

Throughout the pandemic and shift back to in-person learning, I have been deeply involved in *Generating and Reclaiming our Wisdoms (GROW): A Collection of Asian American and Pacific Islander Community Stories at UC San Diego*, a collaboration of students, faculty, staff, and librarians at UCSD seeking to preserve, document, and increase the visibility of student and community experiences in the historical and current movements for AAPI Studies and AAPI student-community activism at UCSD, going back to as early as the 1980s. This project involves a research component where we learn and apply the practices of archival and oral history methodologies to record the histories of AAPI student-and-community activism. Fundamentally, however, this project is rooted in community-building, most importantly in ways that transcend the boundaries set by the university and society. While bringing together undergraduate and graduate students with professors, faculty, and staff at UCSD, we continue to bring those who had graduated or left UCSD back to discuss their experiences and activism as well as others in the community beyond UCSD who are also engaging in similar efforts to document and share the wisdom, experiences, and activism of the AAPI community. Altogether, this community project is a very special space where we all simultaneously get to share experiences, knowledge, and raw thoughts and feelings in our studies and interactions, thus having organically cultivated some beautiful, meaningful relationships.

Personally, my involvement began early on in my college years, beginning with my interest in understanding my identities and positionalities as an Asian American, first daughter of immigrants, and first-generation college student and my wanting to be more involved with the community here. However, upon exploring and learning about community history and understanding campus climate and relations at UCSD, I had observed and experienced the limitation to access and visibility of such information, despite there existing an APIMEDA Programs and Services and AAPI student organizations. This continued to fuel my curiosity and involvement in the community: becoming an APIMEDA Programs and Services Community Assistant, the previous Political Awareness and Action Coordinator and the current Chair of Asian and Pacific Islander Student Alliance (APSA), an active student leader at the Student Promoted Access Center for Education and Service (SPACES), a Cross Cultural Center social justice educator and student leader, and a scholar of the new AAPI Studies program. Amidst all these involvements, I also happened to stumble across Emeritus Professor Jim Lin and his stories as well as previous student archives and works - such as that by alums Dr. Angela Kong, Jessica Hatrick, and countless other student activists - that revealed historical documents and narratives about the complex struggles for Asian American Studies at UCSD in the 1980s and even as recently as in the 2010s, information that had been *in a way* lost throughout the years as a result of the lack of institutional preservation of these histories as well as the natural loss of knowledge as time passes and as those who hold the knowledge leave. Shocked and excited, I had shared the findings with APIMEDA Programs and Services' Associate Director, Windi

Sasaki, and Professor of History and the Inaugural Director of AAPI Studies, Simeon Man, who were not only similarly shocked to hear about the new information and community experience but also felt the collective sense of urgency to preserve and bring to light the long, complex struggles of the AAPI community. From there, with the support of librarian Cristela Garcia-Spitz, we intersected each of our strengths and specialties to bring the ever-growing team of GROW together. Personally, since the Summer of 2020, I was particularly interested in the archives, collections management, and other mediums of documenting community experiences, and I ultimately analyzed and managed over 300 pages of historical documents from Special Collections as well as was able to identify, track, and connect with individuals mentioned in these documents from the 1980s and more. This overlapped with the growth of the research team and the formal beginning of our collaborative research in Spring 2021, which focused on conducting oral histories. I continued to work independently throughout the Summer of 2021 to develop the skeleton of the project and its website with the core team, and I continue to lead the team project while contributing to research and knowledge of the collection and expanding the community.

Reflecting upon my experiences, I realize that *while* I contributed to growing the group and shaping our experiences, I have also so greatly benefited and learned from the community. Having grown up and existing in a society that has been dominated by pressures enforcing the senses of isolationism, imposter syndrome, and a blurred sense of self-value and self-worth, this community has shown me the power of being able to gather, connect, and care for each other through our shared experiences, struggles, and joys. We shared complex emotions of shock, anger, disappointment, and pain when hearing about injustices that community members, including ourselves, have faced. Yet, we also shared many moments of absolute awe, admiration, and love in learning about each other, our efforts and accomplishments, and our little unique quirks and joys, learning and also reminding ourselves that our truest selves are valid and deserve to exist and thrive in healthy, safe, and empowering spaces. Notably, these deep connections occurred both virtually and during a shift back in person, revealing the power that care and community have in transcending the systemic, physical, and digital barriers that we faced in the past years. Moreover, seeing myself reflected in this community as well as in our undergraduate, graduate, faculty, staff, and alumni community has been so empowering, heartwarming, and inspiring. Altogether, GROW and this larger community has led to so much personal and collective healing and growth, I am so proud, grateful, and beyond lucky to be a part of this beautiful community and to also have a role in contributing to these spaces. Moreover, it is through all these moments - big and small, heavy and light, and all the in-betweens - that reveal how we the community have poured so much time, energy, and labor in carving out spaces and experiences to provide the care, comfort, and community that we struggled to find elsewhere here, making this effort truly “by us, for us.”