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Transition Message from the Editors

Embracing Open Access: The Next Stage of the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Nexus Journal

Paul M. Ong and Melany De La Cruz-Viesca

After a decade and a half of existence, *AAPI Nexus* will become an open-access journal, a move that we hope will increase the social and political value of our contributors. This means granting “free, irrevocable, worldwide, perpetual right of access to, and a license to copy, use, distribute, transmit, and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship” (Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing, June 20, 2003). This 2017 issue is our last under the more traditional and restrictive publication format, which is the prevailing practice within the academy. Next year, we will make all future practitioners’ essays, resource papers, and research articles readily accessible online, with no cost to users. We believe that this approach will better serve our communities in providing them with actionable knowledge to improve policy, practice, advocacy, and organizing.

Open access is consistent with our broader vision. *AAPI Nexus* was established to bridge “town and gown” and dismantle the barriers separating the academy and larger community. We see this as an integral part of ethnic studies’ founding mission to “serve the people.” We serve in many ways, through taking personal and collective stances. We in the university can also make a unique contribution through doing what we do best, the production of knowledge, not just abstract and esoteric scholarship, but insights that speak directly to daily problems facing our communities. We develop knowledge that strengthens real social agency, arming stakeholders with actionable information: research that is transformative, informs decision makers, and promotes the well-being of Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). For ex-

ample, *AAPI Nexus* has filled the gaps in the existing literature to better understand the position and experiences of AAPIs by publishing data disaggregated by ethnic groups or subgroups. We also acknowledge the generation of knowledge is not limited to those within the academy. *AAPI Nexus* has fostered the production of knowledge outside the academy by seeking and publishing community-based research and practitioner's essays where those on the front line have an opportunity to express opinions and to advocate based on beliefs and firsthand experience working on the ground—in the town, not the gown of the theoretical Ivory Tower. Migration to an open-access platform removes obstacles and allows for a greater exchange of ideas and discussion across multiple disciplines and stakeholders.

The move to open access is reflective of the mission of UCLA's Asian American Studies Center (AASC). Partnering with other AAPI stakeholders remains as relevant today as in 1969, when AASC was established through student, community, and faculty struggles to transform the academy. In many ways, community engagement is more important now because of the current political backlash against the past gains made by people of color through the civil-rights and social movements. Despite our hopes for a better tomorrow, political, social, and economic inequality is still too prevalent today. As part of a public university, the AASC is committed to the principle that the public should have access to the output of publicly funded research and provide the broadest possible dissemination of published research. Asian American Studies (AAS) is in a better position to contribute to the fight for social justice and greater inequality after nearly fifty years. AAS has become more established within the university, achieved a high degree of scholarly legitimacy, become more institutionalized, and trained thousands of students. The challenge is how to innovate, mobilize, and channel our resources to allow for greater sharing of knowledge. Moving to open access, thus lowering one barrier, is one small step in that direction.

As a part of the journal's transition, we also look back to give our readers better access to past publications. You can now download the table of contents from all past issues and a cumulative index to make searching for articles by subject and author easier at <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/aascpress/2017NexusIndex.pdf>. We are also committed to seeking funding, so we can make previous

volumes of articles and essays more accessible. We are deeply indebted to our past contributing academic and community writers, artists, editorial staff, and the AASC, as well as subscribers and readers, who have helped us carry out the mission of the *AAPI Nexus Journal*. We continue to pursue the mission of bridging the “town and gown” and look forward to new collaborations and partnerships.

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MELANY DE LA CRUZ-VIESCA is the Assistant Director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and the Managing Editor of *AAPI Nexus Journal*. She also serves as the Director of the AAPI Community Development Census Information Center, a partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau. Her research focuses on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander demographics and policy, in relation to asset building, housing, community and economic development, and education. She was appointed by Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa in 2008 and reappointed by Mayor Eric Garcetti to the City’s Human Relations Commission.