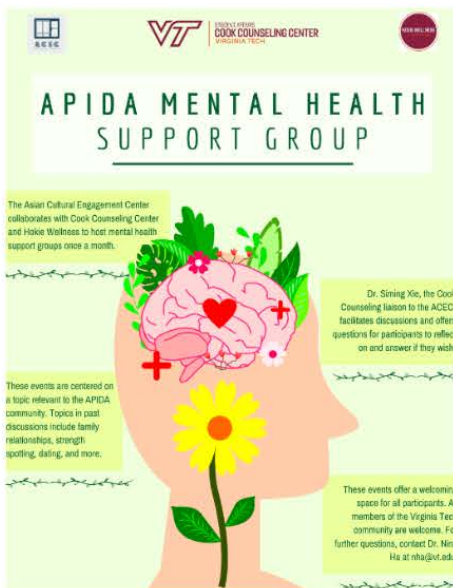
**Virginia Tech is only 1 of 4
AANAPISIs in Virginia**

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

The APIDA + Center provides educational programming to the Virginia Tech community and beyond. Its work engages APIDA students across the university to learn more about their heritage, highlight accomplishments by VT APIDAs, and address holistic student development, professional development through conference attendance, and support for mental health wellness.



Above and below
2023 South Asian Youth Initiative at Yale



2023 AAAS Conference in Long Beach, CA

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

The ACEC provides educational programming to the Virginia Tech community and beyond. Its work engages APIDA students across the university to learn more about their heritage, highlight accomplishments by VT APIDAs, and address holistic student development. Intersectional programming with other campus partners including the other Cultural and Community Centers, academic colleges, and student groups, provide opportunities for meaning making and identity formation of the VT APIDA student community.

Asian Cultural Engagement Center
Save the Dates!

- JANUARY 27TH @ 10:30 AM EST: LUNAR NEW YEAR AT THE OWENS FOOD COURT
- JANUARY 28TH @ 4:00 PM EST: LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION AT GLC MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
- FEBRUARY 6TH @ 4:00 PM EST: APIDA MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT GROUP - NOTE CARD WRITING FOR LOVED ONES/WHAT ARE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS?*
- FEBRUARY 13TH @ 6PM EST: WORKSHOP ON JAPANESE PUPPETRY (AKUTAGAWA)
- FEBRUARY 17TH @ 12 PM EST: LEARNING LUNCH FEATURING DR. TAYLAN O. TOPCU
- FEBRUARY 23RD @ 8 PM EST: VIRTUAL NIGHTTIME GUIDED MEDITATION
- FEBRUARY 24TH @ 12 PM EST: DAY OF REMEMBRANCE LEARNING LUNCH FEATURING ANDY MORIKAWA
- FEBRUARY 27TH @ 12 PM EST: APIDA MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP*

* The location for the events is the Asian Cultural Engagement Center (Squires Room 140 unless specified).
* If you need accommodations or have any questions, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu

Lunar New Year Celebration

JANUARY 28
GLC MULTIPURPOSE ROOM
5-8 PM
FOOD & DRINKS PROVIDED!

APIDAHM PRESENTS
InspirAsian Series Featuring Undergraduates

Tuesday, April 25, 2023 @ 5:30-7 pm
Squires Room 140 or via Zoom

THE SPEAKERS

- Crystal Lee
Computational Modeling and Data Analytics with concentration in Cryptography and Cybersecurity
- Sophia Eliza Andron
Microbiology with minor in Psychology
- Brendan Huang
Clinical Neuroscience with minor in Asian Studies
- Thirlok Shivaraman
Computer Science
- Samantha Shim
Political Science with concentration in Legal Studies

Join us to hear graduating students from various majors talk about their experiences at Virginia Tech and what they're currently working on as seniors. Light refreshments will be provided.

REGISTER IN ADVANCE:
<https://bit.ly/3zghQpE>

For questions and/or accommodations, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu

MOSS ARTS CENTER
JAPANESE PUPPETRY WORKSHOP

JOIN US IN OUR EXCLUSIVE WORKSHOP! JAPANESE PUPPETRY WITH AKUTAGAWA ARTISTS KORYU NISHIKAWA V AND TOM LEE

KORYU NISHIKAWA V
Fifth-generation Japanese master Puppeteer and Hoopmaster of Madalyo, Kumano Ningyo.

TOM LEE
Asian American designer, director, and puppet artist who has performed on Broadway in *War Horse* and at the Metropolitan Opera in *Motina Butterfly*, in addition to creating critically acclaimed original work fusing technology and contemporary puppetry techniques.

Asian Cultural Engagement Center,
140 Squires Student Center

February 13, 2023
5:00 - 7:00 PM EST
Light Refreshments will be served.

Scan this code for more information and to reserve your spot!
Free admission; registration recommended.
For questions or accommodations, please contact Dr. Ha at nha@vt.edu.
<https://bit.ly/36E3d4c>

APIDA Queer, Questioning, and Allies Support Group

LGBTQ+ RESOURCE CENTER

What do we do?

APIDA Queer Questioning, and Allies, is a support group for queer APIDAs and those looking to better support queer APIDAs. We meet monthly, and work with organizations such as Cook Counseling, Hokie Wellness, and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center to create a space where meaningful discussions around what being Queer and APIDA means and how that affects the way in which we navigate the world.

For questions and/or accommodations, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu

The Asian Cultural Engagement Center Presents
DAY OF REMEMBRANCE Learning Lunch Series

Featured Speaker
Andy Morikawa
19th Senator, Fellow VT Institute for Policy & Development

February 24, 2023
12 PM - 1 PM EST
Squires Room 140 and via zoom

For questions and/or accommodations, please contact Dr. Nina Ha at nha@vt.edu

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Learning Lunches

The Learning Lunch series involved APIDA faculty members who presented their personal and professional journeys into higher education. These faculty members shared their personal experiences and research. They also gave students advice about the advantages of pursuing graduate and/or undergraduate research and talking to the participants about their experience as APIDA faculty.

Featured speakers included: Dr. Taylan Topcu, Andy Morikawa, Pulitzer Prize Winner Dr. Viet Thanh Nguyen, Composer and conductor Huang Ruo, Dr. Banu Subramaniam.



Learning Lunch with Andy Morikawa



Learning Lunch with Dr. Banu Subramaniam



Learning Lunch with Dr. Viet Thanh Nguyen

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

InspirASIAN Series

The InspirASIAN Series is an initiative by the Asian Cultural Engagement Center that highlights and celebrates the achievements, perspectives, and expertise of APIDA faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students. The panelists share their personal journeys, insights, and experiences in academia and beyond to help, inspire and motivate current APIDA students. This year, the ACEC had the pleasure of hosting two panels. The panelists are listed below:

March Graduate Panelists:

- Diksha Pilania (Master's Student, Architecture)
- Hesam Mahmoudi (Ph.D Student, Industrial and Systems Engineering)
- Farooq Zahid (Master's Student, Aerospace Engineering)
- Minhyuk Ko (Ph.D Student, Computer Science)
- Sydney Dayyani (Master's Student, College of Education Curriculum & Instruction)
- Prithivrajan Thiyagarajan (Master's Student, Industrial and Systems Engineering)

April Undergraduate Panelists:

- Crystal Lee (Computational Modelling and Data Analytics with concentration in Cryptography and Cybersecurity)
- Sophia Eliza Andrión (Microbiology with minor in Psychology)
- Brendan Huang (Clinical Neuroscience with minor in Asian Studies)
- Thrilok Shivaraman (Computer Science)
- Samantha Shim (Political Science with concentration in Legal Studies)



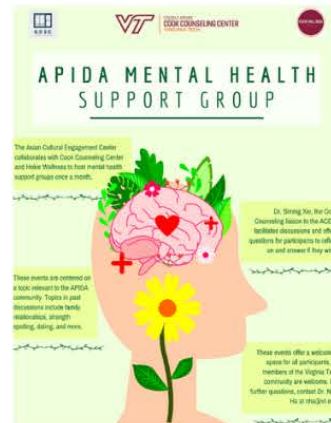
SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

APIDA Mental Health Support Group

The Asian Cultural Engagement Center collaborates with Cook Counseling Center and Hokie Wellness to host mental health support groups once a month. Dr. Siming Xie, the Cook Counseling liaison to the ACEC, and Saad Khan, Hokie Wellness, facilitated discussions and offers questions for participants to reflect on and answer if they wish. These events are centered on a topic relevant to the APIDA community.

Some themes for the year featured:

- Healthy Relationships
- Strength Spotting
- Fear in a Hat



Mental Health Support Group
April 2023

APIDA Men's Support Group

The APIDA Men's Support Group is a monthly event that provides a welcoming and supportive space for APIDA men to come together and discuss various topics. The meeting is open to all and aims to create a sense of community and foster connections among its members. All discussions are confidential and were facilitated by Dr. Siming Xie, who guided the group and offered resources as needed.

The themes featured included:

- De-stigmatizing Mental Health
- Emotions
- Stress Management



Men's Support Group
April 2023

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

APIDA Queer, Questioning, and Allies Support Group

APIDA Queer, Questioning, and Allies, is a support group for queer APIDAs and those looking to better support queer APIDAs. The group met monthly, and worked with organizations such as Cook Counseling, Hokie Wellness, and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center to create a space where meaningful discussions around Queer and APIDA identities and how these identities affects themselves and others. Themes covered during the year include: Social Pressure and Coming Out and Parental Pressure and Coming Out.

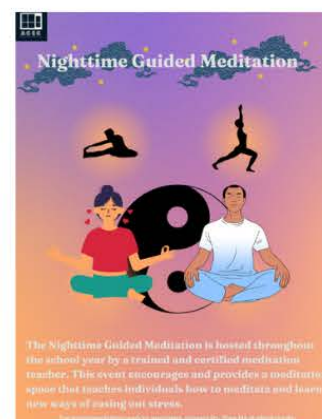


Nighttime Guided Meditation

The Nighttime Guided Meditation was hosted virtually throughout the school year by a trained and certified meditation teacher, Vivek Rajan. This event encouraged and provided a meditative space that taught individuals how to meditate and learn new ways of easing stress.



Vivek Rajan, Facilitator



APIDA HERITAGE MONTH

"Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AAPI Heritage Month) is an annual celebration that recognizes the historical and cultural contributions of individuals and groups of Asian and Pacific Islander descent to the United States. AAPI Heritage Month 2023 will take place from Monday, May 1 to Wednesday, May 31."

- History (A&E Television Networks, LLC)

The ACEC celebrated APIDAHM one month early, in April, by hosting a wide variety of events showcasing and celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage. The events for APIDAHM this year featured:

- **Angry Out Loud: The Bodily Autonomy Edition Series**
 - Part I: Undergraduate
 - Part II: Graduate
 - Part III: Faculty and Staff
 - Part IV: CCC Members, Minoritized, Underrepresented, and/or Underserved Communities
- **“But Where Are You REALLY From?” - DACA Experiences from APIDA Backgrounds** with El Centro and JMU/VT Honors Colleges
- **APIDAs in Public Service**
- **APIDAs and Adoption Panel**
- **Film Showing of Everything Everywhere All At Once** with LGBTQ+ Resource Center and University Libraries
- **APIDAs in Public Health**
- **APID Alumni Society Career Panel**
- **APIDAHM Collaboration with Owens Dining**
- **AASU Guest Speaker**



"But Where Are You Really From?"- DACA Experiences from APIDA Backgrounds



Angry Out Loud: Bodily Autonomy Edition Series

SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

In addition to the signature events and the special events hosted for APIDAHM, the ACEC also organized several events this year including:

- Lunar New Year Collaboration with Owens Dining - Year of the Rabbit/Cat
- Lunar New Year Celebration in the GLC (Collaboration with AASU)
- Japanese Puppetry with Akutagawa in collaboration with Moss Arts Center
- College of Science Community Night
- Violence in Schools (Listening Session Co-sponsored with Virginia Asian Advisory Board and Virginia Latino Advisory Board)
- Scholar in Residence - Dr. Banu Subramaniam Lecture and Learning Lunch
- Ramen for Reading Day
- Achievement Ceremony



Lunar New Year Celebration



Japanese Puppetry with Akutagawa

GRADUATE APIDA STUDENTS

Formed in 2022, the Graduate APIDA Student Organization (GAPIDAS) focuses on the APIDA graduate student experience. The organization aims to build connections and provide a necessary outlet for advocacy and support. Co-founded by Gia Ha and Michelle Choi Ausman, the GAPIDAS utilized the 2022-2023 academic year to define the purpose and goals for the organization as well as identify initiatives to tackle in the upcoming academic year. During the summer of 2022, they participated in the APIDA Caucus book club reading *RISE*, a contemporary look at the Asian American Experience. The following summer, GAPIDA members with the APIDA Caucus and other campus members read and discussed, *Crying in H Mart*. The group aspires to continue its advocacy work for graduate students as well as for the APIDA campus community.



Gia Ha presenting her project - APIDA State of the Union - at the Virginia Tech Graduate School's Diversity Scholars Awards



Michelle Choi Ausman presenting her project on engineering students during the pandemic at the Virginia Tech Graduate School's Diversity Scholars Awards

APIDA CAUCUS

The APIDA Caucus brings together APIDA staff, faculty, and graduate students and their allies to promote the well-being by:

- creating a welcoming and inclusive space for APIDA faculty, staff and graduate students to connect
- advocating for representation and equitable treatment of the APIDA community in all aspects of the university
- recommending actions to improve the working, research, learning and living conditions of APIDA community members
- foster support and empowering relationships between caucus members

During the academic year, Caucus members gathered to develop initiatives and socially to build community. The APIDA Caucus hosted a summer book club that brings together faculty, staff, and graduate students. Additionally, the Caucus hosted monthly socials at various venues.



Group photo of the APIDA Caucus from Fall 2022 gathering

APID ALUMNI SOCIETY

Through the APID Alumni Society, former students can remain connected to each other and the APIDA + Center after graduation. The Asian Pacific Islander Desi Alumni Society (APIDAS) of Virginia Tech, led by Jacqueline Marmol (2019), is an organization dedicated to fostering community for all Asian/Asian American and Pacific Islander alumni. In addition to building a community of alums, it strives to foster mentorships with current undergrad and grad students, provide networking opportunities, and give back no matter where they are.

During APIDA Heritage Month, APIDAS led an alumni panel sharing their experiences post Virginia Tech with students. The panelists' insights and stories provided narratives that inspired current students and future Hokie alumni. Additionally, the APIDAS participate in the Fall and Spring Achievement Ceremonies celebrating an important milestone for APIDA students as well as many homecoming activities.



Photos from Homecoming 2022 Tailgate



Jacqueline Marmol delivering remarks at the Spring 2023 Achievement Ceremony

HIGHLIGHTS

Programming spotlights from the 2022-2023 academic year



Supporting Mental Health

Programming to support mental health

- APIDA Mental Health Support Group
- APIDA Men's Support Group
- APIDA Queer, Questioning, and Allies Support Group
- Nighttime Guided Meditation

InspirASIAN Series and Learning Lunches

- Average attendance of 25 campus community members
- Special Learning Lunch featuring Pulitzer Prize Winner Viet Thanh Nguyen



Collaborations

Intersectional Programming:

- APIDAs in Latin America - Dr. Felix Wang (El Centro)
- Dr. Judy Wu (LGBTQ+ Center)
- Akutagawa - Japanese Puppetry (Moss Arts Center)
- Dr. LaTasha Sarpy - Angry Out Loud (Black Cultural Center)



Overall, this was one of the best and most informative experiences (2023 South Asian Youth Initiative at Yale) I've had since enrolling at VT and I would recommend it to anyone considering the trip in the future.

- Luke Stanley

GOALS

Goals for the upcoming 2023-2024 academic year and beyond

01

Increased offerings and programming

Implement academic related programming and services (e.g.: academic advising, tutoring, study skills seminars) as well as enhance current wellness offerings (additional support groups, peer wellness mentors, and other wellness series).

02

Faculty Cohort

As part of the AANAPISI Grant, develop a faculty cohort program focusing on inclusive pedagogy centered around APIDA and Indigenous students.

03

Living Learning Community

Conceptualize and collaborate on creating an APIDA living learning community to further identity development and foster sense of belonging for students.

REFLECTION

Reviewing the highlights of the 2022-2023 academic year



Student Engagement

Attendance:

- Mental Health Supports Groups averaged 15 students.
- Ramen for Reading Day brought over 230 students to the Center.

Lunar New Year

Highest attendance in Center history with over 200 students, faculty, staff, and community members in attendance.



AANAPISI Grant

Received grant from U.S. Department of Education aimed at improving the APIDA and Indigenous student experiences through holistic support.



I am thankful for hearing about this amazing opportunity through the Asian Cultural Engagement Center. It was very generous of them to provide us with transportation for the trip, which made attending possible for me. In the future, I hope many other students have the opportunity to attend such events!

-Poojita Kapireddy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*We thank you for your continued support
in our efforts at the APIDA + Center*

CONTACT

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