Inclusion and Acceptance

At Sacramento State, Tranh Pham says she feels accepted as she is—a first-generation student who identifies as Queer.

A small boat with Vietnamese refugees rose and fell among the swells of the Gulf of Thailand. Huddled among them, 3-year-old Tranh Pham nestled into her mother’s torso.

Pham, who is now a graduate student at Sacramento State, says one of the things she remembers most is feeling lost as she ventured out of the refugee camp in Thailand and headed to America.

Pham and her family fled Vietnam as political refugees. Her father, who fought with the Americans, wanted to protect his children’s futures. “My parents both valued education, and that’s why they decided to flee Vietnam,” she said.

As a Vietnamese refugee growing up in Kansas, Pham says she often felt like she didn’t fit in at Sacramento State, she found a community that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and acceptance. She feels valued and accepted as she is, a first-generation student who identifies as Queer.

“That statement that says, ‘Redefine the possible’ really rings true to me,” she said. “Because I didn’t think I could do this and getting here made me feel that anything is possible. Not only is it possible that I can be here at Sac State, but I can also grow as an individual, as a student, and a member of the campus community.”

On campus, Pham has served in multiple roles at the University Library, and the Centers for Diversity and Inclusion, including the Women’s Resource Center and the PRIDE Center. In 2020, she was nominated for the Sacramento State Women of Influence and the National Student Employee of the Year awards. She has dedicated herself to ensure that all students “feel like they belong and are affirmed.”

Pham hopes the On the Rise campaign will provide additional philanthropic support to bolster student services so more Sacramento State students can find their way and feel supported as they pursue their degrees.

“If we want to give everyone a chance to access higher education and achieve the American dream, we have to support student centers like the ones at Sac State,” she said.

“They equalize the educational experience and help students of color, of low economic status, different gender identities, and different races all have access to the same right to knowledge, so they can be part of this great nation. The Centers help affirm that every student belongs.”

ABOUT ON THE RISE

The goal of the $225 million On the Rise campaign is to amplify Sacramento State’s impact in the region, the state, and the world by doubling our current level of private support. The campaign has three priorities: supporting students through increased financial aid and student programs; advancing knowledge through innovative learning approaches; and strengthening the larger Sacramento community through diverse, engaged, and impactful teaching and research.

On the Rise campaign is committed to uplifting generations of people in an equitable and sustainable way.

For more information about On the Rise, please contact the Campaign Office at campaign@csus.edu.

Online: csus.edu/campaign