What is your role at Johns Hopkins?
As the Chief Financial Officer, I am a member of the Executive Leadership Team of Howard County General Hospital and primarily responsible for the immediate and long-term financial performance of our hospital and health system.

How long have you been with Johns Hopkins?
I started at Johns Hopkins as an administrative resident in the Office of Managed Care in 1994. I've literally spent half of my life as an employee of Johns Hopkins.

Who were your role models or key influences growing up?
My parents and their friends were my role models growing up. We were part of a tightknit community of Filipinos who all immigrated to Baltimore in the mid-60s. My father had come to Johns Hopkins for his clinical fellowship in surgery, and my mother had come to further her graduate studies in piano at the Peabody Conservatory. They, along with their friends, established a Filipino-American association called Katipunan, and, growing up, much of our social lives revolved around the activities of that group. I didn’t realize until I had kids of my own how special this was and how privileged I was to have had that experience. The friends I made in that group are still my closest friends to this day. And the common values of character, good education, faith and hard work that all of our parents instilled in us really shaped our lives.

What does your identity as an Asian-American add to your work?
Although I don’t think it impacts my day-to-day work, I feel a responsibility to be involved in diversity initiatives at Hopkins, whether it is benefiting Asian-Americans or just underrepresented minorities in general. Having a diverse workforce strengthens our organization as long as we listen to and support their ideas and opinions.

What do you think are the most pressing issues that Asian/Pacific-Americans face today?
I think Asian/Pacific-Americans often struggle with establishing their own identities. There are not a lot of visible Asian/Pacific-American role models. Many of the stereotypes about Asian/Pacific-Americans still persist, but discrimination is often more subtle. Even being labeled the “model minority” can have negative repercussions for Asian/Pacific-Americans who don’t fit the mold.

Who or what helped you pursue your career path?
I remember taking a class in bioethics in college and becoming fascinated with the delivery side of health care and the complex decisions that health systems are responsible for on a daily basis. I also enjoyed administrative and leadership roles at school. Health care administration became a natural choice. I then interned under the president of a local hospital, and realized that it was the right career path for me — I could be an administrator, but also serve the community and help people.

What Asian/Pacific-American historical figures do you find interesting or inspiring?
Bruce Lee was one of my heroes growing up. It sounds so obvious but, unfortunately, he was really the only Asian-American celebrity at the time. But he was more than just a kung fu master. He broke down a tremendous number of barriers for Asian-Americans through his successful career and incredible life story and philosophy. It was inspiring to see an Asian man with so much power.

What are some fun things about you that you want readers to know?
I am a big Elvis fan, and have been seen performing karaoke from time to time.

What advice can you give other Asian/Pacific-Americans pursuing health care?
Health care is a wonderful field where you can have a positive impact on people’s lives, whether as a frontline caregiver, an administrator or someone who works behind the scenes ensuring the system functions properly. You also have the opportunity to work within a team of highly qualified and motivated people who share a common goal of service, which I find especially true at Hopkins.

Claro Pio Roda, Dr.P.H.
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Howard County General Hospital