

To the community,

The Asian American Research Journal was founded in the Fall of 2020, amidst a year of reinforced stereotypes and rising violence against Asian Americans as the COVID-19 pandemic began to become embedded into everyday life. A year later, we continue to witness and experience the harm inflicted upon our communities. We have all been awaiting the day this hostility comes to an end, but with further investigation of our histories as immigrants and descendants of immigrants, we are certain that the same question has been pondered by generations of Asian Americans throughout the course of economic, legal, and social injustices they have had to endure since their arrivals: *When will things change?* Adversity seems to persist regardless of the time period. However, alongside the pain, we become more conscious and confident about our own existences and identities. As we learn more about ourselves, our families, our communities, and our histories, we grow as we assertively march onwards into our futures.

Now, with a platform to engage in and publish research, we have worked towards our second publication. Taking into great consideration the context of the global pandemic, our theme “Illuminating Lived Realities” seeks to bring light to and to validate the vast diversity of Asian American experiences. With proper attention to their lives, we debunk stereotypes, reclaim histories, and attend to our communities, breaking out of the margins in which we have been historically situated.

We are honored to have had the opportunity to put this volume forth with the guidance of the co-founders and chief editors of the AARJ’s first volume, Anh-Tu Lu, Austin Le, Gabrielle Nguyen, and Richie Chu. We also extend our thanks to the authors, designers, editors, faculty, and community members who have supported the journal the entire way through, and we cannot wait to continue seeing this academic community bloom and thrive. We especially thank the tremendous efforts of our journal-building community: Julianne Han, our executive editor, Antonia Mou, our executive editor and chief designer, and Frances Chai, our communications chair. Finally, thank you to Rachel Lee and the eScholarship team, and our warmest gratitude to our endlessly supportive faculty sponsors, Dr. Khatharya Um and Dr. Lok Siu.

Please enjoy “Illuminating Lived Realities”!

In Solidarity,
Gun Ho Moon and Yi-Shen Loo
Chief Editors 2021-2022