For a long time, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) have been categorized as one monolithic group. This perpetuates the Model Minority myth that misleadingly posits that all of our communities thrive; and in particular, our AANHPI students succeed academically and do not need help. In fact, we know that this myth distorts the reality that many AANHPI students struggle and need the extra support. I applaud the Campaign for College Opportunity’s report that examines the state of AANHPI higher education students. Their thoughtful attention to data disaggregation reveals the stark achievement gaps that exist within our AANHPI students, in particular our Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander students. It is my hope that this powerful, well-researched report along with its important recommendations will better inform higher education stakeholders and policymakers of the need to address these inequities, and provide the needed programs and resources to ensure all of our AANHPI students succeed.

Dr. Cirian Villavicencio
Commissioner, California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs
Chair, Higher Education & Equity Committee

For decades, the model minority myth has harmed Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and all under-resourced communities. This myth ignores the socioeconomic struggles of AANHPI communities, renders us silent, and worse---pits communities of color against one another for resources. This report by the Campaign for College Opportunity’s State of Higher Education for AANHPI comes at a critical time as educators, advocates, and students are calling for access and compassion in education, from kindergarten to doctoral programs. As a public servant, educator, student, and mother, my hope is this report will help lead to the systemic change our students need.

Dr. Kirin A. Macapugay
Vice Chair, California Commission on APIA Affairs Higher Education Committee; Trustee, Southwestern Community College District; Professsor, San Diego City College

The State of Higher Education for Asian American and NHPI Californians report illuminates the diverse experiences of Asian American and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI), and therefore peels the layers of educational successes and disparities. Many AANHPI communities, including Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Samoan, Tongan and many more communities have been historically locked out of accessing the appropriate resources and support to attain higher educational goals, leaving educational equity gaps deep and wide. We must turn the Campaign for College Opportunity’s recommendations into action to ensure California meets the needs of all AANHPI students and families.

Nkauj Iab Yang
Executive Director, California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs
The State of Higher Education for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders details the diverse and complex educational experiences of AANHPI students. Through the collection and use of disaggregated data – an approach that should be utilized by all policymakers and institutional leaders, practitioners, and researchers – this report rightfully offers and advocates for more nuanced public policies that bring greater educational equity for our marginalized and underserved AANHPI students.

Mike Hoa Nguyen  
Assistant Professor of Education, University of Denver

As the fastest growing population in the U.S., it is important to understand the unique needs, challenges, and contributions of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population. I applaud the Campaign for College Opportunity for their focus on the AAPI student population in California and encourage policymakers, education leaders, and advocates to pay close attention to the recommendations.

Robert Teranishi  
Professor Education and Morgan and Helen Chu Endowed Chair in Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles

I am hopeful to see that CSU and UC enrollment for Asian American and Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander (NHPI) Californians as a whole remained positive despite the immense struggle of the COVID-19 pandemic, but we still have much work to do. The State of Higher Education for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Californians brings to light the glaring inequities in four-year college access with only 44 percent of NHPI students completing A-G curriculum. As Chair of the Senate Education Committee and a representative of the 20th State Senate District and a diverse population of Asian American and NHPI constituents, I look forward to the valuable data and recommendations this report will bring as we continue to fight for equitable access to our prestigious UCs and CSUs.

Senator Connie M. Leyva  
California State Senator Representing Senate District 20

Access to higher education is critical to Californians; however, too often the diversity and needs of the Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA/NHPI) communities are rendered invisible by lack of data and stereotypes such as the Model Minority Myth. As Chair of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Legislative Caucus and a State Senator, I am grateful to the Campaign for College Opportunity for issuing their report, The State of Higher Education for AANPI Californians, which disaggregates AA/NHPI student data to identify educational inequities impacting diverse AA/NHPI communities. The AAPI Legislative Caucus looks forward to working with stakeholders and our community to ensure all AA/NHPI students are supported in achieving their educational goals.

Senator Dr. Richard Pan  
California State Senator Representing Senate District 6

“The report is very timely in light of the Asian hate sentiments and violence we have witnessed across the country, including on college campuses. As the Assemblymember representing Southern California’s only Asian-majority Assembly District and a former trustee of the Los Angeles Community College District, I thank the Campaign for College Opportunity for highlighting the support needed to address a very diverse community. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the state-level proposals,”

Assemblymember Mike Fong  
California State Assemblymember Representing Assembly District 49

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