Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Inclusivity on USF Campus
ASUSF Senate Resolution 16-17-10

Whereas: The University of San Francisco prides itself on being ranked 6th on the U.S. News & World Report’s 2016 list of top universities for undergraduate students for ethnic diversity; and

Whereas: USF’s “Commitment to Diversity” home page reads as follows:

“Inclusive excellence means finding common ground among diverse communities, and then moving to higher ground. At USF, we celebrate an environment where every individual steps into new understanding respectfully and with delight, and where all are better off by being part of our diverse community.”

Whereas: Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are the third fastest growing ethnic population in the California Bay Area, according to the San Francisco Chronicle article in 2011; and

Whereas: The Pacific Islands of Oceania are comprised of three main regions called Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia, which are not included in the continent of Asia; and

Whereas: The U.S. Census (since 1997, implemented 2001) and USF Census recognize that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) and Asian Americans are separate and distinct racial groups; and

Whereas: The University of San Francisco’s Asian Pacific American Studies program, the Center for Asia Pacific Studies, and the sociology class titled APIs in U.S. Society, do not recognize Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders distinct from Asian Americans; and

Whereas: Only 18% percent of Pacific Islanders ages 25 and up hold a Bachelor’s degree, according to ‘Empowering Pacific Islander Communities’ informational booklet of 2014; and

Whereas: Pacific Islander (PI) students are accounted for 0.8% of the student population at USF, totaling 88 undergraduate and graduate students, and express concern about their misrepresentation in curriculum, campus spaces, faculty, and staff; and

Whereas: Data collection is inaccurate, by conflating data of students who are born and raised on the islands with students who are native to the islands, therefore mixing nationality with ethnicity, ie. Guamanian as a nationality and Chamorro as a native ethnicity; and

Whereas: The Center for Asia Pacific Studies (CAPS) overview homepage reads as follows:

“The Center for Asia Pacific Studies promotes and fosters research, public programs and teaching focused on Greater China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and India.”

Which does not include any of the countries or islands that can be found in Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia, the three regions within the Pacific Islands of Oceania; and
Whereas: The Asian Pacific American Studies (APAS) Minor is the only department on campus that has any PI related material, but does not require any classes involving NHPI curriculum besides SOC 228: APIs in U.S. Society, which only dedicates a maximum of two weeks to NHPI issues and/or history; and

Whereas: Neighboring higher education institution, San Francisco State University offers courses under their Race and Resistance Studies department catered to PI history which include RRS 103: Introduction to Pacific Studies and RRS 303: Health and Wellness among Pacific Islanders; and

Whereas: City College of San Francisco offers a Critical Pacific Islands Studies program and Certificate of Accomplishment to students, which aims to:

“...introduce[s] students to a critical analysis of Pacific peoples and cultures in the U.S. diaspora and beyond. Privileging the voices of native Pacific Islanders, the interdisciplinary curriculum explores a plethora of historical and contemporary topics, including colonization, militarization, social movements, and immigration, through the use of academic and community-based scholarship.”

Whereas: None of the 28 Jesuit universities in the United States have programs or classes that are dedicated to NHPI history or culture; and

Whereas: There is limited faculty and staff within the CAPS and APAS departments and on campus that are of PI heritage and PI students do not have individuals to talk about their experiences with who will relate; and

Whereas: The Intercultural Centers previously hosted a drop-in space called “Pau Hana” which used a Native Hawaiian term for “time after work”, which was meant to focus on Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander students, but has been formally been changed to “Asian American Drop In”,

Whereas: PI students do not wish to participate in programs hosted by various departments on campus that continue to attach and mix PI experiences with Asian American experiences under the “API” or “APIA” umbrella term; and

Whereas: A PI student of Chamorro (Micronesian) descent stated:

“I have attended Pau Hana a few times and it has been really difficult to engage in conversation when I am always still the 1% in the room let alone the world. I feel that trying to create a space for Native Pacific Islanders and/or Indigenous students would be really great given that our histories of colonization and population are so similar. We share so many stories and histories and Pacific Islanders and Indigenous peoples hold strong alliances because of that. I find that the group Pau Hana seems to marginalize us Pacific Islanders more than we already are because of the participation of creating an API space. When Pacific Islanders are not even a part of the continent Asia, and our histories are so so different.”

Whereas: A PI student of Tongan (Polynesian) descent stated:

“Pacific Islanders are tokenized within academics at USF and aren’t allowed for self-discovery. You don’t really know yourself as a racialized body... If there are ‘API’ spaces, that’s a deal breaker. That means I’m not going to that thing, because if they’re using an outdated race term, I’m not gunna believe that they’re
actually there for me. They don’t care about me today. They care about me 30 some years ago… Professors and departments still lump Asians and Pacific Islanders together. The ‘experts’ on race are not actually experts.”

Whereas: A PI student of American Samoa (Polynesian) descent stated:

“The statistics tell me that I’m the most likely to fail in the world of higher education, and when I don’t see myself accurately represented in the literature I’m reading, the classes I’m taking, or the faculty that’s guiding me, I understand why those numbers exist. How can the inequalities I face as a Pacific Islander be recognized and addressed by this University when it still references the people of Oceania as API? That terminology is dismissive of the fact that there are many disparities between the two groups. API on spaces may be advertised for me, but they were not made for me. And as long as they are being promoted as such I would not feel comfortable attending those events.”

Whereas: A PI student of Solomon Islander (Melanesian) descent stated:

“We are not Asians. We are our own entity. We are so rich and diverse and I feel like the rest of our community here needs to know that. We’re not just dots on the map. We are actual human beings with our own stories.”

Therefore, be it resolved by ASUSF Senate of the University of San Francisco, representing all the undergraduate students of the University: That the University of San Francisco will make a continued effort to separate the umbrella term “API” within academic departments, such as the Center for Asia Pacific Studies and the Asian Pacific American Studies minor; furthermore, be it

Resolved: USF will make sure to hire faculty and staff that will accurately represent and reflect the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander student population, proportionately, totaling in 4 hires; furthermore, be it

Resolved: The University will disaggregate collected data within natives through ethnic identity and national identity within USF census for admissions and data gathering; furthermore, be it

Resolved: Academic departments and campus spaces will actively separate the term “API” within their program, course descriptions, and academic jargon, highlighting that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders are distinctly different and independent of Asian and Asian Americans; furthermore, be it

Resolved: A class specifically catered to the culture and history of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders will be offered under Critical Diversity Studies and will be a required course for students who wish to declare an Asian Pacific American Studies minor, which will be taught by a qualified Native Pacific Islander Professor; furthermore, be it

Resolved: Professors under the Asian Pacific American Studies minor will be actively informed on and trained to talk about NHPI history and contemporary social issues, and will understand and acknowledge the differences between Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders; furthermore, be it

Resolved: That these above statements will be in fruition and completed by the Fall semester of 2019.
Submitted by: Tabitha Reyes, ASUSF Student of Color Representative
Presented: Tuesday, February 28, 2017
Signed: Tuesday, March 21, 2017

Shaya Kara, ASUSF President