

Practitioner Essay

Building Gardens: Food Justice, Community Engagement, and Gardens for the Asian Pacific Islander Community in the San Gabriel Valley

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Abstract

Culturally relevant gardens can significantly benefit regions like the San Gabriel Valley, which contain nearly a third of Asian Americans who are low income, by providing organically grown produce for students (Asian Americans Advancing Justice, 2018). This article focuses on one service-learning program: Asian / Asian American Studies 3510 Food Justice, the Body, and the Environment in the API Community at Cal State LA that works with schools throughout the San Gabriel Valley to build culturally relevant produce gardens. While our work focuses on building gardens and considerations of food justice, one of the greatest barriers to community-university partnerships is the lack of procedural transparency embedded within the university structure and culture. The heart of this essay is this process.

Introduction

Back in the 1970s and 1980s in the San Gabriel Valley, few homes had vegetable gardens as prominent features of the front yard. The sugar cane, bok choy, gailan, taro, strawberries, and bamboo that slowly overtook the carefully landscaped grassy front yards in Monterey Park were in large part due to the growing numbers of Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) in the San Gabriel Valley (Cheng, 2013). These humble home gardens were practical, and arose out of a need for food that resembled what families ate in their home countries. These families were

very resourceful as every patch of land was utilized to maximize the land available in the homes of these ethnoburbs (Li, 2008). Even in the 1970s, the multitude of Asian American grocery stores, now so prevalent throughout the San Gabriel Valley, were mostly inaccessible despite the demographic shifts of the region and the historic ubiquity of Asians within California's agricultural landscape (Lee, 1993).

Changing demographics along with the resurgence of "slow foods" also sparked a renaissance of regional foodways and an emphasis of localized farm to table movements. Public health campaigns also attempted to address the desire for nutrition and health with campaigns throughout communities of color. In Los Angeles, a group of activists and scholars formed APIOPA (Asian Pacific Islander Obesity Alliance, now API Forward Movement) to address the needs of the API community, left behind in public health efforts (Carreon and Baumeister, 2015; Molina, 2006; Risse, 2012; Shah, 2001; Yu, Zhihuan, and Singh, 2010). The science and cultural currency attached to nutrition and health helped fund and create new gardens throughout the nation. Especially prominent were former First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign and Ron Finley's ingenious strategies to combat hunger in South Central LA (Finley, 2019; Let's Move, 2019). While many of these programs addressed the great need for food justice, few if any of these programs specifically addressed the needs of the API community (Pimentel and Horikoshi, 2016). AAAS 3510 was an attempt to address this gap by attempting to provide culturally relevant, culturally recognizable gardens specific to the API community and communities of color that overlaid them.

The changing demographics of the San Gabriel Valley also witnessed a sizeable increase in the number of API students at Cal State LA (see Table 1). Cal State LA is a public institution comprised primarily of students of color. Historically, a working-class Hispanic-serving institution, Cal State LA is also a designated AANAPISI (Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Institution). Students of Asian / Asian American and Pacific Islander descent represent the second-largest group on campus which is located at the nexus of the older API communities of downtown Los Angeles and largest and most dynamic community of Asians and Asian Americans in the United States in the San Gabriel Valley.

Table 1. Demographics of Cal State L.A. Students as of Fall 2016
(Trustees of the California State University, 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2017)

Values	Asian American Population	Pacific Islander Population	Latinx Population	First-Generation University Student
Percentage	14.20%	0.10%	60.90%	61.71%
Count	3,960	29	16,939	17,173

Note: This chart has been modified to align with the sources listed. The number of first-generation college students was calculated by adding up the numbers of first-time freshman from 2013 to 2016. This number does not include first-time freshman who are no longer enrolled at Cal State LA and first-time freshman from before 2013 that currently attend Cal State LA.

The new administration of Cal State LA, under President William Covino, emphasized service-learning and civic engagement as the core of the university's strategic plans. The campus gave courses with a service-learning or civic engagement component a general designation of civic learning, though service-learning was a definition and activity left primarily to individual faculty to define. Service-learning courses, in theory, are designed to teach students about global and societal issues while encouraging them to tackle these issues with on-the-ground work. The Asian/Asian American Studies (AAAS) 3510 class teaches students about food insecurity within the API community while also attempting to address this issue by creating an edible garden with culturally relevant produce (Brnton and Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Additional outcomes of service-learning include motivating students to become more engaged citizens, creating opportunities for students to interact with more diverse groups of people, and creating long-term partnerships with the local community (Bringle and Hatcher, 2000, 273–290; Jacoby, 1996, 21; Mintz and Hesser, 1996, 37).

Studies have shown the positive impact civic engagement has on undergraduate education (Butin, 2007, 177–183). This article presents one such program at Cal State LA that highlights the multiple relationships, stakeholders, challenges, successes, and strategies in building a community-based project within Asian/Asian American Studies. While detailing the program, project, and directions that community gardens have taken, this article provides insight into the roadblocks of service-learning from the perspective of a student and junior faculty member with little experience navigating the administrative process.

Table 2. Demographics of San Gabriel Valley Cities Served (<i>Los Angeles Times</i> , 2018)			
School	API Population	Latinx Population	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Recipients
Alhambra High School	44.3%	50.4%	76.7%
Garvey Intermediate School	59.3%	38%	78.7%
Mark Keppel High School	72.8%	22.4%	65.2%

Table 3. Demographics of San Gabriel Valley Schools Served (<i>Los Angeles Times</i> , 2018)						
City	API Population	Latinx Population	White Population	Foreign-Born Population	Median Incomes < \$20,000	Median Incomes \$20,000-\$40,000
Alhambra	47.2%	35.5%	13.8%	50.8%	23.5%	25.7%
Monterey Park	61.1%	28.8%	7.4%	53.6%	23%	24.5%
Rosemead	48.6%	41%	8%	56.4%	24.3%	28.6%
San Gabriel	48.9%	30.4%	17.4%	52.6%	20.3%	26.1%

Class and Project

In the fall of 2016, Cal State LA approved of an Asian American Studies course entitled “Food Justice, the Body, and Environment in the API Community,” an upper-division, general education course that covered students’ race and ethnicity requirement for the general education curriculum for graduation. This class also fulfilled their civic learning requirements for graduation. Intentionally designed to align with students’ general education, it was meant to attract students from various disciplines, and consequently students with diverse skill sets, into service-learning and Asian/Asian American studies.

Earlier renditions of the class were experimental models cross-listed between Asian American Studies and the History Department in a course entitled “History of Asian Americans.” These classes were tra-

ditional university learning modules with civic learning as an *option*. As a result, the history of an Asian America course was divided between those that followed traditional text-based learning and those that participated with a community organization. In this earlier version of this course, self-selected students worked with APIOPA, under the guidance of program director Scott Chan, and Cal State LA, AAAS Program alumnus Kyle Tsukahira in a class taught by Ping Yao, AAAS Program Director. Students helped to create and expand CSAs (community-supported agriculture) throughout Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley with the hope that they would eventually expand their efforts into Cal State LA. These CSA boxes delivered fresh, culturally relevant produce to individuals and organizations with API-specific produce from API farmers.

The first class (fall 2015) established a garden with the Alhambra Unified School District. The class of close to forty students worked with Alhambra Unified School District, which tried unsuccessfully in the past to build a school garden. Due to the lack of funding, efforts varied from school to school in the district and were often unsuccessful. The Cal State LA class worked with the district under the coordination of director of Special Education because the garden was meant to serve able-bodied and disabled students. Alhambra High School, one of five high schools in the district, had a pressing need for a school garden for its special education classes, which lacked a structured space for students' daily exercises and a quiet space for students that needed less stimuli in the classroom. The garden would also serve the needs of their culinary arts class.

As the class proceeded with instruction in history, the insertion of service-learning seemed just that. However tenuous, the class seemed to make a connection to the service-learning aspect along with the curriculum. The amount of legal forms was unexpected. Much of the pa-z-trick and university. To avoid costly fingerprinting and paperwork for Cal State LA students (required for all districts), the best option was that Cal State LA students worked on three consecutive Saturdays (often these days were ten to twelve hours long) to complete a garden.

With a budget of \$2,000 through an Instructionally Related Activities (IRA) grant from the university, the garden required additional moneys and goods. That first year, more than twenty-five letters were walked to corporate businesses to solicit in-kind donation of materials to the school garden because of insufficient funds to purchase wood and plants for the garden. Corporations, especially chain stores, have

separate budgets determined by individual stores and, thus, rather than appealing to the larger corporate structure, each store gave discretionary donations. Moreover, corporate headquarters did not honor outside solicitations. Orchards Supply and Hardware was the only organization that generously agreed to assist. Its in-kind donations made up for the lack of materials such as soil, tools, and a shed. In addition, community members who walked by or had heard through word of mouth of our endeavor also offered donated materials to build the school garden. With a longer standing relationship with San Gabriel Nursery, one of the oldest Japanese American nurseries, we used the remaining funds to buy plants and materials that were recognizable to a primarily API and Latinx student body through a credit system, which we continue to use.

To make the space accessible, garden boxes were created so that high schoolers of all levels of accessibility had use of the space. We followed accessible facilities guides through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The garden boxes also served another practical purpose. Because soil testing was an expensive and lengthy procedure, the garden boxes allowed us to curtail this procedure (California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2018). On the last day of the work, students with special needs and their families were invited to the planting of culturally relevant produce in their new garden. The superintendent had a ribbon ceremony to mark the opening of the garden in a small ceremony. In addition, the largest Chinese-language newspaper in southern California also covered the event because of the API focus of the garden.

A divided class, between those who chose service-learning and those that continued with a traditional classroom model, was untenable. The class was realigned so that rather than a tacked-on service-learning feature, a new course was proposed. Alongside curriculum changes, the needs of APIOPA and the class shifted. The relationship between the nonprofit and university required more resources than APIOPA was able to provide and a new community partnership was needed to continue service-learning. As the university shifted from a quarter system into a semester system, AAAS received approval for additional classes that focused on service-learning. Few other courses offered the designated civic learning class with a specific focus on social justice, food insecurity, race, gender, class, and sexuality within the API community and specifically the San Gabriel Valley.

Many students that entered the class had little familiarity in food justice or Asian American studies but were interested in the title of the

course. Given the amount of reading and fieldwork required, surprisingly, the class was full, with thirty-eight students. The semester system (fifteen weeks as opposed to the ten-week quarter system) offered longer instructional time to discuss the many contemporary issues related to race, the environment, and food access. The first ten weeks addressed the “academics” of food justice and food access. For the remaining weeks, students began an in-depth plan for approaching the service-learning component. Fieldwork was scheduled with more time options, due to student work and academic obligations, rather than the hectic three Saturdays of the last garden project.

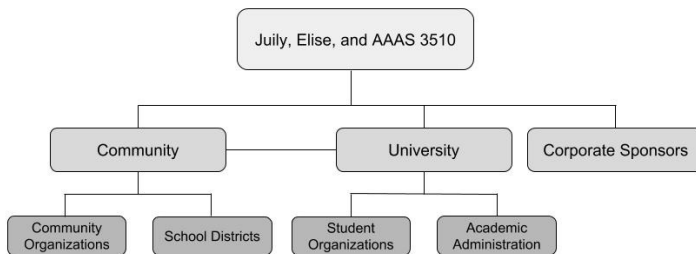
The second garden, designated at Mark Keppel High School, enlisted the help of student club organizations at Cal State LA, initiated by students of the class who were engineering majors. As the project had spread through word of mouth, student engineer organizations volunteered to help build and design garden boxes, benches, and other structures requiring construction and use of tools and machinery. The plan for the semester-long collaboration between Cal State LA and Alhambra Unified School District utilized previous protocol for paperwork. However, a significant modification was made by involving the Center for Engagement, Service, and Public Good at Cal State LA. The center streamlined the administrative relationship between the university and the school system. Rather than the instructor filing paperwork that established the relationship between the university and the community partner, the Center for Engagement worked with school district administrators to establish and formalize the collaboration. Ultimately, the success of the community-based projects relied on relationships built across several agencies.

Establishing Relationships

Linda Tuhiwai Smith states, “Insider research has to be ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research. It also needs to be humble. It needs to be humble because the researcher belongs to the community as a member with a different set of roles and relationships, status and position” (Smith, 1999, 139). Smith’s work on how to frame the terms of involvement in community and research, for those of us who are part of the communities, requires more reflexivity (Matsumoto, 1996). While being part of the community helped to navigate some administrative processes, the processes were never side-stepped, overlooked, or shirked. For this reason, the model for community involvement is reproducible through a transparent chart of these

relationships, with the onus to establish these relationships on individual professors. There were three key partnerships—university, community, and corporate—in building our garden. At the university, the most important factor was university buy-in from administrators and students. Depending on the organizational culture of the university, this could include the chair, dean, facilities director, risk management, and a center of engagement (administrative). We found it was crucial to incorporate student governance to bridge the gap between academic and student involvement. Within the community, educational/ district partnership within district administration and individual schools (principal and teachers) were needed to proceed with projects. Most of our projects also included nonprofits to bring closer association with organizations seeking to do the same work. Corporate sponsorship, if feasible or desired, is the least critical component in a community service-learning program. While useful because of funding, they are not integral. The following is a simple chart detailing the major stakeholders involved with establishing school gardens.

Figure 4. Stakeholders



Diminished Funding

In the fall of 2017, we found ourselves with significantly reduced funding but still with a growing demand for more community gardens at various school districts, in addition to Alhambra Unified School District. The university IRA board allocated a budget of \$1,000 for the class, half of the previous year's funding. In addition to the problem of money, there was also a consensus among students that the greatest need was at Cal State LA. The need for a student garden coupled

with the growing awareness of food insecurity meant that our efforts and concentration shifted to an inward model. While the class agreed that a different direction was desired, there was still the problem of money to establish a culturally relevant garden at Cal State LA. The greatest issue was a site on campus to direct our efforts. Rather than navigating through district policies for creating gardens, we had to undertake university protocol to establish an on-site university garden.

The Anna Bing Arnold Children's Center (ABACC), an offsite early education school part of the Cal State LA campus, presented the class with a solution of a campus site. ABACC had attempted to create a garden with little funding or structural support, such as an irrigation system for sustainable stewardship. In addition, the site was problematic as it was located on a hill, four feet above ground level. However, the greatest problem was the institutional support in the form of facilities management and infrastructure access to the site to make it accessible. In practical terms, the site needed campus administrative approval. Whereas for school districts, the prerequisite was a steward for the garden once completed, university facilities needed university-wide approval. As evidenced from the following narrative, this proved to be a minor first step through a labyrinth of administrative hurdles.

ABACC provides priority childcare and pre-K education to the children of currently enrolled Cal State LA students (Cal State LA, 2018). When space is available, faculty and staff of Cal State LA and the larger community are accommodated. As a lab school, ABACC trains more than two hundred students within the School of Education through a combination of work studies, internships, and classroom observations (*ibid.*). The center wanted a learning garden. This site proved to be the best way to concentrate our efforts because of its location; it is a space that is part of the university campus, but also it retained its own semi-independence.

Because we lacked money, we attempted to reimagine what funding could look like if not from the traditional IRA funds we relied upon. Elise resourcefully looked to student government organizations to fund a garden for students by students. Having been charged with the task of furthering student interests, ideally, student governance would fund this garden because it addressed a rising student concern about hunger and nutrition while encouraging student engagement through community involvement. Elise approached Cal State LA's Associated Students, Incorporated (ASI) for funding. ASI is 501(c)3 non-profit organization that operates as an auxiliary service on campus with

a budget of approximately \$1.3 million (Associated Students Incorporated, 2018). ASI is a mixture of elected and appointed student representatives for all university-wide decisions for and about student programs (*ibid.*). Because ABACC primarily served the students of Cal State LA, we felt they were the most appropriate source of funding for a project that tackled an accumulation of current student needs.

As a member of ASI, Elise was aware that ASI was looking for areas to distribute a surplus of funds, totaling \$133,376 (*ibid.*), for student programs. In addition, because ASI is subject to the bylaws of the university, projects needed vetting by multiple agencies including Risk Management, the vice president for facilities, and the facilities director. Receiving funding from ASI would allow us to demonstrate that our project had support from the student body and could lead to other sources of funding for future service-learning food justice programs in AAAS.

We submitted a \$10,000 request for funding to build a learning garden at the ABACC based on the needs of the center. The proposal needed to clearly stipulate the benefits to the students, ASI as an organization, the campus as a whole, and the community we were serving. Despite university aims to become a service-based university, there was a lack of direct institutional financial support to service-learning projects, as demonstrated by our limited funding in the fall of 2017. Moreover, the proposal for funds from ASI served a distinctly deliberate purpose; if ASI funded the project, it would not only be tackling food insecurity on campus but it would also be making a statement in support of service-learning, thus acknowledging the need for institutional support but also establishing its place at the forefront of funding service-learning projects as not just a top-down policy but also one that garnered the support of the student body.

The financial needs of ABACC were greater than previous gardens. To secure the total amount of needed funds, we applied for multiple grants. California State Student Association (CSSA) Greenovation Fund was a Cal State systemwide grant vetted by individual site presidents and then through a CSU-wide student committee. The full amount of \$10,000 was requested from CSSA because, at the time, we were unsure of the status of our ASI funding due to the internal politics of the student organization. Ultimately, it was also strategic because, even funded, both grant sources would only supply a partial amount to ensure more support for more programs. Unlike ASI, the Greenovation Fund sought projects that promoted innovative sustainability as a Cal

State-wide student-led policy. Because most of the projects funded by CSSA were extracurricular projects proposed by environmental student organizations, our project's tie to curriculum, service-learning, and the community stood out as innovative amongst other applicants.

Lastly, we needed a community-based fund that would also tie in our mission for university and community collaboration. To this end, Chinatown's Firecracker Fund, a community-based grant for nutrition and health for the API community supported through its annual Firecracker Run was a perfect match, if funded. In the past, it had supported community partnerships and programs affiliated with AAAS. AAAS's community-based gardens were perfectly aligned with the organization's goals and mission. We received \$18,750 in funding: \$1,000 from the university IRA grant, \$6,000 from ASI, \$500 from the ASI President's discretionary fund, \$6,250 from CSSA, and \$5,000 from the Firecracker Fund (this amount does not include labor costs donated by contractors and university facilities personnel). In addition, another student of the Food Justice Club applied for an external grant that received \$1,000 to supplement the ADA portion of the garden. This substantial amount of money would allow for a learning garden that encompassed several of ABACC's needs in a large 30 × 100 foot space: a culturally relevant raised-bed garden, a dry river bed to mimic the Arroyo Seco, a sensory path, a California native garden, drought-tolerant foliage, pergola for shading, gates, steps, a security gate, and seating for children three to five years of age.

Successes and Challenges

Building a garden involved much more than just plants, seeds, and dirt. As we reached the conclusion of the project, the results were largely successful when viewed through financial results: the ABACC garden project received almost \$20,000 in funding and was completed in April 2018. While the ultimate completion of these projects may paint a rosy process of uniformed steps with the eventual establishment of a garden, much of this process was neither transparent nor gradual. In short, the lack of transparency in undertaking campus-focused projects proved to be the most difficult in attempting to implement a service-learning course.

Our unfamiliarity (as an undergraduate student and lecturer) with the university fiscal and administrative process made each step following the submission of proposals a Sisyphean task. First, the funding requests from ASI with its own culture of procedures and policies

were marred by internal and personality conflicts. After submitting the request for funding to ASI, we were involved in innumerable conversations with multiple administrative offices including ASI board members, ASI executives, and university administration about steps that were not clearly defined in the original requests for applications and proposals. The internal politics of student and university organizations exacerbated issues beyond the scope of the project. For example, the fiscal board left our project out of the budget draft to die within the committee due to internal personality conflicts. Ironically, the internal politics of the student organization mimicked the university administration.

Luckily, the food justice service-learning project had strong student support through ABACC, the current class, and former students. After learning that funding for the program was at risk, current and past student participants of CSULA and parents of the children of ABACC gathered at the final board of directors' meeting en masse to address the importance of the program and how it contributed to their academic and personal lives. A meeting that often only sees limited student attendance, ASI's last meeting had more than sixty students packed into a small boardroom to voice their support and ask for consideration for the project. The board decided to reallocate \$6,000 to our project because of the show of support by students.

An unintended outcome of the project and service-learning program, students observed and participated in student governance. One of the goals of service-learning programs is to create more engaged citizens by teaching students the importance of participation in the community and local government (Jacoby, 1996, 21). Students demonstrated this by showing up to the final ASI board meeting and sharing their opinions, giving testimonies on how community-based learning influenced career choices for some students. Service-learning is engaged citizenship. A successful service-learning course instills a better understanding of the local community and its needs by allowing students to utilize the skills they have obtained in the classroom. Service to the local community, establishing relationships with community partners, and visible outcomes means that their investment is not only academic but also measured in real terms in the form of a garden that students can and do revisit.

Our second misstep occurred with the lack of familiarity with university power structures at the faculty and administrative level. The relative smallness of the Department of Asian/Asian American Stud-

ies meant there was little guidance on university procedures. In addition, because few instructors have experience navigating the university infrastructure for service-learning, there are simply no guidelines nor training to tackle even the most basic of steps. For example, an unwritten protocol of university administration is including officials, through all chains of command, in e-mail communications. Because we had not met many of the individuals involved, we unwittingly excluded administrative officers. In doing so, we were committing administrative foibles embedded in unstated university culture. Our e-mails were read, at best, as failures to follow proper procedure and in some cases as a desire to outmaneuver proper channels for project implementation. Rather than omission or deliberate evasion of university policies or communications, our mistakes were due to inexperience with university chains of command and ignorance of the culture of university communications.

While not obvious, a successful outcome that emerged from working with various university administration is the formalization of AAAS's service-learning projects. The necessity of relationships pushed us to work closer with the university administration such as Risk Management and Facilities to form ongoing partnerships. Moreover, the formalization of service-learning programs through an ethnic studies department means a clearer path for other classes to become successful service-learning courses. Tasks such as securing funding and relationships, assessing risk, and establishing frameworks are part and parcel to community relationships. However, these can and should be mitigated through transparent protocols. Creating a much more secure path to these relationships through the university allows faculty members and students to place their focus on curriculum, project planning, and strengthening their relationship with the community, rather than navigating the secret passageways of the university system (Bingle and Hatcher, 2000, 283–284). As a result of this project, AAAS created its own guidelines to support any future projects that deal with service-learning in food justice.

Relying on student organizations to continuously fund service-learning projects is not sustainable because it would require faculty to apply annually for funding, compete against prioritized student-proposed programs, and rely on funds that vary based on how much the current student board decides to allocate for programming. Furthermore, an ASI board member pointed out that approving funding for this project would set a precedent for departments to rely on student funds for service-learning rather than look to institutional support. This

challenging and time-consuming process of obtaining funds to carry out a service-learning project is one of the largest roadblocks to service-learning on our campus. The financial burden of service-learning lies on the faculty (for seeking funding and additional time without course time releases) and students (with full academic and professional workloads) committed to its implementation.

Figure 5. Garden Before and After (top); Alhambra High School (bottom) ABACC



Source: Photo courtesy of Juily Phun

Continuities, Disjunctures, and Takeaways

Service-learning, when planned well, positively influences students and community organizations. Even without a manicured plan, students have had great learning outcomes despite administrative hiccups and faculty oversights. Service-learning courses are a space to challenge traditional pedagogies especially in regard to power relations in the classroom. Service-learning is a social justice pedagogy because its goals are to include students in tackling issues that affect their communities and encourage students to utilize their privilege as educated members of society to address them. Due to the nature of service-learning courses, many utilize the multicultural education critical pedagogy model. Susan Cipolle states, “its [critical pedagogy] fundamental goal is to examine the educational system critically and work to transform the dominant social and cultural values in the interest of a more equitable democracy” (Cipolle, 2010, 6). This often is reflected through disassembling traditional power relations between faculty and students in the classroom and shifting toward student-centered learning (*ibid.*, 6–7).

The effort to establish culturally relevant gardens as a service-learning course continues to rely on dependable sources of funding and willingness of faculty and students to navigate through the labyrinth of the university system, a task not for the faint of heart. The needs of the San Gabriel Valley community, our community, continues to grow despite diminished funding. This current year’s focus on the university at the ABACC, though eventually a successful collaboration, has a terminal date. Our strategy to obtain funding and maneuver through the university for the ABACC garden helped us understand the operations of the university for future projects. Through sharing this process, we hope others can avoid the pitfalls within their own university culture to conduct a successful service-learning course. We believe in the transformative nature of service-learning to address food and environmental justice in the API community. As the San Gabriel Valley continues to grow, a longer-term goal of sustainable service-learning, particularly in service to the “missing minority” remains a priority of the food justice class and of the Department of Asian/Asian American Studies at Cal State LA. At a time of diminished funding, the question is not whether this kind of program is sustainable but *how*.

Acknowledgments

We thank all our community partners for helping us create API gardens throughout Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley.

Notes

- ¹ While our department is Asian/Asian Americans Studies (an appellation from twenty-five years ago), in the effort to also address the diversity of the student population at Cal State LA, along with the students in the San Gabriel Valley, the class was renamed API (Asian, Pacific Islander) Food Justice to encompass both the students we serve and the students that join the class.
- ² Historically, the Asian American community was often left behind in public health campaigns while being the target of public and city officials in efforts to rid itself of the “blight” of Chinatown.
- ³ Pimentel and Horikoshi’s idea that API are the missing minority rather than the model minority is especially relevant in this essay.
- ⁴ President William Covino’s strategic plan included civic engagement as a general education requirement for all students. To date, AAAS 3510 is one of seventy-five upper-division courses (many of which are cross-listed) offered by the university; five of which are taught by AAAS. However, civic learning (which is a large blanket term for any kind of course that may deal with community engagement, writ broadly) is often conflated at Cal State LA with service-learning (which requires engagement with an outside community organization).
- ⁵ The credit system we established with San Gabriel Nursery allows us to purchase materials but pay at a later date as the university requires paperwork and time to pay for services and goods. San Gabriel Nursery generously allowed us to get what we needed first while waiting for payment processing with the university. This is something impossible with corporate suppliers as AAAS is neither a contractor nor business with established credit.
- ⁶ Numerous studies have documented the levels of soil contamination throughout the San Gabriel. Because the western part of the region lies between the 10, 210, 605, 60, and 710 freeways, soil and air contamination remain a challenge for the area. See California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, 2018.
- ⁷ ABACC was the first children’s center established in the CSU system to care for the children of Cal State LA students in 1968.
- ⁸ The amount starting at the beginning of the semester was \$120,854. The total amount of available fund eventually became \$133,376 after additional calculations were made closer to the end of the semester.
- ⁹ Risk Management is a department within universities that mitigates any exposure to liability or loss for the university. Facilities is another department within the university that deals with anything related to university grounds and facilities management. To the best of our knowledge, most universities have these departments within the university structure.
- ¹⁰ To date, AAAS at Cal State LA has only one tenure-track faculty member (Director) and has not had any hires for the department.

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