

Meet Our AANAPISI Team



Principle Investigator

Faye Caronan

Faye Caronan (she/her) is an Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies and the Associate Dean for Faculty and Staff Affairs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Her research specialty is in Comparative Ethnic Studies and the study of U.S. Imperialism. Her book, *Legitimizing Empire: Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican Cultural Critique*, examines how Filipino American and U.S. Puerto Rican cultures challenge narratives of U.S. exceptionalism. Her current research examines the precarious nature of U.S. Territorial Citizenship. She has taught courses on Asian American history and contemporary experience, Ethnic Studies research methods, cultural diversity in the workplace and ethnic diversity in popular culture. She is the child of Filipino immigrants. When not on campus you might see her commuting by bike with two of her three children along for the ride.

Daranee Teng

Daranee Teng (she/her) is an educational equity researcher-practitioner, daughter of Thai-Chinese-Indonesian immigrants, and community organizer. Her work is centered on advancing equity, racial justice, and opportunities for individuals from historically marginalized communities in predominantly white spaces, including education, yoga, and wellness. Daranee brings over 18 years of experience working in the area of educational equity, both in schools and community-based organizations locally, nationally, and internationally. Daranee holds a B.A. in Spanish Language & Literature, a B.S. in Journalism, and an M.A. in Educational Policy & Practice. She is currently pursuing a doctorate from the University of Colorado Denver with a focus on culturally responsive research and evaluation methods in educational settings in urban and diverse communities. Her professional and academic interests include issues of race, class, gender, and identity in education; Critical Race Theory, AsianCrit Theory, and QuantCrit Theory. She is also a member of CU Denver's Doctoral Students of Color. Daranee is excited to be a part of the Asian American & Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) program as an Action Research Specialist Graduate Assistant. She is also a board member of Colorado Dragon Boat, an alum of Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) Nonprofit Impact fellowship, and recently completed a two-year term as a commissioner on the City & County of Denver's Asian American Pacific Islander Commission.



Action Research
Specialist

Salena Tran

During her undergraduate years she pivoted her career from healthcare to digital marketing and couldn't be happier! She has had the privilege of creating content for various brands such as DryBar, Estee Lauder, Lancome, and more.

Entering her freshman year of college back in 2018, she remembers the struggles of trying to figure out her entire life. Whether it was FAFSA, signing up for classes, or just simply finding her way into this next chapter, she remembers how difficult it was to navigate. This is why she is so excited to spend her last year here and be part of the AANAPISI program. She hopes to bring her own experience and skill set to help the AANAPISI student community at CU Denver thrive and succeed.



**Content Creation and Knowledge
Dissemination Specialist**



**Student Success
Specialist**

"Yumi" Patricia Park

During her undergraduate years, she transferred to CU Denver after studying both out-of-state and abroad. At CU Denver, she discovered the importance of community and belonging for student well-being and success. She went from feeling anonymous and isolated to feeling seen and supported. After graduation, she started working in a non-profit that served students, and unexpectedly began to focus on the AAPI population and DEI efforts. She returned to CU Denver as a graduate student in the New Directions program and also began working on campus as a graduate student assistant (first at the Center for Identity & Inclusion, and now, for AANAPISI). Her non-profit work, coursework, and AANAPISI work continue to intersect and enhance her vision for student transformation and campus renewal.

Judy Tran

Judy Tran, MPH (she/her/hers), serves as a Mental Health Specialist at ANNAPISI while also instructing public health courses and conducting research at CU Anschutz Medical Campus and CU Denver. Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Health & Behavioral Sciences at CU Denver, Judy focuses on mental health and health disparities among racial/ethnic marginalized communities with chronic diseases. Beyond her professional endeavors, she is a dedicated dancer and choreographer, serving as the Founder and Co-Director of the Colorado Korea Convention, as well as the Founder and Leader of the Royals Dance Team. Additionally, she is a choreographer to the Nguyen Thieu Buddhist Youth Association and International Dance Crew. Despite her busy schedule, Judy prioritizes self-care and enjoyment, making time for activities such as hiking, festivals, and concerts.



**Mental Health
Specialist**

Jaslyn Nguyen

Jaslyn Nguyen is an undergraduate student at CU Denver majoring in Accounting and planning to become a CPA. She has spoken as the AANAPISI student representative and was previously a Diversity Officer at the Center for Identity and Inclusion (CII) on campus. CII allowed her to work under Asian American Student Services as a Program Assistant and Peer Mentor for the Asian Student Leadership Program. Within her time at CU Denver, she has served as the President and Treasurer of the Vietnamese Student Association as well as the Public Relations Officer of Asian Student Association. Native to Colorado, she is the youngest of four where her parents and three older brothers have also graduated from CU Denver. She enjoys advocating for student success and climate sustainability. In her free time, she likes spending quality time with family and friends and trying new things such as food, music, and fashion styles. In the future, she would like to travel the world and help others reach their full potential.



Talent Management Specialist

Tara Lepale

Tara Lepale is an Undergraduate Assistant who is responsible for team communications within AANAPISI. This is her first year at CU Denver as an Undergraduate student who is currently studying Architecture with a minor in Urban Planning. Tara is of Filipino and Samoan heritage and is originally from Riverside, a city in Southern California. She graduated from Martin Luther King Jr. High School in May of 2023 where she served as the Command Master Chief of the Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Program. In her free time, Tara enjoys reading, writing, and spending time with her cousins and her kitten, Socks.



**Business Service Coordinator and
Communication Specialist**

Monica Vu

Monica is currently a digital design major at CU Denver. As a Colorado native, she enjoys watching movies, hanging out with friends, and cooking. Her favorite dishes to make are fried rice and butter chicken. She also favors horror or thriller movies, even though she gets scared easily. Monica enjoys having conversations with others and helping as much as she can. In the future, she is considering becoming a teacher at some point. However, her current plan is to design for others, whether it's for a company or freelance work.



Student Liason Specialist



Operation Management Specialist

Grace Dunlap

Grace Dunlap (she/they) is a senior biology major serving as an undergraduate assistant for AANAPISI. As an international transracial adoptee from China, Grace found a deep love and belonging within the clubs and Asian American community on campus. Since freshman year, they have dedicated much of their time to supporting the AAPI community as a past student organization president of the Council of Asian Student Leadership (CASL), and Pinoy American Student Association (PASA), and as a mentor for the Academic Success and Leadership Program (ASLP). Although they are graduating in the Spring this year, Grace hopes to aid AANAPISI for as long as she can, setting the solid groundwork for future students before she matriculates to the Anschutz Skaggs School of Pharmacy in the fall.