

# ASPIRE ANNUAL REPORT & EVALUATION

BY: RAJU DESAI, LEVALASI LOI-ON, ARLENE DAUS-MAGBUAL, AND GRACE YOO



ASPIRE  
2019-2020





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary is a comprehensive summary of the annual report and an assessment of the ASPIRE program from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020. This current evaluation report seeks to determine whether ASPIRE has supported high-need AA&PI students. Utilizing multiple methods, this report reviews and analyzes the data and assessments from Asian American Pacific Islander Retention & Education (ASPIRE) program at San Francisco State University (SFSU). The ASPIRE program was created to help address the unmet needs of high-need AA&PI students and increase their Fall to Fall retention and graduation rates.

Between October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, ASPIRE has met most of the desired outcomes described in the grant including the following:

- Close to 8,000 AA&PI students were sent emails for continuous broad dissemination of information
- 23 students were referred, 18 students tested, and 13 students were recommended for learning disability support
- 1,916 students participated in the non-cognitive workshops/events
- 1,021 students participated in a peer-led study circles
- 1,105 students participated in learning communities and linked courses
- 18 faculty participated in the faculty learning community
- 14 peer mentors as peer mentors

Major milestones have included the following in response of the pandemic:

- During the last year, the ASPIRE grant strengthened infrastructure support including communicating with students by phone, updating our website weekly to include COVID-19 resources, bi-monthly newsletters emailed via Mailchimp, and an increased daily usage of our social media platforms - Instagram and Facebook. 22 newsletters sharing resources, event and job announcements, AANAPISI scholarship information, and campus deadlines were sent. In order to maintain a virtual presence, the team regularly posted about weekly events, posts from campus partners, and recorded events to share on the Facebook page. For example, the recording of the April 2020 talk on Anti-Asian Discrimination received almost 700 views. ASPIRE also celebrated graduates with a virtual ceremony. The event recording was shared online, collecting over 800 views. Much of ASPIRE resources were connected to a website, increasing site traffic during this period to a total of 3,061 views.
- Due to COVID-19, one milestone was a move towards virtual programming including various non-cognitive workshops crafted during the pandemic. Some of these addressed mental health, zoom fatigue, anti-Asian discrimination, online learning, financial wellness, and sewing masks with successful participation from students, staff, faculty, and off-campus community members.
- During the remote transition, the ASPIRE Faculty Learning Community has continued to flourish and grow with faculty development focused on pedagogy and writing, virtual active learning strategies, critical disability studies, xenophobia against Asian Americans, strengths-based teaching, and remote innovative practices. A total of 18 faculty from the College of Ethnic Studies have participated in the ASPIRE Faculty Learning community.

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- During the remote transition, peer mentors continued to support their peers in the classroom. Peer mentors planned and facilitated events that responded to COVID-19 and racial justice, which included topics such as mental health, community solidarity, basic needs, and time management.

This 2019-2020 evaluation report provides a formative and summative assessment of all activities. These are areas in which the ASPIRE program can continue to learn and grow in the following ways:

- SF State should be commended for their final steps in institutionalization of the director and educational psychologist positions in Year 5.
- It is recommended to continue discussions with the College of Ethnic to institutionalize peer mentoring and to continue working with CEETL FYE on institutionalizing and creating faculty learning communities in particular on equity, inclusion and diversity.
- The ASPIRE FLC has focused on faculty lecturers in the department since faculty lecturers have expressed that they have mainly gotten development and community from the FLC.
- ASPIRE team should continue faculty development and staff and administrator trainings on the needs of AA&PI students especially in the face of the pandemic and the rise of anti-Asian hate and violence.
- ASPIRE study circles have continued to grow and institutionalization may happen in the College of Ethnic Studies when we return to face to face instruction. One recommendation is the continual institutionalization of study circles within the college.

- Although retention has been better with high need AA&PI students, new AA&PI students have experienced a decline in enrollment across the university. One recommendation is for new initiatives to be continually built for outreach and programs on financial literacy.
- ASPIRE team will continue to track all students who have taken ASPIRE linked courses and whether they major/minor in AAS, major/minor in Race & Resistance Studies, or minor in Critical Pacific Islands and Oceania Studies. SF State has slowly allowed access to Navigator. Navigator is a student success platform being used at over 200 US higher education institutions and being implemented throughout the CSU. Navigator is an online tool to connect undergraduate students to faculty, staff and campus resources. Through this tool, users can raise early alerts for students, create a kiosk system, initiate proactive advising campaigns and innovatively help students graduate on time.
- It is recommended that SFSU disaggregate the AA&PI data to see which AA&PI populations have the highest needs in retention.
- ASPIRE team should continually coordinate with campus partners in particular in identifying AA&PI students on academic probation and providing the necessary outreach to these students.
- A final recommendation includes more offerings in cohorting sequenced courses from Fall to Spring. Currently, AAS 101 meets Oral Communication GE requirements. I encourage offering another AAS first-year class possibly AAS 102 that could meet Area E GE requirement.



# SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1899 as a teachers college, San Francisco State University (SFSU) remains united as a community of learners with passion for academic excellence, intellectual discovery, creative and critical inquiry, and educational equity. The University maintains a proud history of commitment to social justice and opposition to oppression and marginalization, which lives on through the work, scholarship and community engagement of its students, faculty, staff and alumni. Located in San Francisco, SFSU is part of the 23-campus California State University (CSU) system and is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). In addition to WASC accreditation, SFSU also maintains specialized accreditation for 28 programs. The University awards bachelor's degrees in 126 areas, master's degrees in 103, and a doctorate in educational leadership.

San Francisco State University is unique in that it is the birthplace of Ethnic Studies and has been home to the only College of Ethnic Studies in the nation since 1969. Ethnic Studies plays a critical role in SFSU's history and legacy of promoting social justice and equity. The university serves approximately 30,000 students annually.

Within the College of Ethnic Studies, the Asian American Studies (AAS) department for over 50 years has furthered the understanding of the histories and cultures of Asian Americans (AA) and the various identities and experiences of AA communities. Most recently, Pacific Studies courses have been offered since 2017 and the development of a Critical Pacific Islands & Oceania Studies minor in 2019.

## AA&PI Context of SFSU

SFSU is an important institution in the region and a key contributor to the education of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AA&PI) population, as well as students who are high-need, low-income and underrepresented in higher education. The Asian American & Pacific Islander Retention and Education (ASPIRE) program has been developed to address the needs of over 1700 high-need students that identify as or experience:

- Low-income
- First generation college student
- Pacific Islander (PI)
- Filipina/o/x
- Cambodian
- Laotian
- Vietnamese
- Barriers to high-need AANAPI and low income student success: Academic barriers (writing / composition), non-cognitive skills, learning disabilities, and financial pressures





# WHAT IS ASPIRE?

The **Asian American and Pacific Islander Retention and Education (ASPIRE)** program aims to improve and expand SFSU's capacity to serve high-need AANAPI and low-income degree-seeking undergraduate students, improve the learning environment, and strengthen academic outcomes by increasing student engagement and enhancing cognitive and non-cognitive skills.

This is done through a partnership between Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) and the College of Ethnic Studies (COES). The three goals for this program is to provide the following 1) broad dissemination of information along with targeted support to high need AA&PI's with a particular focus on AA&PI's with learning differences; 2) create, build and sustain an AA&PI Student Learning Communities and 3) Faculty Learning Communities. This grant has opened up an opportunity to institutionalize long term services for Asian American and Pacific Islander Students at SFSU through the development of the first ever Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Services department housed in SAEM Division of Equity and Community Inclusion (DECI) and the hiring of an inaugural Director for the department. The partnership also extended to colleagues in SAEM Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) with the hiring of an ASPIRE Educational Psychologist to address the needs for ASPIRE students with learning differences.

The ASPIRE Advisory Board was created to support the development of the program and to make sure they are on track with our outcomes. The ASPIRE Advisory Board consists of a PI and CO-PI, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Director of AA&PI Student Services, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, Assistant Vice President of Division of Equity and Community Inclusion, Professors in Asian American Studies and Race and Resistance Studies.

# ASPIRE FRAMEWORKS

**ASPIRE has developed a framework that is rooted in the pillars of Ethnic Studies to provide Access, Relevance and Community.** ASPIRE centers the stories and experiences of AA&PI students, and builds the capacity of faculty and staff to respond to the issues that they face on a regular basis. In our learning communities, faculty and peer mentors read texts and literature to build critical pedagogy through teaching, learning and service.



ASPIRE is organized around annual themes that reflect the framework of the P's: **Purpose, Pathways, Praxis, and Presentation.**

- **Valuing Cultural Knowledge:** Teach ethnic studies that put students, their histories, and their current stories at the center of the curriculum.
- **Student Voice:** Include students in the development of curriculum and programming.
- **Authentic Relationships:** Develop caring and long-lasting relationships between students, teachers, staff, administrators, families, and communities.
- **Community Involvement:** Collaborate with school staff, faculty, and administrators, along with families and community organizations to ensure the well-being of students through services, mentoring, and advising.

## ASPIRE FOCUSES ON THREE QUESTIONS POSED BY DR. DAWN BOHULANO MABALON:

- **WHO AM I?**
- **WHAT IS THE STORY OF MY FAMILY AND COMMUNITY?**
- **WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE A POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE WORLD?**

**Table 1. ASPIRE Quantitative Data Records, 2019-2020**

Evaluation Method	n
<b>Quantitative Data</b>	
Students who were recommended for testing/support for learning disabilities	23
Students who received testing/support for learning disabilities	18
Students participating in workshops	1,917
Peer mentors	14
Students who participated in an ASPIRE linked course	1,105
Students who participated in mentor-led study circles	1,021
Materials developed, approved, & distributed to target students	8,418 (Fall 2019) 9,479 (Spring 2020) 7,813 (Fall 2020)
Faculty participation in learning communities	16



**Table 2. ASPIRE Assessments and Evaluations, 2019-2020**

<b>Evaluation Method</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>ALL AA&amp;PI STUDENTS</b> 2019-2020 SFSU All AAPI Student Online Survey	947	September 2019
<b>ASPIRE Learning Community Students (n=1105)</b>		
<b>Pre-Survey</b>		
Fall 2019 Pre-Survey	260	September 2019
Spring 2020 Pre-Survey	30	January 2020
Fall 2020 Pre-Survey	327	September
<b>Post-Survey</b>		
Fall 2019 Post-Survey	105	December 2019
Spring 2020 Post-Survey	125	May 2020
Fall 2020 Post-Survey	177	December 2020
<b>Focus Groups</b>		
Fall 2019 Focus Group	136	October 2019
Spring 2020 Focus Group	224	May 2020
<b>ASPIRE Peer Mentors (n=14)</b>		
	10	December 2019
	9	May 2020
Fall 2019 Survey	10	May 2020
Spring 2020 Interviews	12	December 2020
Spring 2020 Online Survey	4	December 2020
Fall 2020 Focus Group		
Fall 2020 Online Survey		
<b>ASPIRE Faculty (n=18)</b>		
Fall 2019 Online Survey	17	December 2019
Fall 2019 Focus Group	8	December 2019
Spring 2020 Online Survey	6	May 2020
Fall 2020 Focus Group	12	December 2020
Fall 2020 Online Survey	4	December 2020

# METHODOLOGY

This report is an annual report for 2019-2020 that describes our programs and numbers reached. In addition, this report also serves as an evaluation of our services and programs. As part of the annual report, the ASPIRE team has been conducting evaluations, including annual surveys of AA&PI students, pre-surveys and post-surveys to students involved in ASPIRE learning communities and linked courses, evaluations of events and workshops, monthly updates from peer mentors, and annual surveys of faculty involved in faculty learning community.

To ensure a comprehensive assessment of the ASPIRE program, this current evaluation report answers the following questions:

- To what extent has ASPIRE increased service and support to high-need AA&PI students and those with learning disabilities?
- To what extent has ASPIRE succeeded in improving the learning environment and increasing engagement of target students?
- To what extent has ASPIRE increased targeted student outcomes?
- To what extent do gaps exist in the features of the ASPIRE program? In what ways are students' needs not served?
- What resources and/or steps are necessary to fill the gaps and meet students' needs?

The ASPIRE program was evaluated using multiple methods. ASPIRE has been conducting evaluations, including annual surveys of AA&PI students (pre-surveys and post-surveys to students involved in ASPIRE learning communities and linked courses), evaluations of events and workshops, monthly updates from peer mentors, and annual surveys of faculty involved in faculty learning community.

Dr. Maharaj Desai, the evaluator, has been working with ASPIRE since 2019 and has been trained in both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Dr. Desai started to examine the existing ASPIRE records and current assessments. He worked to start evaluating questionnaire design for the following: an online emailed survey of all AA&PI students on campus, pre and post surveys for all students enrolled in ASPIRE linked courses, post-survey of peer mentors at the end of each semester, and a post-survey of ASPIRE faculty at the end of each semester.

In addition, Dr. Desai assessed ASPIRE qualitatively by conducting multiple focus groups with the various stakeholders in ASPIRE. Focus groups were held with students in each ASPIRE linked course during the middle of the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 semesters. Additionally, focus groups with faculty and peer mentors were also held during the Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020 semesters.

**Table 1. ASPIRE Quantitative Data Records, 2019-2020**

Participation in ASPIRE Programs and Services	n
Students were recommended for testing/support for LDs	23
Students receiving testing/support for LDs	18
Students participating in workshops	1,917
Peer Mentors	14
Students who participated in an ASPIRE linked course	1,105
Students who participated in mentor-led study circles	1,201
Mass email distribution	8,418 (Fall 2019) 9,479 (Spring 2020) 7,813 (Fall 2020)
Faculty participation in Learning Communities	14

# KEY FINDINGS

The findings of this annual evaluation report is divided by sections including by the three comprehensive and complementary activities:

- Broad dissemination of information and targeted support to high-need AA&PIs
- Student learning communities with culturally-relevant and community-responsive practices, linked courses and peer mentors
- Faculty development and faculty learning communities

## BROAD DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION AND TARGETED SUPPORT TO HIGH-NEED AA&PIs

A key component of ASPIRE as outlined in the AANAPISI grant proposal is the broad dissemination of information to high-needs AA&PI students. The AA&PI Student Services Director sends out mass emails to all AA&PI identifying students at the beginning of each semester (Fall and Spring). In total, the number of AA&PI students who receive emails at the beginning of each semester are 8418 (Fall 2019), 9479 (Spring 2020), and 7813 (Fall 2020) students. Additionally, weekly emails are sent as a newsletter to approximately 800 students from ASPIRE linked courses. These emails are sent starting the second week through the end of the semester and contain information about important deadlines, various events, resources, and workshops available on campus. In Fall 2019, emails reached an average of 360 students and in Spring 2020, they reached an average of 231 students. In the beginning of Fall 2020, they averaged 343 students due to additional ASPIRE students accounted for 40% of the total list. MailChimp is utilized to track how many students are reading these emails. In the emails, students are redirected to the website, which includes information on staff, resources, ASPIRE linked courses, and upcoming opportunities such as jobs openings, scholarships, and an event calendar for the semester. During this period the website traffic included 3,061 visitors. There were approximately 561 users in Fall 2019, 1,100 in Spring 2020, 738 users in Summer 2020, and 662 in the beginning of Fall 2020.

### Annual AA&PI Survey

First-year AA&PI San Francisco State University students were invited via email to complete a survey on their experiences as AA&PI students. Students were notified that their responses would help improve existing programs and services. The students were asked questions about their interactions with faculty, SFSU's social environment, and their sense of belonging at SFSU.

## Background of Respondents

- 947 students responded to this survey
- The top 5 ethnicities are as follows: Filipino (30%), Chinese (28%), Vietnamese (8%), Asian Indian (5%), and Japanese (4.5%)
- The gender breakdown is as follows: Male (33%), Female (64%), Trans (0.3%), and Non-Binary (2.3%)
- 21% of students are unsure whether they have enough funds to complete college

## AA&PI Students Frequency of Supportive Campus Interactions, Fall 2020, n=947

- 68% felt comfortable talking to faculty at the end of class
- 70% felt comfortable asking questions during class
- 57% felt comfortable visiting faculty during office hours
- 74% felt comfortable discussing class-related issues by email

## AA&PI Students Perception of ASPIRE's Campus Impact, Fall 2020, n=497

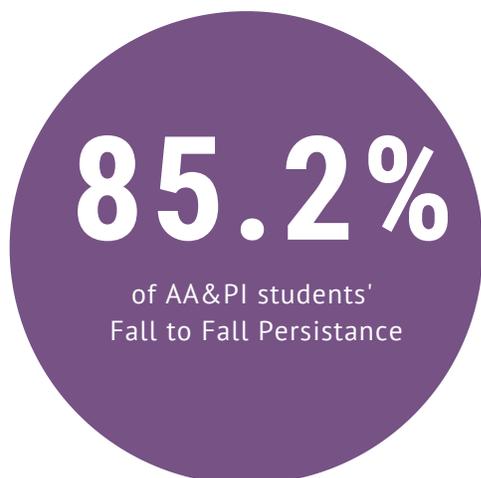
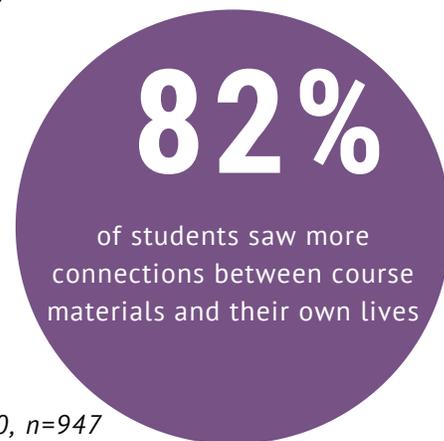
- 82% saw more connections between course materials and their own life
- 59% felt more comfortable talking in class and talking with a faculty outside of class

# IMPACTS OF ASPIRE

## AA&PI Students Perception of ASPIRE's Campus Impact, Fall 2020, n=408

### AA&PI Students Experience of Supportive Campus Environment, Fall 2020, n=947

- 90% felt that faculty care about their students
- 78% felt that students care about their classmates
- 71% of students have made personal friendships with other students in class,
  - 81% ASPIRE students vs. 70% non-ASPIRE students
- 71% of students know about on-campus resources to support academic and/or personal issues
  - 82% ASPIRE students vs. 69% non-ASPIRE students
- 73% of students feel comfortable seeking out on-campus resources
  - 80% ASPIRE students vs. 73% non-ASPIRE students
- 76% of students feel a sense of community at SFSU
  - 83% ASPIRE students vs. 75% non-ASPIRE students
- 78% of students feel a sense of belonging at SFSU
  - 85% ASPIRE students vs. 80% non-ASPIRE students



# FALL TO FALL PERSISTENCE

The percentage of San Francisco State University wide - is 78% compared to 85.2% of AA&PI students on campus.

## Identification and Support for Students with Disabilities

The ASPIRE Educational Psychologist serves as part of a cohesive, collegial team dedicated to providing effective advocacy for students at SF State and assisting students with their agency, self-determination and empowerment as they pursue their educational goals.

The Educational Psychologist (EP) has primary responsibility for performing psychoeducational assessments, recommending effective learning strategies, and assisting with coordination of programs to support Asian American and Pacific Islander (AA&PI) and high-need students' academic achievement, social integration, persistence, and graduation.

The Educational Psychologist conducts Learning Disability (LD) testing based on the California State University criteria. When students are referred for testing to determine if they have a learning disability, they are asked to complete an LD questionnaire that involves questions regarding health and development, family background, school history, and learning challenges. In the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-2020, there were a total of 23 students who completed an LD questionnaire. This number of students who completed a questionnaire for 2019-2020 is lower than previous years and is primarily due to the pandemic and the context of online learning.

After students complete the LD questionnaire, they are then contacted to schedule an initial appointment with the Educational Psychologist (EP). When students present for the initial appointment, students are asked to share more about their educational experience from K-12, their college experiences, and what their learning concerns are. If students present for the first time to Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (and have not been seen by a counselor within the past school year), the EP will also complete an intake process that all students who access CAPS services receive. The EP then shares what the testing process entails and will determine if LD testing is appropriate. After the initial meeting, the EP will schedule testing appointments for the student to begin the testing process. There were a total of 18 students that completed testing entirely. Of those 18 students, 72% were eligible under the California State University Learning Disability criteria. These students were recommended accommodations and to seek services through Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC). 28% of the students who completed testing entirely did not meet the eligibility criteria.

**DR. GWEN AGUSTIN**  
**ASPIRE**  
**EDUCATIONAL**  
**PSYCHOLOGIST**  
**COUNSELING &**  
**PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**  
**(CAPS)**



# STUDENT LEARNING COMMUNITIES WITH CULTURALLY-RELEVANT AND COMMUNITY-RESPONSIVE PRACTICES, LINKED COURSES AND PEER MENTORS

Considerable research has examined the potential of LCs for increasing postsecondary students' academic achievement and retention (Johnson, 2001; Russ, 2010). Studies have shown that there are higher rates of academic achievement, as well as significantly higher rates of social and academic integration for LC students compared to students who did not participate in the LCs (Johnson, 2001; Russ, 2010).

Like research that demonstrates the efficacy of learning communities, ASPIRE's learning communities were designed to give students extra support and additional exposure to AA&PI studies. Students in the LCs are part of a cohort, or learning community. The focus is a learning community of students within AA&PI studies that offers co-curricular activities through ASPIRE; one on one meetings with professors, participation in study circles and one on one meetings with ASPIRE peer mentors. All courses in AA&PI studies will fulfill GE graduation requirements for all majors at SFSU. Faculty teaching in ASPIRE LCs are regularly trained to focus on needs and supports. Students also have the one-on-one support from the Asian American and Pacific Islander Student Services office.

The ASPIRE Learning Communities aim to provide students with an empowering learning community through GE courses in AA&PI studies to gain units for graduation. Since Spring 2017, the ASPIRE LCs have served 2,535 students across 66 sections of various GE courses. Between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020, ASPIRE LCs served a total of 1,105 students across 30 sections of various GE courses. The focus of all the courses is to build a learning community, introduce campus and community resources that could help students succeed in SFSU, and support each student 1:1 with the needs they have outside of the course.



**Table 3. ASPIRE Learning Community and Linked Courses by General Education**

Semester	Course Title	GE Req Fulfilled
FALL 2019	AAS 101: First Year Experience	A1: Oral Communication
	AAS 106: Asian American Activism	E: Lifelong Learning Develop
	AAS 108: Asian American Artistic Explorations	E: Lifelong Learning Develop
	AAS 218: Asian American Culture	C2: Humanities
	AAS 323: Chinese American Identities	UD-D: Social Sciences
	AAS 360: Koreans in the United States	UD-D: Social Sciences
	AAS 372: Vietnamese American Literature	UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
RRS 303: Health & Wellness Among Pacific Islanders	UD-B: Physical Life Science	
SPRING 2020	AAS 101: First Year Experience	A1: Oral Communication
	AAS 106: Asian American Activism	E: Lifelong Learning Develop
	AAS 108: Asian American Artistic Explorations	E: Lifelong Learning Develop
	AAS 110: Critical Thinking & the Asian Am Experience	A3: Critical Thinking
	AAS 210: History of Asians in the U.S.	D2: Social Sciences, US History
	AAS 210: History of Asians in the U.S.	D2: Social Sciences, US History
	AAS 216: Introduction to Asian American Literature	C2: Humanities
	AAS 301: Asian Americans of Mixed Heritage	UD-D: Social Sciences
	RRS 103: Intro to Pacific Studies	D2: Social Sciences, US History
RRS 303: Health & Wellness Among Pacific Islanders	UD-B: Physical Life Science	
FALL 2020	AAS 101: First Year Experience	A1: Oral Communication
	AAS 106: Asian American Activism	E: Lifelong Learning Develop
	AAS 110: Critical Thinking & the Asian Am Experience	A3: Critical Thinking
	AAS 210: History of Asians in the U.S.	D2: Social Sciences, US History
	AAS 210: History of Asians in the U.S.	D2: Social Sciences, US History
	AAS 213: Asian Am and American Ideals & Institutions	D3: Social Sciences - US/CA Government
	AAS 218: Asian American Culture	C2: Humanities
	AAS 332: Japanese American Art & Literature	E: Lifelong Learning Develop/UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
	AAS 360: Koreans in the United States	E: Lifelong Learning Develop/UD-D: Social Sciences
	RRS 103: Intro to Pacific Studies	D2: Social Sciences, US History
RRS 282: Art & Cultural Practices of Oceania		

If students choose to take all of the courses offered in the ASPIRE LC, students can fulfill SFSU general education requirements (27 out of the 51 units). All 27 units can also fulfill a major in AA Studies, allowing students to easily double major if they have an interest in the subject matter.

Over the course of three years, these courses have been part of a curriculum designed to support first-year students and those continuing on with their education. In the first semester, AAS 101: First Year Experience in Asian American Studies, is a course that fulfills Area A3: Oral Communication. In addition, linked courses are offered in Asian American Studies and Race and Resistance Studies for students to continue their general education, with courses offering curricular peer mentoring, study circles, and support from faculty who had been involved in faculty learning communities.



A total of 1,105 students were served in 30 sections of various GE classes between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020. Students in our ASPIRE LCs were emailed a pre-survey in the first 3 weeks of the semester as well as a post-survey in the last week of the semester by their instructors. Some of the survey questions included:

- How often did you experience a sense of community at SFSU?
- How often did you experience campus services outside of the classroom?
- How often did you experience support for studying?
- How often did you experience support for career planning?
- How often did you experience support for time management?
- How often did you experience support for learning styles/differences?

**Table 4. Pre & Post Surveys of ASPIRE Learning Communities / Linked Courses, Fall 2020, Spring 2020 & Fall 2019**

	Prior to ASPIRE learning community/linked courses	Post ASPIRE learning community/linked courses
<b>Fall 2020</b>	<b>n=337</b>	<b>n=177</b>
Sense of Community	87%	98%
Seek Campus Services	83%	85%
Services Support for Studying	87%	97%
Support for Career planning	84%	90%
Support for Time Management	79%	92%
Support for Learning Differences	80%	95%
<b>Spring 2020</b>	<b>n=175</b>	<b>n=122</b>
Sense of Community	93%	98%
Seek Campus Services	81%	90%
Services Support for Studying	80%	94%
Support for Career planning	76%	94%
Support for Time Management	71%	89%
Support for Learning Differences	77%	93%

	Prior to ASPIRE learning community/linked courses	Post ASPIRE learning community/linked courses
<b>Fall 2019</b>	<b>n=260</b>	<b>n=105</b>
Sense of Community	87%	98%
Seek Campus Services	83%	85%
Services Support for Studying	87%	97%
Support for Career planning	84%	90%
Support for Time Management	79%	92%
Support for Learning Differences	80%	95%



After analyzing the post surveys from Fall 2019, Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 and conducting focus groups with all 18 ASPIRE linked courses from Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, the following themes were discovered

- *Flexibility & Understanding of Student Perspective*
- *Community Building & Faculty Communication*
- *Pandemic Responsive Pedagogy*

Over the Fall 2019 semester focus groups were conducted with current ASPIRE students, peer mentors, and members of the faculty learning community. Focus groups were also conducted with 224 of the 235 students enrolled in ASPIRE linked courses during the Fall 2019 semester. Focus groups were conducted in the 9 ASPIRE classes over a 2 week period in October by outside staff. The responses were analyzed and coded for themes. The most significant themes were: students found ASPIRE faculty to be flexible & understanding of student perspective; ASPIRE courses foster a greater sense of community than their non-ASPIRE courses; and the students felt faculty were responsive to the challenges of pandemic-era learning and student experience.

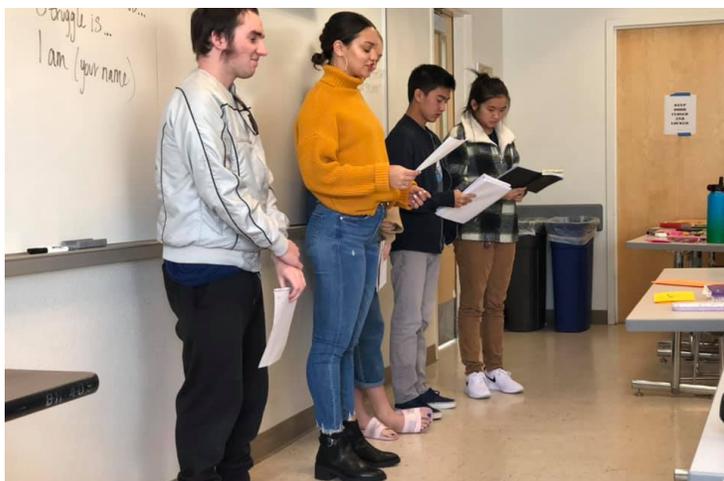
***“WHEN I HAD TO DRIVE ACROSS THE COUNTRY BECAUSE HOUSING WANTED PEOPLE TO LEAVE, MY PROFESSORS WERE SUPER UNDERSTANDING AND GAVE EXTENSIONS AND TOLD ME NOT TO WORRY, EVEN PROVIDING LINKS AND RESOURCES THAT WERE RELEVANT TO MY SITUATION JUST IN CASE I NEEDED THEM.”***

## **FLEXIBILITY & UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENT PERSPECTIVES**

An overwhelming amount of students expressed appreciation for how flexible and understanding ASPIRE faculty were in light of COVID-19. Due to the pandemic, many students experienced changes in their housing, family, and job situations. Some students did not have adequate access to WIFI and other educational resources. ASPIRE faculty were able to support students throughout these challenges by being flexible, understanding, and attentive to individual student needs.

*“Honestly, both my ASPIRE instructor and peer mentor are both amazing individuals. My instructor was especially understanding of the struggles we were all dealing with and was one of the few instructors I had that dealt with remote learning the best (I have 6 classes and only 2 handled the situation well in my opinion). 1) My professor limited his class to once a week, which was helpful for students who either had to work more and didn't have easy access to WIFI and computers. 2) He had office hours frequently and would allow us to schedule appointments with him at other times if that didn't work.”*

***“SHE WAS UNDERSTANDING DURING SOME OF MY ISSUES WITH LOCATION IN REGARDS TO BEING ABLE TO COMPLETE WORK IN A CERTAIN TIME AND COMMITMENTS I HAD TO ABIDE BY THAT TOOK AWAY TIME DURING THE WEEK AND WAS FLEXIBLE WITH ME.”***



“Our peer mentor has provided accommodations for students who were busy with school or work which was very helpful. Also when I got sick during the class the instructor was supportive and gave me a little more time to submit my work which helped me while I was getting better.”

**“I’VE BEEN ABLE TO GROW IN MANY WAYS. ONE BEING THAT I FEEL ACCEPTED IN A COMMUNITY AND HAVING THAT PLACE WHERE I BELONG GIVES ME MORE MOTIVATION AND CONFIDENCE TO PURSUE MY PASSIONS AND EDUCATION.”**

## COMMUNITY BUILDING & FACULTY COMMUNICATION

Another significant theme gleaned from student responses was the sense of community and care cultivated by professors and peer mentors. In particular, students noted that consistent and clear communication from faculty about course assignments was critical for students to remain connected and motivated during remote learning. Furthermore, students especially appreciated that professors and peer mentors actively reached out to check in on students’ well-being and that faculty sought to create community by bringing guest speakers and engaging with students during community study circles.

*I really appreciated how available they were to meet on an online space. And, they would always communicate back through email efficiently.*

*I love how they offer more support for us to get through this fall semester during this pandemic of this year. For instance, check in with the professors & peer mentors. Even stopped by study community circle to get my homework assignments done.*

*Having zoom consultations that are part of the course credits helped connect with the professors on a closer level than we would have if we were completely online and asynchronous. Although it wouldn’t be as close as if we were in person, the presence of these zoom consultations helped keep my motivation to continue schoolwork during the semester.*

*My professor and peer mentor constantly reached out to my peers and I to check up on us. I appreciated the guest speakers that were brought into the class because it helped us understand our community better and the resources on campus.*

*I could meet them on Zoom and the instructions are quite clear at the same time. All these have made the instructor as well as the mentor become supportive. When I need help, I could solve them timely.*



## PANDEMIC RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Students appreciated the ways in which faculty and peer mentors carefully planned their courses in response to remote learning and the COVID-19 pandemic. Students noted that clarity and organization of course assignments and materials were crucial for students to understand the expectations of the course. Additionally, students felt that faculty were attentive to different learning styles and the challenges of remote learning by employing various teaching practices and dividing materials into digestible chunks.

**“HAVING THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE AND THEM ALWAYS TALKING ABOUT THEM MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE SOMEWHERE TO GO AND MAKES US FEEL INVOLVED.”**

*Records lessons in shorter, divided parts that are easy to find and review, provides wide breadth of teaching strategies*

*She has everything listed on ilearn at the beginning of the semester, so as students, I could manage my time for the assignment*

*We met individually during the first few weeks and explained our learning styles and I feel like my instructor took it under consideration during the whole semester which I really appreciated.*

*My professor made the ilearn posts very easy to follow each week. The assignment instructions were clear and the readings and videos were really helpful for me to learn online. I really enjoyed taking this online course.*

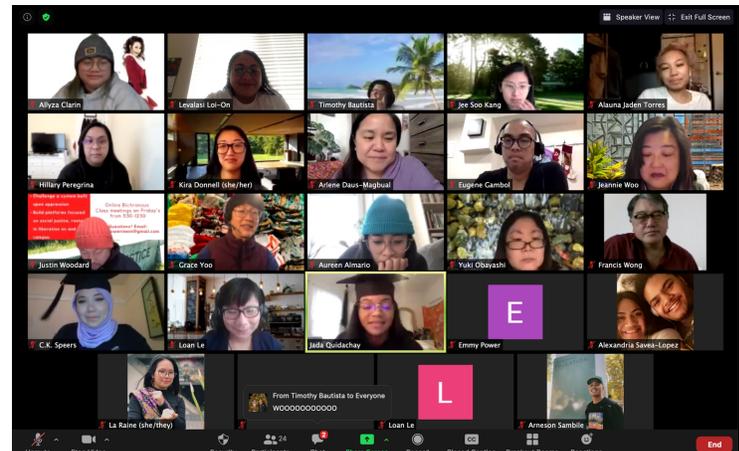
ASPIRE FALL 2020

# SEPTEMBER EVENTS

<b>Wednesday 9/2 @2p</b> ASPIRE Community Mixer	<b>Friday 9/4 @1p</b> Online School Survival Guide: Tips & Tricks for First-Year College Students	<b>Tuesday 9/8 @2p</b> Creative Learning Styles Workshop
<b>Thursday 9/10 @4p</b> AAPI & Disability Justice w/ Alice Wong	<b>Tuesday 9/15 @5:30p</b> Pacific Islander Welcome Night	<b>Thursday 9/17 @2p</b> Unpacking Wealth + Financial Wellness
<b>Tuesday 9/22 @2p</b> ASPIRE Student Success Group: Coping w/ COVID-19 (Until 10/27)	<b>Thursday 9/24 @4p</b> Oral Histories with Community/Family Members	SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER STUDENT SERVICES

QUESTIONS OR ACCOMMODATIONS? EMAIL [ASPIRE@SFSU.EDU](mailto:ASPIRE@SFSU.EDU)

**THE CLASS HAS BEEN EXTREMELY WELL ORGANIZED IN THE MIDST OF REMOTE LEARNING AND IT'S CLEAR THAT THE PROFESSOR CAREFULLY PLANNED OUT HOW THE COURSE WOULD BE RETROFITTED TO SERVE THIS NEW MODEL WE'VE BEEN FORCED TO CONTEND WITH.**





## PEER MENTORING

Multiple sources of data illustrate the benefits of peer mentorship in classrooms. According to Rieske and Benjamin (2015), peer mentors in the classroom provide “meaningful peer-to-peer interactions,” increase students’ sense of belonging and connection to the university, help first-year students transition into university life, facilitate student engagement, refer students to campus resources, tutor students, and develop educational programming (Rieske and Benjamin, pp. 69-72). In another study, Morales, Ambrose-Roman, and Perez-Maldonado (2015) report that mentees not only increased interaction with a university program but also increased interaction with university support resources in general (writing centers, university events, meetings with faculty, etc.), which was particularly surprising given the university’s status as a “commuter institution” (p. 131). The peer mentorship program mitigated mentees’ sense of “otherness” and isolation and also “lessened the distinctions between the students’ home worlds and their school worlds” (Morales, et. al., 2015, p. 132). The peer mentorship program thus represented a

“vital” transition in students feeling more engaged with their academic lives (Morales, et. al , 2015, p. 132).

In the vein of the studies listed above, the ASPIRE linked courses are supported by undergraduate and graduate peer mentors who work with faculty. ASPIRE trains and supports 10 peer mentors each year. Peer mentors serve as an intermediary between the faculty and students in the hopes that students who have difficulty approaching a teacher will be more comfortable approaching a peer that has a working relationship with their faculty. These peer mentors met with ASPIRE staff and their assigned faculty partners weekly. They also attended each class session as well as their assigned study circle times. Additionally, some peer mentors had to meet with individual students outside of the assigned study circle times.

Between Fall 2019 and Fall 2020, 14 peer mentors were trained. Peer mentor training included discussing strategies for student success, peer support, wellness, academic support, and planning for non-cognitive events.

Peer mentors planned and facilitated events that responded to COVID-19 and racial justice, which included topics of mental health, community solidarity, basic needs, and time management. Peer mentor events include:

- ASPIRE Open Mic
- ASPIRE for Black Lives Matter
- Online School Survival Guide: Tips & Tricks for First-Year College Students
- Creative Learning Styles
- Oral Histories with Family & Community

Both students and peer mentors described multiple benefits of having peer mentors in ASPIRE classes. 45-minute focus groups were conducted in all 8 ASPIRE linked courses during the middle of the Fall 2019 semester. Students described feeling more comfortable approaching a peer mentor and described seeing the relationship between the peer mentor and faculty as an indicator of whether they could approach their instructor or not.

- Students Are Better Able to Connect with Peer Mentors
- Peer Mentors See Themselves Differently
- Faculty Being Better Able to Engage with Students

### ***Students Are Better Able to Connect with Peer Mentors***

Students described having peer mentors in their ASPIRE linked classes as having a positive effect because they found it easier to connect with a peer their age. Students also described seeing peer mentors as more approachable and also that they felt less guilty about "bothering" a peer mentor to get help. They shared that speaking to a peer mentor first made them feel more comfortable approaching their professor. Students also really appreciated the regular reminders and check-ins from their peer mentors that helped them feel like part of a community.

Some of the quotes that students shared regarding peer mentors include:

*"Peer mentors provide hands-on help outside of the classroom."*

*"I was able to check in with a peer mentor about struggles in class and about the semester."*

*"It's easier to connect with my peer mentor because she is a student. I'm not afraid to approach her."*

*"To learn from someone who looks like me. Someone who understands the same struggles as my peers and I when we were growing up."*

*"It's nice to have mentors that are in the class who can understand what students are going through and help keep them on track."*

*"They feel like genuine friends"*

*"Peers who are in my classrooms also see me on campus outside of class, and I think Peer Mentorship helps build a sense of overall community on campus for those who are in the program."*

*"I wish every class would have a peer mentor. Students feel intimidated to go to a professor. A peer mentor as a first contact is safer because students don't want to "bother" the professor."*

***"THE BENEFITS I GAINED WERE HAVING A MENTOR WHOM I FEEL COMFORTABLE TALKING TO ABOUT MY IDEAS THAT I WAS TOO SHY TO SHARE IN CLASS. AS WELL AS SOMEONE WHOM I CAN TURN TO ONCE I SIGN UP FOR MINORING IN AAS."***

## Peer Mentors See Themselves Differently

Aside from the benefits to the ASPIRE students, the peer mentor program also has direct benefits on the peer mentors themselves. Peer mentors described their experiences in ASPIRE as transformative in that they begin to see and imagine more for themselves. The experience has shifted their perspectives and is also challenging Model Minority stereotypes of AA&PI students as passive and not "leadership material." This is directly aligned with the grant objective that states peer mentors will: receive professional development; develop coaching skills and leadership skills; build authentic relationships; and help to create a strong community for students.

*"Prior to this program, I had a difficult time considering myself a leader. I have learned significant lessons in providing community for others as well as providing for my community."*

*"Being able to interact with students has allowed me to widen my network, and has helped me realize the joy in working for and working with my community. I have shifted my perspective on my studies, and feel more determined to succeed, not just for my own gain but to help others as well."*

**"BEING A PEER MENTOR HAS AFFECTED ME BY PUSHING ME TO BE A BETTER STUDENT. I THINK MY ROLE AS A PEER MENTOR IS TO BOTH BE AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A STUDENT NAVIGATES SCHOOL WHILE ALSO LEARNING AND SUPPORTING OTHERS. THIS HAS MADE ME A BETTER STUDENT BY FIGURING OUT WAYS I NAVIGATE MY OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THE INTENTION OF LEARNING SKILLS I CAN SHARE WITH OTHERS."**

## Faculty Being Better Able to Engage with Students



**"STUDENTS PERCEIVE MY PEER MENTOR AND I AS A TEAM. I FEEL LIKE AS A FACULTY MEMBER I BENEFITTED THAT THEY COULD RELATE TO THE TEAM."**

In addition, to the benefits to ASPIRE students and peer mentors, faculty also described how having peer mentors in their classes helped them better engage with their students. Faculty found that students were seeing the faculty-peer mentor groups as teams and a positive association with a peer mentor equated to a more positive association with the faculty member. Also, students would be encouraged and motivated to engage with faculty by their peer mentors. Additionally, some faculty would attend study circles to do their own work and students mentioned enjoying seeing faculty in that space and watching their informal interactions with the peer mentors and students.

*"Building that connection with the professor is something I found really helpful. Because when you are on the same page as your professor, it makes the community circles and class lively and fun. Everything just clicks better and makes the experience smoother."*

*"Overall, the peer mentor program is great. Not only am I able to support ASPIRE and AA&PI students on campus, but I am also able to be supported by folks working in ASPIRE."*



## STUDY CIRCLES

This project has implemented strategies to cultivate a sense of belonging and social and academic integration on campus. A number of studies on student retention and persistence have noted the importance of a sense of belonging in maintaining year-to-year attrition (Ishler & Upcraft, 2005; Logan, 2017; Olbrecht, 2016). ASPIRE's study circles and non-cognitive workshops help cultivate that sense of belonging within individual students and in the AA&PI student community more broadly.

Students in ASPIRE linked courses are required to attend at least one study circle per semester per class. Study circles are held four days a week and provide a physical space for students to study on campus. Peer mentors are available during study circles to provide one-on-one support, and students are provided a space to collaborate on readings and assignments for their class. Study circles were moved remotely in Spring 2020 via Zoom and continued into Fall 2020; students were able to share one zoom link for the same time period and study together collaboratively. Additionally, the study circles are available to all students, which builds a larger community across all students at SFSU, and allowed us to stay connected to students virtually. ASPIRE's non-cognitive events and workshops serve a similar purpose in creating a sense of community and belonging across students in ASPIRE linked courses and the wider campus. ASPIRE offers workshops and events, and caters to intersectional AA&PI identities and experiences.

8 workshops and 13 events were held between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020. Between these dates, 1,021 students participated in peer-led study circles.

In Fall 2019 (October-December 2019), the number of students who attended the following included:

- 526 Students at Study Circles
- 193 Students at Non-cognitive Workshops
- 670 Students at Non-cognitive Events

In Spring 2020 (February - May 2020), the number of students who attended the following included:

- 253 Students at Study Circles
- 127 Students at Non-cognitive Workshops
- 601 Students at Non-cognitive Events

In Summer 2020 (July - August 2020), the number of students who attending the following included:

- 33 Students at Non-cognitive Workshops

In Fall 2020 (September 2020), the number of students who attended the following included:

- 242 Students at Study Circles
- 100 Students at Non-cognitive Workshops
- 203 Students at Non-cognitive Events

It is important to note that the number of students participating in study circle declined due to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. While this impacted study circle attendance, our programming numbers stayed the same. In total between October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, the number of students who attended the following included:

- 1,021 Students at Study Circles
- 453 Students at Non-cognitive Workshops
- 1,474 Students at Non-cognitive Events



## PEER-LED STUDY CIRCLES

Between October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, 1,021 students participated in peer led study circles. Study circles are held four days a week from 11AM-4PM. Students in linked courses are required to attend at least one study circle per semester per class, where peer mentors are available to provide one-on-one support. Study circles also cultivate collaboration between students who are able to discuss course readings and prepare for assessments together.

Additionally, they are available to all students, which builds community across ASPIRE linked courses and AA&PI identifying students on campus. While unable provide a physical study space for students on campus, study circles shifted remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Peer mentors continued to lead weekly study circles remotely via Zoom. Students were able to access these study circles and receive 1:1 peer support on class assignments, or to personally check-in with faculty or peer mentors.

*"I think the study circles are a positive consistent space that current and past ASPIRE students can gather to study, learn, and connect with other people for resources and a sense of community"*

*"Study circles are a safe space. They try to make the study session feel like home. You don't find that anywhere else."*

*"The core group that consistently comes to the study circle...they are the ones that open up to the instructor the most."*

*"The thing that benefits me the most is a space to study because the library is full most of the time."*

*"I was able to find a community full of like-minded people. Everyone here is very welcoming even if I don't know them. The peer mentors always greet me with a smile whenever I come to the study circles."*

*"I learned of a new place I can go to for studying when the library is too crowded or loud or distracting."*

*"Study circle really helped me get my stuff done even just for an hour."*

*"There were times where I needed a class to study and the Aspire tutoring [study circle], was there for me to focus"*

## NON-COGNITIVE WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Between October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020, we had 1,917 participants attend our non-cognitive workshops and events. These workshops are in response to feedback that our faculty and peer mentors receive from our students, including from an evaluation sent after every event. ASPIRE partnered with departments and divisions across campus to help with our students' needs. The remainder of Fall 2019 included film screenings of Chinatown Rising and Loveboat Taiwan, and non-cognitive workshops focused on scholarship writing, music, time management, career planning, and self-care.

**Table 5. ASPIRE Workshops & Events by Month, 2019-2020**

<p><b><u>October 2019 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholarship Writing</li> <li>• ASPIRE Music Session</li> <li>• Workshop &amp; Guest Speaker: Rocky Rivera</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>October 2019 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film Screening: Chinatown Rising</li> <li>• Film Screening: Loveboat Taiwan</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>November 2019 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time Management</li> <li>• Career as Community</li> <li>• Being Mixed Race</li> <li>• Self-Care as Resilience</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>November 2019 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation Zen</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>February 2020 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's Talk About Sex</li> <li>• Poetry &amp; Spoken Word</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>February 2020 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Panel: Fight the Tower</li> <li>• Transfer Student Mixer</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>March 2020 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a Success Squad</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>March 2020 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest Speaker: Kat Evasco</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>April 2020 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No-Sew Mask Making</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>April 2020 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASPIRE Talk: Anti-Asian Discrimination</li> <li>• ASPIRE Open Mic</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>May 2019 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASPIRE &amp; AAS Graduation Celebration</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>May 2019 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Your Compassion</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>August 2020 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASPIRE 4 Black Lives Matter</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>August 2020 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASPIRE Open House</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>September 2020 Workshops</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online School Survival Guide</li> <li>• Creative Learning Styles</li> <li>• Unpacking Wealth &amp; Financial Wellness</li> <li>• Oral Histories with Community &amp; Family Members</li> <li>• Student Success Group: Coping w/ COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>September 2020 Events</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASPIRE Community Mixer</li> <li>• AA&amp;PI Disability Justice</li> <li>• Pacific Islander Welcome Night</li> <li>• ASPIRE Game Night</li> </ul>

In Spring 2020, these non-cognitive events broadened to include topics such as sexual health, poetry writing, and mask making after we shifted to a remote campus due to COVID-19. In-person programming was cancelled, and talks were scheduled via Zoom. Guest speakers addressed experiences of Asian American women as scholars, undocumented students, and anti-Asian discrimination in the pandemic. At the end of the Spring 2020 semester, over 150 attendees participated in a virtual celebration of 18 students as they completed their degree. In the summer, ASPIRE collaborated with community organizations to host ASPIRE for Black Lives Matter to address anti-Blackness in the Asian American & Pacific Islander communities. Collectively this informed all of our Fall 2020 programming, which included a community mixer, a gathering for Pacific Islander students, and a conversation on AA&PI Disability Justice with Alice Wong. ASPIRE hosted workshops on remote learning, financial literacy, oral histories, and the only COVID-19 programming on campus. For the first time, ASPIRE offered a six-week student success group focused on how students were coping with the shelter in place mandate and pandemic.

# FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND FACULTY LEARNING COMMUNITIES

A critical strategy within the ASPIRE program involves increasing the capacity of faculty to recognize and appropriately respond to AA&PI students who would benefit from academic and/or non-cognitive support. Bjorklund, Parente & Sathianathan (2002) examined the relationships between faculty teaching practices, classroom climate, and students' perceptions of their gains in communication skills, problem-solving skills, occupational awareness, and academic competence. The study found that increasing faculty interactions and providing constructive feedback improved students' academic and non-cognitive skills. ASPIRE's faculty professional development has helped faculty broaden learning to include experiences of underrepresented AA&PI into the curriculum; refocus learning efforts to meet required learning outcomes while also accommodating high-need/AA&PI populations; and increase the academic and career advising ability of faculty to include cognitive and non-cognitive supports. Due to the pandemic and the switch to remote learning, faculty development has been even more crucial.

Since Fall 2019, a total of 18 faculty from the College of Ethnic Studies have participated in the ASPIRE Faculty Learning community. In addition, there are Summer & Winter faculty workshops that are open to the larger Asian American Studies and Race Resistance Studies faculty. Faculty trainings and meetings have focused on the following topics:

- Writing in the Classroom: Annotated Bibliography
- Active Learning Strategies
- Contemporary Issues of the Pacific: Local and Global Context
- Professional Development with AAS Faculty: Empathy in our Relationships at SFSU
- Welcome to Zoom: Best Practices
- Xenophobia against Asian Americans
- Strengths-Based Teaching and Remote Innovative Practices
- Disability Visibility
- Unlearning the Myth of the Gender Binary
- Comedian Pedagogy: How to bring relevance, energy, and laughter over zoom during COVID-19.



The following are percentages of ASPIRE Faculty with Increased Knowledge and Capacity in Teaching High Need AA&PIs & Non-Cognitive Supports by Semester: Fall 2019 to Fall 2020, n=18 faculty participating (See Table 9).

- 92% of faculty increased their knowledge of research on supporting AA&PI students facing retention and graduation issues
- 100% of faculty increased their knowledge of research on supporting AA&PI students facing learning differences
- 96% of faculty increased their knowledge of research on supporting AA&PI students facing mental health issues
- 92% of faculty increased their knowledge of research on supporting AA&PI students with writing difficulties
- 100% of faculty increased their knowledge of on-campus resources for students facing learning differences, mental health issues, and other non-cognitive challenges
- 96% of faculty increased their knowledge of on-campus resources for students with writing difficulties
- 100% of faculty self-reported increased capacity to serve high-need AA&PI students (Faculty indicated 7 or higher in increased capacity)



**Table 6. Percentage of ASPIRE Faculty with Increased Knowledge and Capacity in Teaching High Need AA&PIs & Non-Cognitive Supports by Semester: Fall 2019 to Fall 2020**

	Fall 2019 n=8	Spring 2020 n=10	Fall 2020 n=1	Total Mean n=29
Knowledge of Research on supporting AA&PI students facing retention and graduation issues	88%	80%	82%	83%
Knowledge of Research on supporting AA&PI students facing learning difficulties	100%	80%	73%	83%
Knowledge of Research on supporting AA&PI students facing mental health issues	88%	90%	73%	83%
Knowledge of Research on supporting AA&PI students with writing difficulties	88%	80%	82%	82%
Knowledge of On-Campus Resources for Students facing learning differences	100%	100%	82%	93%
Knowledge of On-Campus Resources for Students facing mental health issues	100%	100%	73%	90%
Knowledge of On-Campus Resources for Students with Writing Difficulties	100%	100%	73%	90%
Knowledge of On-Campus Resources for Students with Other Challenges (housing, financial aid, immigration, etc.)	100%	100%	73%	90%
Referred Students to On-Campus Resources for Learning Differences	88%	80%	55%	76%
Referred Students to On-Campus Resources for Mental Health Issues	75%	90%	64%	76%
Referred Students to On-Campus Resources for Writing Difficulties	100%	80%	73%	90%
Referred Students to On-Campus Resources for Other Challenges (housing, financial aid, immigration, etc.)	88%	90%	82%	86%

After each faculty learning community, surveys were collected utilizing open-ended questions. In the survey, questions were asked about the impact and utilization of Faculty Learning Community trainings in the classroom, suggestions for future trainings on specific content areas, and suggestions for trainings to support students with high needs in the classroom.

Focus groups were also conducted. These were the three major themes:

1. How ASPIRE helped to increase faculty capacity to serve high-need AA&PI students.
2. How ASPIRE helped to increase faculty capacity to serve students' non-cognitive skills.
3. How ASPIRE faculty learning community improved pedagogies on writing and caring for students.

## Impact and Utilization of Faculty Learning Community Trainings

Faculty responses to surveys and focus groups indicated that ASPIRE's Faculty LC is having a positive impact on their effectiveness in serving high-need AA&PI students. They mentioned the benefits of the ASPIRE faculty trainings on their pedagogical praxis which makes them more highly qualified educators. Additionally, they described specific tools from the trainings that helped them better meet students cognitive and non-cognitive needs. The adjunct faculty further described the experience as the only sense of community they were able to find as non-tenure track faculty on a college campus. This community motivated them to want to further develop and improve their pedagogical praxes.

*"I have used multiple active learning strategies shared by my colleagues and also shared by our facilitators. These strategies have helped me to engage my students in diverse ways."*

*"I have been able to incorporate aspects of writing tools and exercises for my students. I feel that also bringing in aspects to help develop emotional intelligence and reflective skills have also helped my students grow as people."*

*"The most relevant workshop has been the PI studies training. It was a full day, but I wish it was 2. It makes me rethink what "inclusivity" looks like in the classroom, as well as the dangers of canonization in an interdisciplinary field"*



*"My ASPIRE mentor is critical to my classroom infrastructure and core to relational pedagogy. I have utilized study circles and prioritized 1:1 teacher / student check-ins. I have referred a handful of students to ASPIRE appointed psychologist (Gwen)." have different strengths and learning styles."*

*"In general I am now creating my classes as more "student-centered" as opposed to my old school practice of teaching with a mostly teacher centered approach that usually took into account grading, administrative work, following all the university rule, and then lastly, student needs. I am spending more time in and out of class listening to, guiding and building relationships with our students. I am consciously challenging myself to break out of the entraining "banking model" of schooling that I've been accustomed to, and creating more project based and hands on in-class exercises to make the learning more meaningful, relevant and fun for all of us. I am taking more classroom time to talk about diversity of learning approaches, how my assignments and assessments are tied to our course learning objectives, and what MY TEACHING GOALS ARE to be as fully transparent and HUMAN as I can be with the students."*

*"I have had students take learning style surveys to help them better understand different learning styles and reflect on their own learning and studying strengths and practices. I think use that to encourage more cohesive group work, as students are more aware of what their own strengths and contributions to the group can be, and are also mindful of the fact that their group members may have different strengths and learning styles."*

**“HAVING DRAFTED A TEACHING STATEMENT WAS POWERFUL AND HOWEVER ITERATIVE IT IS YEAR TO YEAR, I AM MINDFUL NOW IN EXECUTING IT IN ACTION AND INTENT.”**

**“I HAVE LEARNED SO MANY WAYS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM AND WORKED ON GETTING BETTER EACH SEMESTER.”**

## Suggestions for Future Faculty Learning Community Trainings

As faculty further hone their craft in the LC, they begin to spot more areas in which they need further development to better serve high-need AA&PI students. The responses from the end of the semester surveys indicate both the level of engagement of faculty in the process of collective inquiry and their new understandings of the blindspots in serving high-need AA&PI students in the AAS and RRS departments.

*“Trainings that are led by academic experts / researchers, or more engagement with other faculty members from the AAS Department, as well as possibly other educational practitioners and educators from other campuses would be helpful to support the teaching of under-represented AA&PI experiences for faculty.”*

*“I would love to learn about the South Asian American Experience.”*

*“Loved the PI workshop we had early in the semester. I think it is a necessary one every semester / year for new faculty to understand never to conflate the experiences of AA and PI folks (particularly addressing this idea to those of Filipino descent).”*

*“I would love to feel more informed about SE Asians to be able to include more in my curricula. I think an approach that could connect the experiences of different ethnic/marginalized groups through the common history of militarization and/or colonization would be powerful.”*

*“I’d appreciate trainings on engaging students with learning disabilities in the classroom. I feel equipped to work with and refer students for services but I could benefit from a conversation about how various learning disabilities manifest in the classroom and how to support students in the moment.”*

*“I’ve found the ASPIRE Faculty iLearn page to be very helpful with providing many and most of the resources that have been useful to share with students in the classroom who may have high needs. One training that might be helpful would be to have folks who work with DSP come to talk and share experiences and strategies for working with students with learning disabilities - a topic I felt like I could have learned more about.”*

*“I would love trainings that include the peer mentors on strategies for us to support students together, ie examples of how faculty and peer mentor can work together to structure support for a writing assignment.”*



## Changes to Probation, Units, Retention, Graduation

Currently, ASPIRE's goals for probation, units, retention, and graduation are based off of SFSU's total student population. While, those numbers do not show improvement, the six-year graduation rates for AA&PI students and high-need AA&PI students are significantly higher than the total university average. The four-year graduation rates are slightly lower for high-needs AA&PI students and just about the same for AA&PI students.

### Academic Probation

An objective of this grant was to decrease the percentage of high-need FTFTF placed on academic probation by 6% among high need APIs. The percent of students on academic probation have fluctuated widely over the last 5 years. A campus effort is in place for first-year academic advising for all students starting in Fall 2020.

**Table 7. Academic Probation at the End of First Term**

Cohort	High Need API			API			Total FTFTF		
	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%
Fall 2015	828	66	8.0%	1,019	79	7.8%	4,081	438	10.7%
Fall 2016	748	78	10.4%	894	90	10.1%	3,531	437	12.4%
Fall 2017	766	100	13.1%	913	120	13.1%	4,084	717	17.6%
Fall 2018	778	90	11.6%	984	117	11.9%	4,066	677	16.7%
Fall 2019	730	78	10.7%	889	87	9.8%	3,517	539	15.3%

### Credits earned in first term

The baseline units for SFSU students attending full-time is 12 units. The ASPIRE grant's objective was to increase units by all SF State students by 3 units. Over the past 4 years, mean units have increased slightly among highly needy AAPI students from 11.66 in Fall 2015 to 12.90 in Fall 2019. Also, among APIs, campus means have also increased from 11.75 to 13.03 for APIs and 11.20 to 12.33 among FTFTF.

**Table 8. SFSU Credits Earned in First Term**

Cohort	High Need API		API		Total FTFTF	
	Cohort	mean	Cohort	mean	Cohort	mean
Fall 2015 - Units taken	828	13.19	1,019	13.22	4,081	13.12
Fall 2015 - Units earned		11.66		11.75		11.20
Fall 2016 - Units taken	748	13.53	894	13.54	3,531	13.36
Fall 2016 - Units earned		11.67		11.76		11.27
Fall 2017 - Units taken	766	13.74	913	13.81	4,084	13.46
Fall 2017 - Units earned		12.09		12.17		11.25
Fall 2018 - Units taken	778	13.93	984	13.99	4,066	13.80
Fall 2018 - Units earned		12.90		12.93		12.34
Fall 2019 - Units taken	730	13.95	889	14.03	3,517	13.79
Fall 2019 - Units earned		12.90		13.03		12.33

## Fall to Fall retention

The overall Fall to Fall one-year retention rates among SF State full-time students (FTFTF), Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) students and high need Asian American and Pacific Islanders (API) students improved this academic year from three to four percentage points. Because of the grant, there are continuous improvements in retention for high need API students. This Fall there was an increase in retention from 85.2% in the previous year to 89.5% this Fall. These increases are attributed to the available support and information provided by the ASPIRE grant.

**Table 9. Fall to Fall One-Year Retention**

Cohort	High Need API			API			Total FTFTF		
	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%
Fall 2015	828	713	86.1%	1,019	883	86.7%	4,081	3,266	80.0%
Fall 2016	748	629	84.1%	894	752	84.1%	3,531	2,782	78.8%
Fall 2017	766	683	89.2%	913	812	88.9%	4,084	3,242	79.4%
Fall 2018	778	663	85.2%	984	840	85.4%	4,066	3,201	78.7%
Fall 2019	730	653	89.5%	889	780	87.7%	3,517	2,863	81.4%

## 4-year and 6-year graduation rates

The overall 4-year graduation rates among SF State full-time students (FTFTF), Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) students and high need Asian American and Pacific Islanders (API) improved this academic year from one to two percentage points. For high need APIs, the 4-year graduation rate improved from 23% (Fall 2015 cohort) to 24.6% (Fall 2016 cohort). Each cohort entering SF State since Fall 2012 has seen an increase in 4-year graduation. Over the last 4 years, SF State students in general, Asian American and Pacific Islander students and high need Asian American and Pacific Islanders students have seen a 4 to 5 percentage increase in their 4 year graduation rates. These increases are attributed to the available support and information provided by the ASPIRE grant.



The overall campus 6 year graduation rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) students and high need Asian American and Pacific Islanders (API) students improved this academic year, with an increase of 3 to 4 percentage points. This last academic year we saw the greatest improvement in 6-year graduation rates for Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) students and high need Asian American and Pacific Islanders (API) students. These increases are attributed to the available support and information provided by the ASPIRE grant.

**Table 10. Four-Year Graduation Rate**

Cohort	High Need API			API			Total FTTF		
	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%
Fall 2012	872	174	20.0%	1,070	226	21.1%	3,756	810	21.6%
Fall 2013	864	178	20.6%	1,052	234	22.2%	3,550	788	22.2%
Fall 2014	839	193	23.0%	997	237	23.8%	3,630	903	24.9%
Fall 2015	828	194	23.4%	1,019	253	24.8%	4,081	982	24.1%
Fall 2016	748	184	24.6%	894	233	26.1%	3,531	935	26.5%

**Table 11. Six-Year Graduation Rate**

Cohort	High Need API			API			Total FTTF		
	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%	Cohort	#	%
Fall 2010	787	457	58.1%	1,007	599	59.5%	3,609	1,919	53.2%
Fall 2011	774	497	64.2%	940	604	64.3%	3,469	1,859	53.6%
Fall 2012	876	528	60.3%	1,077	664	61.7%	3,756	2,062	54.9%
Fall 2013	864	532	61.6%	1,052	655	62.3%	3,550	2,006	56.5%
Fall 2014	839	551	65.7%	997	649	65.1%	3,630	2,004	55.2%



# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations based on the evaluation of data collected by the ASPIRE team and qualitative analysis of interviews and focus groups.

- SF State should be commended for their final steps in institutionalization of the director and educational psychologist positions in Years 4 and 5.
- It is recommended to continue discussions with the College of Ethnic to institutionalize peer mentoring and to continue working with CEETL FYE on institutionalizing and creating faculty learning communities in particular on equity, inclusion and diversity.
- The ASPIRE FLC has focused on faculty lecturers in the department since faculty lecturers have expressed that they have mainly gotten development and community from the FLC.
- ASPIRE team should continue faculty development and staff and administrator trainings on the needs of AA&PI students especially in the face of the pandemic and the rise of anti-Asian hate and violence..
- ASPIRE study circles have continued to grow and institutionalization may happen in the College of Ethnic Studies when we return to face to face instruction One reco
- mmendation is the continual institutionalization of study circles within the college.
- Although retention has been better with high need AA&PI students, new AA&PI students have experienced a decline in enrollment across the university. One recommendation is for new initiatives to be continually built for outreach and programs on financial literacy.
- ASPIRE team will continue to track all students who have taken ASPIRE linked courses and whether they major/minor in AAS, major/minor in Race & Resistance Studies, or minor in Critical Pacific Islands and Oceania Studies. SF State has slowly allowed access to Navigator . Navigator is a student success platform being used at over 200 US higher education institutions and being implemented throughout the CSU. Navigator is an online tool to connect undergraduate students to faculty, staff and campus resources. Through this tool, users can raise early alerts for students, create a kiosk system, initiate proactive advising campaigns and innovatively help students graduate on time.
- It is recommended that SFSU disaggregate the AA&PI data to see which AA&PI populations have the highest needs in retention.
- ASPIRE team should continually coordinate with campus partners in particular in identifying AA&PI students on academic probation and providing the necessary outreach to these students
- A final recommendation includes more offerings in cohorted sequenced courses from Fall to Spring. Currently, AAS 101 meets Oral Communication GE requirements. I encourage offering another AAS first-year class possibly AAS 102 that could meet Area E GE requirement.

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