



IN THIS MOMENT



2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT **A REFLECTION**



**THE MOST CHALLENGING
MOMENTS IN HISTORY OFTEN
GIVE RISE TO MOMENTS OF
GREAT CHANGE.**

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

To say that this past year was challenging for the APIA (Asian and Pacific Islander American) community, the students we serve, and APIA Scholars as an organization would be an understatement. The 2020–2021 fiscal year, which started on the backdrop of a global pandemic that caused physical and mental health challenges, financial hardship, and disruptions to Scholars' day-to-day lives, quickly escalated from rhetoric on misplaced Asian blame to a rise in anti-Asian hate incidents and finally racist attacks on members of the APIA community.

However, the most challenging moments in history often give rise to moments of great change. Since 2003, APIA Scholars has upheld its unwavering commitment to serving the underserved but this year prompted us to dig deeper into what holistic supports for tomorrow's diverse leaders should look like, especially in the midst of the ever-changing landscapes of higher education and industry. How do we continue to innovate the way we educate, elevate, and empower the *whole Scholar* in the new normal and beyond?

I am proud to share this report as a reflection of our resilience and commitment to equity through the increased impact and growth of our flagship programs, a mental health

initiative intersecting cultural sensitivity and innovative technology, two new fellowship programs on applied research and social innovation, and actionable research to drive systemic change. This past fiscal year, APIA Scholars was also honored to receive a significant and transformative gift that will ensure our impact in a fast-growing APIA community continues well into the future.

Lastly, this year's Annual Report is personally significant to me in that it illustrates the power of collective change. Our ability to pivot, innovate, and uplift during such a year was only possible through the support of our partners and community. This support came in many forms: donations, grants, and volunteerism, but also thought partnership, alliance-building, and, simply, friendship.

Our goal has always been to forge an equitable future for all. With the generous support of our many partners and donors around the country, our corps of dedicated volunteers and mentors, and our amazing Scholars and Alumni, we are well on our way. This year and always, we are grateful for your support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Noël S. Harmon". The signature is stylized with a large, bold "N" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Noël S. Harmon, PhD

EMPOWERING SCHOLARS SINCE 2003

Our Mission is to make a difference in the lives of APIA students by providing them with resources that increase their access to higher education which serves as the foundation for their future success and contributions to a more vibrant America.

Our Vision is to see that all Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have access to higher education and resources that cultivate their academic, personal and professional success regardless of their ethnicity, national origin or financial means.

APIA SCHOLARS STRIVES TO IMPACT THE LEADERSHIP OF TOMORROW THROUGH
EQUITABLE HIGHER EDUCATION WHICH SERVES AS A FOUNDATION TO AN EMPOWERED
APIA COMMUNITY: EDUCATE, ELEVATE, AND EMPOWER.

EDUCATE

We remove barriers to postsecondary education access and success for low-income underrepresented APIA students, serving as the foundation for their future.

ELEVATE

We raise visibility and uplift the stories of our diverse Scholars and Alumni while building coalitions with other communities traditionally marginalized in higher education and leadership.

EMPOWER

We expand knowledge through research and collaborate across sectors to achieve systemic change, envisioning a future of APIA representation, inclusion, and equity.

SCHOLAR PROGRAMS



BUILDING COMMUNITY

APIA Scholars embraced virtual connectivity and took every advantage to meet our Scholars where they were. We connected Scholars with peers, mentors, industry leaders, and those who could support them during a tumultuous time. From webcast series, to virtual summits, to virtual entertainment, APIA Scholars brought the APIA community together to create stronger connections and embrace the moment.



SUPPORTING TRANSITIONS

Everyone learns what it takes to transition from one phase of life to the next. As part of our mission, APIA Scholars helps students transition from high school to college and college to career; however, this year we helped transition our community from today to tomorrow without ever really knowing what tomorrow would bring. We did so by providing tangible resources and learning experiences to students and alumni to help them understand the impact of community and assure them that they are not alone in this journey of life.



CENTERING WELLNESS

There are many factors that contribute to the education and career choices our Scholars make. APIA Scholars mobilized to better understand the impacts, challenges, and barriers to educational completion and job placement our Scholars and Alumni were facing. In this process, we learned more about just exactly who our Scholars and Alumni are—their personalities, needs, and experiences—and realized the importance of centering on Scholar and Alumni mental and physical well-being to grow together as a community.



I found Elevating Leaders Summit very uplifting to know people were willing to be so open and personal with us and give us all an insight into what we could experience and how to overcome it. —APIA Scholar 2020-21 Cohort

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Elevating Leaders Summit

The inaugural Elevating Leaders Summit (ELS) helped to prepare more than 100 incoming Scholars to thrive on campus. To contribute to their personal development and success, Scholars analyzed justice issues impacting APIAs, examined their personal and cultural identity, and immersed themselves in a community of understanding.

ELS left a tremendous impact on participating Scholars with 98% agreeing that they left with a strong sense of their identity and the ability to name the personal experiences and cultural values that shape who they are.



Industry Expert Series

The APIA Scholars Industry Experts Series launched in 2020 as a series of interactive virtual sessions designed to expose Scholars to the experiences of APIA industry leaders and potential career pathways. This program supported over 250 students and gave them exposure to diverse industries from science,

technology and engineering to healthcare, the arts, and entertainment.



Social Innovation Fellowship

With generous sponsorship from McDonald's, APIA Scholars launched the Social Innovation Fellowship to elevate Scholar and Alumni voices in designing solutions to serve future Scholars. Fellows are trained in the frameworks of design thinking and learn how to apply this skill set to promote the success of APIA college students. Drawing on personal experience and interviews with APIA college students, the team sought to answer out how to:

- Create a mentorship experience that feels like a second family to college students
- Help students create a safe and productive space to connect with their families about their emotional health
- Help students assess their needs for fulfillment and stability throughout the career exploration process



**APIA Scholars staff
welcome new Scholars at
the first annual Elevating
Leaders Summit.**



Mentorship

The APIA Scholars Professional Mentorship program facilitates virtual mentorships with APIA Scholars and industry professionals. In 2020–21, more than 250 mentees were matched with professional mentors who collectively

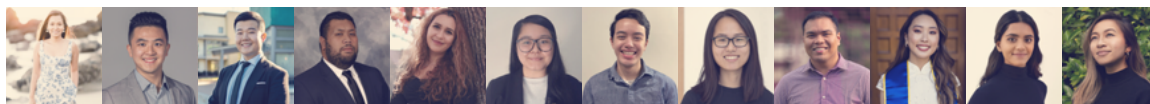
logged more than 1,500 conversations supporting and guiding individual mentees on how to access and advance their desired careers. This program allows for meaningful connection and skill development to empower the next generation of APIA leaders.



Mentorship Success Story

Fa'aumu Kaimana received their undergraduate degree in 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Fa'aumu sought career guidance and was paired with mentor Taylor Ahana, who shares Fa'aumu's Pacific Islander identity. Taylor recommended Fa'aumu apply to AmeriCorps and explore a career in academia. With Taylor's guidance, Fa'aumu found employment with AmeriCorps and was accepted into a PhD program in Gender & Sexuality Studies at University of Minnesota for Fall 2021.

Social Innovation Fellows 2021



L to R: Aishwarya Sharma, Chris Shin, Henry Huang, Jerry Viena, Kaitlyn Nedrow, Maria Dolojan, Melvin Nguyen, Rui Jia Zheng, Ryan Mandado, Sharon Yuen, Soma Sharan, Sydney Nguyen.



Fostering community, providing a platform, and facilitation of meaningful dialogue regarding issues AAPI and other students of color are facing are essential in developing community and industry leaders of tomorrow. —Maria Dolojan, APIA Scholars Social Innovation Fellow 2021

Program Highlights (continued)



A Focus on Mental Health

Mental health is not a new issue. Recent events have only elevated the need for mental health awareness and support among key stakeholders—policymakers, higher education grant-makers, educators, and students themselves. Since the pandemic, staff noted a spike in mental health “insight flags” including depression, discrimination, dropping out, roommate conflict, and severe anxiety. In response, the APIA Scholars Mental Health Initiative was formally launched in May 2021 to destigmatize

mental health support and provide accessible and culturally sensitive resources.

With the support of The Kresge Foundation and ECMC Foundation, the initiative rolled out with an **Awareness Campaign** and will continue with **Education** and **Services** with virtual events and the implementation of a mobile teletherapy application—META Teletherapy—which will provide virtual access to professional and culturally sensitive mental health support and self-advocacy tools.

Mental Health Awareness and Education Events

Spoken Word Night

In honor of Asian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month, APIA Scholars hosted a Spoken Word Night Event. This event elevated Scholar/Alumni performances in an effort to raise awareness around mental wellness within the APIA community and cultivate a sense of community through story-telling. By participating in this event, we aimed to empower Scholars, Alumni, and partners with the understanding that the journey towards mental wellness is best done together.

Radical Healing: Surviving to Thriving, Presented by the Steve Fund

In this workshop, we co-created a collective healing experience. Together, we explored the history and rationale of radical healing,

introduced the psychology behind the framework, generated a personal definition of radical healing and imagined it in action.

Mental Health and the APIA Identity

Presented by National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA)

This interactive training focused on examining mental health and self-identity, building skills around mental health communication, and understanding methods of self-care and healing. Facilitated by Dr. DJ Ida, Executive Director of the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA), the session provided Scholars and Alumni with the tools to identify ways in which identity overlaps with mental health and develop skills to cultivate wellness.

I really LOVED the topics that were discussed. All of the panelists were so relatable and helped me ease my tension a little bit for college. —APIA Scholar 2020-21 Cohort





**SINCE 2003, APIA SCHOLARS HAS
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TO SERVING THE UNDERSERVED BUT THIS
YEAR PROMPTED US TO DIG DEEPER.**

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

In the last 18 years, APIA Scholars has worked with sponsors and partners to provide a variety of **scholarships to over 7,500 students**. Scholarship awards range from **one-time \$2,500 awards to multi-year \$20,000 awards**.

2021-2022 APIA SCHOLAR COHORT

337

Scholars
awarded

79%

First generation
college students

46%

First in their family
to attend college

71%

Come from families
that make less than
\$30,000/year

\$1,685,000

Scholarship dollars distributed

APIA Scholars has a special focus on uplifting individuals who are representative of the APIA community's diversity, geographically and ethnically, especially those ethnicities that have been underrepresented on college campuses due to limited access and opportunity.

2020-2021 AANAPISI SCHOLAR COHORT

165

Scholars
awarded

68%

First generation
college students

38%

First in their family
to attend college

58%

Come from families
that make less than
\$30,000/year

\$537,500

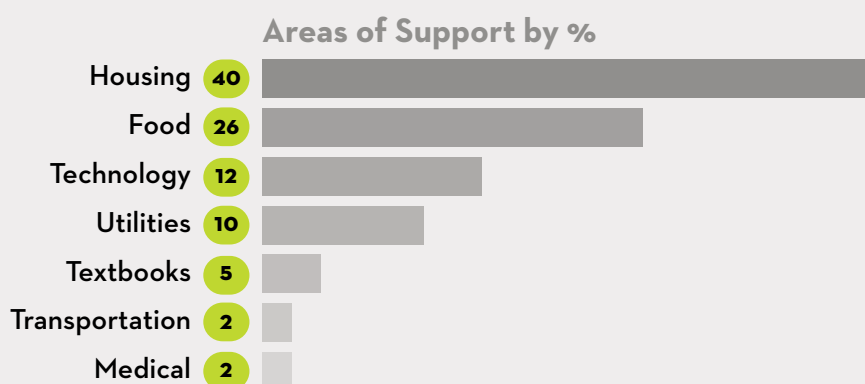
Scholarship dollars distributed

The **Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) Scholarship Program** is a collaboration with AANAPISIs and the communities they serve to provide scholarships, expand institutional capacity and mobilize local resources to help foster economic development. The AANAPISI Scholarship is available annually to underserved students attending APIA Scholars' AANAPISI partner campuses.

APIA SCHOLARS EMERGENCY FUND

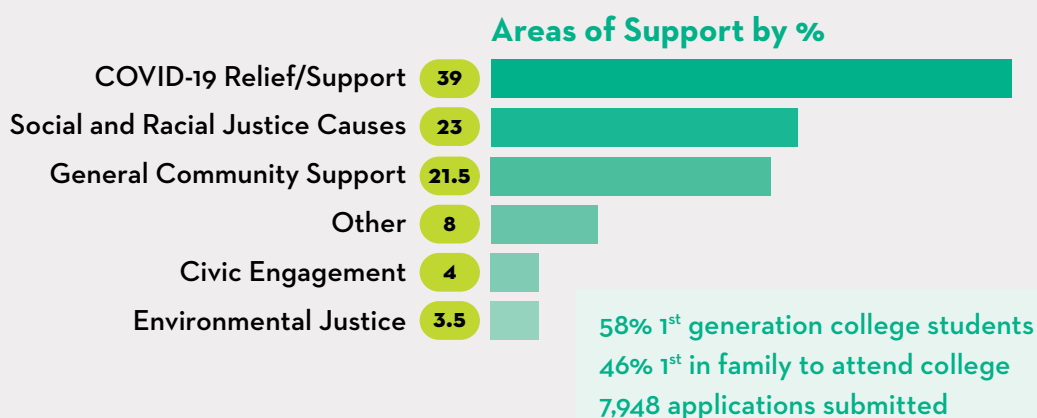
The APIA Scholars Emergency Fund, a need-based financial assistance opportunity, is available to current and former APIA Scholarship and AANAPISI Scholarship recipients who are experiencing a temporary, unexpected financial hardship that puts them at risk of being unable to persist in their educational pursuits or graduate from college. The APIA Scholars Emergency Fund is made possible through generous support from Macy's and Wells Fargo.

In 2021, **174 scholars** were awarded a total of **\$167,500**.



WELLS FARGO STUDENT IMPACT SCHOLARSHIP

APIA Scholars was proud to partner with Wells Fargo to administer the Student Impact Scholarship. This program recognizes and assists students making a difference in their communities, despite being financially impacted by the pandemic. Recipients were awarded a scholarship and were invited to participate in a spring mentorship program with a Wells Fargo mentor.



ACTIONABLE RESEARCH FOR CHANGE

Too little is known about the true diversity of students in our community. Our research work strives to provide data that expands beyond the usual umbrella terms of the APIA community, and places our Scholars at the core of research-based policy and practice recommendations that can be used by policymakers, higher education leaders, and other community stakeholders to increase educational opportunities and success for APIA students.



Generations of Pacific Islander leaders including founding fathers of Micronesian nations have graduated from AANAPISIs in Hawai'i. I am proud to acknowledge that I became woven into this federally-recognized AANAPISI genealogy by attending UH Mānoa and graduating from UH Hilo. Through this acknowledgment, we celebrate our shared history at these institutions and our growing visibility.

—Axel Defngin, UH Mānoa

Research Highlights

Strengthen the AANAPISI Network

For students across the nation, college campuses have long served as hubs of advocacy, social movements, and social change. Today, college students are more active than ever, challenging higher education institutions to better serve an increasingly diverse student body. Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) play a unique role in supporting low-income, first generation APIA students. As federally designated Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), AANAPISIs cultivate environments that promote the success of underserved APIA students by attending to their distinct needs.

Based on research and AANAPISI Scholar testimonials, we know that AANAPISIs play an

important role in educating our community, with nearly half of APIA students enrolled in college attending an AANAPISI. We want to strengthen this network by partnering with AANAPISI stakeholders (institutional leaders, program directors, students, and researchers) to ensure that promising practices are shared and scaled to impact more students' lives, and that institutions receive the resources they need to serve their students well.

Applied Research Fellowship

The APIA Scholars Applied Research Fellowship Program situates our Scholars and alumni at the center of our research initiatives to impact the educational and workforce trajectory of APIA students across the nation. The program enables outstanding graduate

BASED ON RESEARCH AND AANAPISI SCHOLAR TESTIMONIALS, WE KNOW THAT AANAPISIS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY, WITH NEARLY HALF OF APIA STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COLLEGE ATTENDING AN AANAPISI.

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I am grateful to have participated in an AANAPISI program like Full Circle Project at CSU, Sacramento because the program and staff understands the intersectionality of identities to provide tailored resources/opportunities that supported my wellbeing and developed my leadership skills as a student mentor. Their endless support and care led to my continuous engagement on campus and path towards graduation.

—Houa Vang, CSU Sacramento Alumni

students pursuing full-time masters and doctoral degrees who are also APIA Scholars alumni to play a significant role in advancing the organization's student research and advocacy agenda. Fellows participate in an intensive eight-week program designed to immerse them in the applied research process in order to: **educate** the field and stakeholders about APIA heterogeneity, **elevate** the issues most impacting APIA students and their communities today, and **empower** institutions, organizations, supporters, and students with tools to advocate for equity and culturally relevant supports.

NHPI Research

Our current understanding of how institutions and educators in the Pacific are able to serve

marginalized student communities or how NHPI students fare in postsecondary education is limited, due to national postsecondary data sources' inability to capture reliable information about students in the region. To learn more about these institutions and their capacity to serve NHPI students, APIA Scholars set out to conduct a Rural Pacific Learning Tour, a set of conversations with institutional stakeholders at nine of the eleven rural higher education institutions in the U.S. affiliated Pacific Islands. Our next steps are to launch a capacity building initiative for institutions serving NHPI students in the continental U.S., Hawai'i, and U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands.



**OUR ABILITY TO PIVOT, INNOVATE, AND
UPLIFT DURING SUCH A YEAR WAS ONLY
POSSIBLE THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF
OUR PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY.**

STAFF



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THANKING OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

These supporters made gifts during APIA Scholars' 2021 Fiscal Year, spanning July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021.

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\$500,000 and up

Ascendium Education Group
McDonald's
Toyota Motor Corporation
Wells Fargo

\$250,000–\$499,999

The Kresge Foundation
MetLife Foundation
The Coca-Cola Foundation
The Walt Disney Company
United Health Foundation

\$100,000–\$249,999

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\$5,000–\$24,999

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Nakupuna Foundation

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Emi Hata
Victor Kuo

OUR STEWARDSHIP

All Amounts in Thousands

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Grants and Contributions	\$13,816
Programmatic Events.....	\$405

Total Support and Revenue \$14,221

EXPENSES AND LOSSES

Total Program Services	\$11,051
Management and General.....	\$1,291
Fundraising.....	\$512

Total Expenses and Losses \$12,855

Change in Net Assets..... \$1,365

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash and Cash Equivalents.....	\$4,032
Investments.....	\$1,756
Contributions Receivable	\$2,683
Prepaid Expenses.....	\$129

Total Current Assets \$8,602

Net Property and Equipment..... \$158

Other Assets \$36

Total Assets.....\$8,797

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Scholarships Payable.....	\$1,483
Accrued Expenses.....	\$43
Accrued Scholarships	\$90
Other Liabilities	\$292

Total Current Liability.....\$1,909

Net Assets \$6,888

Total Liabilities and Net Assets.....\$8,797

FINANCIAL POSITION

*These are unaudited figures and may slightly change after the audit in February 2022.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES



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