

Working on the HCAP undergraduate research assistant (URA) project has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my college journey. Our group collaborated to create a career Readiness program focused on supporting Asian American undergraduates at Hunter College. I assisted by developing interview questions, interviewing students, and thinking through various components of the program. These experiences helped me develop qualitative research skills and gave me an in-depth understanding of the challenges students face when it comes to academic and career decisions.

One of the significant aspects of the project was listening to the stories shared by the students we interviewed. As a first-generation College student, I saw parts of myself in their experiences. Many of them described similar experiences I have had, like not knowing how to talk to their families about choosing a major or feeling nervous about reaching out to professors or mentors. Conducting these interviews helped me to practice asking thoughtful, open-ended questions, taking effective notes, and identifying common themes. It also gave me space to reflect on my own path. I realized how much my cultural background, family, and values influence the way I make academic and career decisions.

Furthermore, this project provided a valuable opportunity to work collaboratively with my research team. Throughout the semester, we shared different perspectives, gave each other constructive feedback, and had open discussions about what ideas might work and what might not. Together, we brainstormed activities aligned with specific learning outcomes, focusing on how to make the program practical and relevant for students. Through this process, I also learned a lot myself. I gained a deeper understanding of career exploration, became more comfortable sharing my ideas, and contributed to group discussions with increased confidence. These resources will also guide me as I begin to explore potential graduate programs and consider which area of study I might pursue for my master's degree.

This project helped me grow both academically and personally. It gave me the confidence to trust my abilities, build meaningful connections, and made me more certain about the kind of work I want to do in the future.