

***Mt. San Antonio College
AANAPISI Grant – Arise Program
2014-15 Accomplishments (Year 4)***

The Mt. San Antonio College Arise Program is funded through a federal AANAPISI Grant to meet the educational needs of low income, first generation, limited English proficient, basic skills level Asian and Pacific Islander American students. There were 564 enrolled Arise students during year 4. The Program has focused its efforts on five main areas:

- English Language Development
- Mathematics Success
- Counseling Intervention and Educational Planning and Student Development
- Leadership Development

English Language Development

During this fourth year of our grant, three activities were implemented that were designed to improve skills and competency for Non Native English Students (NNES): Conversation Circles, Verb Boot Camp, and Writing Boot Camp. Students who are considered Non-native English Speakers (NNES) continue to have access to English language development support outside of the classroom through a variety of established workshops that focus on grammar (e.g., articles, parts of speech, gerunds and infinitives), boot camps that address verb usage and writing, and conversation circles where participants engage in practicing their speaking skills with students whose primary language is English.

A total of 253 students participated in these activities. 114 students attended at least one Conversation Circle session; 74% of these students attended more than one session. The two largest AAPI ethnic groups who participated were Chinese and Vietnamese. Some of the students were asked to grade themselves on “my ability to speak English” at the first meeting and again at the last meeting; 35% of the students gave themselves either an “A or B” grade at the first meeting. In contrast, 65% graded themselves with an “A or B” at the last class meeting. Of the 90 students who attended the Verb Boot Camps, 92% reported increased knowledge about English Verbs. 57% of the Arise students who began as AMLA (ESL) students have subsequently excelled to enroll in English 1A (Freshman Composition). The NNES activities that have been initiated through the grant have garnered continued support from the institution. As a result, these activities will continue to benefit students as they are offered regularly through the Writing Center and the American Language (AMLA) department.

Mathematics Success

To address a gap in basic skills progression of mathematics, the program staff developed, in partnership with the Math Department, a Math Boot Camp initiative. In Summer 2015, students participated in this second pilot to refresh their math skills by using an online test preparation tool (ALEKs). They had support from faculty and peer advisors; as a result, some of the students were able to improve their placement test outcomes. A total of 67 students actively participated; 85% were males and 99% were students of color. Of the 18 students with valid pre- and post-test scores, 72% placed at least one level higher on their post-test. Ninety-six percent of the students persisted through the four-week boot camp, which offered 32 hours of lab access (8 hours/week). Students spent an average of 13 hours using the online tool, with 57% of the 67 students completing at least 13 hours, including one who clocked in a total of 43 hours. The boot camp is a promising new practice which addresses math confidence issues,

math placement, and will hopefully develop a practice of enrollment into math courses early in a student's academic career.

In Fall 2015, 33 of the students who participated in the Summer Math Boot Camp enrolled in a math course, which represents 49% of the participants. In fact, 73% of these students were taking math for the first time at Mt. SAC. Among the students who enrolled, 53% were enrolled in at least three levels below college math. On average, 43 students attended the 2-hour daily sessions which consisted of guided instruction and practice in sequential math levels, direct interaction with math faculty, and teamwork activities to build confidence in math skills.

As an outcome of the math boot camp, was math study hall sessions during the academic year. Math tutoring is held two nights a week. There are times when the room is at full capacity, and students have had to work in the hallway and in an adjacent meeting room. Students who never participated in tutoring before are finding strength in studying with students like them and are now able to easily seek assistance when needed – “no shame to ask.” The number of students using tutoring services totaled 432.

Counseling Intervention and Educational Planning and Student Development

357 students participated in two or more counseling interventions or workshops and 479 students completed an educational plan that is online and accessible for updates and further review. Arise counselors provide career, educational and personal counseling. They also assist in conducting workshops and help to design the student leadership program efforts.

Eight Arise Program Students (AANAPISI grant) participated in a special AANAPISI-funded “Digital Stories” project. These students participated in intensive instruction and worked with coaches to create their stories. Each of their stories depict themes of family separation, cultural identity, immigration experiences, individual struggles, and family struggles; they also represent the hopes and aspirations of each. One storyteller shared, “. . . finding a way to explain aspects of my culture repeatedly surfaces. I have a desire to help others understand the ‘why’ and not just the ‘what’ about their cultural orientations . . . I hope that it will enable others who do not know about my history to broaden their understanding of my culture.” These stories have been shared during faculty professional development activities, to the campus community, and as part of higher education circles (conferences, senior administrative meetings).

Leadership Development

Among the 32 students who participated in the Summer 2015 Leadership Retreat, 100% indicated that their self-confidence as well as their skills as a communicator have improved as a result of their participation in the leadership retreat. When asked about an unexpected learning outcome, one student shared, “There are some attributes I didn't realize would make a good leader like being emotional and caring about effort and not just results.” (Pacific Islander male) As a result of hosting this annual event, students' engagement on campus has increased. Many have become peer mentors, student ambassadors, served as group leaders for the Conversation Circles NNES workshops, and engaged in leadership roles with student government, campus committees, honors, and student clubs and organizations. In fact, one of the students served as the Associated Student Body President during the 2014-2015 academic year. Student peer mentors have been able to develop higher level leadership skills by developing and leading student sessions themselves. The peer mentors noted self-reflections about their own growth in their role during the retreat: stepping out of their comfort zone (demonstrating courage though not seeing themselves as leaders), adapting to new situations (transitioning away from being a student-athlete to develop a different student “identity”), and the significance of putting leadership into practice (demonstrating dependability, honoring the trust placed in them, solving problems that emerge).