

Asian American & Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI)

2025 Focus Group Report

North Seattle College

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Background

In October 2021, North Seattle College (NSC or North) was awarded a 5-year federally funded Asian American & Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) grant to enhance the institutions capacity to serve Asian and Pacific Islander students (A&PI) and low-income students. North Seattle College (NSC), an AANAPISI-funded institution, is committed to understanding the experiences, needs, and challenges of A&PI students and enhancing their academic success.

The purpose of this report is to present the findings from a series of focus group discussions conducted with Asian and Pacific Islander students at North Seattle College during academic year 2024-25 (Year 4 of the grant). Additionally, these focus groups expand on the work done the years prior with focus groups conducted in the 2023-2024 (Year 3) and 2022-2023 (Year 2) academic year. These discussions were driven by the need to gain valuable insights, voice concerns, and identify strategies for enhancing the AANAPISI programs' effectiveness in supporting North Seattle Colleges' A&PI student community. By engaging directly with A&PI students, we gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, perspectives, and aspirations within the college environment, and inform institutional efforts to address their specific needs.

This report will explore the key themes that emerged from the focus group discussions, reflecting the experiences of A&PI students at North Seattle College. Also, highlighting the recommendations and solutions proposed by student participants to improve A&PI student experiences relating to academic and personal growth. Such insights and recommendations will be of immense value to the North Seattle College administration, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders invested in the success and well-being of A&PI students.

Framework- The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model

One of the main goals of NSC's AANAPISI grant is to increase student success outcomes and create a stronger sense of belonging by implementing culturally responsive-sustaining programming and providing holistic student support services. To ground the work of the grant, we utilized the [Culturally Engaging Campus Environments \(CECE\) model](#) that is *"derived from qualitative interviews with 150 diverse undergraduate students (e.g., Asian American, Black, Indigenous, Latino, Pacific Islander, and multiracial populations) across the United States, qualitative interviews with more than 30 educators at institutions that have 2 demonstrated relatively equitable outcomes across racially diverse student groups, three decades of existing research on diverse students in college, and practical observations and experiences working with undergraduate populations"* (Museus, 2014).

According to the National Institute for Transformation and Equity (NITE), *"the focal point of the CECE model emphasizes that college students' access to culturally engaging campus environments is positively correlated with individual traits (such as sense of belonging, self-efficacy, motivation, and performance) on success and an increased probability of succeeding in college."*

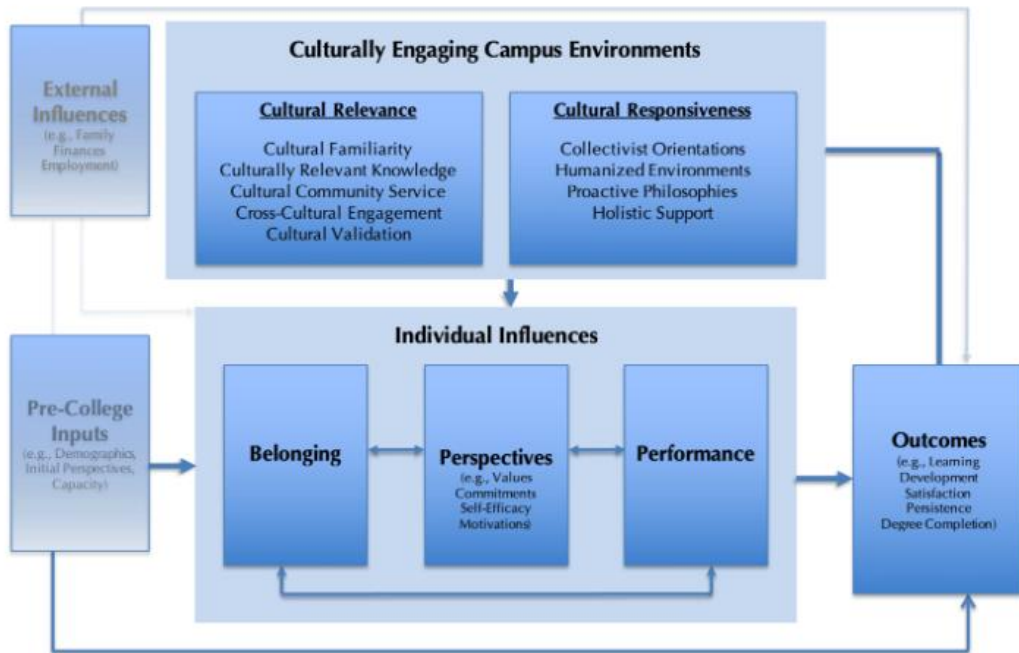


Figure 1. The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model of College Success

Based on the positive correlation between having a culturally engaging campus environment and student’s likelihood for success, the AANAPISI program at NSC and the questions and recommendations in this focus group report are based on the CECE Model.

Lastly, Terrell L. Strayhorn, author of *College Students' Sense of Belonging: A Key to Educational Success for All Students*, writes “Students can find a sense of belonging when we, as educators and leaders, do the hard work of changing our institutions in ways that make belonging possible for all” (Strayhorn, 2023). Through this focus group and this report, we hope to provide insights and recommendations from our A&PI students to shape how North Seattle College can continue and reimagine the work of ensuring belonging as an integral part of our institution and systems for all students.

Report Overview

The report is divided into several sections, covering different aspects of the focus group discussions. These sections will include an overview of the research methodology, an analysis of the major themes, challenges identified, and recommendations for action and improvement. By presenting these findings, we aim to contribute to the ongoing conversations about student success and inclusion at North Seattle College; ultimately, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that empowers A&PI students to thrive academically and prepare for their future careers.

AI Statement

In the preparation and writing of this research report, the AANAPISI Team utilized ChatGPT as a function in analyzing data by presenting key themes and potential recommendations for the North Seattle College community to aid in the research process. However, all interpretations and conclusions

presented will remain solely responsible through the authors who will carefully review and revise this report for accuracy.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, specifically facilitating one focus group during Spring Quarter on May 15th, to gain in-depth insights into the lived experiences of North Seattle College's Asian and Pacific Islander students regarding their 1) Sense of belonging and 2) Perceptions of support for success at North Seattle College. Focus groups were chosen as the primary data collection method due to their ability to foster dynamic discussions, allow for the exploration of shared experiences, and to elicit rich, nuanced perspectives on each topic. The focus group had one main facilitator with one co-facilitator guiding the discussion. The focus group took place inside the Asian & Pacific Islander Center (APIC) where tables were shaped into a half circle with the facilitator at the front facing the participants.

The focus group was 1.5 hours long and a total of 10 questions under three major themes:

- 1) Sense of Belonging- 4 Questions
- 2) Student Services- 3 Questions
- 3) First Year Experience- 3 Questions

The focus group questions only changed slightly from the year previous (Year 3, 2023-2024), with the removal of the question around A&PI students facing discrimination in the first section of asking about Sense of Belonging. This question was required to be asked when partnering with Access Community & Organization (ACO) the year prior. Like we have done in the last two years, we intentionally decided to continue to frame questions around the theme of having a 'sense of belonging.' This will enable our team to track students' perceptions and feedback around this theme for three consecutive grant years in a row.

See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of all questions asked in the focus group.

Sample Selection/Eligibility

Participants were selected based on specific pre-qualification criteria to ensure the relevance and focus of the discussions. The criteria for participation were as listed: 1) Self-identification as Asian and/or Pacific Islander, and 2) Current enrollment as a student at North Seattle College.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through a mixed-method approach including purposive and convenient snowball sampling methods. A purposive sampling method allowed for a targeted approach inviting Asian and Pacific Islander identified students at North Seattle College. An email campaign was sent specifically to students at North Seattle College who had self-identified as Asian and Pacific Islander and met the participation requirements. Additionally, a series of internal emails and Canvas announcements targeting AANAPISI enrolled students were sent. Furthermore, a convenience sampling method was deployed by posting visually appealing flyers (see Appendix B) in high traffic areas around campus and utilizing AANAPISI social media accounts. Finally, a snowball sampling method was utilized to expand our reach to more participants. As participants confirmed their participation, we asked them to share this

opportunity with other eligible friends and classmates helping us spread the word widely and connect with a diverse range of Asian and Pacific Islander students.

To incentivize students to participate in this study, AANAPISI gave out a \$25 gift card (funded by Student & Activities Funds) to any student that participated in the focus group discussion that was eligible. AANAPISI also catered food & drinks (banh mi sandwiches & boba tea) for the focus group to further incentivize and provide students with refreshments while they were in the focus group.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a 1.5-hour focus group session, with one main facilitator, one support facilitator, and one notetaker. A semi-structured discussion guide was utilized to ensure consistency across both groups while allowing flexibility for emergent themes and in-depth explorations. The facilitators posed open-ended questions designed to elicit participants' perceptions and experiences related to their sense of belonging within the North Seattle College campus environment, and the types of support they found beneficial to their academic and personal success. The focus group was audio-recorded with the explicit consent of the participants to ensure accurate capture of the discussions. Detailed notes were also taken to document non-verbal cues, group dynamics, and contextual observations.

Data Analysis

The audio recordings from the focus group were transcribed verbatim to facilitate comprehensive data analysis. Thematic analysis, an iterative and systematic process for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (or themes) that arise within the data, was employed to analyze the qualitative data. The analysis processed involved several stages:

1. AANAPISI staff independently familiarized themselves with the data through repeated reading of transcripts;
2. Initiated coding to identify interesting features across the entire dataset;
3. Searching for themes by collating codes into broader potential themes;
4. Reviewing themes to ensure they are coherent and distinct;
5. Defining and naming themes with the support of AI ChatGPT;
6. Producing the report; and
7. Finding discrepancies in coding and theme identification, which were discussed and resolved through consensus.

The identified themes and sub-themes directly address the research questions regarding students' sense of belonging and perceived support for success.

Participant Demographics & Background

This section of the report will provide an overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants who took part in the focus group. The information below was gathered during the check-in process by having participants fill out a Microsoft Form with their information.

Demographics Breakdown	
Date of Focus Group	5/15/2025

Total Participants	12 students
Age	17, 18 (3), 19, 20 (3), 21, 25, 22, 73
Gender	4 Male & 8 Female
Ethnicity	Japanese Vietnamese, Vietnamese (2), Nepali (2), Asian (3), Hawaiian, Chinese, Filipino White, Cambodian
International Students	7 International Students & 5 Domestic Students
Student Status	Full time (11), Part-Time (1)
Field of Study	Academic Transfer DTA (3), Associate in Arts-DTA (3), Associate in Science, Business, Computer Science, Electronics, International Business, Pharmacy Tech

Figure 2. Chart showing demographics breakdown of focus group participants

Findings

The findings from North Seattle Colleges 2025 Asian and Pacific Islander focus group are presented below. This section is organized by the main discussion of categories and questions, followed by the themes that emerged for each specific question. The themes are supported by direct participant quotes and recommendations for the institution to consider in their efforts to foster an ever-increasing environment conducive to meeting the needs of Asian and Pacific Islander students at North.

Sense of Belonging

Goal 1: To better understand how students define “sense of belonging”, discover the ways they feel and do not feel like they belong at NSC, and their ideas to increase belongingness on campus.

Several key themes emerged from participants’ definitions of belonging and highlighting ways that they feel that they feel like they belong and ways they don’t feel belonging here at North Seattle College. Participants revealed that 75% of them feel like they belong here on campus with 25% reporting they feel a strong sense of belonging, and 50% reporting they feel like they belong on campus.

On a scale of 1-5, Do you feel like you belong at NSC?
Out of 12 participants- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 (25%) reported that they feel like they somewhat belong • 6 (50%) reported they feel like they belong • 3 (25%) reported they feel a strong sense of belonging

Figure 3. Chart showing participants reported sense of belonging on a Likert scale of 1-5

Emerging Themes:

Diverse programming and supportive staff help instill a sense of belonging for students

When asked the question “What are the ways you feel you like you belong at North?” participants spent a lot of time discussing all the diverse programs that have made an impact on them. Additionally, they also mentioned how having supportive staff in these respective programs made a difference in increasing their sense of belonging and feeling confident about who they can reach out to for assistance.

Diverse Programs:

- *I feel like I belong through not only the different programs we have, but also the diversity within the community with people with different backgrounds.”*
- *“I really like the support systems here- wellness center, health care, mental health care, AANAPISI office, IP office, and Project Baldwin and more.”*
- *“Only through my program [do I feel a sense of belonging], I am in International Business. Otherwise, I feel so disconnected from the rest of campus because all my classes are online.”*

Supportive Staff:

- *“Spaces like APIC and AANAPISI with helpful staff.”*
- *“Wellness Center with really helpful staff.”*
- *“Being able to talk to Jordan (AANAPISI Navigator) helps me feel like I belong because I know I can go to him for help or when I have questions.*
- *“Tutors have been really helpful for me.”*
- *“My Seattle Promise Retention Specialist has helped me a lot and it is nice to know that I can go to her whenever I need help with classes or transfer questions.”*

Conversely, spaces where there is a lack of staff support or services for students negatively impact their sense of belonging. One service that was mentioned a lot by participants was **International Programs** at North. This feedback was also mentioned in our Year 3 Focus Groups as well and appears to be common feedback among international students as to why they do not feel like they belong at NSC. To read more, please refer to **AANAPISI Year 3 Focus Group Report**.

- *“It would help to have more advisors to help people feel less left out because many times we have classes and we are busy and we cannot find the right time to see them (North International Program Advisor) and it’s so hard.”*
- *“I would like more support in finding jobs that international students can apply for because a lot of us are not eligible, and it is really hard to find jobs on campus. This makes me feel discouraged and lost.”*

Lack of accessibility to information

In response to the question, “What are the ways you don’t feel you belong at North?”, students shared stories highlighting how hard it is to locate information at North, whether they’re trying to find community, access resources, or get their questions addressed. Primarily when it came to knowing when and where community events were taking place on campus, many students shared the same feelings of frustration of not knowing where to find this information in one place. Some participants shared what worked for them (ex. Canvas calendar, looking at bulletin boards for flyers, and/or checking their emails), but the consensus is that information is hard to find and it leads to many participants not knowing what is happening on campus which ultimately impacts their sense of belonging.

- *“It’s hard to find these groups (clubs) and programs to join.”*
- *“There are way too many flyers around campus and it is overwhelming to look at sometimes.”*
- *“We just don’t know what other events are happening or information is everywhere, so we don’t know when or what events are happening and then I find out later that I missed out on an event I would have wanted to go to.”*
- *“It’s hard to tell if it’s either a problem of if it’s a lack of information you receive or if you don’t have the motivation or just enough time to get involved in school events consistently.”*

- *"I have mainly online classes, so I am not on campus often and even so, I find the website hard to navigate to find what I need or get my questions answered."*
- *"Sometimes I find out events from following Instagram accounts instead."*
- *"Usually, each organization posts their own events, so it is everywhere so it's not in one spot but you have to take the time to look."*

High Volume of Message Notifications Impact Student Knowledge of Engagement Opportunities

After the discussion around clubs, many participants shared their frustration with emails and how difficult it is to use email to find out more about events that are happening on campus due to email overload. Many students cited how their frustration stems from getting too many emails, too many notifications on Canvas, not knowing about their Seattle Colleges email, and/or not being sure where to look for information regarding events. Due to the lack of knowledge of how to manage their emails, confusion on where to find information on events, and information being shared and posted in different ways by various programs and services- this all impacts the participants' sense of belonging on campus when it comes to clear and accessible communication. A centralized messaging system could be advantageous for all students.

Email Overload

- *"There are too many emails that are being sent out and sometimes I don't see emails that talk about events and I just miss them."*
- *"I never check my school email; it's just my personal email so that is also why I don't know what is going on."*
- *"My suggestion for this problem is I tell my classmates to forward your school email to your personal email so that way, you can get all emails and get notified so there is just one platform that you have to check."*
- *"I do this (forward school emails to personal emails), but the problem is that when I do this, there are too many emails, and I cannot keep up with my inbox, so I start ignoring emails"*

Canvas Notifications Overload

- *"I know that you can look on your Canvas Calendar, and they show events that are happening, but it's not all events, just main events so it's still not all of it."*
- *"I get sent so many notifications from my teachers and programs from Canvas that it is hard to keep up."*
- *"Canvas has too many notifications that are sent to my email about course announcements, like when something is graded, when a comment is left, or announcements about events, and it fills my inbox so I'm sure I'm getting emails and notifications about events, but it just gets so lost."*

Lack of identity and language representation impacts sense of belonging for students

Another emerging theme that came out of participants' discussion that impacts their sense of belonging is not seeing other students, staff/faculty, or spaces that reflect their identity. Many of the quotes below emphasize the importance of representation and students having a desire to be able to see themselves, their culture, and languages represented on campus.

- *"I don't feel like I belong when I don't see anyone from my country."*

- “I don’t see a lot of Filipinos on campus... I was touring and visiting other colleges, and they have a Filipino Club. Why don’t we have one here?”
- “I actually don’t see a lot of people from people that come from my country... at Central, I see more but at North, I haven’t met anyone else that is also from my country.”
- “I feel disconnected because there is no one here who can speak my native language and that I can have conversations with and connect with. Every day I come to campus, I hope to see someone from Iran, from Afghanistan or from Pakistan, but I don’t ever see anyone.”

Student Services

Goal 2: To better understand and indicate which services A&PI students find most helpful and confusing at North Seattle College, the barriers they face, and their ideas on how services can be improved.

Using Mentimeter and providing students with a comprehensive list of 18 student services offered at North (Appendix C), we asked each participant to indicate the top three services they found most helpful and the top three that they found to be the most confusing. We then proceeded to ask them to share why they found these helpful and/or confusing.

MOST HELPFUL Student Services at North Seattle College
Out of 12 Participants- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AANAPISI (10 votes) • Advising/Library (8 votes each) • Tutoring/Food Pantry (5 votes each)

Figure 3a. Chart showing top 5 most helpful student services as indicated in Mentimeter

Note: *Advising and Library were tied for second, while tutoring and food pantry were tied for third.*

MOST CONFUSING Student Services at North Seattle College
Out of 12 Participants- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Services/ Opportunity Center/Workforce Education (5 votes each) • HDC 101 Seminar/Student Media Center (4 votes each) • Financial Aid (3 votes each)

Figure 3b. Chart showing top 5 most confusing student services as indicated in Mentimeter

Note: *Career Services, Opportunity Center, and Workforce Education were tied for first, while HDC 101 Seminar and Student Media Center were tied for second*

In Appendix D & E, you can see the Mentimeter results for both questions.

Emerging Themes:

Students find services most helpful when they are consistent and have supportive staff or resources

From the list of top services that participants found most helpful—AANAPISI, Advising, Library, Tutoring, and Food Pantry—participants emphasized how important it is that they know that not only is there

someone they can go to for advising, but that a relationship is built between the student and the person providing advising. Additionally, many participants commented on the resources and amenities these services provide, and how that plays a factor in how they find the service helpful.

Advising from Staff & Faculty

- *“Advising because I am a Seattle Promise student and it’s been helpful to have a consistent advisor the last two years. She always tells me what I should do next or what to expect for the quarter and I can just kind of tell her what’s going on. She can also help me with financial aid things and where I want to go as a transfer student.”*
- *“International programs has been the most helpful for me because if I have any questions, I know I can go to them and get my questions answered”.*
- *“Faculty and Instructors can really help when doing labs, and they really help when I need extra help.”*

Resources

- *“I said the library because it’s quiet, and I can get to it easily on campus. There are a lot of resources like the computers.”*
- *“The library is my favorite place because of the piano practice room.”*
- *“Financial aid for me specifically as someone who just moved to Seattle, like finding a job, paying rent, supporting yourself and family is a big deal... it’s helpful to understand how to pay for tuition.”*
- *“And my other helpful resource is the Food Pantry and the library because I like all the resources that they provide.”*

Highlight: Why AANAPISI was voted the most helpful service

When asked why AANAPISI had the most votes and why, students highlighted the services that the AANAPISI Navigator provides, amenities of the Asian and Pacific Islander Center (APIC) student space, as well as the Peer Mentors and the peer mentoring program.

AANAPISI Services & Program

- *“I would say the monthly check-in that you can have with Jordan (Navigator) is the most helpful for me because he’s so helpful and... he really puts a lot of effort to actually help you solve your problems.”*
- *“It (AANAPISI) makes me feel safe and it has given me direction.”*
- *“I would say they provide more detailed information because compared to TRiO or LSAMP, they (AANAPISI) usually organize their own events, and they (AANAPISI Peer Mentors) have more information, and they help me be more aware.”*

APIC Student Space

- *“I really like this place (APIC), and I would say it’s really great for team working and making good friends”*
- *“It’s been nice to make friends (at APIC) who have similar culture and background and it’s easier for me to like blend between them and then really talk to them.”*
- *“I like that there are tutors here (APIC) to help with English and Writing so I don’t have to go to the tutoring center.”*

Peer Mentors & Peer Mentoring Program

- *“One of the things I like about AANAPISI is the peer mentors. I have a great Peer Mentor and they are very friendly, professional they know what they are doing, and (they) have done a great job building community and fun events.”*
- *“They (AANAPISI Peer Mentors) make it more fun to go to school when you know that you have friends to be able to spend time with.”*
- *“When I first got here, I really don't know what to do, but they (AANAPISI Peer Mentors) have a clear path or they at least know what to do, like on school and they connect me with a lot more resources, which is very, very helpful.”*

Service Access & Resolution Challenges Undermine Student Experience

From the list of top services that participants found most confusing- Career Services, Opportunity Center/Workforce Education, HDC 101 Seminar, Student Media Center, and Financial Aid, participants mainly spoke about Financial Aid, Career Services, and Advising. We defined “confusing” as services that participants had a hard time navigating/accessing or didn’t know much about but wanted to know more about a service. Even though Advising was not voted as one of the most confusing services, participants spent some time discussing the challenges they have had. When asked about Opportunity Center/Workforce Education, HDC 101 Seminar, Student Media Center, participants shared that they knew little to no information about these services.

Financial Aid

- *“Financial aid because they cannot provide help or resources to international students... not even where to look for scholarships or anything that we are eligible for.”*
 - *“Something that I would like to know more about is where to find scholarships on campus, there should be some way of like letting all students know what there is and what is going on.”*
- *“Last time I went to financial aid to try to resolve a problem, they were not helpful and I left confused so I had to go to Jordan (AANAPISI Navigator) to try to help me... Jordan had to go with me to financial aid to figure it out and thankfully, they give me a refund the next day”*

Career Services

- *“For Career Services, I do get some emails sometimes and they tell you to go to Handshake but that was confusing and I don’t know what to do. And I try emailing them, but I never got a response.”*
- *“I don’t really know what services they (Career Services) provide. I went to their office and asked them and then every time, they just mention Handshake and every time I go on the Handshake website, I don’t find anything helpful or that would be effective... I would be just so confused.”*
- *“Why don’t we have a career coach or a career office like other schools have?”*

Advising

- *“Advising is difficult for international students because we only have one advisor we can go to and it seems like they are always too busy to help.”*
 - *“I also second this because I would like to see more than one advisor in international services because if you don’t fit their schedule, you are out (cannot see them).”*
- *“I can relate on this as well, there are other advisors that are not considerate about what classes that we should take that we can be successful in.”*

- *“Advisors should really consider the life of the student and all the factors that they are facing before giving advice. It felt like my advisor and teacher were giving me false encouragement and pushing me saying “I can do it”, but they need to actually see all the things that are going on and be more honest with me.”*

First Year Experience

Goal 3: To better understand A&PI students’ experience as a first-year student, the challenges they encountered, and the resources/solutions they have that could have improved their experience.

When asked to rate their First Year Experience (FYE), participants were evenly split. Half reported having a positive experience and feeling supported- 8% felt very supported, and 42% said their FYE was good, and they received adequate support. The other half described their FYE as only okay or challenging, noting that they received limited support. Many of these students cited feeling unprepared for the transition to college, as well as difficulties with wayfinding and locating resources during their first year.

From a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your first-year experience at North Seattle College?
Out of 12 participants-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 (25%) reported that their FYE was challenging and they received little support • 3 (25%) reported that their FYE was okay and they received some support • 5 (42%) reported that their FYE was good and they received support • 1 (8%) reported that they FYE was really good, and they received a lot of support

Figure 4. Chart showing participants rating on their first-year experience on a Likert scale of 1-5

Emerging Themes:

Running Start and International Students Want More Pre-Arrival Support

- *“I started as Running Start student, and my high school did not know how to support running start students and that made my first year really hard. But now as a Seattle Promise student, I feel like my advisor are trained a lot better to help transition students from high school to being a college student.*
- *“I wish my high school advisor knew more information, I mean, it’s not their fault, but maybe advisors here can do more to help high school advisors know more about how to support Running Start students.”*
- *“What was a challenge for me in my first year was that I am new in Seattle and I am also a Running Start student, so I was not prepared for college life and I didn’t know what I wanted to do in my future or what classes to take... I didn’t know what GPA was or how it was calculated. I wish I had my advisor to make that all clear to me when I started.”*

Navigating a New City & Education System - International Students

- *“The language barrier and all this was super challenging for me, but the school was another big challenge for me because like I was taking some classes, and it was really hard and after three quarters, I realized the major that I thought I was doing was not the right one for me.”*
- *“Culture shock because the education system is so different from back home and but there are so many things I did not know about like things like daylight savings which was very confusing for me.”*

- *“Moving from my home country was such a big transition for me and it was really hard in my first year trying to figure out everything on my own.”*

Challenges with wayfinding and finding resources for First-Year Experience (FYE)

Wayfinding

- *“During my first year when coming to campus, I had no idea where to go, which building was what building and where my first class was, I was so lost.”*
- *“I asked my teachers like there are so many buildings and how to find my classes and they didn’t know how to answer me.”*
- *Everything here on this campus is confusing compared to Seattle Central because I go there for one class. Everything is very flat on this campus and I have to walk everywhere and walk for a bit to find what you are looking for”*
- *“The buildings here are so not welcoming, they don’t look done or there’s not much color.”*

Finding Resources

- *“I had no idea what was going on or what programs were taking place on campus or what classes to take and I was not very involved.”*
- *“I think the biggest challenge for me was to navigate or like try to find the resources which already exists, but you just cannot find it or just don’t know where to look. It’s not really said.”*

Students revealed that due to the challenges faced in transitioning to college, wayfinding, and finding resources, it takes some time for students to become familiar with campus and that one of the main ways they become more confident is through student worker and leadership opportunities on campus.

Recommendations

1. Increase Sense of Belonging through:

1A. Student-Centered Spaces and Amenities

- **More Amenities:** Students shared how they would like to see more amenities be provided in spaces that they hang out in that they have seen at other college spaces-
 - *“It would be good see more fun things like a pool table or a bit more fun games that people can play.”*
 - *“When I go to Central, they have more things like ping pong tables, and they have a game center and space for volleyball.”*
- **Centralized Student Hub:** There have been talks from North student leadership about creating a student hub on campus, and from the feedback we heard from the focus group, we feel that putting efforts and resources toward creating a centralized student hub could help increase the sense of belonging for many students on campus. As the AANAPISI grant is scheduled to conclude in September 2026, we recommend the institution continue or start conversations about what to do with APIC furniture and amenities towards this vision of having a centralized student hub.

1B. More Student Worker & Student Leadership Opportunities

- **Provide More On-Campus Student Worker Jobs:** Participants in both this year and year 3 focus groups also recommended the same suggestion of having more on-campus student work jobs and leadership opportunities available to them. One participant shared that *“it’s not just work study, that is the issue. The college needs to have more job opportunities available that can allow us to work, there just aren’t enough jobs”*. These roles were cited to help increase the confidence of students' knowledge of resources and services as well as empower them to help their peers navigate campus.
- **More Awareness of How to Form Student Clubs:** Through the dialogue that participants had about clubs and the process of creating them, it was suggested by students that there be more information readily available about how students can start clubs and that be shared more widely every quarter. A suggestion is that at the quarterly Club & Resource Fair, there is a booth that is dedicated to educating students on how to start their own club and can provide a “starter kit” so they have information they need to start the process. Additionally, this “starter kit” can be posted online and shared more widely with staff and faculty.

1C. Identity-Based Student Groups & Events

- **Group Collectives:** North Seattle College has had success with student groups in the past, and there is a current effort to bring them back to campus. Based on participant’s desire to see more representation on campus, establishing sustainable community-based student groups with a consistent advisor (faculty/staff member) will be instrumental in ensuring that community groups can be sustained as students transition after their time at North.
- **Create an Asian & Pacific Islander First-Year Learning Community:** Seattle Central’s AANAPISI program has implemented Learning Communities (LCs) that count as Integrated Studies (IS) requirements. They specifically have a First-Year Learning Communities (FYLC’s) where AANAPISI students from their program can be in a FYLC and take classes together while getting support from their AANAPISI program. NSC can consider a similar cohort model which can then support A&PI students with their FYE as well as building community and sense of belonging.
- **Community-Focused Events:** For the last two years, AANAPISI has seen success and high attendance with the Lunar New Year event. For our most recent Lunar New Year event in 2025, out of 178 attendees and 52 completed surveys, *96.2% of participants reported a strong sense of community* through attending Lunar New Year with 63.5% Strongly Agreeing and 32.7% Agreeing. It is recommended that North Student Leadership and Division for Access, Community, and Opportunity continue to allocate funds to community building events that bring people together as well as increases students' sense of belonging and community.

2. Streamlining Communication for Students

- **Creation of One Platform for All Events:** This recommendation indicates the need for a website that centralizes student events, resources, and clubs that are happening and being hosted on campus. A participant shared, *“It would be helpful to have them all in one spot because it’s just scattered everywhere on campus, and the bulletin boards are so crowded and hard to look at. “*Instead of having students rely on emails, Canvas notifications, Canvas calendar, look around at bulletin boards with crowded flyers, or look at separate webpage for advising events, it is recommended that the institution allocate time and resources to finding one centralized platform that students can be directed to.
- **More information during North Student Orientation (NSO) about how to manage your Seattle Colleges email:** Based on the dialogue participants had around managing their emails, there are students who are unaware of the option to forward their emails. Other participants expressed how by doing this, this caused email overload and overwhelm to their inboxes. Since students are introduced to their Seattle Colleges email during NSO, it is recommended that there be time allocated to demonstrate the options students have when it comes to their emails and email management.

3. Improve Campus Wayfinding & Navigation

- **Update the map on NSC’s website with more details:** Currently, the map on the NSC website only provides limited details. For example, if you click on the ‘College Center Building’ on the map, it shows a list of departments based on ground or upper floors but does not specify the room numbers they are in or where exactly on the floor these departments are located. Additionally, classrooms are listed under “Upper Floors,” but more specifically, they are on the thirdrd floor. These details can help students navigate the campus more easily as well as help staff and faculty be able to show students with more specificity about where places are.
- **Update campus maps more frequently:** With the many changes in office spaces for staff, faculty, programs, and names of spaces, it is recommended that there is a dedicated person that ensures that each quarter (or at least once a year), the map is updated to reflect these changes.

4. Provide more Pre-Transition Support

- **Implement First-Year Interest Groups (FIGs):** First-year interest groups can mitigate the issues surrounding the transition to college for new students. Students, especially those in the Running Start program and International Programs, expressed difficulty in the transition to college. With FIGs geared towards these communities, this creates a stronger sense of community with the guidance of a staff member (ex. AANAPISI Navigator). Additionally, NSC can explore how FIGs can also be implemented alongside Human Development Courses (HDC) 101 courses which are designed for first-year students and include many Seattle Promise Students as well.

- **Building a “Bridge” between Advisors & High School Counselors/Advisers:** Running Start students in last year’s focus group as well as this one voiced that there is a lack of information their high school counselors/advisers have in advising them on their Running Start journey. Many high school counselors and advisors simply don’t know enough about resources and services at the college and tell students to seek support on their own. This leads to Running Start students not knowing who to reach out to or how to seek help when transitioning to NSC. Based on that data, more outreach to Seattle Public High Schools would help de-mystify the college transition

5. Increasing Capacity and Support for International Students

- **Increase Capacity in North’s International Student Program:** International student participants in Year 3 focus groups, as well as in Year 4, all expressed that they wish there were more than one International Program Advisor at North to give them more opportunities to connect with someone in-person (instead of mainly email), decrease the need for a long response time, and getting international students what they need in a more reasonable time (ex. permission codes).
- **Listening to International Students Voices:** Through the last two years, focus groups have been conducted, international students spoke continuously of how their needs are not being met at North when it comes to getting timely support and engagement. To continue to identify challenges and barriers that international students face, it would be impactful if International Programs at the Seattle Colleges district can commit to conducting one focus group each year on each campus to assess how international students are feeling, if they feel support, and if not, what can IP do to meet their needs.

Conclusion

This Year 4 focus group report provides valuable insights into the lived experiences of Asian and Pacific islander students at North Seattle College, shedding light on the critical factors that influence their sense of belonging, accessing necessary services, and first-year experience. While North Seattle College continues to make commendable strides towards fostering a supportive campus climate and provide targeted support, the discussions also reveal areas where A&PI students seek further development to meet the needs of their Asian and Pacific Islander student body. The hope for this report is that it gives the institution ideas, based on A&PI student voices, of how to continue building relationships, spaces, and programs that are inclusive, responsive, and foster a strong sense of belonging that will in turn improve student retention, completion and graduation/transfer.

References

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n.a. (2017) *The CECE model*. National Institute for Transformation & Equity. . <https://nite-education.org/the-cece-model/>

Appendix

A. Focus Group Questions

Theme #1: Sense of Belonging

1. On a scale of 1-5, do you feel like you belong at NSC?
2.
 - 1- You don't feel like you belong at all
 - 2- You feel like you belong a little
 - 3- You feel like you somewhat belong
 - 4- You feel like you belong
 - 5- You feel a very strong sense of belonging
3. What are the ways you feel like you belong at North? Please provide some examples.
4. What are the ways you don't feel like you belong at North? Please provide some examples.
5. What are ideas or thoughts you have that could make NSC a more welcoming place where you can see yourself belong?

Theme #2: Student Services

1. [Using word cloud] Which 3 Student Services do you find the MOST HELPFUL to your success as an API student?
 - a. Please type into MentiMeter
 - b. Why?
2. [Using word cloud] Which 3 Student Services do you find the MOST CONFUSING that causes barriers to your success as an API student?
 - a. Please type into MentiMeter
 - b. Why?
3. If you could change or improve anything about our student services, what would you change?

Theme #3: First Year Experience

1. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your first-year experience at North Seattle College?
2.
 - 1- Your first-year experience was really challenging & you received no support
 - 2- Your first-year experience was challenging & you received little support
 - 3- Your first-year experience was okay & you received some support
 - 4- Your first-year experience was good & you received support
 - 5- Your first-year experience was really good & you received a lot of support
3. Reflecting on your first-year experience at North Seattle College, what were the challenges that you encountered?
4. What resources or ideas do you have that you think would have helped your first-year experience be better?

B. Recruitment Flyer

AANAPISI
Asian American and Native American
Pacific Islander Serving Institution

Your Voice Matters, Join the Conversation

Asian & Pacific Islander Student Focus Group

Join us in a conversation to share your experience as an Asian & Pacific Islander (A&PI) student that is currently enrolled at North Seattle College

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025
Time Commitment: 2:30PM TO 4:00PM
Location: Asian & Pacific Islander Center (APIC)- CC 1360

All participants will receive a **\$25 Gift Card**
Bubble tea & food will be provided!

Sign-up by May 2nd!
Space is limited to the first 15 students that RSVP.

North Seattle College Asian & Pacific Islander Student Focus Group

Questions?
Please email Dawn Cheung at Dawn.Cheung@seattlecolleges.edu

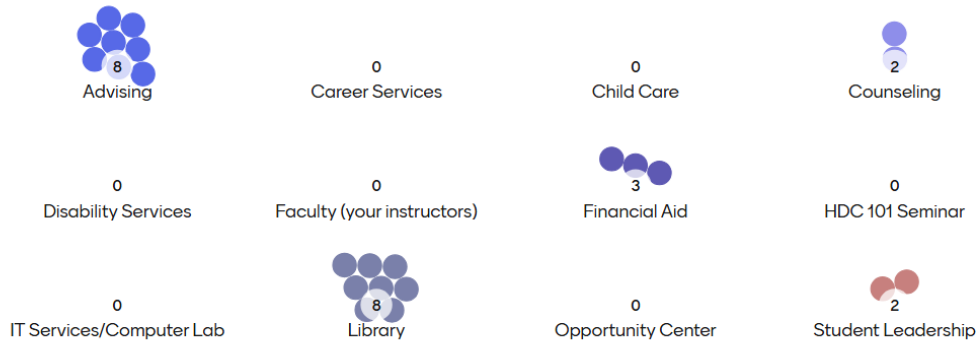
C. List of Student Services that were given to focus group participants to reference during Mentimeter Activity

1. Advising	5. Faculty (your instructors)	11. Opportunity Center
2. Career Services	6. Financial Aid	12. Student Leadership
3. Child Care	7. HDC 101 Seminar	13. Student Media Center
4. Counseling	8. IT Services/Computer Lab	14. Tutoring
5. Disability Services	9. Library	15. Workforce Education
16. TRiO	17. AANAPISI	18. Food Pantry

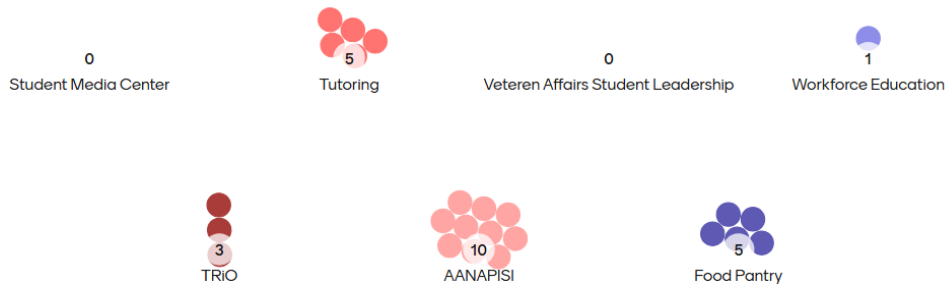
D. Most Helpful Student Services- Mentimeter Results

Note: There was a typo on the Mentimeter which may have skewed the students' results and/or caused confusion. Veterans Affairs and Student Leadership were combined into one option.

Which 3 Student Services & Support Programs do you find the MOST HELPFUL to your success as an API student?



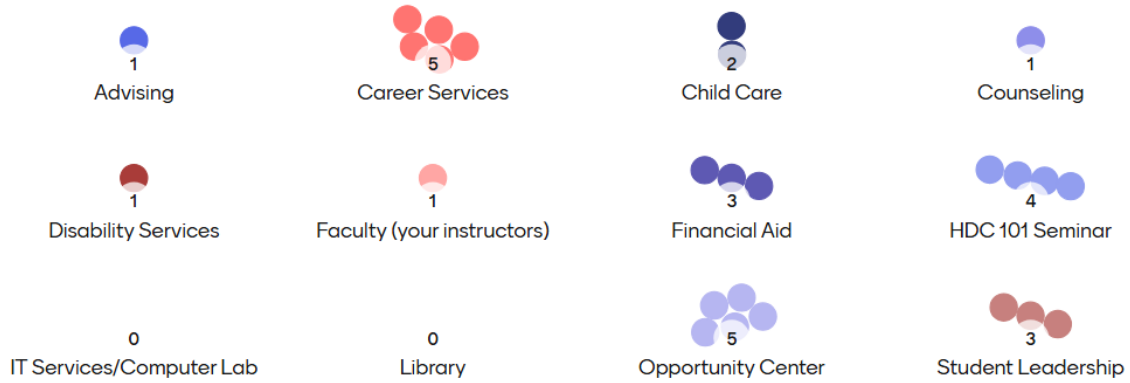
Which 3 Student Services & Support Programs do you find the MOST HELPFUL to your success as an API student? In Addition



E. Most Confusing Student Services- Mentimeter Results

Note: There was a typo on the Mentimeter which may have skewed the students' results and/or caused confusion. Veterans Affairs and Student Leadership were combined into one option.

Which 3 Student Services & Support Programs do you find the **MOST CONFUSING** that causes barriers to your success as an API student?



Which 3 Student Services & Support Programs do you find the **MOST CONFUSING** that causes barriers to your success as an API student? In Addition

