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Abstract

**Beyond the Margins: Navigating Settler Colonialism in Successful Pacific Islander Indigenous Higher Education Retention Models**

In 2008, after a two-year campaign led by Asian American and Pacific Islander students the UC System expanded its admissions categories to include 23 separate ethnic and racial categories under the API rubric. These include but are not limited to the separation of Pacific Islander from Asian American and disaggregating the Pacific Islander category itself. In 1997, the Office of Management and Budget passed OMB directive 15, which requires federal agencies to disaggregate Pacific Islander as a separate racial category. Although the UC system has disaggregated admissions data since 2008, UCR re-aggregates the data of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander undergraduate and graduate students. How does this re-aggregation naturalize problematic racial categories and spur questions regarding campus diversity? Furthermore, how does this affect Pacific Islander students within outreach and retention efforts? This paper is the beginning of a larger project that will analyze the creation and implementation of resiliency models that center Indigeneity within higher education. Specifically, it focuses on the Pacific Islander community and the ways in which we can incorporate a settler colonial analysis that will work to empower Pacific Islander and Native American students in higher education.