



the center  
for asian pacific american women

## ***Asian Pacific American Women's Leadership Institute 2018 Fellowship Class***



### ***Aerica Banks (DC Metro Area)***

Aerica Banks is a patent policy analyst in Google's DC office. In this capacity she monitors the legislative and legal patent landscape and integrates diversity initiatives into Google's patent strategy. Additionally, she is the COO of the Asian Google Network, one of Google's largest employee resource groups. She leads Google's sponsorship of [BEACON](#), the campaign to make Washington, DC the most supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in the United States. She was named a 2017 Tech Titan by Washingtonian Magazine.

Previously, she was a political appointee in the Obama Administration, worked in government relations for The Pew Charitable Trusts, and advanced environmental justice policies in Washington state. She holds a MSc in Environmental Policy from Oxford University and a BA in Environmental Studies and Public Affairs from Seattle University.



### ***Jennifer Brower (WA)***

Jennifer is a Korean adoptee who grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is currently a Faculty Lecturer with the UW School of Social Work Office of Field Education. Jennifer has a Master in Social Work from the University of Washington and Bachelor in Social Work and Spanish from Calvin College. Jennifer has worked in social work for the past 20 plus years specifically with children, immigrants and refugees, and communities of color. Jennifer has spent the last decade fighting for Asian & Pacific Islander Women's rights through organizations like the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) and API Chaya (formally API Women and Family Safety Center) with a special emphasis on human trafficking and reproductive justice issues. In her free time she likes to try new restaurants, travel, scuba dive, and hang out with her dog Genie.



## *Laura Cansicio (GA)*

Laura's latest adventure is serving as Sponsorship Director at Atlanta Habitat for Humanity where she leads a team in resourcing the organization's mission to transform lives and neighborhoods. Passionate about public service, Laura served under a member of Congress in Los Angeles then moved to NYC to earn an MPA from SIPA at Columbia University. After that she became a Public Diplomacy Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok. Post-State Department, she found a new calling in fundraising and has worked for small to large non-profits in progressive development roles, including at CARE USA, RTI International and a non-profit housed within the NYC Mayor's Office. You can tell Laura about your latest business idea and she will find ways to map, fundraise, budget, and translate your dreams into a concrete plan. She takes great pride in the global network she has built across her 15+ year career.

Laura lives in the South but carries a bit of California everywhere she goes. She is originally from Chula Vista and her friends call her Mexipino. She is proud of her immigrant parents and studied the Filipino farm worker movement as part of her undergraduate honors thesis. Laura speaks Thai and is currently re-learning Spanish. She is raising a five-year old and lives in a Craftsman from the 1920s. She likes to cook, write travel reviews, and host parties in her spare time, but can easily be distracted by how she can help you achieve your goals.



## *Grace Choi (DC Metro Area)*

Grace is the Associate Director for Global Gender Policy and Advocacy at Save the Children. Previously, she served as Policy Advisor in the Secretary's Office on Global Women's Issues at the U.S. Department of State. Before that role, she served as Staff Assistant in the White House Liaison's Office at the U.S. Department of State. She is a Member of the Council of Korean Americans, a NetKAL Fellow, and served on the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership's (CAPAL) Board of Directors as Vice Chair for Programs. Prior to her political appointment at the Department of State, Grace worked for the Council of Korean Americans (CKA), the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) in Congresswoman Judy Chu's office, the Presidential Inauguration Committee (PIC), President Obama's 2012 Presidential Campaign, the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Refugee Affairs Division. She holds a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University and a Bachelor of Arts from Boston College.



### *Jennifer A. Cruz (WA)*

Jennifer is an attorney at law and sole proprietor of The Cruz Law Office. For over twenty-one years she has practiced in the area of indigent criminal defense. She also serves as a Pro-Tem Judge for King County District Court. For the last sixteen years Ms. Cruz has been a member of the conflict attorney panel for the King County Department of Public Defense. Prior to this she was a staff attorney for Society of Counsel Representing Accused Persons and for The Northwest Defenders Association. She is a second generation Filipino American born and raised in Seattle's Rainier Valley. Ms. Cruz graduated from the University of Washington in 1993 with a Bachelors of Arts Degree in English and she earned her Juris Doctor from Seattle University School of Law in 1996. Ms. Cruz currently is a member of the Washington State Bar Association's Diversity and Inclusion Committee, she is a board member and serves as secretary for the Filipino Lawyers of Washington, she is a member of the National Filipino American Lawyers Association where she serves as co-chair for the women's affinity network, she is a member of the Diversity Task Force Panel for the Washington Association of Criminal Defense, and she is a parent representative for the Seattle Public Schools Ethnic Studies Task Force.



### *Huong Nguyen (NM)*

Huong is a recent immigrant, born and raised in Hanoi, Vietnam. She came to Albuquerque, NM along with her little son to join her husband in 2005. She received her master degree in International Peace Studies from Notre Dame University and her master degree in Public Administration from the University of New Mexico. Since joining New Mexico Asian Family Center (NMAFC) early 2011 she has had the opportunities to work with marginalized Asian immigrants and their families which helps to deepen her understanding about the vulnerabilities and struggles facing the community as well as their courage, strengths, and resiliency to weather through and thrive to make America their home. It is her belief that community engagement, building and organizing as well as collaboration and teamwork are essential to effect social change and cultural shift, and achieve social justice for all. Huong enjoys cooking, swimming, gardening and traveling with her two adorable sons and husband and loves community gatherings.



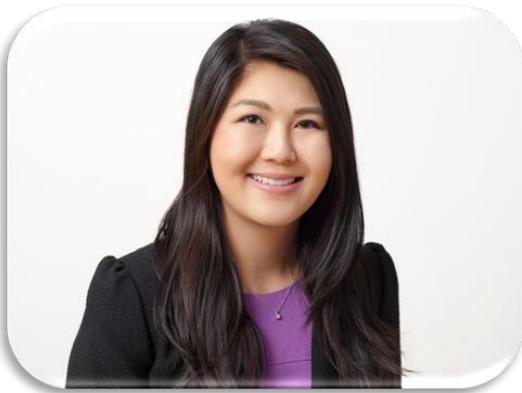
## *Song Seto (CA)*

Song hails from Los Angeles, and is an APAWLI enthusiast! She looks forward to meeting and connecting with new people. Song would like to use this platform to explore the dynamics of being her whole self, being everything she can – that’s magical, understand the forces at play, and understand how her sub-conscious might be leading her astray.

Song is a newly minted MBA grad from Columbia Business School, London Business School, and HKU. She worked with a Columbia professor on a curriculum to educate NYC prisoners in entrepreneurship, finance, and negotiations including how to deal with the cultural and organizational dynamics that come into play in prison and the outside world.

Her interest lies within the intersection of technology and entrepreneurship, fintech, and turnarounds. Trained as a strategist, Song applied to her Global Business Assignment in Cape Town, South Africa, to provide insights to an NGO on an external change management problem. As a result, she’d traveled to 18 countries in 15 months and would like to travel to Cuba before American capitalism takes over and backpack the Pacific Crest Trail.

Song stays best by diverse and constant reading habits; active and probing conversations with interesting people; trying something new, pursuing the arts, practicing mindful meditation, Pilates, yoga (kundalini and hatha), and wonderful bouts of daily daydreaming! To end on a high note, Barbara Streisand once sang, “People who need people are the luckiest people in the world.”



## *Tiffany Siu (CA)*

Tiffany is a Product Marketing Manager at Google and leads marketing for Google Optimize 360, part of the Google Analytics 360 Suite. In this role, Tiffany is focused on developing compelling and engaging product content that drives customer acquisition. Previously, Tiffany was a Senior Account Manager on Google’s Large Customer Sales team, advising large business-to-business advertisers on their media investment with Google.

Tiffany serves as the Chair of the Asian Google Network (AGN). As Chair, Tiffany oversees all strategy and programming for AGN’s 10 offices and nearly 4,000 members in the United States. Under Tiffany’s leadership, AGN has launched programs such as the AGN Executive Coaching Program to tackle the “Bamboo Ceiling” and the annual AGNFest to connect and educate Googlers about the contributions from the AAPI community. Tiffany has a bachelor’s degree in economics and sociology from New York University.



## *Diana Yu (DC Metro Area)*

Diana serves as the Chief of Staff and Acting Executive Director for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In this capacity, Diana oversees daily operations and leads the team during transition.

Prior to this role, Diana was an educational program specialist with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education. She specialized in monitoring state educational agencies' management of special education programs with an emphasis on fiscal systems. She served as an expert in the areas of discipline and fiscal systems and also completed a detail at the Initiative. She also chaired the planning process for the annual OSEP

Leadership Conference for three years which was a gathering of national, state, and local leaders in the field of special education.

Previously, Diana was a special education teacher who taught students with disabilities. She also held leadership roles including mathematics department chairperson and technology lead teacher. In these roles she helped transform the teaching practices at her school by training colleagues on ways to innovatively provide classroom accommodations and modifications to curricula. Diana also has extensive international educational experiences through short term trips to Mexico, Korea, and Kenya.

Diana received her Bachelor of Science degree cum laude in Psychology and Master of Education degree magna cum laude in Special Education from George Mason University. She is currently working on her Doctoral degree at the George Washington University in the Leaders for System Change program.