

From: Official ESU Email

Sent: Monday, May 3, 2021

Subject: ESU Celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

In 1992, Congress designated May as Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month to commemorate the cultures, traditions, histories, and contributions of Asian American & Pacific Islander people in the United States. As with other cultural and heritage months, it is important not to limit, isolate, and confine the richness of AAPI people into one month during the year.

You might be thinking: Who is part of the AAPI community? Who are they? AAPI is a pan-ethnic umbrella for people with widely disparate ethnic identities. In the United States, each AAPI group is unique, having its own geographical roots, language(s), religion(s), political ideologies, and cultural traditions. Immigration patterns and the reasons for immigrating to the U.S. are also unique for each AAPI group. Because umbrella terms like AAPI are limiting, a growing number of individuals prefer to identify themselves by their ethnicity over their race.

Regrettably, anti-Asian sentiment in the U.S. is not new. Specific ethnic groups within the broader AAPI umbrella have been targeted for generations. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers. The internment of Japanese Americans during World War II involved relocating and incarcerating them in concentration camps. Asia is also home to the largest Muslim population. In the U.S., many Muslims struggle with ignorance, hatred, and violence fueled by islamophobia. AAPI individuals and groups continue to be perceived and treated as perpetual foreigners in their own country.

The most recent wave of violence in the U.S. against AAPI people is rooted in historical xenophobia. We still mourn the tragedy that took place in Atlanta, Georgia, on March 16, 2021. Despite the ongoing hatred and violence, AAPI individuals have persevered, and AAPI groups have thrived. The AAPI community has directly and significantly contributed to the growth and development of the U.S – take the California Gold Rush and the Transcontinental Railroad, for example.

We hope you take time this May – and throughout the year – to learn more about the AAPI community and their cultures, traditions, histories, contributions, and achievements.

Dr. Santiago Solis

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Black Lives Matter!

Vice President, Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence