

Hello!

During my journey through the AAPI URA research program, I experienced a profound shift in my understanding of the Asian American experience. Today, let's dig into a personal journey that surprised me: the depth of my family AAPI immigrant experience. ✨

No more second-hand info; News and social media are my usual go-to sources for insight about AAPI, but honestly, it's like trying to figure out the entire plot of a movie just from the trailer. But then this program introduced me to a whole new world of Asian American experiences.

Fast forward to one of the most eye-opening experiences – interviewing my sister. We share a similar life as Hong Kong immigrants, or so I thought. We share a similar life, but peeling back the layers on family values and intersectionality within the Asian American bubble was a revelation. Her views on success and college admissions turned out to be surprising. Money and well-paying jobs were recurring themes, revealing layers of social and cultural expectations, family norms, and personal goals. The interview took an unexpected turn, but that's the great thing about it. 👁️💡

The AAPI program did not stop there. Imagine this. A virtual room brings together a diverse group of students and mentors with unique perspectives on what it means to be Asian American in this world. Sharing our stories, the good, the bad, and the ugly, was a powerful experience that broke the cultural norm of hiding personal feelings. Ironically, I grew up in a culture where emotions were typically hidden, so the AAPI program became a haven for breaking the silence around mental health. Our group discussions revealed cracks in the community's mental health support system. It's time to change that narrative.

Looking back at my sister's interview, an unexpected challenge emerged. It wasn't easy to get detailed answers. This was especially true for topics where the model minority myths were not well known. This made me wonder what would happen if more people were exposed to Asian American studies. Can we change perspectives, eliminate misconceptions, and fill gaps in knowledge? Perhaps, just maybe, a deeper understanding of our history and struggles will break down the stereotypes that have persisted for far too long.

A sagacious insight came from guest talker Mike Hoa Nguyen. It's okay to be biased as an interviewer. It's about presenting the world through a particular lens: an Asian American lens. Bias can be a tool for authenticity, not something to be feared and avoided.

The AAPI URA program was a great experience, and I leave with a new sense of pride in being Asian American. The challenges, surprises, and eye-openers made it possible for me to share our stories, challenge stereotypes, bridge gaps in understanding. 🌱