

Summary of My Experience at the ASHE Conference and the Impact of the Carter Travel Award
Pin-Ru Su



Attending the ASHE (The Association for the Study of Higher Education) Conference was a transformative milestone in my academic journey. It marked my first time participating in a large-scale international conference, especially as an English learner, where I had the privilege of serving as a volunteer and presenting two research papers. The experience, held in the brisk, cold atmosphere of Minnesota, was invigorated by the warmth of knowledge-sharing and intellectual exchange. Over four days, I engaged in discussions that expanded my imagination of higher education research beyond what I had previously conceived. The tightly packed yet fulfilling schedule exposed me to critical dialogues on topics like decolonization, higher education equity, whiteness, and Asian diaspora while inspiring me to reflect deeply on Taiwan's unique position in global academia.

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One of the most profound takeaways was realizing the need for critical examination of how Western academic frameworks, such as DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and social justice, may not align perfectly with Taiwan's socio-cultural contexts. This realization strengthened my commitment to amplifying Taiwan's complex and diverse academic contributions on the international stage. The ASHE conference provided a space to contemplate how to navigate the intersections of global and local knowledge systems and further motivated me to pursue my goal of becoming a transnational scholar—not as knowledge reproducer, but as a critical knowledge creator.

The Carter Travel Award played a pivotal role in making this experience possible. As a young scholar with limited resources, this funding alleviated financial barriers and allowed me to fully engage in the conference's enriching activities. It enabled me to connect with scholars across borders, both through presenting my work and listening to theirs, and it helped me discover new perspectives that will shape my future research. Most rewarding was the validation I received when my ideas resonated with peers and when audience members expressed gratitude for helping them understand complex theories.

This experience was more than a step forward; it was a leap toward growth and academic belonging. The Carter Travel Award did not just provide financial assistance—it was an investment in my development as a scholar navigating the international and intellectual boundaries that define higher education today. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity and eager to continue this journey, bringing more voices from Taiwan epistemology into the global conversation in the field of higher education research.