



SACRAMENTO
STATE
STUDENT AFFAIRS

Asian Pacific Islander Desi American
Center

DATA DOWNLOAD

Advancing Educational Equity through Data Disaggregation

Southeast Asian Students at Sacramento State



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A Message from President Luke Wood

Southeast Asian refugees represent the largest refugee community ever to be resettled in the United States, after being forcefully displaced by war and its aftermath in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in the 1970s (Southeast Asian Resource Action Center, 2019). The majority resettled in California and established communities across the Central Valley and Sacramento metropolitan area.

To ensure that the experiences of Southeast Asian American students are visible and better understood, this report is a follow-up to “Ecological factors in Hmong American educational success” (Vang, 2018), and “Lost A-Hmong the data: Disaggregating the Hmong student experience” (Vang, 2019). This report is the first step to disaggregating the data so that the model minority concept that has kept Southeast Asian students from getting the culturally appropriate academic support and retention services that they need is no longer perpetuated.

It will take a broad, multilevel, and extraordinary response in policy, practice, and resources from individuals, families, communities, and institutions to increase the enrollment and completion rates of Southeast Asian students. I hope this report will carve out a place in the academic literature for the Southeast Asian student experience in order to make possible institutional changes that better support their academic development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luke".

Dr. Luke Wood
President

Summary

Key Institutional Data Describing Southeast Asian Students

- In Fall 2022, over 2,400 students self-reported Southeast Asian as their ethnicity. These include Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, Burmese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Singaporean and Thai.
- In Fall 2022, 43% of Southeast Asian students identified as first-generation college students and were eligible for Federal Pell Grants.
- The top 10 majors for Southeast Asian students were Health Science BS, Computer Science (Pre), Biological Sciences (General) BS, Computer Science BS, Business (Accountancy) BS, Psychology BA, Civil Engineering BS, Biological Sciences (Biomedical Science) BS, Business (Management Info Systems) BS, and Computer Engineering BS.
- The Fall 2015 cohort's retention rate for Southeast Asian students:
 - Cambodian students at the end of year 1 (93%), year 2 (86%), and year 3 (79%)
 - Hmong students at the end of year 1 (67%), year 2 (70%), and year 3 (61%)
 - Laotian students at the end of year 1 (78%), year 2 (78%), and year 3 (68%)
 - Vietnamese students at the end of year 1 (86%), year 2 (82%), and year 3 (77%)
- The Fall 2016 first-time, first-year cohort's 4-Year and 6-Year graduation rate for Cambodian students were 11.8% and 41.2%, Hmong students 12.5% and 47.2%, Laotian students 18.2% and 72.7% and Vietnamese students 16.5% and 64.2%
- The Fall 2018 transfer cohort's 2-Year and 4-Year graduation rate for Cambodian students were 62.5% and 87.5%, Hmong students 33.3% and 71.1%, Laotian students 50% and 66.7% and Vietnamese students 33% and 81.3%

Key Findings from the Survey of Southeast Asian Students

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- 78% of Southeast Asian students were born in the USA.
- 58% of Southeast Asian students are currently employed while pursuing their degree.
- 55% of Southeast Asian students are living at home with 5 or more people in the household.

ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE LIFE

- 45% of Southeast Asian students indicated a lack of information about college, application fees, and application process. These were significant barriers they faced when applying to college.
- 47% of Southeast Asian students indicated that their parents/guardian or sibling encouraged their decision to attend college.
- 24% of Southeast Asian students indicated that helping their family, parent, or community was their reason to pursue higher education.

CAMPUS CLIMATE

- 92% of Southeast Asian students indicated that courses frequently or occasionally inspired them to think in new ways.
- 82% of Southeast Asian students felt family support was frequently or occasionally needed for them to succeed in school.
- 63% of Southeast Asian students frequently or occasionally felt isolated from campus.
- 53% of Southeast Asian students frequently or occasionally felt lonely or homesick.

STUDENT SUCCESS

- The top five university support, information, or services Southeast Asian students indicated to be most helpful to facilitate completing their degree were Job/internship, Career development, Networking opportunities, Scholarship opportunities, and Academic advising.
- 81% of Southeast Asian students indicated that financial support would be most helpful to facilitate the successful completion of their degree.
- 72% of Southeast Asian students indicated family obligations (taking care of siblings, personal problems, etc.) Interfered with their ability to successfully complete their degree.
- 70% of Southeast Asian students indicated academic and educational factors (lack of adequate preparation for college, lack of proper motivation, poor choice of major, etc.) Interfered with their ability to successfully complete their degree.





Introduction

Asian American students are often misrepresented for their overrepresentation in higher education at many selective institutions (Hune & Chan, 2000). Due to the use of large aggregated institutional data sets, Southeast Asian students are often mis-characterized and categorized as a single group. This can obscure the educational disparities that exist when compared to other ethnic minority groups. Teranishi, Lok, Nguyen, Educational Testing Service, and the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (2013) underscored this sentiment in the following statement: “Simply put, the aggregation of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) subgroups into a single data category is a significant civil rights issue for the AAPI community that has yet to be resolved” (p. 2). Subsequently, when there are national conversations, initiatives and campaigns about college access, retention and completion, Southeast Asian students are seldom part of the discussions, and their experiences are not part of the process.

The goal of this report is to provide information on how to work with Southeast Asian communities and create relations with stakeholders in order to support Southeast Asian students’ high school completion, transition to college, college matriculation, and beyond.

Methodology

In Fall 2022, 485 out of the 2,435 Southeast Asian students completed the 27-item questionnaire survey. This resulted in a 20% response rate. This report consists of a single higher education institution in the greater Sacramento region, and therefore it only represents some Southeast Asian students. This limited representation, therefore, cannot be used to generalize to the entire population of Southeast Asian students at the institution, not to mention in the region, the state, or the United States. Similarly, our findings can only be used to describe the social and cultural experiences of Southeast Asian students at Sacramento State. Figures 1-34 were drawn from the Office of Institutional Research, Effectiveness, & Planning (2022); they were not part of the data collection.

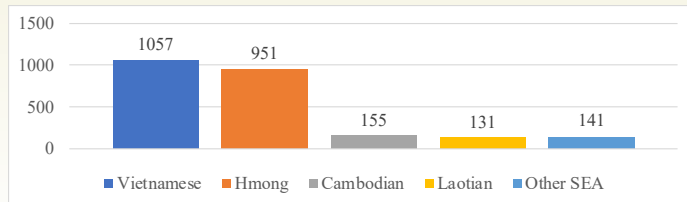


Southeast Asian students at a glance

2,435 students self-reported as Southeast Asian ethnicity. Other Southeast Asians include Burmese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Malaysian, Singaporean and Thai.

FIGURE 1

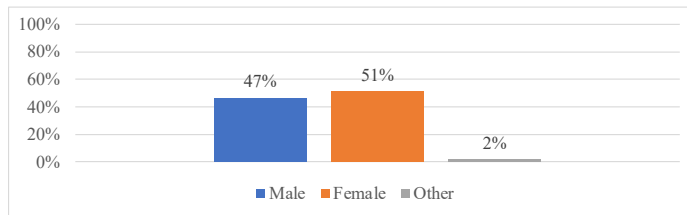
Southeast Asian students' ethnicity, Fall 2022



Note: Other Southeast Asians include Burmese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Malaysian, Singaporean and Thai.

FIGURE 2

Southeast Asian students who identify as Male and Female, Fall 2022



Note: "other" includes non-binary, missing data, and declined to state.

FIGURE 3

Southeast Asian students who identified as first-generation college students and were eligible for Federal Pell Grants, Fall 2022.

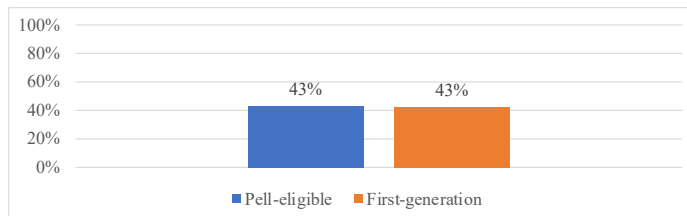


FIGURE 4

Southeast Asian students by subgroups who identified as first-generation college students and were eligible for Federal Pell Grants, Fall 2022.

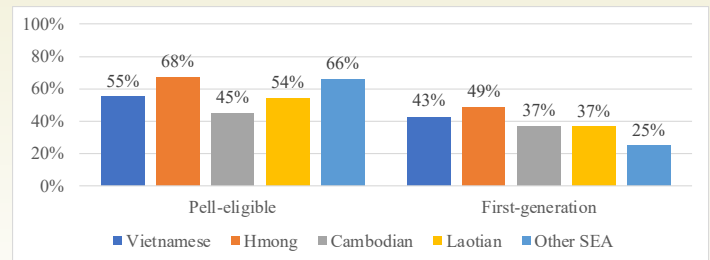


FIGURE 5

Top 30 majors for Southeast Asian students, Fall 2022.

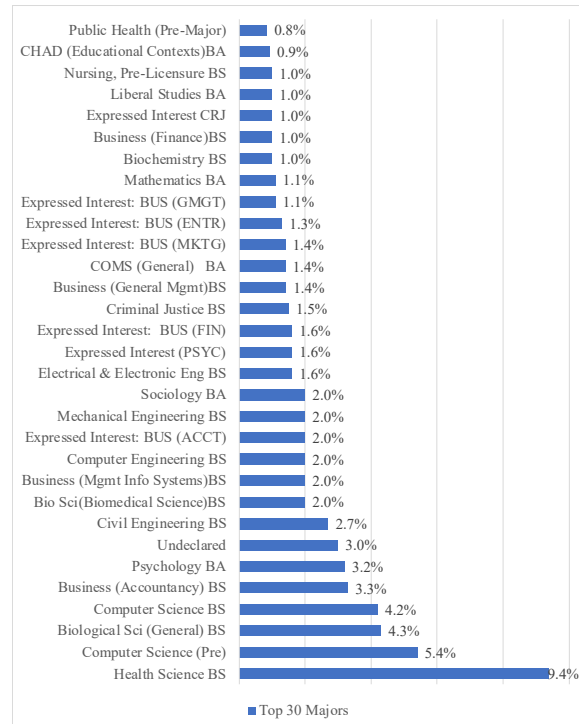


FIGURE 6

Class level for Southeast Asian students, Fall 2022.

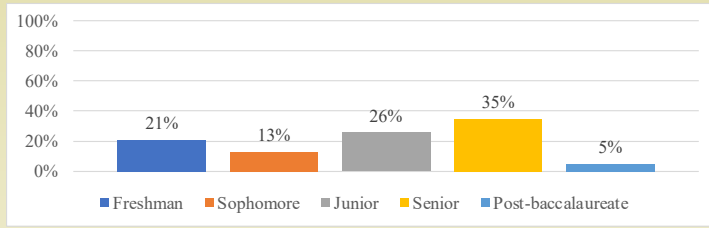


FIGURE 11

Enrollment trend for Hmong students, Fall 2015-2022.

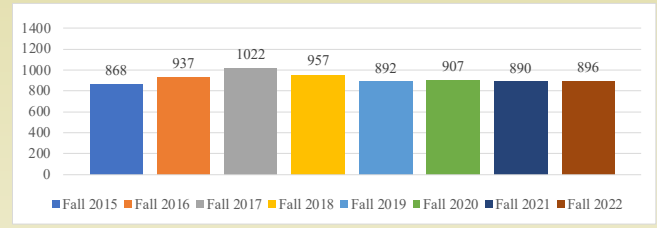


FIGURE 7

Enrollment status for Southeast Asian students, Fall 2022.

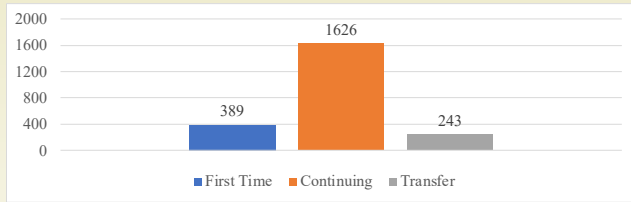


FIGURE 12

Enrollment trend for Laotian students, Fall 2015-2022.

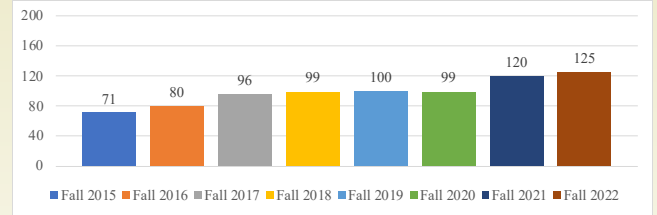
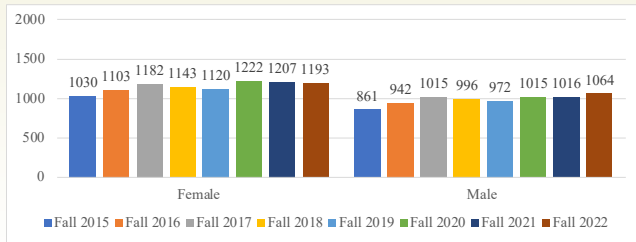


FIGURE 8

Total Southeast Asian students who identify as Female and Male, Fall 2015-2022.



Enrollment trend

FIGURE 9

Enrollment trend for Southeast Asian students, Fall 2015-2022.

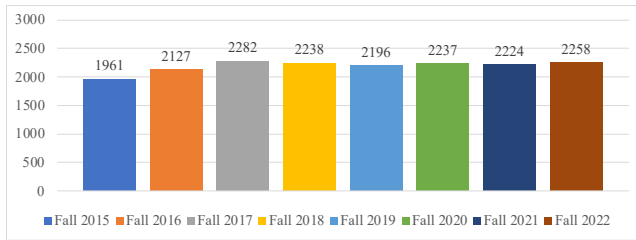


FIGURE 10

Enrollment trend for Cambodian students, Fall 2015-2022.

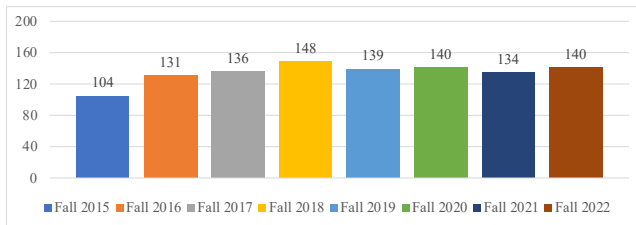


FIGURE 13

Enrollment trend for Vietnamese students, Fall 2015-2022.

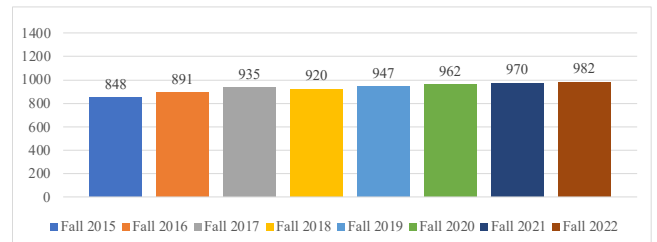


FIGURE 14

Overall Southeast Asian students' major in the academic colleges, Fall 2015-2022.

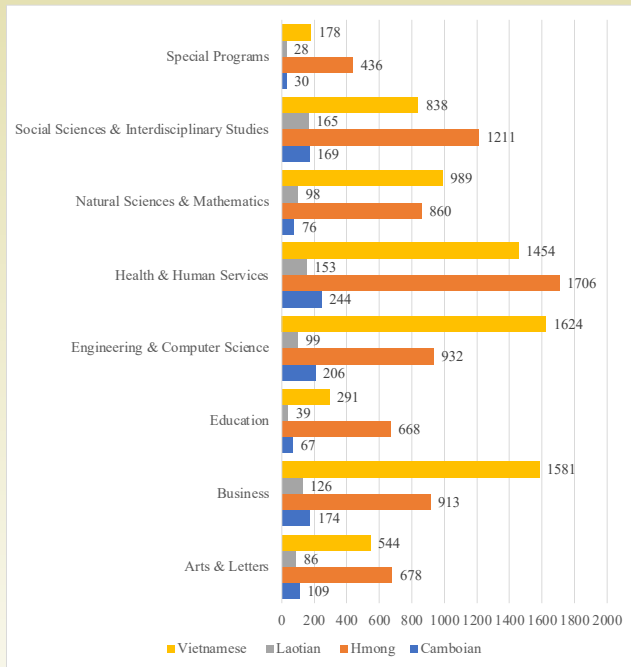


FIGURE 18

Retention rates for Hmong students, cohorts Fall 2015-2021.

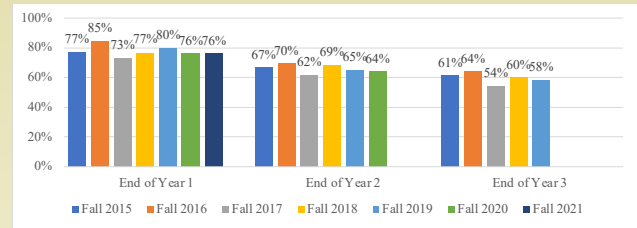
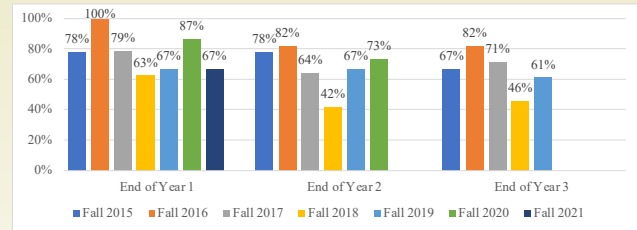


FIGURE 19

Retention rates for Laotian students, cohorts Fall 2015-2021.



Retention

FIGURE 15

Overall retention rates for Southeast Asian students, Fall 2015-2021.

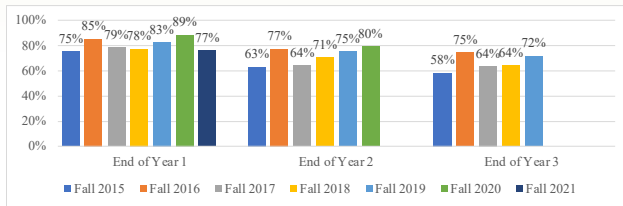


FIGURE 16

Overall retention rates for first-time freshman Southeast Asian male students, Fall 2015-2021.

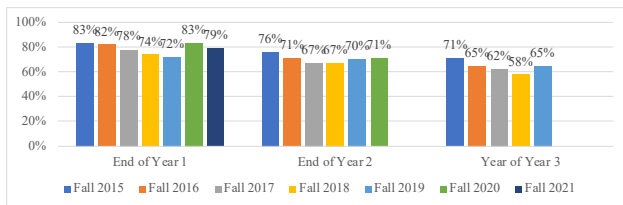


FIGURE 20

Retention rates for Vietnamese students, cohorts Fall 2015-2021.

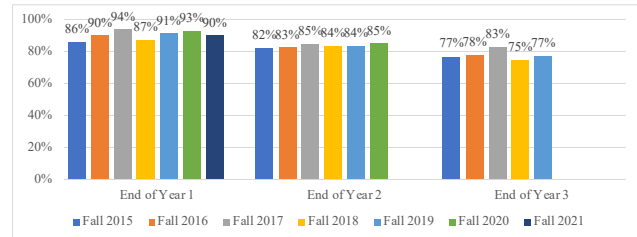
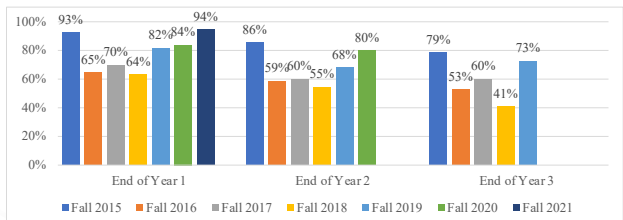


FIGURE 17

Retention rates for Cambodian students, cohorts Fall 2015-2021.



4-year and 6-year graduation for First-time Freshman Students

FIGURE 21

Overall, 4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Southeast Asian students, Fall 2012-2018.

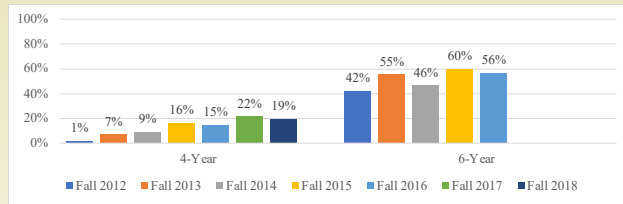


FIGURE 22

Overall, 4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Southeast female students, Fall 2012-2018.

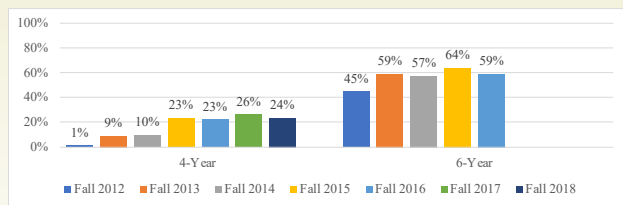


FIGURE 23

Overall, 4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Southeast male students, Fall 2012-2018.

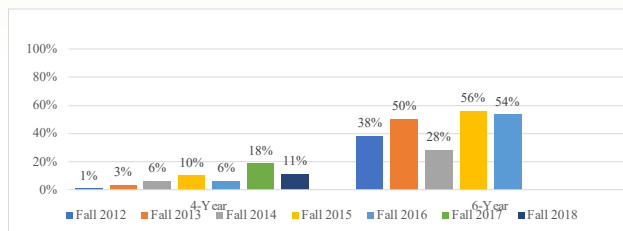


FIGURE 24

4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Cambodian students, cohorts Fall 2012-2018.

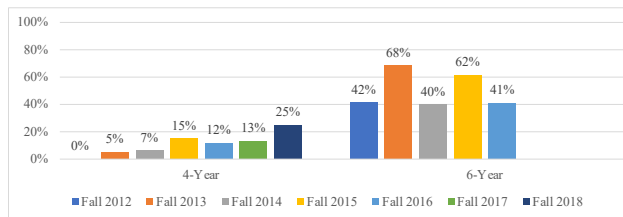


FIGURE 25

4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Hmong students, cohorts Fall 2012-2018.

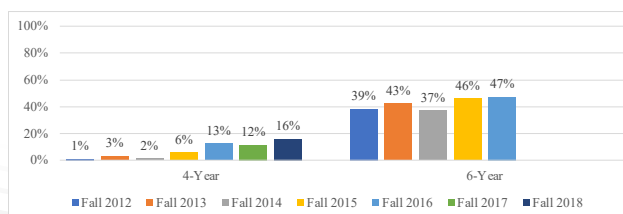


FIGURE 26

4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Laotian students, cohorts Fall 2012-2018.

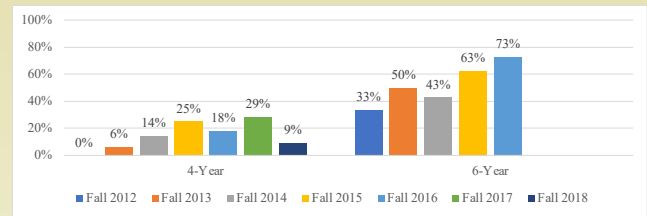
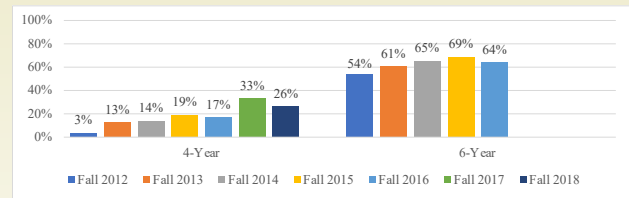


FIGURE 27

4- year and 6- year graduation rates for first-time freshman Vietnamese students, cohorts Fall 2012-2018.



2- year and 4- year graduation for Transfer Students

FIGURE 28

Overall, 2- year and 4- year graduation rates for Southeast Asian transfer students, Fall 2012-2020.

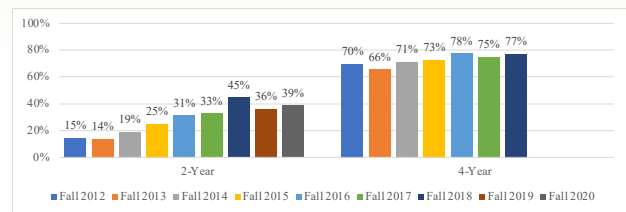


FIGURE 29

Overall, 2- year and 4- year graduation rates for transfer Southeast female students, Fall 2012-2020.

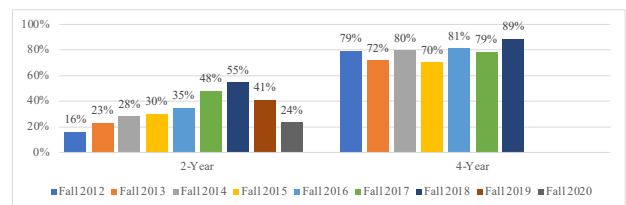
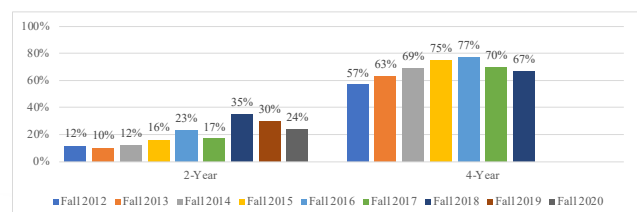


FIGURE 30

Overall, 2- year and 4- year graduation rates for transfer Southeast male students, Fall 2012-2020.



Survey Findings

FIGURE 31

2-year and 4-year graduation rates for transfer Cambodian students, cohorts Fall 2012-2020.

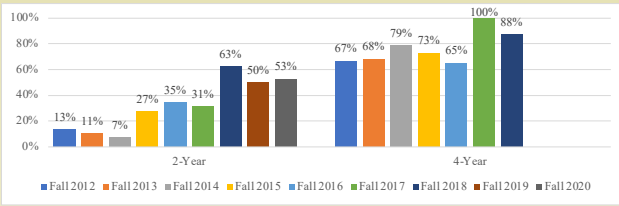


FIGURE 32

2-year and 4-year graduation rates for transfer Hmong students, cohorts Fall 2012-2020.

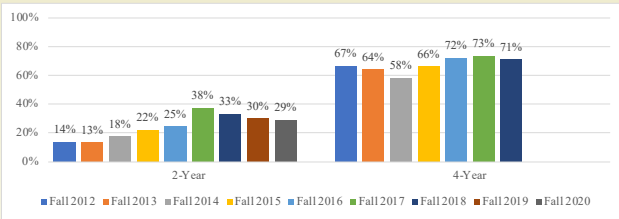


FIGURE 33

2-year and 4-year graduation rates for transfer Laotian students, cohorts Fall 2012-2020.

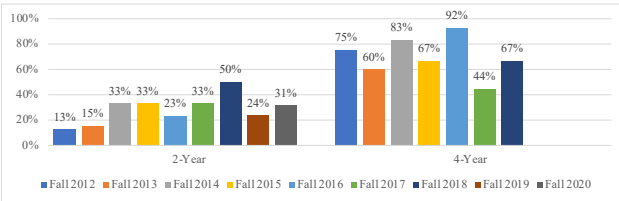
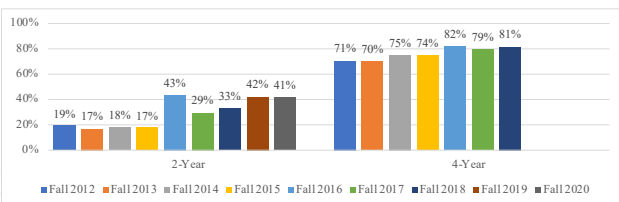


FIGURE 34

2-year and 4-year graduation rates for transfer Vietnamese students, cohorts Fall 2012-2020.



The following findings are based on 485 students who completed the survey.

FIGURE 35

Southeast Asian students who completed the questionnaire.

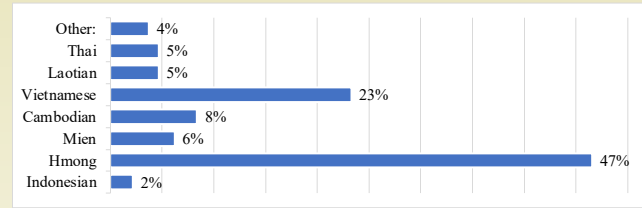


FIGURE 36

Country of Birth for Southeast Asian students.

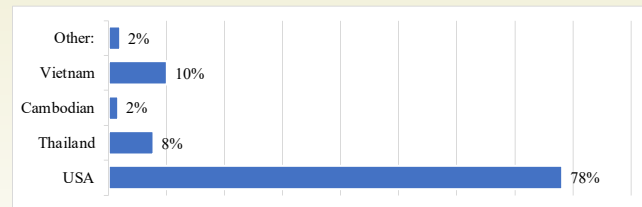


FIGURE 37

First enrollment at Sacramento State.

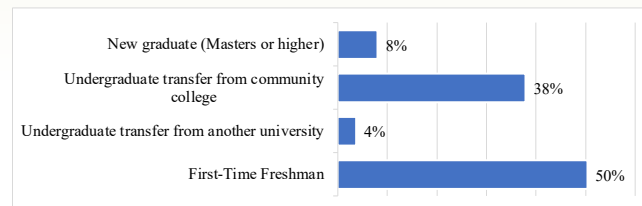


FIGURE 38

Number of people in the household for students living at home.

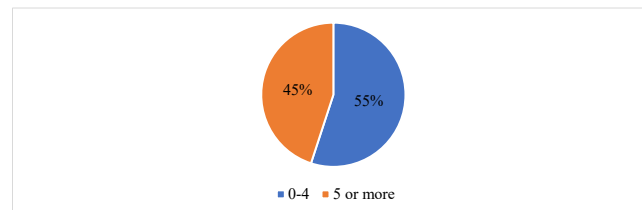


FIGURE 39

Highest education level of father.

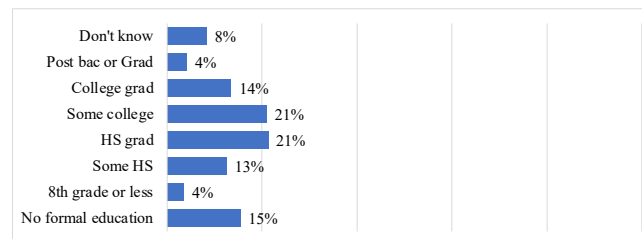


FIGURE 40

Highest education level of mother.

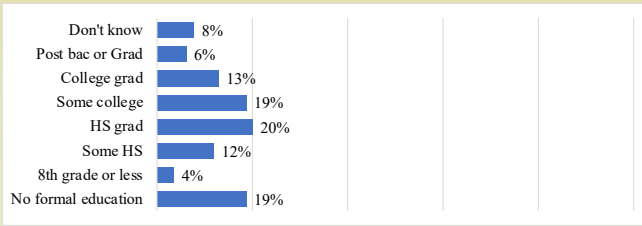


FIGURE 45

Factors influenced decision to attend college.

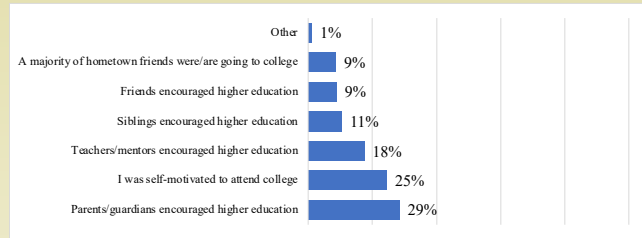


FIGURE 41

Number of immediate family who attended college and completed their college degree.

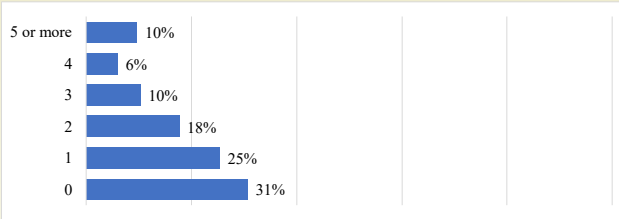


FIGURE 46

Barriers faced during the college application process.

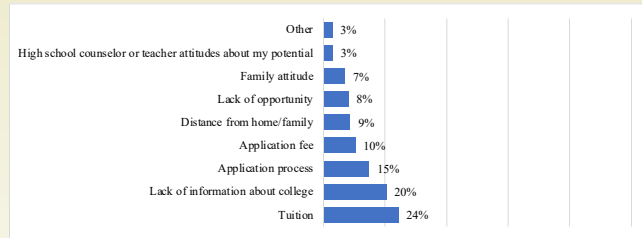


FIGURE 42

Employment status while pursuing a degree.

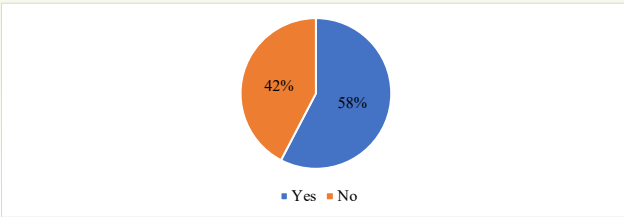


FIGURE 47

Individuals who encouraged, guided and/or supported their decision to go to college.

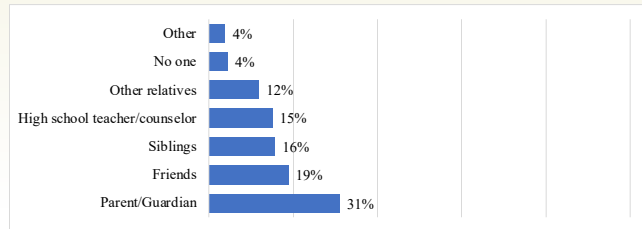


FIGURE 43

Heard about applying to college during high school.

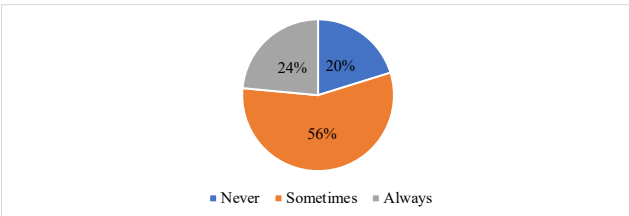
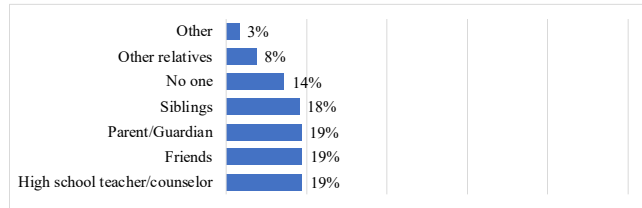


FIGURE 48

Individuals who helped their transition into college.



Questions 44-54, respondents were prompted to select all that apply.

FIGURE 44

Reasons for pursuing higher education

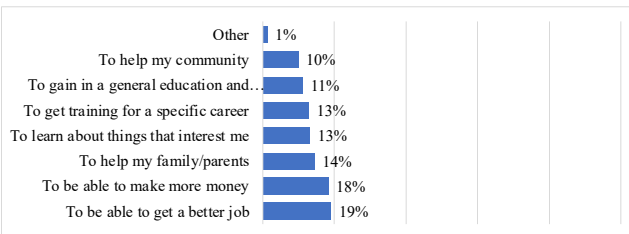


FIGURE 49

Emotional factors in their overall wellness and campus engagement since entering college.

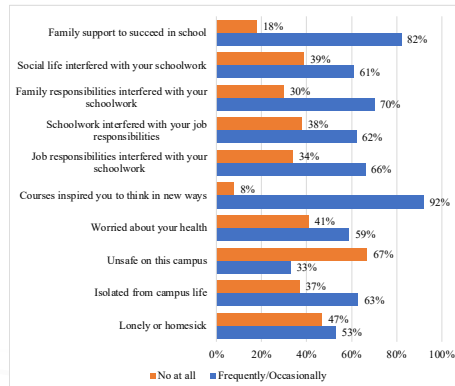


FIGURE 50

Factors that interfered with their ability to complete a degree.

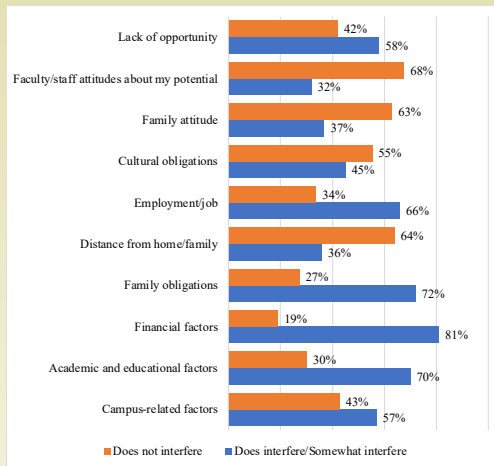


FIGURE 51

People with whom students discussed academic challenges.

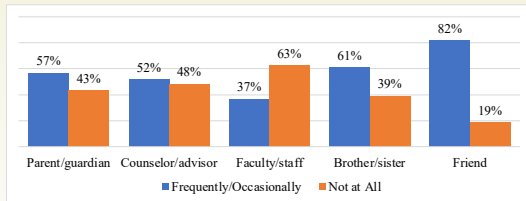


FIGURE 52

People with whom students discussed personal challenges.

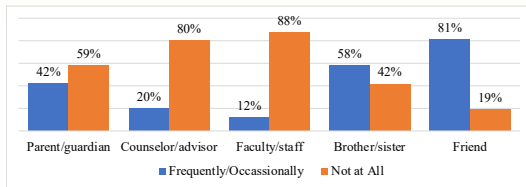


FIGURE 53

University support, information, or services would be most helpful to facilitate the successful completion of students' degree?

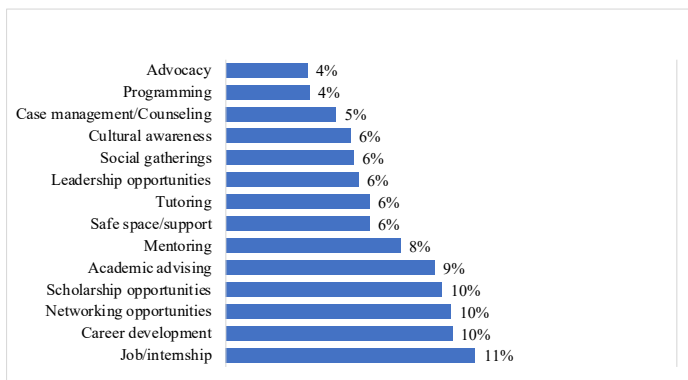


FIGURE 54

Family support that would be most helpful to facilitate the successful completion of students' degree.

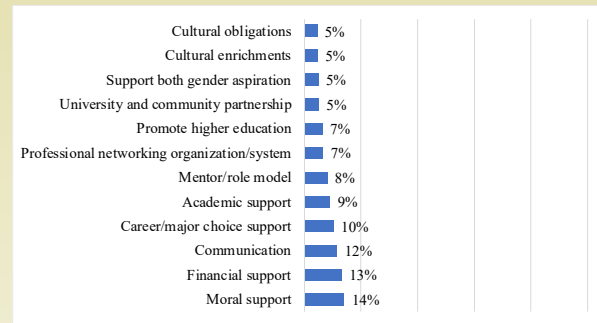


FIGURE 55

Sacramento State was their first or only choice.

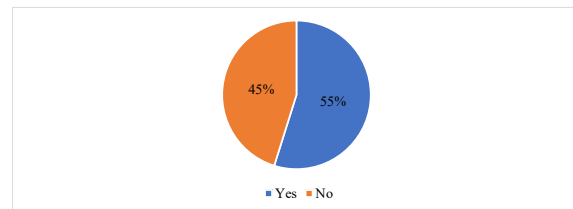
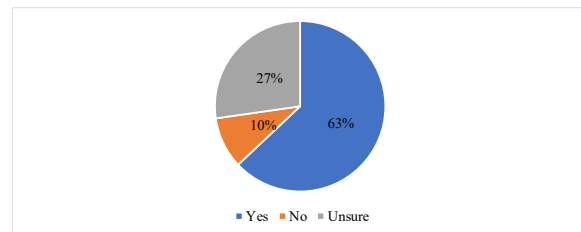


FIGURE 56

Students would still choose to enroll at Sacramento State if they could make the choice again.



Recommendations for Institutional Practice

The following recommendations build on previous literature and are carefully selected to present systematic strategies to support Southeast Asian students. Each recommendation comes from a policy and practical standpoint. Each of these recommendations is vitally important in changing the discourse of what it means to be a Southeast Asian college student. These priorities represent a vision to address the myriad educational needs of these students, ranging from broad to specific and from cultural to structural.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Collect, analyze, and report annual disaggregate major institutional data sets and information of different Southeast Asian and other ethnic groups use to drive decisions.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Increase access and collaboration with K-12 school districts and community organizations that target Southeast Asian American students to create transition programming to strengthen students' college and career readiness.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Build into and institutionalize programs that promote, contribute, and improve the sense of belonging and the educational success of Southeast Asian students.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Form a meaningful and sustainable relationship with the community/family around cultural and social activities to promote intergenerational dialogue and discourse.

For practical application, here are some questions that faculty and professionals in student affairs can ask themselves to integrate these ideas into their everyday practices (Student Success Collaborative, 2017).

Senior Administrators

Are there subpopulations or programs that under perform the university average?

Deans

Where do I need to adjust academic support resources to improve student outcomes?

Chairs and Faculty

Which courses should I prioritize for review and possible redesign?

Staff/Advising

What milestone/benchmark thresholds can I use to target overlooked students for early advising interventions?



Conclusion

The educational experience of Southeast Asian American students deserves increased data equity and visibility among the campus and community. This report is dedicated to the Southeast Asian students who are persistent and successfully graduate despite challenging environmental and societal factors, including familial and cultural influences central to Southeast Asian students' aspiration and educational pursuits.

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