Unite, a summit to critique the social structures that keep Southeast Asian American students from being successful will be held at Highline on Oct. 29.

Resources for academic help, opportunities to speak about the struggles that Asian American students face, and highlights of achievements will be presented. The event will take place in Building 8 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

“Thirty-two percent of students in Washington state have a bachelor’s degree and only 9 percent of that is [Asian American/Pacific Islander] students,” said Ekkarath Sisavatdy, director of Highline’s Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institute.

AAPI students stands for Asian American/Pacific Islander students. Pacific Islanders tend to get lumped with Asian American students as having the same issues of not being able to find resources specific to their needs and being seen as uneducated, Sisavatdy said.

Highline is the most diverse two-year institution in the state, with 70 percent students of color and more than 20 percent of whom are AAPI. AANAPISI is a program funded by a five-year $1.5 million grant from the federal government. It’s goal is to increase the rates of graduation for AAPI students.

“We strive to bring equity,” Sisavatdy said.

AANAPISI sponsors summits throughout the year that focus on specifics in the AAPI community. Uprise was held earlier this month on Oct. 8 for Native American Pacific Islander students. It drew hundreds of students from throughout south King County.

This upcoming summit, Unite, will focus on conflicts specific to Southeast Asian students, which include students from The Philippines, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam and will provide resources particular to their issues.

AANAPISI also offers a multitude of classes and programs at the college that can help give AAPI students a leg up in academics. Classes that are offered include Math 91, Communication 200, and College 100. Advising geared toward AAPI students is also offered and study halls as well.

Another way students can access AAPI resources is through the AANAPISI website: AANAPISI.highline.edu.

“We have all these programs, but they can’t help if nobody knows about them,” Sisavatdy said. “That’s why it’s important to share out and talk about the resources we offer.”

This is the third year AANAPISI has been holding these summits and Sisavatdy said they’re a great way to spread the message.