

2025-2026

Asian American, Asian, And Pacific Islander (AAAPI) Center Annual Report



AAAPI Center

Since its official opening in September 2024 in Room 205 of Burritt Library, the Center has been staffed by a graduate assistant, student workers, and volunteers and has served as a hub for students, student organizations, classes, and campus events. Under the leadership of Co-Directors Dr. Julie Kim and Dr. Nghi Thai, the Center has provided academic and cultural programming and fostered collaborations with Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community organizations.

Student Organizations

The following AAPI student organizations collaborated with the Center during the year. Their involvement included attending weekly Center meetings, assisting with event planning, and volunteering at Center events:

- Asian American and Pacific Islander Association
- South Asian Student Association
- K-Pop Dance Committee
- Filipino Student Association



Yein Cho, a Graduate Assistant and a graduate student in Psychological Science, stated:

Being in a new country and trying to find my own path toward a future I could not yet see, I cannot really explain my college experience without talking about the AAAPI Center. For a long time, I had hoped that our campus would have an Asian center. When the AAAPI Center was finally established and I had the opportunity to work there as a graduate assistant, I remember being so happy that I finally had a place where I could share "my story," and a place that felt like "my place" and "my space."

The AAAPI Center was an open space where students, faculty, the broader university community, and our local community could come together, connect, and share their knowledge and experiences. Being part of the Center gave me opportunities to connect with diverse people and to use what I learned in my classes in a real setting, but it also gave me experiences that I could not have gained in a classroom. I learned how to communicate and collaborate, take responsibility, think through challenges, and turn ideas into something meaningful. More than anything, these experiences helped me discover what I enjoy, what I am capable of, and what I want to pursue in the future.

The people I met through the Center became an important part of my life. We came from different backgrounds and had different experiences, but we came to understand and appreciate the many cultures and stories within the AAAPI community. Somewhere along the way, we became friends, colleagues, mentors, and family. The Center gave me not only opportunities to learn and grow, but also a sense of connection and belonging that made my college experience so much more meaningful. I am grateful to have been part of a community where we could share our stories, support one another, and celebrate our cultures and the community we have built together.

Highlights for Fall 2025

Open House with Tea and Coffee on October 22, 2025

with Dr. Natuko Takemae (Japanese Matcha), Dr. Tyler Kynn (Turkish tea), Dr. Mei Zongxiang (Chinese tea), and the AAAP Center staff (Thai Boba, Korean tea, and Vietnamese coffee)



AAPI Community Series: From Community to Capitol: Engaging AAPI Voices to Shape Connecticut State Policy with Megan Baker on November 13, 2025



Megan Baker, Lead Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Policy Analyst for the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO)

AAPI Faculty & Leader Series: Dean Jayanthi Kandiah and Dr. Helen Abadiano on November 18, 2025



Dean Jayanthi Kandiah

College of Health & Rehabilitation
Sciences



Dr. Helen Abadiano

Professor, Literacy, Elementary, & Early
Childhood Education
Interim Associate Dean, School of
Education

Henna & Origami on December 3, 2025



Henna creations by Ruqiya Rasool of the Henna Lounge & Blue Devil Origami
Workshop presented by the Japan Society of Greater Hartford

Highlights for Spring 2026

Lunar New Year Celebration Week, February 17-19, 2026

Day 1- Day 3 – Displays of cultural outfits and artifacts



Day 1 - Language Café with Korean School of Greater Hartford, The Japan Society of Greater Hartford, and students



Day 2 – Games of Luck & Fortune with the Boston Nakamaro Karuta Club and students



Day 3 - Fashion Walk with AAPI Chorus, The Japan Society of Greater Hartford, Candyce Scott (Alderwoman at the City of New Britain), and students



AAPI Faculty & Leader Series:

“Living in the In-Between: Autoethnographic Explorations of Hybrid Asian American Identity” with Dr. Stephanie Young on March 25, 2026



Dr. Stephanie Young, Professor of Communication Studies and Director of the Basic Course at the University of Southern Indiana

AAPI Community Series: “A Perspective: The Co-Evolution of Ecological Conservation (Mālama ‘Āina) and Lei Culture on Hawai’i Island” with Julia Meurice on April 8, 2026



Asian American, Native Hawaiian, & Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Festival on April 30, 2026

with Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies, East Asian Studies, International Student & Scholar Services, Center for International Education, AAPI 110 and COMM 417 students, Asian American and Pacific Islander Association, Filipino Student Association, K-Pop Dance Committee, South Asian Student Association, AAPI Chorus, Boston Nakamaro Karuta Club, Brush calligraphy with Dr. Guan, Japan Society of Greater, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) CT, New Britain Museum of American Art, Philippine Nurses Association State of Connecticut, Irene Pham, M. Clark Wen, Beacon Craft Studio, mintyspoon atelier, yarnshaper (Tiffany Hsu)



Exhibit at the New Britain Public Library to celebrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month during May 2026



Thank you!

The AAAPICenter sincerely thanks the entire Central community for their incredible support. We also extend our gratitude to our staff—Yein Cho, Michelle Silarack, Patricia V. Avisan, Neelia Bergeron, Carmelo Arroyo, Mickal Holmes—our volunteer, Gian Nikolai S. Baun, as well as Dr. Natsuko Takemae and Dr. Matthew Chudnow for their invaluable contributions.

Contact us!

Come see us in Room 205 of the Burritt Library!

You can also reach us at 860-832-0036 or AAAPICenter@ccsu.edu.

Website: <https://www.ccsu.edu/asian-american-asian-and-pacific-islander-center>

Instagram: [@aaapicenter_ccsu](https://www.instagram.com/aaapicenter_ccsu)

Published in October 2026