

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER POLICY SUMMIT

2024 Program and Agenda

MOVING FROM
**COLLECTIVE
KNOWLEDGE**
TO
ACTION

FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024

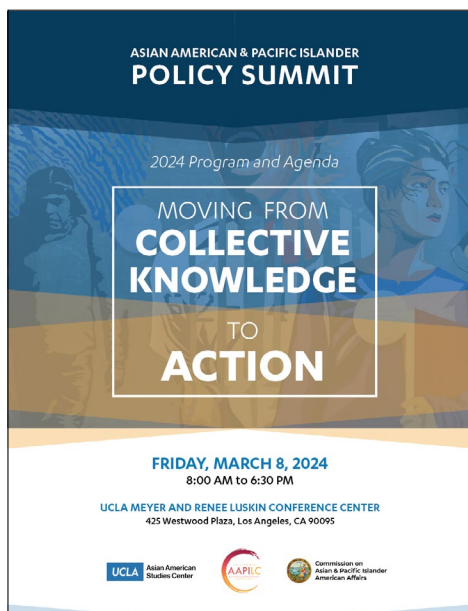
8:00 AM to 6:30 PM

UCLA MEYER AND RENEE LUSKIN CONFERENCE CENTER

425 Westwood Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90095



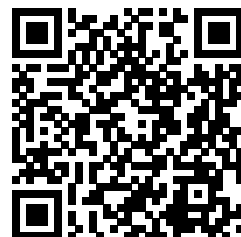
Commission on
Asian & Pacific Islander
American Affairs



For a digital version
of today's program, visit:

[https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/
aapipolicy/summit2024](https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aapipolicy/summit2024)

Stay tuned for conference
session recordings and notes.



2024 ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER POLICY SUMMIT

*Moving from Collective
Knowledge to Action*



**Commission on
Asian & Pacific Islander
American Affairs**

Welcome to the 2024 Asian American and Pacific Islander Policy Summit!

We are pleased to have you join us this year as we build upon the momentum of the 2023 Summit that focused on reimagining California by developing solutions that establish more equitable institutions, policies, and systems that work toward social justice for all — a future inclusive of Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander communities.

This year's Summit bridges the gaps between public policy, research and the community and addresses critical advocacy for higher education, ethnic studies, hidden homelessness, civic engagement and voter participation, and other timely topics. Panel sessions will offer a dynamic platform for dialogue, collaboration, and strategic visioning towards the broader goal of transforming communities through collective knowledge, action, and care.

Today's Summit brings together lawmakers, researchers, community-based organizations, students, philanthropic and private sector leaders working to break down silos, deepen coalition-building, and invest in a policy-research-advocacy infrastructure to better serve the needs of AAPI communities.

The Summit is made possible in part by the Asian and Pacific Islander Equity Budget, which was a result of a statewide coalition of 116 community-based organizations and the California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus who advocated for these funds to support California's diverse AAPI communities. Thank you also to the East West Bank Foundation and the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs for their generous support of the Summit and Closing Reception.

This event is co-organized by the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, and Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander American Affairs.

AGENDA

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM | Registration

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM | Coffee & Breakfast

9:00 AM - 9:15 AM | Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Natalie Masuoka (UCLA Asian American Studies and Political Science)

Dr. Karen Umemoto (UCLA Asian American Studies Center)

Khydeeja Alam (Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs)

Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi (California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus)

9:15 AM - 10:45 AM | Session 1
Critical Advocacy for Higher Education

Commissioner Kirin Macapugay • Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng • Dr. Karen Umemoto • Abigail Chun

Critical Advocacy for Higher Education highlights examples of effective cross sector collaboration for higher education initiatives across the state, including the AANHPI Student Achievement Program and ethnic studies, as well as issues facing our Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) in California.

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Break

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM | Session 2
AAPI Hidden Homelessness: The Problem and Potential Solutions

Assemblymember Phil Ting • Dr. Lois M. Takahashi • Joyce Pisanont • Lisa Hasegawa

This session features a new study on Asian American and Pacific Islander homelessness conducted by USC-UCLA-AAPI Data that examined eleven California counties with the highest concentration AAPI populations to show where and how homelessness is hidden. The study highlights the problem of discrepancies in the counts of AAPI homeless youth and its implications. The session will engage housing and community economic development leaders and legislators to discuss solutions and ways forward.

12:30 PM - 1:15 PM | Lunch

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER **POLICY SUMMIT**

1:15 PM - 1:30 PM

Keynote Address: Attorney General of California Rob Bonta

In this keynote address, **Attorney General Rob Bonta** will illuminate the critical role that elections and civic engagement play in shaping the trajectory of our communities and the broader AAPI landscape. As distinguished leaders in public service, he will delve into the transformative power of active citizen participation and the impact it has on policy, representation, and community well-being.

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM | Session 3

Asian American and Pacific Islander Power in the 2024 Election

Andy Tran • Nancy Yap • Godfrey Plata • Esther Mulipola • Dr. Natalie Masuoka

This panel brings together community organizations and advocates who are involved in Asian American/Pacific Islander voter registration and voter turnout efforts in the Southern California area to discuss best practices along with a call to action discussion about best strategies for the general election in November 2024.

3:00 PM - 3:15 PM | Break

3:15 PM - 5:00 PM | Session 4

A Call to Action: Policy Recommendations and Bringing Community to the Capitol

**Assemblymember Mike Fong • Faith Lee • Richard Calvin Chang • Dr. Angelica Cortez
Priscilla Huang • Karla Thomas • Chanchanit Martorell**

The session aims to highlight how advocacy organizations have translated UCLA research into tangible actions. Organizations will provide updates on their current initiatives and projects, showcasing the evolution of their strategies since the 2023 Summit. This insight will offer a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing efforts to address AANHPI community needs. The session will conclude with actionable recommendations for both the community and elected officials. The AAPILC will provide specific guidance on how the community can support their initiatives, and advocacy organizations will outline policy recommendations for elected officials to consider.

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM | Closing Remarks and Networking Reception

Chair Serena Chin Kirk (Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs)

Dr. Natalie Masuoka (UCLA Asian American Studies Center)

Isa Whalen (California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus)

SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE
SPEAKER

Rob Bonta

**Attorney General
of California**



On April 23, 2021, Rob Bonta was sworn in as the 34th Attorney General of the State of California, the first person of Filipino descent and the second Asian-American to occupy the position. Attorney General Bonta's passion for justice and fairness was instilled in him by his parents, who served on the frontlines of some of America's most important social justice movements. It's why he decided to become a lawyer — to help right historic wrongs and fight for people who have been harmed. He worked his way through college and graduated with honors from Yale University and attended Yale Law School.

Attorney General Bonta has led statewide fights for racial, economic, and environmental justice and worked to further the rights of immigrant families, renters, and working Californians. He previously worked as a Deputy City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco, where he represented the City and County and its employees, and fought to protect Californians from exploitation and racial profiling. He went on to pursue elected office in Alameda County, first as an Alameda Council Member and later as an Assemblymember representing Oakland, Alameda, and San Leandro.

In the State Assembly, Attorney General Bonta enacted nation-leading reforms to inject more justice and fairness into government and institutions. As the People's Attorney, he sees seeking accountability from those who abuse their power and harm others as one of the most important functions of the job.

He is married to Mia Bonta, and they are the proud parents of three children Reina, Iliana, and Andres.



For more information about the
Office of the Attorney General, visit
<https://oag.ca.gov/office>.



Mike Fong was elected to the 49th District of the California State Assembly in February 2022, where he is honored to represent Alhambra, Arcadia, El Monte, Monterey Park, Rosemead, San Gabriel, San Marino, South Pasadena, Temple City, as well as the unincorporated areas of South San Gabriel, North El Monte, and East Pasadena. Mr. Fong is the Chair of the Assembly Higher Education Committee and serves on the Appropriations; Banking and Finance; Budget; Budget Subcommittee #2 on Education Finance; and Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism, and Internet Media Committees. He also serves as the Assembly Vice Chair of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus.

His priorities include expanding access to quality higher education, protecting the environment, ensuring public safety, creating jobs, and addressing homelessness. Prior to his election to the Assembly, Mr. Fong served as a Trustee of the Los Angeles Community College District. There, he pushed forward policies that increased student success, improved educational access and quality, and expanded workforce education and high-growth sector training programs at nine community colleges serving over 250,000 students across Los Angeles and surrounding cities.

A lifelong public servant, Mr. Fong has led teams in his various professional roles with the City of Los Angeles, working on issues such as housing access, civic engagement, youth employment, workforce development, and education. He has served as the Director of Policy and Government Relations for the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment, East Area Director for Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and a Field Deputy for Los Angeles Councilmember Ed Reyes. A product of Los Angeles County, Mr. Fong graduated from California State University at Northridge with a Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management & Leadership and from University of California at Los Angeles with a B.S. in Psychobiology and a minor in Education.



Al Muratsuchi represents the 66th Assembly District, located in the Los Angeles South Bay and Harbor Area. A champion for public education, Muratsuchi serves as Chair of the Assembly Education Committee and previously served as Chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Education Funding. He is also fighting climate change as former Chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policies, authoring landmark legislation for California to achieve carbon neutrality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent by 2045. Muratsuchi has written laws to fight for education, jobs and the economy, clean energy and environmental justice, public safety, veterans, and small businesses. He has helped deliver billions in increased funding for California public schools and for universal high-speed internet access to close the digital divide.

The son of immigrants, Muratsuchi was born and raised on U.S. military bases overseas before arriving in California in 1982. A product of public schools and a first-generation university graduate, he attended the University of California, Berkeley, and received a Juris Doctor degree from UCLA before settling in the South Bay. Muratsuchi has dedicated his career to public service, working as a UCLA lecturer, civil rights lawyer, and Deputy Attorney General with the California Department of Justice. Prior to serving in the California

Legislature, he served on the Torrance Unified School District Board of Education, Southern California Regional Occupational Center Board of Trustees, and Torrance Planning Commission. Muratsuchi lives in the South Bay with his wife Hiroko Higuchi, Ph.D., his daughter, who attends a local public school, and their dog Teddy.



Phil Ting was elected to the State Assembly in 2012, representing the 19th Assembly District, which spans the Westside of San Francisco, as well as the communities of Broadmoor, Colma, Daly City, and parts of South San Francisco and San Bruno. As California moves on from COVID-19, Ting is focused on economic recovery, while also continuing with progressive policies that protect and expand opportunity for all, equal rights, and environmental preservation. Because of his experience in the financial sector and as the San Francisco Assessor-Recorder, Ting has become a leading voice on California's finances. He served as Chair of the Assembly Budget Committee from 2015-2023, leading efforts that brought record funding for public education and historic investment in the Asian American Pacific Islander communities to stop AAPI hate.

Ting is a graduate of U.C. Berkeley and Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He began his career in public service as the Executive Director of the Asian Law Caucus, an organization founded in 1972 to advance and promote the legal and civil rights of the Asian Pacific Islander community, and once served as Community Relations Director at San Francisco State University. In 2005, Ting was appointed Assessor-Recorder of San Francisco by then-Mayor Gavin Newsom, where he closed a five-year assessment

backlog and brought in \$290 million in unpaid property taxes to the city, created a program to increase rooftop solar installations, and spearheaded efforts to assist homeowners and tenants facing foreclosure. Ting lives in San Francisco's Sunset District.

Opening Remarks



Dr. Karen Umemoto is a Professor in the Departments of Urban Planning and Asian American Studies and the Helen and Morgan Chu Chair of the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA. She received her M.A. from UCLA in Asian American Studies and Ph.D. from MIT in Urban Studies. She taught at the University of Hawaii for 22 years where she became chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning before returning to her alma mater.

Professor Umemoto's research centers on issues of democracy, inclusion and collaboration in multicultural societies with a focus on US cities. Born and raised in Los Angeles, a major concern has been racial hate, conflict and violence. She has published *The Truce: Lessons from an LA Gang War* on racialized gang conflict and *Jacked Up and Unjust: Pacific Islander Teens Confront Violent Legacies* on youth violence in Hawai'i.

Her current project is the AAPI Multimedia Textbook, an online open access educational platform to bring Asian American stories into every classroom.



Khydeeja Alam was appointed as the Executive Director of California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA) in December 2023. Khydeeja was officially sworn in by the Speaker of the California State Assembly Robert Rivas.

Khydeeja has over fifteen years of experience in California politics, government and external relations, budget, policy development, and coalition building. Khydeeja worked on passing major legislation and budget in California, including the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), the Transitional Kindergarten, the California Dream Act, the College Readiness Block Grant, Safe Schools for Immigrant Students, Early education, State Census funding, and many others. She is currently the board President of CAIR Sacramento Valley/Central California and serves on the Advisory Council for Muslimahs in Policy (MIPS). Previously, Khydeeja served on the statewide Early Childhood Policy Council and Educare California at Silicon Valley.

Before joining the Commission, Khydeeja was Governor Gavin Newsom's appointee and served as the Director of External and Legislative Affairs at California Volunteers, Office of the Governor. In her capacity she led statewide initiatives, oversaw state grants, worked with Mayors across the state, statewide elected officials, higher education institution leaders, and community partners. Khydeeja successfully led expansion of two major programs at California Volunteers and built a strong relationship with the legislature; for which California was awarded the Innovation in Policy Making Award by the America's Service Commissions. Prior to her public service, Khydeeja served as the Senior Director of Policy and Advocacy for Catalyst California.

In 2023, Khydeeja was recognized by the National Association of Asian Pacifics in Politics and Public Affairs (NAAPPPA) list of top 40 Under 40 AAPI political operatives and public affairs professionals in the country. Khydeeja graduated from the University of California, Berkeley.

9:15 AM - 10:45 AM | Session 1 Critical Advocacy for Higher Education

Commissioner Kirin Macapugay • Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng • Dr. Karen Umemoto • Abigail Chun

Critical Advocacy for Higher Education highlights examples of effective cross sector collaboration for higher education initiatives across the state, including the AANHPI Student Achievement Program and ethnic studies, as well as issues facing our Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) in California.

Session 1 Speakers: Critical Advocacy for Higher Education



Commissioner Kirin A. Macapugay, MSW, DSW Candidate is Vice-Chair for the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander (API) Affairs Higher Education Committee, spearheading the historic Student Achievement Program to support lower-income Asian American Pacific Islander students, teaches human services and social work for San Diego City College, and serves as principal investigator for the college's AANAPISI program and director of PEER.

Macapugay serves on the San Diego City Mayors Asian Pacific Islander Advisory, the boards for Made in Paradise Hills and Only Stronger, and created the nonprofits API Community Actions and Indigenous Knowledge, Art, and Truth (IKAT). She has several publications, has appeared on NPR, PBS, KPBS, KGTV, KUSI, the San Diego Union Tribune, and has spoken for several international organizations and companies including NCORE, Asian Pacific Islanders for Higher Education, Lyft, AT&T, and regional convenings. She was awarded "Best Professor" by SDSU students, a Civil Rights Women's Leader by RISE San Diego, Asian Pacific American Coalition's Civic Engagement Leader, a San Diego Woman of Influence by San Diego Magazine, and one of the Most Influential Asian Leaders by Asian Business Association and the San Diego Business Journal.

December 12, 2022 is proclaimed Kirin Macapugay Day in the County of San Diego. An indigenous Kalinga and Bontoc immigrant from the Philippines, alum and trustee emeritus of Southwestern College, Macapugay is a doctor of social work candidate at the University of Southern California with a masters in social work from San Diego State University and certificate in indigenous people's rights from Columbia University's X program.



Dr. Rowena M. Tomaneng has over 28 years of teaching and administrative experience in higher education, and she currently serves as the President of San José City College (SJCC) in the San José Evergreen Community College District. Prior to SJCC, Dr. Tomaneng served as President of Berkeley City College (BCC) in the Peralta Community College District and in multiple roles at De Anza College in the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, including Associate Vice President of Instruction and Faculty in English, intercultural studies, and women's studies.

Dr. Tomaneng currently serves as President of the Board of Directors for Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE), President of the National Asian Pacific Islander Council-American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and Vice President of the Northern Region of the Chief Executive Officers Board for the California Community Colleges (CEOCCC). Dr. Tomaneng's teaching, research and publications explore human rights, social movements, transnational feminism, and racial equity in education. She has written and contributed to a variety of publications including Transformations: Leadership Roles in Higher Ed for Humanities Professionals, Journal of Multicultural Perspectives and Transformative Practices for Minority Student Success: Accomplishments of Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions.

A first-generation immigrant from the Philippines and community college transfer student, Dr. Tomaneng earned her Ed.D. in International and Multicultural Education, Human Rights Concentration from the University of San Francisco, M.A. in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and B.A. in English from the University of California, Irvine.



Abigail Catalano Chun (she/her) is a multiracial Nikkei storyteller, writer, and researcher. She serves as a Content/Curriculum Coordinator for Foundations and Futures: An AAPI Multimedia Textbook, a transformational narrative change project of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Prior to her current position, Abigail served as a research assistant with the Gila River Digitization Project under Koji Lau-Ozawa and a writing/editorial fellow with Brown University's Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. She received her undergraduate degree in American Studies from Brown University with a focus on heritage studies, Japanese American wartime incarceration, and Asian settler colonialism.

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM | Session 2
AAPI Hidden Homelessness: The Problem and Potential Solutions

Assemblymember Phil Ting • Dr. Lois M. Takahashi • Joyce Pisanont • Lisa Hasegawa

This session features a new study on Asian American and Pacific Islander homelessness conducted by USC-UCLA-AAPI Data that examined eleven California counties with the highest concentration AAPI populations to show where and how homelessness is hidden. The study highlights the problem of discrepancies in the counts of AAPI homeless youth and its implications. The session will engage housing and community economic development leaders and legislators to discuss solutions and ways forward.

Session 2 Speakers



Dr. Lois M. Takahashi is Houston Flournoy Professor of State Government and Coordinator of the MPA program at the USC Price School of Public Policy in Sacramento. Prior to joining USC Price, she was interim dean at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs and was President of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP). She studies how housing, violence, and spatial factors lead to health disparities for vulnerable populations. Her research has been supported by grants from NIH, NSF, and foundations/donors.

She is a recipient of several teaching and service awards, and currently serves on the boards of APAIT/Special Service for Groups and the Western Center on Law and Poverty.



Joyce Pisanont is the Chief Strategy & Impact Officer at National CAPACD. She brings over 20 years of experience working with Asian Pacific Islander community development organizations, including for several National CAPACD members in New York, California, and Washington.

Prior to joining National CAPACD, Joyce established and ran an economic development resource and design center in Seattle's historic International District. Her previous experiences have ranged from fund development and grants management, to advocacy and community organizing, to establishing and growing programs that build local leadership capacity.

Joyce is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley Masters in Social Welfare program.



Lisa Hasegawa is the Regional Vice President for NeighborWorks America, Western Region. Lisa has more than 25 years of community development, housing and public health experience. Prior to NeighborWorks, she served as the executive director of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development, and then served in several capacities at UCLA, including Activist in Residence and Policy Advisor at the Asian American Studies Center, and Assistant Director of Federal Relations.

She currently serves on boards of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation, and the advisory committee of The Asian American Foundation.

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM | Session 3
Asian American and Pacific Islander Power in the 2024 Election

Andy Tran • Nancy Yap • Godfrey Plata • Easther Mulipola • Dr. Natalie Masuoka

This panel brings together community organizations and advocates who are involved in Asian American/Pacific Islander voter registration and voter turnout efforts in the Southern California area to discuss best practices along with a call to action discussion about best strategies for the general election in November 2024.

Session 3 Speakers



Andy Tran is a Staff Attorney on the Impact Litigation team at Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern Californian (AJSOCAL), challenging laws and policies that violate the civil rights of AAPI communities and leading the organization's election protection plan to ensure fair representation and safeguard the right to vote. Before AJSOCAL, he was a litigator at two national law firms, defending healthcare institutions and Fortune 500 companies against professional and general liability claims. During law school, Andy served under the Obama administration in the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of the Treasury, and Federal Communications Commission. Currently, he volunteers as General Counsel to Project by Project and on the board for the Vietnamese American Bar Association of Southern California. Andy was born and raised in Chicago and attended college in Berkeley, CA, and law school in Washington, D.C.



Nancy Yap is the Executive Director of the Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE), a nonprofit organization that is committed to advancing the political and civic engagement of leaders in the Asian and Pacific Islander community. Through this role at CAUSE, Nancy brings her experience working in Asian and Pacific Islander communities for over 20 years with a focus on strategic planning, community partnerships, curriculum design, programs facilitation, and executive leadership development.

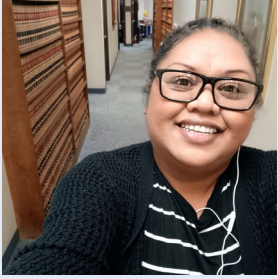
Prior to CAUSE, she was the Vice President of Development at LEAP (Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics). She also owned her own artist management business representing spoken word and hip-hop artists, including poets from the 2003 Tony Award-winning "Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry Jam on Broadway."

Outside of CAUSE, she is a Member of the Board of Los Angeles Building and Safety Commissioners, appointed by Mayor Karen Bass and confirmed by the Los Angeles City Council. She is actively involved in the Little Tokyo community as a previous President of the Arts District Little Tokyo Neighborhood Council and the Co-Founder of two programs in Little Tokyo, Community Feeding Community, which raised over \$200,000 for small businesses during Covid-19 closures, and Haunted Little Tokyo, which brings thousands of people to the neighborhood each year.



Godfrey Santos Plata is a queer Filipino immigrant who is obsessed with building and igniting people power, particularly among communities of color. Plata was born in Marikina, Philippines, and is a teacher-turned-organizer currently living in LA's Koreatown. In Los Angeles, Plata serves as the Deputy Director at LA Forward Institute, which supports civic education and community-building across the county to ensure all Angelenos area able to unlock democracy for themselves as much as possible. He also supports civic engagement work for AAPI Equity Alliance, a coalition of 40+ local community organizations interested in deepening and advancing AAPI civic engagement in LA County. Outside of work, he sits on the nonprofit board of API RISE, a community group serving formerly incarcerated and detained members of the API community. Follow Godfrey on Instagram at @godfreyplata.

Session 3 Speakers (continued)



Easter Mulipola hails from Oceania, the sea of islands by way of Vaitogi village in the islands of American Samoa and is a direct descendent of the honorable Tupua family where Samoan cultural education runs deep. In 2002, after the tragic murder of her brother Fagafaga Mulipola from gang violence, Easter and her family founded PR to memorialize a commitment to end these senseless acts of violence by amplifying Hope, Community Service and Samoan cultural protocols and teachings. Easter Mulipola serves as PR's current Executive Director where she leads and navigates her team with unwavering passion and commitment to end all forms of violence through meaningful community engagement, specifically among urban based Pasifika youth. Project-Respectt is an educational center & legal clinic based in Long Beach and Orange County focused on Community & Cultural Safety.



Dr. Natalie Masuoka is Associate Professor of Political Science and Asian American Studies at UCLA. She currently serves as the Faculty Director for the Asian American Policy Initiative at the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Her research expertise includes voting and elections, U.S. Census, immigration policy and the Voting Rights Act. She is the author of three books *The Politics of Belonging: Race, Public Opinion and Immigration* (2013), *Multiracial Identification and Racial Politics in the United States* (2017), and *Women Voters: Race, Gender and Dynamism in American Elections* (forthcoming). In 2024 she will serve as co-principal investigator of the Collaborative Multiracial Political Survey (CMPS) a user-content driven, multiracial and multilingual post-election survey. Her recent research on Los Angeles includes an assessment of racial redistricting in the City of Los Angeles and a visualization tool that maps the presence of Asian American voter registration and turnout.

3:15 PM - 5:00 PM | Session 4

A Call to Action: Policy Recommendations and Bringing Community to the Capitol

**Assemblymember Mike Fong • Faith Lee • Richard Calvin Chang • Dr. Angelica Cortez
Priscilla Huang • Karla Thomas • Chanchanit Martorell**

The session aims to highlight how advocacy organizations have translated UCLA research into tangible actions. Organizations will provide updates on their current initiatives and projects, showcasing the evolution of their strategies since the 2023 Summit. This insight will offer a comprehensive understanding of the ongoing efforts to address AANHPI community needs. The session will conclude with actionable recommendations for both the community and elected officials. The AAPILC will provide specific guidance on how the community can support their initiatives, and advocacy organizations will outline policy recommendations for elected officials to consider.



Faith Lee is the Legislative Director at Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California (AJSOCAL) where she advocates for state policies and budget investments that bring language justice, immigrant protections and beyond the API community. In this capacity, Faith helped secure \$5 million state funding to ensure the state is producing more Asian language teachers to teach in dual immersion classrooms. She also helped pass AB 1766 (Stone), a bill that allows all Californians, regardless of immigration status, to obtain a state-issued ID. Prior to AJSOCAL, she worked in the California State Legislature for Senator Richard Pan as his policy analyst and Assemblymember Chris Holden as his field representative. Outside of work, Faith is involved in various clubs that help turnout voters and increase women, especially women of color, representation in different levels of government.



Richard Calvin Chang is a Native Hawaiian attorney who co-founded and currently serves as Director of the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) Data Policy Lab at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Chang has over a decade of experience working with NHPI communities and managing policy campaigns that address NHPI health disparities and promote data equity. He co-authored demographic profiles of NHPIs in the U.S. and California, the first Policy Platform Blueprint for NHPIs in the United States, and recently co-authored the first NHPI Data Policy Platform. He is currently working on projects that include a data curriculum for community organizations, developing accessible data tools, and supporting inclusive and equitable data policies. Chang serves as the Board Chair of Pacific Islander Health Partnership. He earned his J.D. from Seton Hall University School of Law and his M.S. in Computational Analysis and Public Policy from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy. He was appointed to the U.S. Census Bureau's National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations in 2021.



Dr. Angelica Cortez is the Founder and Executive Director of LEAD Filipino and Senior Vice President of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for Pacific Clinics. Voted as a Silicon Valley Woman of Influence and 40 Under 40, she is an activist and strategist with a background in public policy and advocacy. In 2015, she founded LEAD Filipino in 2015 to increase Filipina/x/o American civic leadership in the San Jose Area. Since then, she has grown the organization to serve thousands of students, adults, and families through culturally responsive education and voter engagement programs across the region and state, including opening the group's first office in downtown San Jose.

For over a decade, Dr. Cortez worked in politics from San Jose to Los Angeles on civil rights and equity issues. Most recently, she helped lead field outreach for California's Yes on Prop 16 campaign and secured major corporate endorsements for AB 979, landmark corporate board diversity legislation. In addition to being a frequent speaker on LGBTQ+ leadership, FilAm and AsianAm political engagement, and civic innovation, her contributions have also been recognized by NBC Bay Area and Philippines and Malaysian news media. She holds her doctorate from the University of Southern California.



Priscilla Huang is the founding executive director of the Center for Asian Americans in Action, a nonprofit organization that conducts policy analysis, engages in policy advocacy, and strengthens the advocacy capacity of community organizations to build a more equitable society for Asian Americans in Orange County and beyond.

Priscilla has a background in health care policy, health equity, immigrant health coverage, and reproductive and sexual health. She was a senior attorney at the National Health Law Program, and served as a consultant and senior advisor to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders under the Obama Administration. Priscilla also spent a decade as a non-profit advocate in Washington, D.C. working on a variety of federal policy issues impacting Asian American communities.

Priscilla received her JD from American University, Washington College of Law, where she was one of ten Public Interest/Public Service Scholars. She received a BA in English and Philosophy from Boston College. Priscilla was a Georgetown Women's Law and Public Policy Fellow, has served on several boards and advisory committees and has been recognized for her leadership by the National Immigration Law Center, Families USA, and the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust. She currently serves on the Community Action Fund board for Planned Parenthood of Orange and San Bernardino Counties.

Session 4 Speakers (continued)



Karla Thomas is the eldest daughter to her Samoan mother and Aymara father, who came to the U.S. from Vatia, Tutuila Samoa and Quime, Bolivia. She was raised on Serrano and Tongva land, in the city of San Bernardino, California. Karla serves as the Co-Executive Director of Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC) overseeing its Advocacy and Research pillars.

She has a public health background, holding a Master of Public Health with a focus on health policy from USC and B.A. in Anthropology from UCLA.



Chanchanit Martorell was born in Thailand and raised in Los Angeles and studied Political Science/Public Law at UCLA where she received her B.A. and her M.A. in Urban Planning with a specialization in Urban Regional Development. She also studied Humanities at Chiang Mai University in Northern Thailand in 1988. In 2021, Pacific Oaks College conferred an Honorary Doctorate in Social Work to her where she was also the commencement speaker.

Engaged in social activism for the past 35 years, Martorell is currently the Executive Director of the Thai Community Development Center, a non-profit organization she founded in 1994 to improve the lives of disadvantaged Thai and other immigrants through services that promote cultural adjustment and economic self-sufficiency. Her experiences leading to the founding of Thai CDC include work as an urban planner and as an aide to local, state and federal legislative offices. She also created and taught the first Thai American Experience course offered as part of UCLA's Asian-American Studies curriculum in 1992.

She has become a leading practitioner in community development engaged in affordable housing development, small business promotion and neighborhood revitalization projects. She led the seven-year long campaign to designate East Hollywood as Thai Town which was achieved in 1999.

Closing Remarks



Serena Chin Kirk serves as Chair of the California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, as a liaison between community and the Governor's Administration and Legislature, advocating for issues faced in underrepresented areas of the state. As well as serves as Co-Chair and Treasurer for a statewide political action committee whose mission is to elevate impactful voices, issues and candidates. Having worked on a U.S. presidential campaign, Serena has experience organizing local fundraisers and promoting civic engagement and voter registration. Ms. Kirk has 20 years experience in public policy, advocacy and grassroots mobilization playing a leadership role facilitating influential local and statewide coalitions such as the Alliance for Boys & Men of Color, Beyond Foster Care Campaign, California Children's Health Coverage Coalition and Parks Now. Serena provides strategic direction to organizations from various sectors, with proven success in moving issues such as suicide prevention for Native youth, alternatives to incarceration, higher education pipelines and workforce. She has led passage of meaningful legislative reforms and secured millions for communities of color, children, health and mental health, alongside Children's Defense Fund-California, the California Primary Care Association, Journey House and others.

Known as a children's rights advocate, Serena has served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate in the Los Angeles Child Welfare System, influencing the lives and outcomes of foster youth. A newly appointed Lecturer at the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design in the School of Engineering at Stanford University, Serena most recently co-instructed a class on Artificial Intelligence Policy within the Forbidden Design course work. Ms. Kirk received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications from San Diego State University, as well as spent time studying International Communications and International Politics at Tianjin University, China and University of Oxford, England, later completing her Masters in Business Management & Leadership from Pepperdine University Graziadio Business School.



Isa Kelawili Whalen is a well-researched educational and community advocate skilled at exercising longitudinal and cross-sectional qualitative and quantitative research and collaborative projects that center BIPOC and AANHPI equitable policy and social service creation: including climate justice, public safety, diversity in representation, affordable multi-generational housing, K-12 and higher education curriculum, and culturally conscious and accessible healthcare.

Isa has developed state policy recommendation packets for the states of Washington, Massachusetts, and California that argue for ethnic studies curriculum, culturally appropriate social services, and comprehensive school safety, mental health and wellbeing. Isa has presented detail-oriented and innovative analyses on social justice, equity, and achievement for underrepresented, marginalized, and oppressed AANHPI communities to elected officials, state appointed commissioners, community leaders, professionals, and academic researchers via committee hearings, symposiums, and international conferences.

She has also organized the 2022 UCLA AAPI Equity Policy Summit and 2023 API Leadership Summit, as the Senate Consultant for the California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (AAPILC).

Throughout these experiences, Isa has flexibly worked virtually and in-person as a legislative and community relationship bridge-builder to serve the historically discredited and low-income communities of color.

Outside of the legislative and academic realm, Isa is an Indigenous Chamoru and Filipina woman born, bred, and raised through the assistance of neighborhood intervention. The collective culture of her upbringing, called *inafa'maolek* among Chamoru, taught restoration of order through collaboration, cooperation, reciprocity, and social support. *Inafa'maolek* has driven Isa to become a transformational leader that coordinates community-based social services, needs, and interests.

Summit Organizing Committee

UCLA Asian American Studies Center (AASC)

Deputy Director Melany De La Cruz-Viesca
Faculty Director Natalie Masuoka
Events Director Tammy Borrero
Communications and Publications Coordinator Maya Lu
IT Coordinator Tom Nguyen
Pacific Islander Studies Coordinator Phil Timoteo
Co-Volunteer Coordinators Emiko Kranz and Haley Hosokawa

California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (AAPILC)

Consultant Isa Whalen
Senior Interns Yolanda Wang and Cyrus Vong

California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA)

Executive Director Khydeeja Alam
Commissioner Kirin Macapugay
Commissioner Cirian Villavicencio

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UCLA Asian American Studies Center

Established in 1969, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center (AASC) is a national research center advancing historical, transformative and interdisciplinary scholarship and bridging research with community concerns.



For more information about the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, visit <https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/>.



The Center grew out of the social movements of the 1960s, as students called for greater access to higher education that would help address vital issues in their lives. Today, UCLA is recognized as the premier research and teaching institution in the fields of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies.

The Center's mission is to gather, produce and disseminate knowledge of the lives of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through research, documentation, publications and civic engagement. We are partners with the UCLA Asian American Studies Department, established in 2004. Together through research, teaching and service, we seek to empower communities and the next generation of change agents to counter historic injustices and positively shape our futures.

California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus

The summit is presented as part of the AAPI Policy Initiative, which is a project of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. Research released as part of the initiative has been made possible by the support of the California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus and the State of California.



For more information about the California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus, visit aapilegcaucus.legislature.ca.gov.



The California Asian American & Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus represents and advocates for the interests of the diverse API communities throughout California. It seeks to increase Asian Pacific Islander participation and representation in all levels of government.

Amongst its goals, the Caucus seeks to:

- Increase API representation in all levels of government, including statewide appointments and statewide elected offices.
- Ensure the API community has equal access to education, social services, health, mental health, and other government programs and services.
- Preserve safety net health, mental health, and social service programs that serve the API community.
- Ensure language access and culturally competent services in government programs.
- Strengthen protections against hate crimes and defend the civil rights and liberties of APIs.
- Fight racial stereotypes and negative portrayals of APIs in the media.
- Promote greater civic participation and knowledge about major policy issues among API communities.
- Build common interest and communications among the various API communities.

California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs

The California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs was established in 2002 and is charged with elevating the political, economic, and social issues of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans (APIA), in the state. The Commission advises the Governor and the Legislature on how to best respond to views, needs, and concerns of the state's diverse and complex APIA communities.



**Commission on
Asian & Pacific Islander
American Affairs**

For more information
about CAPIAA, visit
<https://capiiaa.ca.gov/>.



Community Partners & Participating Organizations

Asian American and Pacific Islander Equity Alliance
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California
Center for Asian Americans in Action
Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE)
Center for Community Investment
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
LA Forward Action
Lead Filipino
National CAPACD
NHPI Data Lab
Project Respectt
Thai Community Development Center (CDC)
UCLA Asian American Studies Department
UCLA Institute of American Cultures

Reception Sponsors



Resources from the UCLA Asian American Studies Center

Asian American & Pacific Islander Policy Initiative - Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) are playing an increasing role in all arenas of decision making and politics in the United States. Yet, there is a long way to go before the full chorus of voices among our diverse Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities is heard. The aim of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center's (AASC) AAPI Policy Initiative is to support and produce research in collaboration with nonprofit advocacy organizations and policy makers to uplift AAPI perspectives in civic life and public decision making in California and across the nation.

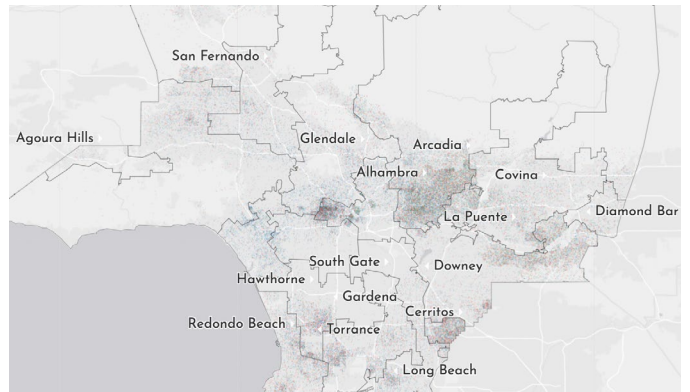
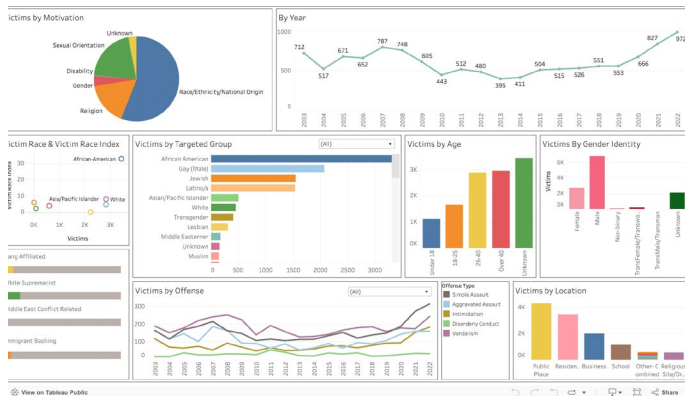
AASC is home to the largest concentration of scholars who study Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations in the nation, with over 50 faculty on its advisory committee, including 20 faculty from a dozen academic disciplines engaged in conducting community-relevant applied research. AASC faculty have also helped build a collaborative network of public policy researchers at campuses across the country. The AASC has a long history of conducting applied policy research, convening various stakeholders through policy summits, collecting disaggregated data, training the next generation of policy researchers and leaders, and disseminating action-oriented knowledge on AAPI populations to inform the public, policy makers and advocacy organizations.

In 2021, AASC received funding from the CA State legislature to support research, data tools (see below), and community programs that address the impact of COVID-19 on AAPI communities, including new research and analysis into hate incidents.



**Hate Crime Data, Los Angeles County:
2003 – 2020 Data Visualization**
<http://uclaresearch.com/data/data-visualization>

**Mapping Asian American
Political Potential: Data Dashboard**
<https://uclamaapp.org/>



The American public lacks access to the wealth of scholarship and storytelling on AAPIs. To cultivate historical empathy, we must start in the classroom, where students form the basis of their knowledge of and relationship to people, places, and themselves. To fill this gap, the **AAPI Multimedia Education Initiative** will open access to over 1,000 years of history on a wide diversity of Asian American and Pacific Islander experiences. It evolves the traditional textbook format by utilizing technology that enables enhanced learning, teaching and greater reach.



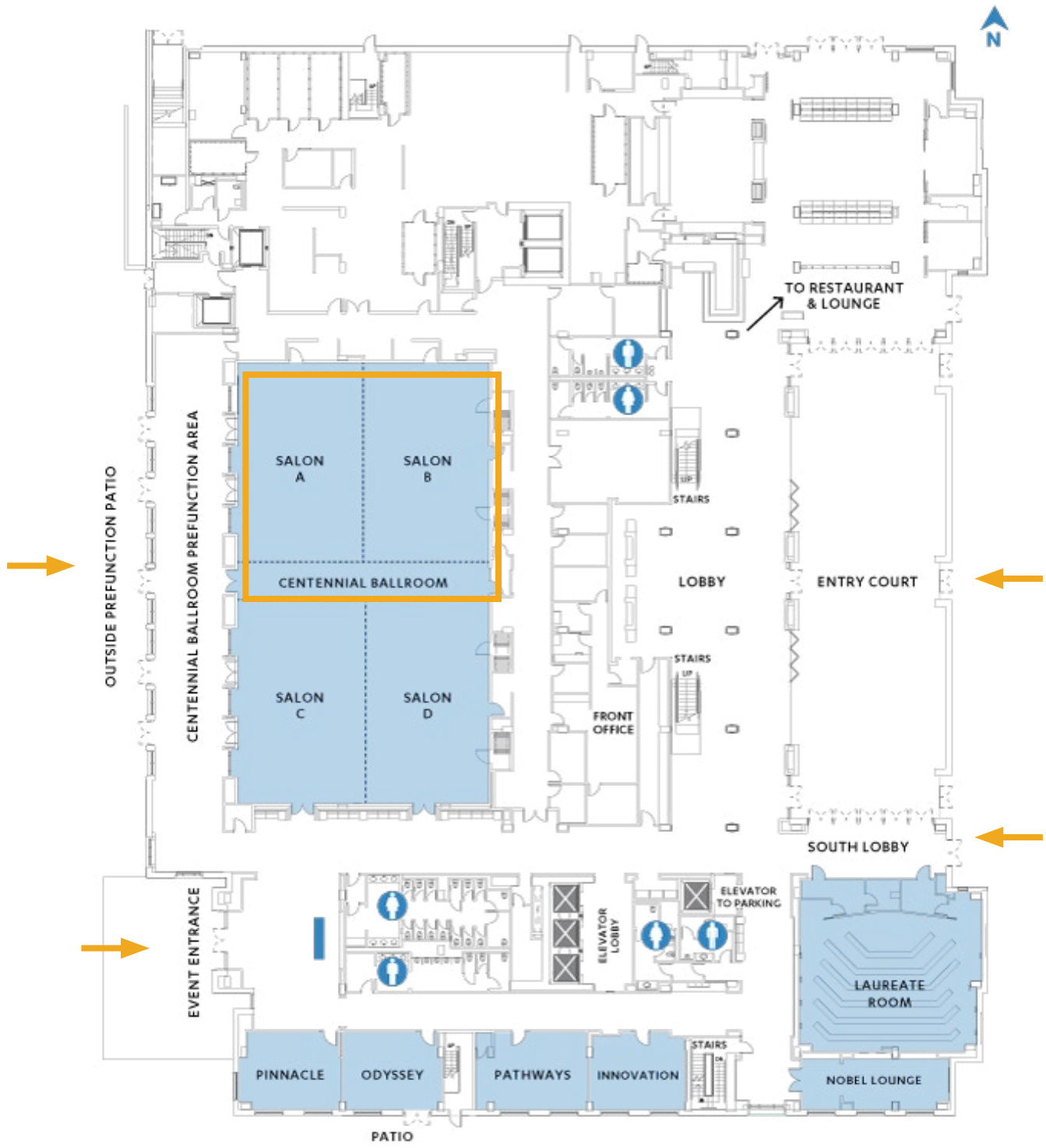
Foundations and Futures

A Multimedia Textbook on
Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

◀ Sign up for release updates & teacher training opportunities!

COMING IN 2025!







Courage is something strong within you
that brings out the best in a person.

—Dr. Robinson Perrenson
1997-1998, May 7, 1992

Uncover the wrongs
from social reality and
noted in a

About the mural: "Education Through Struggle" is displayed outside the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, located in Campbell Hall. Alumnus Darryl Mar and UCLA students painted it in 1995.