Beyond Compositional Diversity: Examining the Campus Climate Experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander Students

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This mixed methods study examines the institutional mechanisms related to ethnicity that shape the differential experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students. By conducting in-depth interviews with AAPI students as well as analyzing data from the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey, this study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the campus experiences of AAPI undergraduates at UCLA from a disaggregated perspective, as aggregate data may lead to erroneous conclusions that AAPI students are academically successful, well-adjusted, and satisfied with their college experiences—a rationale often used to exclude AAPIs from campus conversations regarding diversity, ethnic representation, and racial climate. The findings detail the unique and different experiences of various AAPI subgroups and suggest the need to overcome the harmful stereotype that AAPIs have escaped the racialized, and sometimes discriminatory, experiences of other racial minorities—even if they attend institutions that are compositionally diverse. As institutions of higher education continue to grapple with campus climate, there is an immediate need to consider how AAPI students fit within that narrative and into larger campus priorities.

Keywords: Asian American and Pacific Islander, disaggregation, campus climate, racialization, stratification

In 2011, the YouTube video, "Asians in the Library" took the media by storm as it captured the racist rant of a White, female University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) student mock-

ing Asian Americans, framing Asian American students as perpetual foreigners. As an institution that enrolls 33.5% undergraduates (UCLA Office of Analysis & Information Management, 2014) who identify as Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), the feeling that "the problem is these hordes of Asian people that UCLA accepts into our school every single year," as stated in the video, is prevalent. Despite the single compositional figure that shapes assumptions about the AAPI students who have "overrun UCLA," the campus climate may be hostile for AAPI students, as the video demonstrates. This study points to the need to overcome the harmful stereotype that AAPIs have escaped the racialized, and sometimes discriminatory, experiences of other racial minorities—even if they attend institutions that are compositionally diverse. Racist images, themed parties, and assaults are not bound by percentages of a minoritized student population, geography, or type of institution.

As such, a more precise examination of the AAPI student population is necessary to understand what institutional mechanisms fuel the within-group stratification of student experiences. The diversity of AAPIs at UCLA makes this campus a unique study site, not only to understand the experiences of AAPIs with regard to campus racial climate, but to also demonstrate that compositional diversity—a key rationale that has been extended as an answer to underrepresentation—is not enough to solve issues of discrimination, and that other institutional dimensions must be equally considered to address the stratification of student experiences. This study sought to answer the following question: What are the institutional mechanisms related to ethnicity that shape differential experiences among AAPI students? By utilizing in-depth interviews, complemented by disaggregated quantitative data from the University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES), this study challenges the notion of compositional diversity as the catch-all response to improving campus climate. The following research questions guided our study:

1. How, if at all, are AAPI undergraduates' campus experiences racialized, and does racialization vary across AAPI ethnic group?
2. Are there differences between AAPI subgroups with regards to their experiences of campus racial climate?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is the Multicontextual Model for Diverse Learning Environments (MMDLE). The MMDLE "focuses on the dynamics within spheres of interaction . . . to include diverse student bodies at institutions that have yet to achieve equity in student outcomes and maximize the benefits of diversity for educational outcomes" (Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar, & Arellano, 2012, p. 47) within the postsecondary sector. Given its focus on not only college environments but, more importantly, its emphasis on achieving equity for underserved students, the MMDLE is particularly well suited for the examination of AAPI students who attend a majority-minority institution.

The MMDLE asserts that the institutional context for campus racial climate encompasses five dimensions: (a) historical, or formal policies and informal practices that have excluded or included certain student populations; (b) compositional, or the representation of racial and ethnic groups among the campus community; (c) organizational, or the structural and institutional aspects of the college environment that privilege groups over others; (d) behavioral, or the social interactions students have within and across racial and ethnic groups on campus; and (e) psychological, or students' perceptions of campus racial dynamics and the resulting impact on their well-being. Taken together, these dimensions provide the outline for a diverse learning environment "that integrates inclusive practices, and is also intentional about purpose and knowledgeable about whom they educate" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p. 104).

This important point about knowing who students are is of particular salience to our study, given that compositional diversity alone has been taken as proof of AAPI student satisfaction, an assumption that routinely negates the responsibility of institutions to accurately know their student population. The MMDLE helps to drive this point home, as Hurtado et al. (2012) assert that the model's greatest contribution is to highlight that although compositional representation has been a central response to lack of campus diversity, institutions possess other structural dimensions such as historical legacies and behavioral practices that function to exclude racial and ethnic minority students and perpetuate inequities. The MMDLE concludes that "increasing the diversity of the student body is a necessary but not sufficient condition to realize beneficial educational outcomes—campuses need to optimize conditions for interaction that will result in the benefits of diversity" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p. 44). This is in direct alignment with our study's effort to move beyond compositional diversity as evidence of AAPI student satisfaction at UCLA. In other words, the value of this framework rests upon its comprehensive and holistic perspective on how the campus racial climate is fostered for student-of-color populations, with attention to different aspects of the student experience. Discerning these distinct experiences will allow for more targeted and strategic approaches in addressing each group's unique needs.

In addition to the providing the conceptual underpinnings for this study, the MMDLE also informed our methodological approach. The model guided the collection of qualitative data by informing the development of the interview protocol and the a priori codes used in data analysis. In addition, the framework aided in the selection of UCUES variables that were used in the statistical analyses of the study's quantitative component. Further details are provided later in the Method section.

Review of the Literature

Research on campus climate has been generally focused on three themes: (a) differential perceptions of campus climate by race; (b) racial/ethnic minority students' reports of prejudicial treatment and racist campus environments; and (c) benefits associated with campus climates that facilitate cross-racial engagement (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999, Hurtado et al., 2012). These studies collectively demonstrate that students of color have racialized experiences, encounter racism on predominantly White campuses, and perceive campus climate more negatively than their White peers (e.g., Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000).

Despite the vast number of studies on campus racial climate, however, there is an immensely limited repertoire of literature on Asian American students and even less for Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students. In fact, most of the past research has either positioned AAPIs as a highly satisfied aggregate group that is represented by the experiences of only a few AAPI subgroups, or has entirely ignored their experiences (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Museus and Truong (2009), however, conducted a rare study on the campus experiences and perceptions of AAPI students at a predominantly White institution and found that disaggregated data is key to understanding the within-group variation in the AAPI population. Maramba (2008) shared this sentiment in her study examining Filipinx American students at a large research institution in Southern California, which empirically highlighted that this student group feels homoge-nized within the stereotypical Asian American experience and also lacks a sense of belonging on campus—directly contradicting the misconception of universal AAPI satisfaction.

In the same vein, Johnston and Yeung (2014) found that racism and racialized experiences also shape the experiences of AAPIs and affect their perceptions of campus climate through their study of AAPI campus climate before and after a large-scale racial incident. The authors found that despite attending a compositionally diverse institution, Asian American students still experienced racism and lower levels of belonging due to influences from the psychological and behavioral dimensions of the institution. The authors did not disaggregate their data by ethnic group, however, leaving it unclear as to whether students of different ethnic backgrounds experienced the institutional context differently. These studies point to the need to further explore AAPI students' experiences with campus racial climate.

The challenge in studying the AAPI population is the lack of disaggregated ethnic subgroup data. Although the call for data disaggregation has existed for decades (Hune & Chan, 1997), research in higher education has only recently begun to focus greater attention on the vast diversity within the population. Largely qualitative, these studies have provided rich insight into the distinct experiences of specific AAPI ethnic groups, including Cambodian (Chhuon & Hudley, 2008), Native Hawaiian (Freitas, Wright, Balutski, & Wu, 2013), Filipinx (Maramba, 2008), Hmong (Vue, 2013), Lao (Phommasa, 2015), and Pacific Islander (Wright & Balutski, 2013) American students. Quantitative studies that disaggregate AAPI student data are even fewer in number, given the lack of available data sets. Those studies that do disaggregate, such as Shek and McEwen's (2012) study on Asian American college men, Kodama's (2014) study on leadership self-efficacy among Asian American students, and a number of other recent publications (CARE, 2013, 2015; Chang, Nguyen, & Chandler, 2015; Museus & Truong, 2009; Nguyen, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2014) are notable examples that collectively point to the value of a more accurate understanding of the AAPI population's diverse ethnic groups and their college experiences. Accordingly, this study offers an important contribution to campus climate schol-

arship and extends it to capture the diverse experiences within the AAPI student population.

Method

Because the unique campus climate experiences of different AAPI ethnic groups have not been heavily researched and are thus not well understood, we believed it important for this study to highlight and center students' narratives. At the same time, we were interested in being able to "increase the interpretability, meaningfulness, and validity of . . . [our qualitative] inquiry results" (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989, p. 259). This perspective led us to employ a mixed-methods research design, specifically an exploratory sequential design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), wherein findings from qualitative student interviews informed a subsequent quantitative analysis of student survey data. We also adopted a qualitative dominant approach (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007) throughout the study, emphasizing students' lived experiences in both data collection and analysis. This methodological approach leveraged both the richness and depth of qualitative inquiry and the generalizability and breadth of quantitative analysis, making it well-suited for a data disaggregation study of this type. In this section, we describe our data collection and analysis procedures for the study's qualitative phase, followed by those of the quantitative phase.

Qualitative Phase

The initial phase of the study consisted of semistructured individual interviews with 16 AAPI undergraduate students from a range of ethnic backgrounds. We utilized purposeful and snowball sampling approaches (Merriam, 2009) in an attempt to generate a participant sample that was representative of the UCLA AAPI student population across class, major, and ethnicity. Recruitment e-mails were distributed to AAPI student organizations, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, announcements in Asian American Studies courses, and multiple AAPI student group email lists.

Our efforts to recruit underrepresented AAPI ethnic groups in higher numbers yielded mixed results. The sample had adequate representation from Southeast Asian, East Asian, and Filipinx students but included only one participant each who identified as South Asian or Pacific Islander. We recognize additional participants of these ethnic backgrounds would have contributed additional viewpoints. However, scholars within the qualitative tradition (e.g., Cole & Knowles, 2001; Goodson & Sikes, 2001) have cautioned against discounting individual narratives, maintaining instead the ability of single cases to offer valuable knowledge and insight. See Table 1 for detailed demographic information for participants (all names are pseudonyms to protect students' identities).

Data collection. All students participated in 1-hr interviews with three different researchers, two of whom are authors of this article. The interview protocol was developed after an extensive review of campus climate literature, and designed to gather students' perceptions of and experiences with the campus racial climate. To best understand AAPI student experiences, several different types of questions were utilized, including those that provided insight on students' opinions, values, experiences, behaviors and feelings (Patton, 2002). This included questions on their experiences with ethnic identity (e.g., Hmong, Filipinx) and racial identity (e.g., Asian American, Pacific Islander), interpersonal interactions and relationships both across and within their racial and ethnic group, involvement in student organizations and activities, and overall sense of belonging. (See Table 2 for sample questions from the protocol.) The semistructured nature of the interviews allowed for follow-up and probing questions to emerge naturally in conversation (Merriam, 2009). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis. Given the study's explicit focus on campus racial climate, we utilized the dimensions of institutional context specified by the MMDLE to generate a set of a priori codes for our analysis. This strategy is appropriate for studies that build upon an existing body of literature on a particular topic, and for when close adherence to a foundational conceptual framework is desired (Saldaña, 2016). Thus, our a priori codes adhered closely to the theoretical framework, and addressed the compositional, behavioral, and psychological dimensions of campus climate. Examples of compositional codes included having experiences of being the

Table 1
Participant Demographics

Name	Ethnicity/ies	Regional subgroup	Class year	Major(s)
Amanda	Vietnamese	Southeast Asian	Sophomore	Psychobiology
Andrew	Vietnamese	Southeast Asian	Senior	History, Asian American Studies
Brian	Japanese/Chinese/ Vietnamese	East Asian	Sophomore	Chemistry
Brittney	Hmong	Southeast Asian	Senior	Psychobiology
Jade	Korean	East Asian	Senior	Asian American Studies
Jason	Vietnamese	Southeast Asian	Senior	Biology
Jennifer	Chinese/Vietnamese	Southeast Asian	Senior	Asian American Studies
Jo-Jo	Samoan	Pacific Islander	Senior	Sociology
Lerina	Chinese/Burmese	Southeast Asian	First year	Pre-Business Economics/Pre-Int'l Development
Mary	Filipina	Filipina/o	Junior	Asian American Studies
Penny	Vietnamese	Southeast Asian	Junior	Psychobiology
Rajvi	Bengali	South Asian	Fifth year	Electrical Engineering
Roland	Filipino	Filipina/o	Junior	Molecular, Cell, and Developmental Biology
Seng	Cambodian	Southeast Asian	Junior	STEM
Stacee	Chinese	East Asian	Senior	Asian American Studies, Political Science
TJ	Filipino	Filipina/o	Junior	Linguistics

"only one," having faculty of the same race or ethnicity, and having peers of the same race or ethnicity. The behavioral codes captured the frequency of racial interactions, the quality of racial interactions, the context or setting of racial interactions (e.g., formal or informal), and the type of racial interactions (e.g., interracial, intraethnic, and intraracial). Among the psychological codes were perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, perceptions of interracial and intraracial relations, and perceptions of the campus racial environment.

To strengthen the rigor and trustworthiness of our analysis (Merriam, 2009), as well as consistency in our coding process, we individually coded an initial set of three transcripts, each associated with a student of a different regional ethnic subgroup (e.g., Filipinx, Southeast Asian, East Asian). Once coded, we convened to compare results and enhance the reliability of our analysis. Utilizing an approach in line with a qualitative research paradigm (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014), we refined and standardized our code definitions by discussing and clarifying the discrepancies that occurred in our coding decisions. We then divided up and coded the remaining transcripts using our revised set of codes and definitions. Once the coding process was complete, we clustered the codes into conceptually similar categories based on the MMDLE framework, and from there, generated a set of themes that described the campus racial

Table 2
Select Questions From Interview Protocol

Questions
1. How welcoming do you feel the UCLA campus environment is for AAPI students and/or students of your specific ethnic group?
2. Do you feel that you belong at UCLA? In what way does your ethnic identity and/or AAPI identity contribute to your sense of belonging?
3. How pertinent is your ethnic identity specifically, and your AAPI identity broadly, to your experience as a student at UCLA?
4. What type of interactions do you have with students of other AAPI ethnic groups? What types of interactions do you have with students of other racial groups?
5. What issues affecting your ethnic community specifically, and the AAPI community broadly, do you see as most important and in need of intervention or change on campus?
6. What do you think UCLA can do to ensure that students of your specific ethnic group and other AAPI students feel important and valued on campus?

climate for the study participants. To ascertain whether these findings were indicative of the experiences of the AAPI ethnic groups across campus, these themes served as the basis for the subsequent, quantitative phase of this study.

Quantitative Phase

Data source. We relied on UCUES as the primary data source for the quantitative portion of our study. The University of California Office of the President (UCOP) administers UCUES annually in the spring, where undergraduates from all the UC campuses are sampled. For this study, we focused on data from the 2014 UCUES conducted at UCLA. UCUES collects information on undergraduate students' experiences on campus, including their involvement in activities and organizations, satisfaction with campus life, and perceptions of campus climate.

Sample. Because UCOP collects racial and ethnic subgroup data, we were able to conduct a disaggregated analysis on the AAPI student population. However, because low sample sizes for individual ethnic groups would compromise statistical rigor and the confidentiality of survey participants, we aggregated ethnic data into five regional subgroups: East Asian (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese), Southeast Asian (i.e., Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Vietnamese), South Asian (i.e., Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan), Filipinx, and Pacific Islander (i.e., Native Hawaiian, Chamorro, Marshallese, Samoan, Tongan). Although this approach may appear to contradict the argument for data disaggregation, it is common convention within AAPI-related research, practice, and policy spheres due to the similarities in the migration history and racialization experiences among the constituent ethnic populations of each regional subgroup (see CARE, 2015; Empowering Pacific Islander Communities & Asian Americans Advancing Justice, 2014; Lai & Arguelles, 2003; Ngo, 2006; Shankar & Srikanth, 1998).

After aggregating the ethnic group data into regional subgroups, however, the sample size for the Pacific Islander group was still low ($n = 11$), and thus we excluded this group from the quantitative analysis. We readily acknowledge this is a limitation of our study and hope that the university's future administration of the UCUES survey will elect to sample Pacific Islander and other ethnicities in greater numbers to allow for analyses by ethnic group. In total, 2,703 AAPIs participated in the survey. Table 3 provides detailed demographic information of our overall UCUES sample.

Variables. We utilized institutional demographic data and select variables from the UCUES survey to address the compositional, behavioral, and psychological dimensions of the MMDLE. Disaggregated student demographic data and the level of agreement students feel they belong at the university was used to analyze the compositional dimension, the degree to which the campus is appreciative of diversity was used to analyze the behavioral dimension, and both the degree to which the campus is tolerant of diversity and the level of agreement students feel students of their race/ethnicity are respected on campus were used to analyze the psychological dimension. As the UCUES instrument did not have questions that pertained to the historical and organizational dimensions, we were unable to select and conduct analysis on measures that represented these two elements.

Because the dimensions of the MMDLE are interconnected and are "all in a dynamic relationship with each other" (Hurtado et al., 2012, p. 49), not all of the variables were organized in a direct alignment with the dimensions with which they are traditionally associated. Instead, the variables in this study were grouped to confirm themes that emerged from the qualitative data. For example, sense of belonging is typically an indicator used in the psychological dimension. However, we chose to use it in reference to the compositional dimension to express how the ethnic composition of UCLA's

Table 3
Demographic Sample of UCUES

Subgroup	N
East Asian	1,645
South Asian	255
Filipino	275
Southeast Asian	517
NHPI	11
Total	2,703

Note. NHPI students were included in all aggregate analyses, but not in disaggregated analyses due to small sample size. Sample does not include international students.

AAPI student population contributed to their lack of belonging on campus.

Data analysis. To confirm our qualitative findings, ANOVAs with post hoc tests were performed to compare significant differences and similarities in mean scores in each of the indicators across racial groups, as well as AAPI subgroups. This method is the ideal approach as it allowed us to compare multiple groups while reducing Type I errors that would occur with t tests (Field, 2013). Additionally, we calculated Cohen (1988) effect sizes to determine the magnitude of the statistical differences in mean scores between racial groups and AAPI subgroups, and interpreted the results by small (.2 to .49), medium (.5 to .79), and large (.8 or greater) effects. Effect sizes allow us to better understand the practical strength of the results. Finally, all these tests allow us to assert Creswell and Plano Clark's (2011) approach of generalizing our rich qualitative findings to AAPI students at UCLA.

Findings

In alignment with the theoretical framework that guided this mixed-methods study, the findings and results are organized based on three dimensions of the MMDLE: compositional, behavioral, and psychological.

Compositional Dimension

The MMDLE describes the compositional dimension of institutional context as the racial and ethnic representation of the campus community, from administrators to faculty to students. Participants cited a lack of AAPIs among the staff and faculty. As Brian (East Asian) remarked, "We don't have diversity at the administration level." He followed this by discussing the importance of having diverse representation among these ranks, stating that "it helps the administrators better understand the demographic of the campus and what exactly is going on and what their needs are." Embedded in this statement is the suggestion that AAPI students are desiring to see more faculty, staff, and administrators who not only look like them but also understand their experiences as AAPI individuals.

Specifically among faculty, the only AAPI professors students saw were limited to Asian American studies or Asian language and history courses. Several students did mention having Asian professors in their life science courses, but these faculty members were often international scholars and not Asian American. This lack of representation was particularly acute for the Southeast Asian and Filipinx participants, who expressed a desire to have not only more AAPI faculty, but faculty who also share their ethnic background. Mary (Filipina) shared:

> To see a Filipino professor at UCLA . . . would be really awesome, because it's like "Oh, that professor can do research, I can do research. I can care about those things too." . . . It's a small thing, but it's also a really big thing to see yourself or someone that looks like you out there. To not see yourself there almost feels as if you do not belong.

Having faculty of the same ethnicity to serve as role models would not only be inspiring, but also provide a sense of belonging for students like Mary and others from underrepresented AAPI ethnic backgrounds.

With regard to representation among the student body, all participants commented on the high percentage of AAPI students at UCLA. For some students, such as Brittney (Southeast Asian), this contributed to their decision to attend UCLA: "For me that was a really big factor because I was the tokenized Asian growing up at my high school." Other students, like Andrew (Southeast Asian), shared that this environment led them to associate with other AAPI students, even if they were not expecting to when they initially arrived on campus: "It's very ironic now because I work with pretty much all Asians . . . Most of my social circle are AAPI students." The distinctiveness of UCLA's large numbers of AAPI students was not lost on the participants. In different ways, this high enrollment of AAPIs at UCLA influenced their desire to associate with each other.

Yet, many students discussed finding their sense of community within ethnic spaces more so than in AAPI spaces. This was especially true for the Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Hmong) participants, who shared experiences of connecting with ethnic peers through Southeast Asian-focused student organizations. Having enough students to form a student group was also important for TJ (Filipino), who did not have many Filipinx friends prior to college but declared that now "more than half of my friends are Filipino" due to her involvement in the

Filipinx student organization. Similarly, Jo-Jo (Pacific Islander) credited her Pacific Islander peers and the Pacific Islander student organization for her coming to and staying at UCLA: "That's why I came because they showed me mad love. They were honest with me and they treated me like a family member, like they know me forever. They made me really comfortable." Indeed, AAPI students often gravitated toward each other through ethnic-specific organizations. This is particularly true for students from ethnic groups that are underrepresented. For example, out of the 29,633 students at UCLA, only 66 are Cambodian American (Southeast Asian) and 13 are Native Hawaiian (Pacific Islander), while 3,068 are Chinese American (East Asian) and 6,770 are White. Table 4 further details AAPI student demographics at UCLA.

Stepping outside of these ethnic-centered spaces presented a different experience for students, however, as they were often reminded of their relative isolation within the greater campus community. Although UCLA is a majority-minority school, with AAPIs as the largest racial group on campus, their sense of belonging contrasts starkly from White students—the group to whom they are often dubbed similar with regard to their college experiences. AAPI undergraduates reported lower levels of their sense of belonging on campus [$F(3, 5060) =$ 42.13, $p = .000$] that were statistically significant [$p = .000$] with small effect sizes [$d = .344$, 95% confidence interval: .256–.386], compared to their White peers (see Table 5).

Although quantitative results do confirm that a difference exists between AAPIs and White students, the small effect size indicates a minimal difference between these two racial groups. Qualitative data provides richer insight on the magnitude of these differences, particularly with regards to AAPI subgroups. For example, Jo-Jo (Pacific Islander) shared the following about being the only Pacific Islander student in her classes:

> I was always afraid to open my mouth in class, because I know I sound different. . . . When I talk or whenever I open my mouth, I already feel like all these looks at me, like "Oh, no. This girl is too ghetto for me." . . . [I was] afraid of being judged.

Mary (Filipina) also expressed being unable to connect with peers due to "being the only one," though for her, it was a result of the different experiences Filipinx have in relation to other AAPI ethnic groups "because of the way

Table 4

UCLA Undergraduate Enrollment, Fall 2014

Race/Ethnicity	Enrollment	Race/Ethnicity	Enrollment
African	123	Laotian	13
African American	954	Latin American	742
American Indian/Alaskan Native	157	Malaysian	13
Asian Indian	1,032	Mexican/Chicano	4,301
Bangladeshi	57	Middle Eastern	1,225
Cambodian	66	North African	33
Caribbean	60	Other	4
Chinese	3,068	Other Asian	82
Cuban	51	Other Black	52
Decline to state	923	Other Hispanic/Latino	512
East Indian/Pakistani	5	Other Pacific Islander	9
Fijian	6	Other White	386
Filipino	1,080	Pakistani	137
Guamanian	9	Puerto Rican	57
Hawaiian	13	Samoan	18
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	Sri Lankan	40
Hmong	26	Taiwanese	815
Indonesian	62	Thai	53
International	3,736	Tongan	6
Japanese	514	Vietnamese	1,379
Korean	1,428	White	6,384

Table 5
Racial Group Differences for Campus Climate Indicators

Indicators	AAPI (A)		Black (B)		Latino/a (L)		White (W)		Significant differences
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Level of agreement that I feel that I belong at this university	4.40	1.17	4.34	1.38	4.30	1.32	4.78	1.20	A(1), B(1), L(1) < W***
Degree to which the campus is appreciative of diversity	3.49	1.11	3.00	1.49	3.46	1.34	3.79	1.14	A(1), B(2) < W***, L(1) < W**, B(1) < L**, B(1) < A*
Degree to which the campus is tolerant of diversity	3.67	1.03	2.98	1.28	3.57	1.21	3.89	1.05	A(1) < W**, B(3), L(1) < W***, B(2) < A***, B(2) < L**
Level of agreement that students of my race/ethnicity are respected on this campus	4.46	1.05	3.36	1.48	4.02	1.35	4.81	1.15	A(1), B(3), L(2) < W***, B < A(3), L(2)***, L(1) < A***

Note. Effect sizes: (1) Small ≤ .5; (2) Medium ≤ .8; (3) Large ≥ .8.
* p ≤ .05.   ** p ≤ .01.   *** p ≤ .001.

that we are colonized and the way that American imperialism has affected our culture and the way that we've assimilated in the U.S." This distinction was particularly salient for her in spaces with Asian Americans of other ethnic backgrounds: "When I'm sitting down in class and I'm just the only dark-skinned Asian . . . It's an experience that no one can relate to." At a campus that enrolls nearly 30,000 undergraduates, only 1,080 identify as Filipinx, while 63 identify as Pacific Islanders. With such a small composition on a campus that appears to be overwhelmingly AAPI, it is not surprising that students like Jo-Jo and Mary tend to feel isolated in their classes.

Lastly, a few students mentioned the absence of a strong ethnic community to be a challenging experience. Seng (Southeast Asian) lamented the low numbers of Cambodian American students on campus, saying, "If anything, it would be awesome to see more familiar faces." Seng's experiences were reflected by Southeast Asian students in the quantitative data, who reported the lowest levels of sense of belonging [$F(3, 2296)$ = 5.19, p = .001], which was significant with minimal effect sizes when compared to East Asian [p = .009], [d = .186, 95% confidence interval: .067–.282], South Asian [p = .005], [d = .307, 95% confidence interval: .107–.439], and Filipinx students [p = .031], [d = .251, 95% confidence interval: .048–.365]. This indicates that the statistical differences between AAPI subgroups, with regards to sense of belonging, were limited (see Table 6). However, the frustration of being one of very few of

their ethnic background was compounded by having to constantly explain their identity to others. As Brittney (Southeast Asian), one of only a couple dozen Hmong students at UCLA, shared: "I have to always explain what Hmong is. Whenever I tell them I'm Hmong . . . they're like, 'What's that . . . does that mean you're Asian and Thai?'" For Rajvi (South Asian), who did not "think that there's any welcoming space for Bangladeshi students," the desire to find and connect with ethnic peers led her to create a Bangladeshi student organization, in hopes of creating a space in which she is no longer invisible or mistakenly lumped together with Indian American students. In other words, even at an institution where AAPIs comprise a larger proportion of the students, the majority of these students are concentrated within a few of the same ethnic groups. AAPIs who identify with many other subgroups, like Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians, do feel like they lack a sense of belonging in campus and actively seek others with similar backgrounds.

Behavioral Dimension

The behavioral dimension of the institutional context encompasses the social interactions students have within and across racial and ethnic groups on campus. For this study, we focused on three types of social interactions: (a) *intraethnic*, or with same-ethnic peers; (b) *interethnic*, or with AAPI peers of other ethnic backgrounds; and (c) *interracial*, or with students of other racial backgrounds. We also examined the

Table 6
AAPI Subgroup Differences for Campus Climate Indicators

Indicators	Southeast Asian (SEA)		Filipino/a (F)		South Asian (SA)		East Asian (EA)		Significant differences
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Level of agreement that I feel that I belong at this university	4.22	1.27	4.49	1.28	4.55	1.05	4.42	1.12	SEA < F*, SEA < SA**, SEA < EA**
Degree to which the campus is appreciative of diversity	3.24	1.17	3.41	1.22	3.48	1.13	3.58	1.06	SEA < EA*
Degree to which the campus is tolerant of diversity	3.50	1.15	3.51	1.14	3.66	1.13	3.74	.95	—
Level of agreement that students of my race/ethnicity are respected on this campus	4.26	1.17	4.50	1.12	4.70	.91	4.48	1.01	SEA < EA, SA***, SEA < F*, EA < SA*

Note. Effect sizes: (1) Small ≤ .5; (2) Medium ≤ .8; (3) Large ≥ .8. All significant differences had small effect sizes.
* $p \leq .05$.   ** $p \leq .01$.   *** $p \leq .001$.

quality (positive or negative) of these interactions, as well as the context or setting (formal or informal) in which they took place. Formal settings were defined as curricular or cocurricular activities (e.g., class lecture, student group meeting), while informal settings refer to casual situations (e.g., conversations with peers in the dining hall).

Students discussed engaging in intraethnic interactions most frequently within formal campus settings, most prevalent of which were ethnic student organizations and ethnic student-run programs. The line between formal and informal settings was blurred, however, as many of the social connections students made through ethnic student groups translated into friendships. In describing her participation in the Hmong student organization, Brittney (Southeast Asian) said: "Whenever I felt like cooking, or whenever I felt like eating Hmong food, the older members always cook or invite us over, spontaneous socials, things like that . . . AHS [Association of Hmong Students] very much was the home away from home." These student organizations were critical spaces in which many participants discovered their ethnic community on campus in order to develop a sense of belonging.

In general, intraethnic interactions tended to be highly positive and frequent in nature, particularly for Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander students. However, two of the three Fili-

pinx students discussed experiencing negative experiences with the Filipinx student organization. Roland (Filipino) said he "felt people were being cliquey already right off the bat . . . it was hard to associate with them," while Mary (Filipina) shared that, "I wasn't comfortable. People felt really cliquey. I didn't feel like I fit in." Their quotes suggest that connections with ethnic peers, even when numbers are substantial, are not automatic or guaranteed. Lastly, it should be noted that the East Asian participants commented the least on their involvement with ethnic student groups, the existence of which did not appear to have the same meaning or impact for them as their Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander peers. As Brian (East Asian) stated, "While I think what these student groups do is great, I never felt I really want to join. I was just indifferent about it." Unlike for Hmong students, the higher numbers of East Asian students at UCLA (58.5% of all AAPI students), may reduce the desire and need for students like Brian to seek out their ethnic peers.

A phenomenon that emerged from a number of participants' narratives was their descriptions of negative interethnic interactions. Jennifer (Southeast Asian) alluded to these in discussing the dynamics within the Southeast Asian community: "I feel like the Vietnamese Student Union tries to dominate the rest of the Southeast Asian community and now it's pushing all the Southeast Asian community away . . . There's

just a lot of tension." Having a critical mass of AAPI students does not necessarily mean the dynamics within the population are uniform or necessarily positive. While there were students who described peer groups that cut across AAPI ethnicities or times of collaboration between ethnic student groups, the overall narrative was one that depicted the AAPI experience at UCLA as a largely ethnic-centered one.

Participants across all AAPI ethnic groups discussed having interracial interactions, at nearly equal frequency as interethnic interactions. While several students shared positive interracial interactions, many described negative experiences with other racial groups on campus. In alignment with this finding, an overwhelming proportion of AAPI students reported this negative interaction, with 74.6% of Filipinx, 73.9% of Southeast Asian, 70% of East Asian, and 67.3% of South Asian students reported hearing negative and stereotypical views. For example, several students referenced racial tensions that emerged during recent student government elections, which are a highly contested activity at UCLA. Brittney (Southeast Asian) described an interaction that took place between leaders of two different racial student organizations: "[They] approached one of our [officers] . . . and were like, 'You know what, your community does not know what it's like to struggle.' Of course that caused a huge issue."

Other students shared incidents of microaggressions and negative racial acts often perpetrated by White peers. Jennifer (Southeast Asian) shared, "In my classes I just notice that people purposely do not work with me because I am one of the only [Asian Americans] in the classroom," for example, while Rajvi (South Asian) offered the following anecdote: "Someone was just like, 'Wow, your arms are so smooth. I never thought they could be this smooth . . . You know what they say, Indian girls are so hairy.' It hurt me . . . I was really upset." Lastly, Andrew (Southeast Asian) described assumptions others made about him based on his perceived racial identity:

> People come after me after class like, "Andrew, you're so confident." . . . It's like, "Okay, so why are you making these statements to me? Is it because you do not expect me to be that way?" . . . My personal identity, it's already been assigned certain qualities.

True to the nature of microaggressions, these incidents were small in scope yet exerted tangible impact on students' level of distress and on feelings of isolation.

Quantitative results confirmed these experiences. When compared to White students, AAPIs viewed UCLA as unappreciative of diversity [$F(3, 1336) = 9.76$, $p = .000$] at significantly greater levels [$p = .000$] [$d = .277$, 95% confidence interval: .143–.394] (see Table 5). Additionally, Southeast Asian students perceived UCLA to be unappreciative of diversity [$F(3, 625) = 3.19$, $p = .023$] at significantly lower levels [$p = .015$] compared to East Asian students [$d = .323$, 95% confidence interval: .115–.523] (see Table 6). Although both of these results had small effect sizes, they suggest that even as a majority-minority institution, UCLA is clearly not immune to the challenges of cultivating positive race relations on campus.

Psychological Dimension

Students' perceptions of campus racial dynamics and the resulting impact on their well-being comprise the psychological dimension of institutional context. Across many participants' interviews were descriptions of a less than positive racial environment on campus. Interactions in both interethnic and interracial relations, as well as perceptions of racial conflict or incidents of bias, contributed to how students experienced the overall campus racial climate.

During interviews, a majority of participants detailed negative interethnic relations. Students indicated that these interactions could be strained at times, where ethnic groups' strong focus on their respective needs and experiences contributed to what students—particularly Southeast Asians and Filipinx—perceived to be barriers to connecting with other ethnic communities. For example, Penny (Southeast Asian) described her involvement with the Vietnamese student organization as "frustrating" because "they talked about diversity but at the same time they emphasized a lot on being strictly Vietnamese or strictly Southeast Asian . . . I felt like they could have meshed better with other communities." Similarly, Brittney (Southeast Asian) discussed a stronger connection to fellow Hmong students than other Southeast Asians, due to the latter's lack of attention

to dynamics of socioeconomic status and class differences among the different ethnic groups within the Southeast Asian community.

Students across all ethnic subgroups conveyed perceptions of interracial relations that were not any better, to which they attributed to similar reasons of insular, group-centric thinking that hindered cross-racial interactions. As Jo-Jo (Pacific Islander) described:

> I think the problem is we need to learn about each other's communities in order to work together, but we haven't taken the time out to [do that]. . . . We're so focused on our people, we forget that all of us are going through repression [sic].

Brittney (Southeast Asian) also commented on the absence of dialogue between racial groups, which contributes to lack of collaboration among student of color communities:

> [It's] really disheartening because I'm like at the end of the day we're sitting here fighting for the same resources. . . . Maybe if we set aside our personal issues, we could . . . actually become united and actually fight for something that matters to all of us.

While these students recognized that different student-of-color communities are experiencing similar challenges, they also expressed tensions between racial groups and the need for more demonstrations of cross-racial understanding and solidarity.

Not all students shared negative perceptions of the campus racial climate, however. Brian (East Asian) did not perceive there to be an issue of racial conflict or discrimination at UCLA:

I haven't really been in experiences where I faced discrimination or negative comments about my race. So I do not think my race has affected me negatively . . . I do not see students of my heritage not respected. No one's making fun of their culture or devaluing it.

Similarly, Roland (Filipino) stated, "I feel on the UCLA campus, Filipinos are recognized pretty well because we do have our own organization, which is a pretty big organization," and Seng (Southeast Asian) remarked, "I'd say it's pretty welcoming [here]. Maybe it's because I found my group by talking to lots of people. I guess from my perspective, race wasn't an issue." It is important to note, however, that these three participants found the campus racial climate to be positive for different reasons. Seng (Southeast Asian) found that

race was not salient to his experiences and interactions, Brian (East Asian) felt that there were simply no instances of racism at UCLA, and Roland (Filipino) believed that racial hostilities were limited because his ethnic group had reached a critical mass.

While these students reflected positive experiences, they were in the minority of the participants. Nearly all other students, when asked to describe their overall perceptions of the campus racial environment, offered comments that characterized the climate as isolating and unsupportive of AAPI students. Analyses of quantitative measures related to campus climate provided similar evidence that confirms the differences in student responses. AAPI students did report that they found UCLA to be statistically more intolerant of diversity $[F(3, 1335) = 12.066]$, when compared to White students $[p = .007]$ (see Table 5). However, the small effect size $[d = .212, 95\%$ confidence interval: $.091–.342]$ indicates that the level of magnitude of these differences is low.

Nonetheless, when probed regarding experiences of ethnic identity, which the quantitative data did not allow for, participants described feeling unrecognized and invisible among the student body. This was in part due to others not being familiar with their ethnic backgrounds, as was the case for Brittney (Southeast Asian) and her Hmong identity, Rajvi (South Asian) and her Bengali identity, and Jo-Jo (Pacific Islander), who expressed, "We're still not a known population on this campus. No one knows what a Pacific Islander is, no one knows what a Samoan is, no one knows what a Chamorro is, no one knows what a Marshallese is."

Other students shared frustration with their ethnic groups' experiences often being lost among those of the general AAPI population. For example, it is a common practice in research and practice, as well as through social interactions at UCLA, to aggregate ethnic groups into a single AAPI population. Jason (Southeast Asian) stated, "Because we're grouped as Asians, people can't really tell the difference between us, so I guess they kind of just see us as Asian . . . [they] treat you as any other ethnicity." has truly negative and troubling psychological implications for students. Mary (Filipina) echoed this, offering the following profound comment to indicate her ethnic

community's sense of being indistinguishable on campus:

> They just generalize us to this really huge group of people . . . when there's really specific things about each community that affects their performance. . . . You really miss that. At that point, experiences become invisible. If it's invisible, then it's like it doesn't exist. If it doesn't exist, then what are we?

Participants also described what they perceived to be insufficient commitment and support from the university around diversity and race-related issues, particularly with respect to the AAPI community. For example, Amanda (Southeast Asian) shared a perception that UCLA's administration did not prioritize AAPI students and their experiences: "Whenever something that happens within our Asian community, it's not taken as seriously, or as serious as something [that] happened to another race." Quantitative findings provided generalizable evidence of this. For example, AAPI students $[F(3, 5095) = 148.461, p = .000]$ were statistically more likely to disagree that their race/ethnicity was respected on campus compared $[p = .000]$ to White students $[d = .325, 95\%$ confidence interval: .255–.384] (see Table 5). In addition, one in five Southeast Asian students disagreed that students of their race/ethnicity are respected on campus, the highest level of disagreement among all AAPI students. This finding $[F(3, 2310) = 8.988, p = .000]$ was also statistically significant when compared to East Asian $[p = .001]$ $[d = .215, 95\%$ confidence interval: .097–.31], South Asian $[p = .000]$ $[d = .431, 95\%$ confidence interval: .229–.56], and Filipinx students $[p = .031]$ $[d = .235, 95\%$ confidence interval: .046–.364], though with minimum effect sizes (see Table 6).

Participants also described the level of respect, or lack thereof, they feel is given to students of their race and ethnicity on campus. These sentiments led Jo-Jo (Pacific Islander) to state, "People are just claiming diversity, but . . . UCLA hasn't really proven [its commitment]" and Brittney (Southeast Asian) to pointedly ask: "When it comes to advocating for these students who come from these diverse backgrounds that you pride the university on, are they really being supported? Do you really support diversity or do you support tokenization?" In other words, AAPI students, especially those subgroups that are underrepresented, expressed

their concerns that the institution level of support did not match with their diversity statements.

Students shared that their perceptions of the campus racial climate would be enhanced if the university took proactive steps to demonstrate support for both the AAPI and student of color community in general, and their ethnic communities in particular. Such actions include public statements of solidarity and support when negative racial incidents occur, increased financial and programmatic resources to racial and ethnic student organizations, and greater enrollment and support of students of specific AAPI ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Cambodian, Hmong, Pacific Islander). Until then, students' perceptions of the campus environment are likely to mirror that of Mary (Filipina): "It's not particularly welcoming. I just feel like I'm here . . . I don't feel cared for by the school. I feel like I could disappear from UCLA's campus and it wouldn't matter."

Discussion and Implications

Although AAPIs make up the largest racial group at UCLA, the singular conclusion of universal satisfaction based on compositional representation is a gross misperception. With a population as diverse as AAPIs, race cannot be examined solely through a compositional lens. Indeed, it would be factually inaccurate to declare AAPIs to have one singular perception of their campus experiences. Thus, as our study demonstrates, data disaggregation is a critical tool to illuminate the disparate AAPI experiences that exist. For example, we demonstrate the necessity to drill deeper beyond race, and in doing so, find that specific AAPI subgroups (e.g., Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders), are not only compositionally underrepresented but also experience lower levels of sense of belonging than their East Asian peers. Harkening back to our central premise and conceptual framework, our findings confirm that while compositional diversity plays a significant role toward campus climate, other dimensions of equal importance must interact with one another to produce positive campus climate (Hurtado et al., 2012).

The behavioral dimension, for example, allowed us to interrogate student interactions beyond cross-racial interaction, but in directions

that complicate how we traditionally consider and investigate racial interactions. More specifically, we examined intraethnic, interethnic, and interracial relations, which indicated that students perceive and experience these interactions differently, and across different types of settings and situations. For example, AAPI students discussed experiencing microaggressions in their daily interactions, where stereotypes about their appearance or personality were invoked. Descriptive analysis of the quantitative data confirms that AAPIs experience negative racial interactions at alarmingly high levels, from 67.3 to 74.6% depending on subgroup.

Returning to the MMDLE's premise that an institution's behavioral practices can function to exclude racial and ethnic minority students and perpetuate inequities, the finding that AAPI students are experiencing negative racial interactions strengthens our argument that composition alone does not negate poor campus climate. Instead, these outcomes point to the need for institutions to be cognizant of how interactions within and between groups can be facilitated and to leverage opportunities to foster positive dialogue and engagement. Furthermore, this opens new lines of inquiry for future research, as subsequent studies can uncover how and why intraethnic, interethnic, and interracial interactions unfold differently, or explore the potential consequences that may arise if institutional leaders, student affairs professionals, and faculty are not aware of these differences.

With regard to our findings in the psychological dimension, the majority of our participants reported negative racialized experiences, namely because their peers as well as institutional agents were often unaware of their ethnic heritage or stereotypically believed that AAPIs only have a singular one-dimensional identity. This further exacerbated feelings of being unrecognized, invisible, intolerant, disrespected, and unsupported. Furthermore, both our qualitative and quantitative data converged to support these findings, making this a phenomenon of unique concern for AAPIs. The psychological dimension of institutions points not only to students' perceptions of campus racial dynamics but also the resulting impact on their well-being. As such, these findings of negative racialized experiences confirm the literature on AAPI students at predominantly White institutions that demonstrate the feelings of isolation

and lack of belonging (Maramba, 2008; Museus & Truong, 2009), and extend them to include institutions that are compositionally diverse. This reinforces the need for institutions to implement a more comprehensive and holistic approach, such as encouraging formal and informal interactions with and among AAPIs and their peers, to achieve the benefits of diversity.

In addition to highlighting institutional dimensions that play a role in campus racial climate, our study points to the critical need to use disaggregated data to accurately understand the nature of student experiences within each of these dimensions of campus life. As our findings reveal, while experiences varied across groups, a pattern of negative experiences emerged among the Southeast Asian and one Pacific Islander students—groups that are among the most underrepresented at UCLA. This pattern points out that not only is compositional diversity not sufficient in achieving the benefits of diversity, it can actually overlook entire student populations when data does not accurately account for said diversity. The critical consideration of the dimensions within the MMDLE, then, must be accompanied by an equally critical approach to using data that precisely captures student populations, lest colleges and universities continue to fall short in achieving a racially equitable campus climate.

A number of important implications for practice and policy emerged from this study. Before we present these implications, we again acknowledge that UCLA is a unique institution with regard to the large enrollment of AAPI students. Yet, we want to reiterate our earlier statement that this study's findings can be relevant to any college or university that enrolls AAPI students. For example, our findings indicated that AAPI students can feel isolated and marginalized even when they comprise a large percentage of the student body, suggesting that these feelings may be similar, if not heightened, at predominantly White institutions and campuses with low AAPI student numbers.

In addition, the geographic distribution of the U.S. AAPI population is such that the concentration of ethnic groups varies by location, which can affect the ethnic composition of an institution's AAPI student population. For example, while colleges located the Midwest and the South may have smaller AAPI student populations, these populations may have a larger

representation of Southeast Asian or South Asian students, given the greater presence of these ethnic groups within these regions of the country (U.S. Census, 2012). Recognizing that the needs and experiences of Southeast Asian and South Asian students differ from those of East Asian students, whose experiences are the ones upon which programs and services for AAPI students are typically based, can assist institutions in more effectively serving the specific profile of AAPI students on their campuses. As is the case with any study on campus climate, the implications and recommendations we discuss below are not universal, but should be adapted to fit each institution's specific demographic context and resource capacity.

In regard to transforming institutional practice, administrators and those in student affairs can strengthen outreach to underrepresented AAPI communities. This should start as early as admissions yield events and first-year orientation programs, from the mention of specific ethnic groups (e.g., Vietnamese, Bengali, Samoan, or whichever groups are present among the student body) in program descriptions, to the inclusion of their experiences in program content. Institutions may also want to revise their student census or needs assessments with an option for students to indicate both their racial and ethnic background, to allow for the disaggregation of student responses and a better understanding of the distinct experiences across different AAPI ethnic groups on campus.

Upon identifying underserved AAPI student groups and their needs, institutions must be intentional in implementing strategies to address these needs. These strategies may come in an array of forms. First is the allocation of funding and other resources to multicultural affairs offices to develop peer mentoring, leadership, or community engagement programs that are ethnic-specific, to provide students with a space to connect and build community with ethnic peers. Intergroup dialogue programs that facilitate awareness and understanding between different AAPI ethnic groups, as well as between AAPI students and other students of color, would also be of tremendous value. Also of importance would be the investment of resources to expand existing diversity initiatives to explicitly include AAPI students, particularly those ethnic groups that are underserved. We readily admit that increasing funding for diversity efforts in a period of disinvestment in higher education can be nearly impossible. However, in this current political climate, resources for multicultural affairs can no longer be optional. Colleges and universities exist as a reliable vehicle to educate and create dialogue on issues of race and ethnicity, thus institutional leaders must faithfully reprioritize their budgets to this meet this objective. Indeed, UCLA has more recently moved in this direction, and in 2015 committed resources to establish the position of Vice-Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to focus solely on these issues.

Second is the education of all faculty, staff, and students about the experiences of different AAPI ethnic groups through training workshops or social media campaigns, to dispel the common assumption that AAPI students are a monolith with one singular experience (Lee, 2009). This increased awareness can then inform the development of culturally competent counseling and advising services across all campus functional areas, from the counseling center and residential life to academic advising and career services. Lastly, faculty members can design either full courses or course content that focus on issues of diversity and to examine the history and contributions of AAPI ethnic communities. Although Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies (AAS) may be logical places to start, it may also prove beneficial to have faculty across all disciplines also work toward these goals, given that AAPI students pursue a wide range of majors and programs of study. In addition, the hiring of faculty from different AAPI ethnic backgrounds should be an institutional priority, as a number of study participants commented on the positive impact of having faculty members who share their ethnic identities.

There are also several implications for institutional policy. The finding that students from certain AAPI ethnic groups faced distinct challenges in navigating the campus racial climate despite the large percentage of AAPIs among the student body suggests that institutions have an opportunity to reconsider how they designate underrepresented minorities. Many schools, including those within the UC system (UCOP, 2012), do not currently include AAPI students in these designations, thereby overlooking the needs and experiences of those like the Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander students in this

study. Similarly, college administrators may want to audit their institutional and departmental diversity strategies to identify areas in which all AAPI students or specific AAPI ethnic groups should be included.

Finally, administrators can help to institutionalize data disaggregation in research, practice, and teaching, which this study demonstrates is critical in creating campus climates where AAPI students feel appreciated, recognized, and supported. Efforts in this area may include requiring the collection of AAPI ethnic data on the admissions application and all surveys or assessments that are distributed to students, as well as mandating the inclusion of disaggregated AAPI ethnic data in reports generated by all research units across campus. The collection and reporting of disaggregated data are only the first steps, however. Colleges must also work to embed a culture of data disaggregation across the institution. For example, a task force comprised of faculty, staff, and students could be established to identify and implement strategies for accurately assessing the needs of AAPI students and applying those findings in meaningful and beneficial ways. Put together, the implementation of these recommendations on college campuses can help institutions achieve the benefits of diversity through the formation of universally inclusive campus environments.

Limitations

Several limitations to this study exist. First, the study was unable to adequately capture the experience of Pacific Islander students, as only one Pacific Islander student was interviewed and survey data from Pacific Islander students were excluded from the quantitative analysis due to small sample size. Similarly, the decision to aggregate ethnic groups into regional groups for the quantitative analysis means insight into specific ethnic group experiences could only be derived from the qualitative findings. Second, while UCUES contains questions designed to assess campus climate, as a secondary data source its variables were imperfect or limited in their ability to fully address the dimensions of the MMDLE. In addition, the instrument does not distinguish between race and ethnicity in its

questions, and thus the quantitative analysis is unable to speak to distinctions between interethnic and interracial dynamics.

Lastly, it is important to consider the unique institutional context of the study site. Both UCLA and its geographic location in Southern California have large populations of AAPIs and other communities of color, a demographic context that is likely to shape how students understand and experience race and ethnicity. As such, findings from this study may not be directly transferable to the experiences of AAPI students attending colleges and universities in other areas of the United States. However, this does not mean the findings are irrelevant or not useful for institutions with less diverse student populations or lower concentrations of AAPI students. Recognizing the ethnic composition of the AAPI student population, the experiences of specific AAPI ethnic groups, and the ways in which AAPI students interact across both racial and ethnic identities are important considerations for any institution that enrolls AAPI students. Thus, while this study's findings are specific to the context of UCLA and its student population, its themes are applicable to other schools in their efforts to support their AAPI students.

Conclusion

As institutions of higher education across the nation continue to grapple with campus climate and face increasing demands to better serve increasingly heterogeneous student populations, there is an immediate need to consider how AAPI students fit within that narrative and into larger campus priorities. Representing one of the fastest growing student populations, as well as one of the most overlooked with regard to the provision of support and resources, AAPIs stand at a critical position for defining what it means to embrace a positive campus climate. If AAPIs continue to be left out of these conversations, institutions will continue to fall short of tapping the full potential of campus diversity. There is an opportunity to improve campus climate through the acknowledgment of their unique needs, the commitment to better understanding those needs, and the provision of systems of support that ensure that all of their students are acknowledged, valued, and successful.

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