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**Fits & Misfits When College Students Meet Campus Space:
An Examination of How Students Work to “Belong”**

ABSTRACT

This paper examines what “belonging” means and looks like for college students. Drawing on a larger mixed methods study that explores contradictory experiences of Asian American college students, I use theories of space and race to examine how students’ sense of belonging on campus is influenced by interactions among campus space, students’ racial identities, and racialized expectations. More specifically, this investigation reveals students’ attempts to remake themselves, reposition themselves, and/or remake space in order increase their sense of belonging. The struggles with fit between students and campus space suggest that there is still much to be learned about the variety of experiences of students of color with and within campus space. For Asian American students, in particular, the types of misfits and efforts to achieve a better fit indicate that there are still tensions and dilemmas with which students continue to wrestle even after they have gained access to higher education.