

The Sundial

Issue 10 | Spring 2024

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How Asian Americans Feel

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Taiwanese American Inventor's Story

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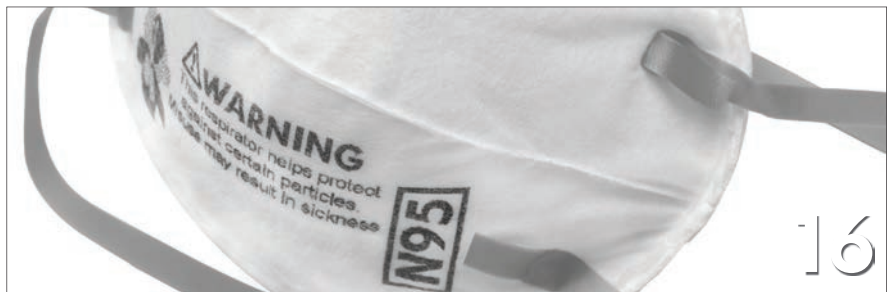
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Post-doctoral counselor fellow Dr. Joshua Chow in front of the Ralph Prator Fountain. (Sasha Alikhanov)



Letter from the EDITOR

In the May issue of spring semester, we are highlighting Asian American stories. As a North and Central Asian in the U.S., I understand the diversity of our community and want to share a variety of stories. We do not all look the same, and we come from disparate regions of the continent, but we can stand together against hate toward each other.

Amid the growing prejudice against Central Asians and Indigenous peoples in my country of birth, Russia, I feel emboldened to be as loud as I can about the beauty of our people. Many Asian people are not seen, heard or considered in conversations of Asian communities. As a Sakha and Kazakh person, I know the feeling of being unnoticed within the community, and I know many others from various ethnic backgrounds can relate.

It is also important to recognize the diversity of Asians outside of ethnicity. Everyone has an intersection of identities, including ethnicity, gender and sexuality, which should be celebrated in all aspects of life. The feature story highlights Dr. Joshua Chow of University Counseling Services, who is a queer Chinese-Taiwanese cisman. Chow and others are unapologetic in their love of their identities and the identities of the people around them. The Media Querencia stories highlight various films and songs by Asian Americans in media, which serve as reflective for some and educational for others.

Each story aims to bring attention to the diverse Asian diaspora in the U.S., and it is an honor to play a part in telling our stories. We hope to continue highlighting Asians from more ethnic backgrounds and always improve our reporting. As a university news source, one of our main goals is to constantly improve so we can better tell people's stories. It is a privilege to tell stories, and I am happy to highlight Asian Americans every day of the year.

Спасибо,

Sasha Alikhanov

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Staff *Highlight*

The students who make the Sundial possible

WRITTEN BY SASHA ALIKHANOV



Trisha Anas

Trisha Anas, the current managing social media editor, is an integral member of the newsroom with palpable motivation in her writing. As editor-in-chief, Anas introduced various structural improvements to the newsroom, which continue to help writers and editors communicate and create the best work possible.

Anas has a passion for representing and uplifting fellow Asian Americans.

“If we do not fight for our community, no one else will,” said Anas.

With her work at the Roundup News of Pierce College and here at the Daily Sundial, Anas has covered stories about diverse communities, alongside stories about higher education, including California State University tuition increases.



Sam Lindberg

Sam Lindberg, a graphic designer, is an invaluable member of the print team. In his role, he designs a variety of stories, from features to this very Staff Highlight. Lindberg brings creativity and life to each of his designs, which spark visual interest and reader retention.

Fellow graphic designer Kevin Silva recommended Lindberg for the role based on their friendship and Silva’s respect for Lindberg’s work.

“You can see the fun he has with the designs he does,” said Silva.

Lindberg’s presence on the print desk is not limited to his designs, which Silva describes as modern and fluid, he also is also a congenial team member.

“We always find a way to have a really cool conversation with each other that I can’t have with anyone else,” said Silva.

Statistics of Sentiments

How Asian Americans feel

WRITTEN BY TRISHA ANAS

During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, it was difficult as an Asian American healthcare worker to not feel an overwhelming amount of anger.

While nearly 1.4 million Asian American and Pacific Islanders, AAPI for short, worked as healthcare workers during the height of the pandemic, Asian hate crimes increased by nearly 150%, according to NBC.

In January 2021, Thai immigrant Vicha Ratanapakdee was brutally shoved and bled to death in San

Francisco. In March 2021, a white gunman went to three spas in Atlanta and killed eight people, six of whom were Asian. In May 2022, the Roque family was verbally and physically attacked by a white male who hurled anti-Asian sentiments at them at a McDonald's drive through in North Hollywood.

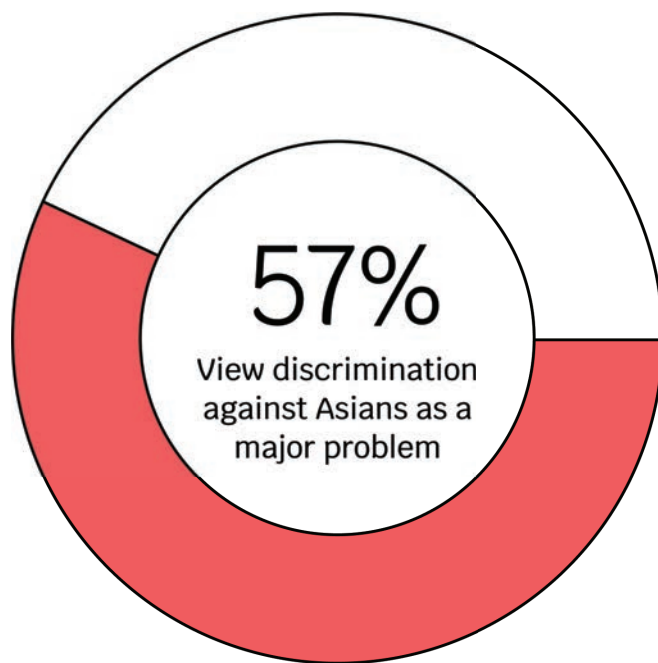
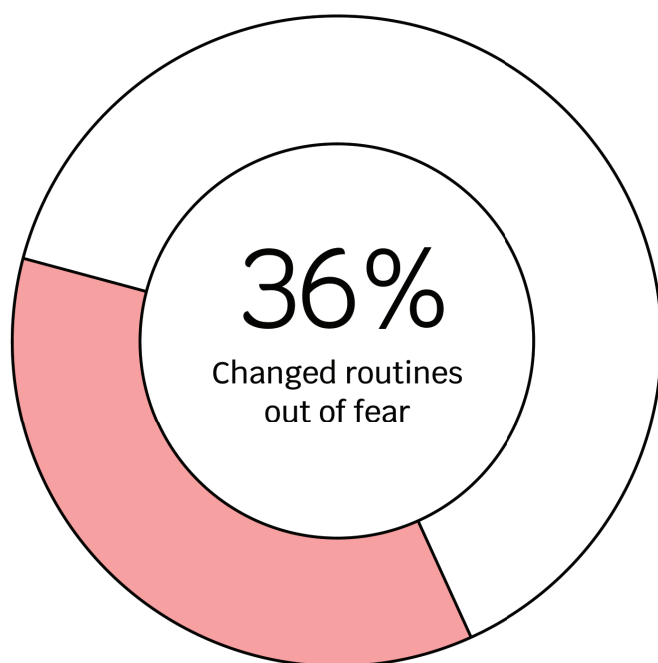
Shortly after the incidents in 2021, the California State University, Northridge Faculty Senate released a statement condemning acts of violence against the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American

community, APIDA for short.

But these incidents are not unfamiliar, nor are they new, to the community.

Asian hate crimes spiked during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to an article on the National Center for Biotechnology Information. A total of 10,905 incidents were reported to the organization Stop Asian American and Pacific Islander Hate, with a jump from 4,632 occurring in 2020 and 6,273 in 2021.

However, in an article on PBS,



Infographic of statistics from a 2023 Pew Research Center study of discrimination experiences of Asian Americans. (Natalie Ammari)

Stop AAPI Hate director of data and research Stephanie Chan said that the numbers might not reflect the true gravity of total Asian hate crimes.

“We know that Asian Americans are among the most likely to not report the crime they’ve experienced,” Chan said. “It’s really sobering to see that even when the world seems to have returned to normal, after the pandemic, these levels are still really elevated in terms of anti-Asian American hate.”

About one-in-five Asians/Asian Americans in the U.S. stated that

former president Donald Trump, who repeatedly called COVID-19 the “Chinese virus,” is one of the reasons for the spike, according to Pew Research.

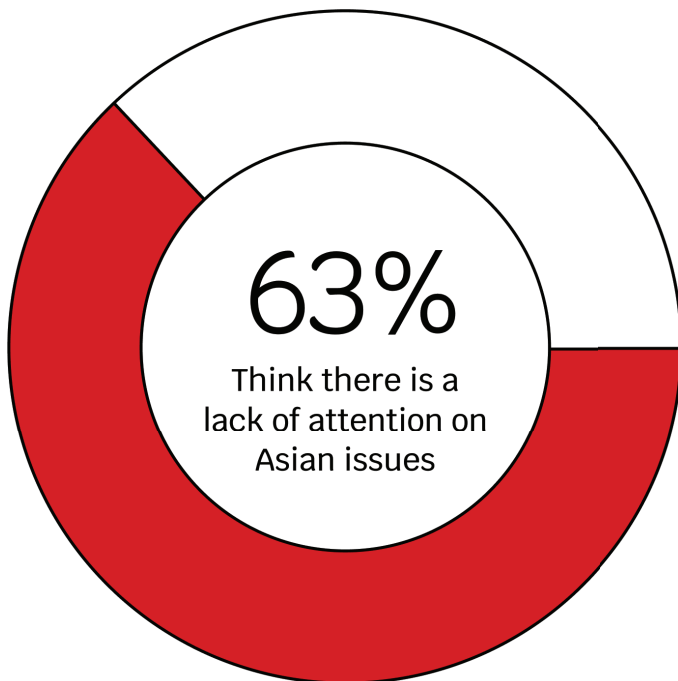
In a recent study, Pew also found that the AAPI community is shaped by their discrimination experiences through three broad ways: that they are treated as foreigners despite being born in the U.S., that they are assumed to be a model minority and that they face discrimination incidents in day-to-day encounters.

About 36% of Asian adults also

stated that they made changes to their daily routines out of fear of being threatened or attacked.

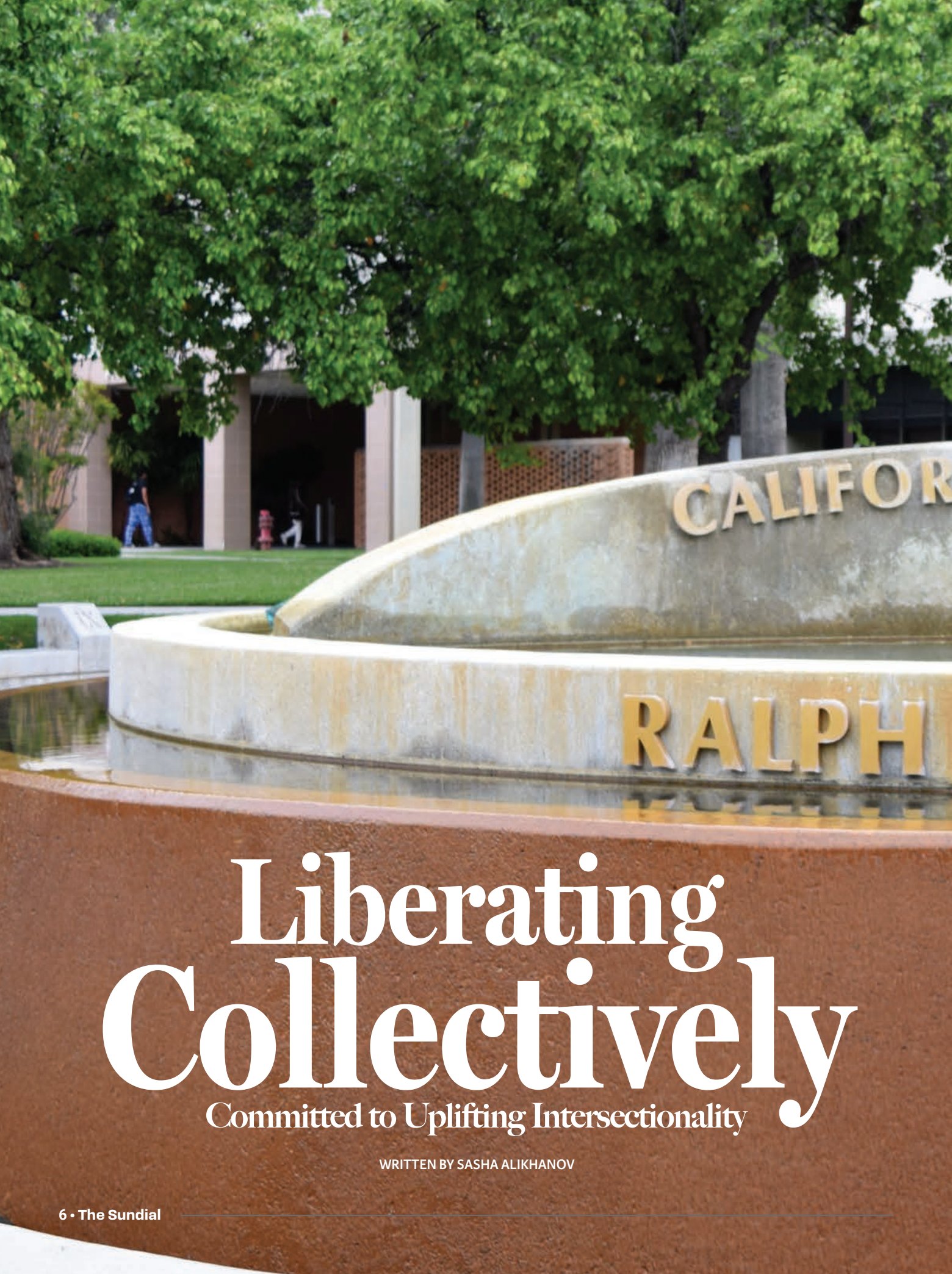
Pew reported that 57% of Asians living in the U.S. see discrimination against Asians as a major problem and 63% say there is not enough attention on race and racial issues around the AAPI community.

But the consistent efforts of community activism and the resilience of the AAPI community continues to push forward, despite the ongoing rise of hate crimes.



“It’s really sobering to see that even when the world seems to have returned to normal, after the pandemic, these levels are still really elevated in terms of anti-Asian American hate.”

*Stephanie Chan
Director of Stop AAPI Hate*



Liberating Collectively

Committed to Uplifting Intersectionality

WRITTEN BY SASHA ALIKHANOV



Post-doctoral counselor fellow Dr. Joshua Chow in front of the Ralph Prator Fountain. (Sasha Alikhanov)

For a community to rise, everyone must contribute.

Dr. Joshua Chow, a post-doctoral counselor fellow at California State University, Northridge's University Counseling Services, champions this idea, and contributes through his work as a psychologist. The Chinese-Taiwanese counselor works with people of all backgrounds empathetically and humbly as informed by his learned experiences.

Chow finds beauty in the work he does and often paints pictures in his head of his experiences. When speaking about the societal pressures people face, he pictures a box that illustrates a feeling of constraint.

"I think of it like society is trying to put them into this tiny box they don't fit into," said Chow. "Once therapy starts to open the box, this huge rush of beautiful colors comes out."

Chow's father was born in Taiwan and moved to Hawai'i when he was 8 years old, and his mother was born in Oakland. Coming from a family with intersecting cultures, Chow was immersed in language and cuisine until things changed at a young age.

"My parents were very focused on making sure we fit in," said Chow. "They were worried about what others would think of us."

Intense assimilation is a common experience of Asian Americans, especially children of immigrants, according to a 2024 scholarly article in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. The article delves into the paradox of Asian American assimilation: Asian Americans are the fastest-growing ethnic minority in the U.S. with large buying power despite a history laced with racism and exclusion, which were perpetu-

ated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many families encourage their children to eat "white" food and participate in hobbies associated with whiteness to fit in and avoid being othered based on their ethnicity. Taking on these markers of the majority is meant to benefit the minority, but it can negatively impact one's view of themselves.

"There was a lot of internalized racism there," said Chow. "I used to want to be white so bad growing up."

While in the throes of teenage self-discovery, Chow found passion in helping others. In high school, Chow worked with students in Special Olympics to support them in their athletic journeys, which served as a leaping pad for him to pursue a life of advocacy and service for others.

"It was so wonderful to see the effects it had on people, even when I was 16, 17, 18," said Chow.

The transition from high school to the University of California, Davis was a major turning point in Chow's life. Through the communities he interfaced with and lectures he attended, his relationship with his Asian ethnicity evolved.

"That started to change in college," said Chow. "I started to discover there is beauty in being Asian, and I would not want to be white at this point."

The path to self-acceptance and empowerment of one's Asian identity is unique to each person, and has been explored in numerous best-selling memoirs, including "Crying in H Mart" by Michelle Zauner and "Minor Feelings" by Cathy Park Hong. A resounding theme from works focused on identity is the difficult path one treads to reach acceptance.





Dr. Joshua Chow in front of the Ralph Prator Fountain. (Sasha Alikhanov)



Dr. Joshua Chow on the University Lawn. (Sasha Alikhanov)

In university, Chow double majored in psychology and evolution, ecology and biodiversity, which led him to research the latter field straight out of undergrad. While he found the research interesting, the process lacked the human interaction off of which he thrives, so he shifted his trajectory to psychology.

Chow's switch brought him to work with people in need at Maitri Compassionate Care in San Francisco, which provides care and resources to people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as people recovering from gender-affirming surgeries.

In his time at Maitri Compassionate Care, his passion for helping others solidified.

"It's not even satisfaction, it's higher than that," said Chow. "Finding my purpose in life through that."

He also recognized the importance of working with people with marginalized identities, who are often left out of conversations of mental health.

"I want to work with these folks," said Chow. "In actuality, work with people both similar and different to me, but still sharing these identities."

Working with people living with HIV/AIDS reminded Chow of the rency of the '80s epidemic. HIV/AIDS can affect anyone, but the disease remains heavily associated with the LGBTQ+

community. Since the disease became common knowledge, it has been used to stigmatize queer people with some labeling it “God’s punishment” for gay men, according to a 2002 scholarly article from the Journal of Medicine and Philosophy.

While working at the care organization, Chow realized his understanding of ancestors differs from the widely accepted definition.

“Oftentimes, there’s an assumption that ancestors mean my direct bloodline,” said Chow.

“Through working with these folks, I learned truly that we’re all connected. The people who experienced the HIV/AIDS epidemic

are my ancestors. I do stand on their shoulders today for what they had done and what they sacrificed, oftentimes not willingly.”

Chow went on to explain how his view of ancestors and their sacrifices inform his life.

“Everything that they’ve done has added up,” said Chow. “It collectively has made me who I am today but also has given me privileges that they certainly did not have. I hope to pass that

on to future generations through the work that I do here.”

As a queer man, Chow highlights the importance of knowing one’s history to be in touch with one’s identity. He began his coming out journey in freshman year of university by telling his friends and waited until after graduation to tell his parents.

“I was privileged to have a family who I knew would be there and would not abuse me or neglect me after I came out, and still, the worries were there,” said Chow.

Chow. “It was through working with [people living with HIV/AIDS] that I realized, ‘Oh, this wasn’t far away at all.’”

As Chow went into a doctoral program at the Wright Institute and moved into new workplaces, he maintained his reverence for the community he gained at Maitri Compassionate Care.

“I get the opportunity to support them when they were supporting me without even knowing it before I was born,” said Chow.

From his upbringing in an Asian household to working with people living with HIV/AIDS, Chow grew to champion intersectionality and the unique ways people’s identities inform one another.

“I am super grateful for my queerness because that is the venue through which I was able to find love for my Asian identity.”

Dr. Joshua Chow

Coming out is a daunting prospect for people from all communities. Queer Asians are noted as repressing their sexuality to avoid stigmas in their families and lives, according to a 2014 scholarly article in the Journal of Men’s Studies.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic still affects how people see queer identity, even among people they know.

“When I came out to my mom, I think that she was quite scared, and I sort of didn’t understand that at the time,” said

“I am super grateful for my queerness because that is the venue through which I was able to find love for my Asian identity,” said Chow. “I started to learn that being different was actually really powerful.”

Not every Asian person is the same despite perceived phenotypic similarities, and their experiences are tailored to them based on their identities. Chow’s understanding of this allows him to be open in every counseling



Dr. Joshua Chow in front of the Ralph Prator Fountain. (Sasha Alikhanov)

session at UCS, where he works now after varying positions throughout his doctoral program.

“Everyone is their own individual, unique person,” said Chow. “It helps me to have a lot of empathy for people who have different and similar experiences.”

As a post-doctoral counselor fellow, Chow works with students from all backgrounds with clinical interests in marginalized minority groups and people who experienced trauma. He also holds Let’s Talk sessions at the Glenn Omatsu House, which are informal opportunities for students to meet counselors and learn about UCS.

“Let’s Talk was a way for me to show students, ‘Hey, there is representation here, and hey, we’re not that scary,’” said Chow. “That’s one of the things I love about UCS. We really are trying to be

our most human being selves here.”

As reflected by other Let’s Talk hosts, including Marlon James Briggs who holds sessions at the Black House, it is helpful for students to see counselors face-to-face and be exposed to the diversity of UCS. In the conversational setting, counselors can break down preconceived notions of therapy and work with students to help them reach their academic and life goals.

“With all that stigma we hear as Asian people, it takes a little bit of time and energy to alay people’s fears of what counseling can be,” said Chow. “Sometimes it takes a similar face or someone who holds similar identities to calm that fear down.”

Chow expressed happiness in his work at CSUN with students being the highlight of his job.

“The students who I see are very grateful, and that is something that is very special about this place,” said Chow. “When they come and seek services, they are so lovely and so willing to engage in growth.”

Helping people of all backgrounds with his skills is the basis of Chow’s drive. His life mission is predicated on collective liberation, which states everyone plays a role in oppression and can transversely play a role in dispelling oppression, according to an article from *The Assembly*, a journal of education at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

“In order for myself to gain freedom, I need to be able to advocate and fight for those who don’t have that,” said Chow. “Therapy is one of the ways I am able to do that.”

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Cantando

WRITTEN BY ALLISON MALTUN

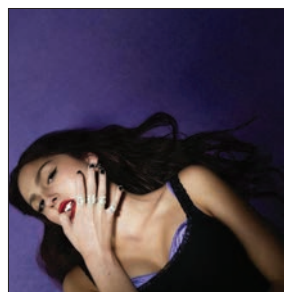
During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, multiple musical artists might come to mind. The following artists come from different Asian ethnic backgrounds and incorporate unique elements of their cultures in their music. Through their work, they have amassed big followings and reached success. They tell their stories through their songs and deliver messages of self acceptance and perseverance. The songs inspire many and help Asian Americans feel represented in a predominately white industry.



Grenade

Bruno Mars

Bruno Mars' song "Grenade" ranked No. 1 in the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 and sold more than 10 million copies. The song is about making sacrifices for someone he loves and not receiving it in return. A famous lyric in his song is "I would go through all this pain/ Take a bullet straight through my brain/ Yes I would die for you baby/ But you won't do the same." In this song, he is sacrificing himself mentally and physically to do anything for the person he loves. This song shows how people will do crazy things for love and still be heartbroken in the end.



Pretty Isn't Pretty

Olivia Rodrigo

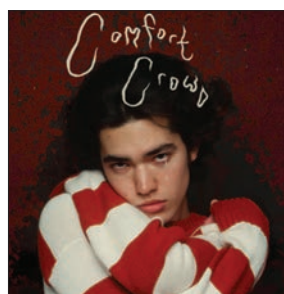
The song "Pretty Isn't Pretty" is part of Olivia Rodrigo's "Guts" album that was released in 2023. Twelve of the album's tracks made the U.S. Billboard Hot 100. She garnered six Grammy nominations for the album and its songs, amounting to 12 career nominations. This song places a big emphasis on beauty and body standards that women face in society. It conveys important messages about self-love and acceptance. It also showcases the struggles women face with impossible beauty standards.



My Love is Mine All Mine

Mitski

Mitski released "My Love is Mine All Mine" in 2023, which ranked in the top 50 of the U.S. Billboard Hot 100. The song received a lot of recognition from Tik Tok, and its virality brought new audiences to the singer. The song is about giving and receiving love. To Mitski, love is something to be held onto and not be taken away like material items. She wants her love to always remain even when she is dead and wants others to know how much love means.



Comfort Crowd

Conan Gray

Conan Gray released "Comfort Crowd" in 2019 as a part of his debut album "Kid Krow." Growing up, Gray faced difficulty fitting in being one of the few Japanese kids in his community and feeling like an outsider. In an interview with Buro, he shared he started writing music in response to the pressure of being an outcast in a predominantly white area. Friendship means a lot to Gray, and the song is about having his friends there as comfort to not feel lonely and isolated.



Promises

Jhené Aiko

The platinum RIAA-certified song "Promises" by Jhené Aiko was released in 2014 as a part of Aiko's debut album "Souled Out." The song is dedicated to her daughter, Namiko Love, and her brother, Miyagi, who unfortunately passed away. The song features vocals from both and is a song for her daughter to look back on. Music is a way for her to cope and her lyrics promise that everything will be alright. The personal song expresses both love and loss.



Open the Spotify app to scan the code and listen to the Cantando playlist.

Matador Marquee

WRITTEN BY ZIPPORAH ALTITIA PRUITT

May is special due not only to April showers bringing May flowers, but also due to it being Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Asian Americans have a rich history in cinema, and the following five titles are all about the Asian American experience, which entertain and teach alike. These films help viewers feel seen and heard with relatable life experiences, as well as educate viewers who are not Asian American.



“The Farewell”

is a 2019 film starring the ubiquitous Asian star, Awkafina. This A24 produced film deals with Awkafina’s character Billi having to travel to China in order to put up a lie with the whole family. This deception is towards Billi’s grandmother as she is diagnosed with Stage 4 lung cancer and the family wants to use the pretext of a wedding in order to have the whole family come together to see her one last time. This movie deals with the Asian American struggle of having to balance Eastern and Western values, with the main character constantly conflicted whether to tell her grandmother about the cancer or keep up the lie to protect her. The family-focused film is a heavy but poignant watch with moments of levity.



“Monkey Man”

is a 2024 film about a man who seeks revenge against the group of people who murdered his mother. This bloodsoaked tale takes the viewer on a ride around India as actor, writer, and director Dev Patel fights for the revenge he so desperately longs for. With hand to hand action and an engaging plot, this film is riveting from the jump. While it does not take place in the U.S., it is a globally promoted film highlighting South Asians, who are often overlooked in conversations of Asian Americans..



“The Debut”

is a 2000 film about a Filipino American named Ben, played by Dante Basco, who is at a crossroads in his life between becoming a doctor, which is what his father wants him to be, or an artist. The main character’s experience is familiar to many people as the dreams of the family can differ from one’s own ideas of what their life should be. Alongside a 2001 Ammy Award for Best Independent Film, it was groundbreaking as it was the first Filipino American film to get a national theatrical release..



“Joy Ride”

is a 2023 raunchy comedy film about four friends who travel through China to figure out their futures, but also themselves. This film is a laugh riot as the friends are crass, sexual, and hilarious in their banter and conversations. This film highlights the Asian American experience of conflict between not fitting in the West because they are Eastern looking and not fitting in the East because they are Western acting. The main character also goes through the struggle of having to be a model minority and repressing one’s true self to reach success.



“Everything Everywhere All at Once”

is a 2022 film dealing with a middle-aged Chinese woman who discovers that her daughter in another universe is willing to destroy the whole multiverse. This film combines heart, soul, toilet humor, and love all into an under two and a half hour watch, which was awarded Best Picture by the Academy. This film highlights the differing Asian American experiences of immigrant parents and first-generation children, and explores the misunderstandings between the two, which can distance them.

Persistent Protection

The inventor of the N95 mask

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE BOECK

The N95 respirator mask is one of the best, most readily available methods of protecting against airborne illnesses, and its Taiwanese American inventor, Peter Tsai, has been a dedicated engineer all his life — even coming out of retirement to put his knowledge to use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tsai was born in 1952 in the Qingshui District of Taichung, Taiwan. He studied chemical fiber engineering at the National Taipei University of Technology before leaving the country in 1981 for postgraduate studies in the United States.

His love of learning helped him earn over 500 credits during his time at Kansas State University. Despite only needing 90 credits to graduate, he took a wide variety of physics, math and chemical engineering courses.

Afterward, he went to the University of Tennessee, becoming a professor and leading a research team to create home air filters. But a revolutionary discovery in 1992 led to new, individual use case — masks.

In order to block 95% of airborne particles, the masks use a special fabric that has been electrostatically charged both positively and negatively. This lets the mask attract neutral particles with no charge, like bacteria or viruses. These particles get polarized and trapped in the filter before passing through the mask, letting it filter airborne particles ten times more efficiently than fabrics that do not use this method.

Tsai's research team thought the mask would be perfect for construction workers in dusty environments. But in 1996, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control caught wind of the mask and realized its potential for blocking viruses.

It's been used by medical professionals ever since, but a recent world event put N95 masks into everyone's hands — the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Washington Post in 2020, N95 masks became such an important commodity in such a short period of time that there was a mass shortage. A huge global scarcity prompted new research into turning the single-use masks into multi-use tools.

Peter Tsai heard the call. The calls from N95DEFCON, specifically, the collaborative group of volunteer scientists who desperately needed Tsai's expertise. Despite having been in retirement for a few years, he immediately returned to the drawing board.

He needed a way for the average citizen to safely reuse N95 masks multiple times without

using fancy laboratory equipment or expensive materials, according to CNN. He tried leaving them out in the sun, washing them with soap, steaming them and many more methods.

"I started working almost 20 hours a day," Tsai told the Washington Post. "But I didn't mind."

He discovered that keeping N95 masks in a 160-degree oven for 30 minutes eliminated enough bacteria for the mask to be useful again. Alternatively, one could use seven N95 masks and use them in rotation, one a day. After using one mask, he would hang it in a dry, isolated spot for seven days until it came back up in rotation. That was enough time for the bacteria to become inert.

Peter Tsai's invention has been saving lives for nearly thirty years. And his love for what he does has continued for just as long.

Maha Krishnamurthy, vice president of the University of Tennessee Research Foundation, told the Washington Post that retirement never stopped Tsai's dedication, even before the pandemic.

"He couldn't actually quit," she said. "It's a quality of all great researchers — you can never shut your brain off."



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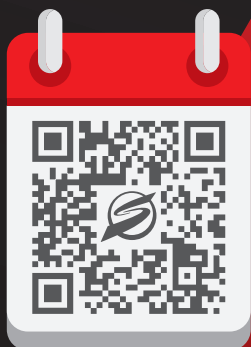
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 📍 Veterans Resource Center



DREAM Center: Marriage Petitions
 Thursday, May 9: 2 p.m.
 📍 Zoom



VRC Graduation Celebration
 Saturday, May 11: 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
 📍 Northridge Center



Rainbow Graduation Celebration
 Friday, May 17: Noon – 3 p.m.
 📍 Rec Pool, SRC



**SRC: American Red Cross Adult and
 Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED Certification**
 Saturday, May 25: 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
 📍 University Student Union

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Txt 'CSUN'
 to 52855

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