December 1998

BRIDGES

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Asian American Studies Program
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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BRIDGES is the newsletter of the University of Wisconsin Asian American Studies Program. Correspondence should be directed to: Asian American Studies Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Room 303 Ingraham Hall, 1155 Observatory Drive, Madison, WI 53706

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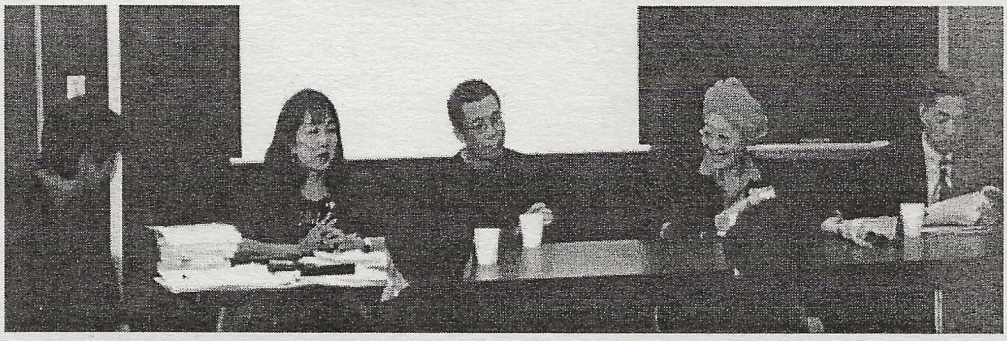
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Asian American Studies Program Hosts Symposium

The Asian American Studies Program (AASP) hosted a national conference titled "Re-searching Asian American Studies: Critical Issues for the 21st Century" on October 23-24. With about 50-60 people attending each day, the conference featured some of the top scholars in the field of Asian American studies. The conference was convened, in part, to showcase for UW students and faculty the top-notch research in sociology, history, diaspora studies, and cultural performance currently being conducted by Asian American studies scholars.

AASP invited 16 scholars from across the country to participate in four research sessions and two discussion sessions. Several UW faculty members also participated in the conference.

The conference kicked off Friday morning with words of welcome from Associate Dean Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, who noted the increasingly important role of Asian Americans in Wisconsin. Next was a session on Asian American history that featured two papers on the intersections between anti-Asian racism and prevalent ideas about sexual deviance in 19th-century America.



Symposium participants discuss the future of Asian American Studies. (Panelists are, from left to right, Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Yen Le Espiritu, Gary Okihiro, Amy Ling, and Michael Omi)

The afternoon session on Asian American sociology featured three papers on ethnic identity formation and different kinds of political mobilization. The final session on Friday was an informal discussion among students and the invited scholars about careers, curriculum, and activism in Asian American studies.

The day ended with stunning dance performances by AASP's Peggy Choy and Washington D.C. dancer Dana Tai-Soon Burgess, with Korean musicians directed by Chan Park.

Saturday's events began with a lively roundtable discussion involving most of the artists from Friday night's performance. The panelists raised and discussed issues such as cultural apathy, the distinction between Asian and Asian American performance, the role of the artist in higher education, the central role of the body in making knowledge less anonymous, and the futility of creating a single Asian American aesthetic.



Dancer Dana Tai-Soon Burgess takes part in a roundtable discussion on Asian American arts and performance.

The next session featured speakers from three different disciplines—anthropology, history, and sociology—who discussed the Asian diaspora and the experiences of Asian immigrants in adaptation and identity formation. The day ended with a discussion about the future of Asian American studies. Several essential issues stood out, including enhancing the visibility of Asian American studies, viewing Asian American studies on a global basis, and "de-centering" and invigorating the field with work from feminist and queer theories.

All sessions provoked stimulating discussions and exceeded the allotted time to accommodate questions and comments from the audience. Afterward, many attendees commented that the conference was one of the best UW events they had attended in many years. One faculty member wondered why AASP had not organized such a conference before. Graduate students appreciated the informal yet intensive contact the conference format allowed.

The invited scholars were:

- Dana Tai-Soon Burgess, Director of Moving Forward Contemporary Asian American Dance Company, Washington DC
- Yen Le Espiritu, Ethnic Studies, UC-San Diego
- Jeremy Hein, Department of Sociology, UW-Eau Claire
- Evelyn Hu-DeHart, Department of Ethnic Studies, University of Colorado
- Victor Jew, Department of History, Michigan State
- Nazli Kibria, Department of Sociology, Boston University
- Gary Okihiro, Department of History, Columbia
- Michael Omi, Department of Ethnic Studies, UC-Berkeley
- Wayne Patterson, Department of History, St. Norbert College
- Leland Saito, Department of Ethnic Studies, UC-San Diego
- Nayan Shah, Department of History, SUNY-Binghamton
- Karen Shimakawa, Department of Dramatic Arts and Dance, UC-Davis
- Linda Vo, Department of Comparative American Cultures, Washington State
- Henry Yu, Department of History, UCLA

AASP FAC members participating in the conference were: Peggy Choy, Stacey J. Lee, Amy Ling, James S. Moy, Kirin Narayan, and Pamela Oliver. Other UW faculty who participated in the conference were: Thomas J. Archdeacon (History) and Li Chiao-Ping (Dance).

News From Ingraham Hall

From the Director

Hemant Shah is serving a second year as director.

Many readers may have expected to hear from Amy Ling in this column, assuming she had returned to her duties as director of AASP after a year-long sabbatical. Unfortunately, Amy has had to take a medical leave for the 1998-1999 academic year. She expects to return to teaching, writing, and researching full time by fall 1999. Given the circumstances, I agreed to serve a second year as director of AASP.

The highlight of the fall semester was the AASP-sponsored symposium in October. The national meeting, titled "Re-searching Asian American Studies: Critical Issues for the 21st Century," featured some of the top senior and junior scholars in the field. Initial planning for the symposium started last fall and really began in earnest in spring semester 1998. Sharon Lee, AASP program assistant, handled just about all the planning and logistics that made the meeting a success. Janet Tom handled publicity and fund raising even as she was preparing for the next big AASP project, the annual spring film festival.

As for the symposium itself, we heard stimulating research papers, provocative political arguments, and practical career advice for students from the invited scholars. The program is compiling a symposium reader containing the presented papers, along with transcriptions of the panel discussions.

Another important piece of news is that AASP is conducting a joint search for an assistant professor position with the Sociology department. We received about 30 applications. We also were given permission to search with Women's Studies but are allowed to hire only one person from among the Sociology and Women's Studies applicants.

Sharon Lee, who has been working for AASP on a limited, hourly appointment for the past year and a half, should be Program Assistant 2 by the beginning of 1999. This new position will mean job security and benefits. This will be the first time in nearly four years that AASP will have a permanent, full time program assistant.

Schindler Earns First Asian American Studies Certificate

Amy Schindler is the first recipient of the Certificate in Asian American Studies. She is a history major who has always been interested in immigration issues. She will take part in the December commencement ceremonies.



Amy Schindler, first recipient of the Certificate in Asian American Studies.

Amy took her first course in Asian American studies, a history course, at Michigan State University. Even though she had already planned to develop a concentration in ethnic studies, the course made an impact. "The material was really eye opening," Amy said. "The history and culture of Asian Americans was totally ignored in all my other classes."

Amy transferred to UW in the summer of 1997 and enrolled in Mike Cullinane's class on Southeast Asians in the United States. "That was a great course," said Amy. "It was about more current issues faced by Asian Americans and it was more personal for me. It really hit home."

Besides the course on Southeast Asian Americans, she has taken courses on Asian American literature with Trudi Witonsky and ethnic social movements with Pamela Oliver.

The courses convinced her that she wanted to pursue Asian American studies further. "When I heard that there was an Asian American Studies Certificate, I was first in line." Of course, that turned out to be literally true.

Amy wants to pursue a career in archival development, which involves the collection, processing, and storage of historical data. She would like to concentrate on the history of Asian Americans.

For more information about certificate requirements, contact the Asian American Studies Program in 303 Ingraham Hall (263-2976).



AASP Has New Web Site

The Asian American Studies Program now has a new web site. Sharon Lee, program assistant, spent a week in HTML workshops offered by Learning Support Services and expanded the existing web site during the month of August.

The web site now has information about past and upcoming events, guests, faculty, courses (including syllabi), and Asian American student groups. It has links to national Asian American Studies resources as well. There also is a brief history of the program on-line, including the original proposal for Asian American studies at UW Madison.

Not only is this information a new addition to the web site, but the site is now linked to the UW home page and to major search engines, including yahoo and altavista.

Check us out on the web for the most up-to-date, comprehensive information about the Asian American Studies Program! Go to:

http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/aasp

Asian American Studies Program Spring 1999 Courses

101 Introduction to Asian American Studies
Instructor: Jan Miyasaki
Lecture 1: 11:00-12:15 TR
3 credits

220 Ethnic Movements in the United States
Instructor: Pamela Oliver
Lecture 1: 11:00-12:15 TR
Lecture 2: 2:30-3:45 TR
(Cross listed with sociology)
3 credits

260 Asian American Culture: Asian American Movement
Instructor: Peggy Choy
Lab 1: 12:45-2:00 TR
2 credits

562 Mass Media and Minorities
Instructor: Hemant Shah
Lecture 1: 8:50-10:05 TR
(Cross listed with Journalism)
4 credits

Fall 1998 Events

LEAP Returns to UW Madison

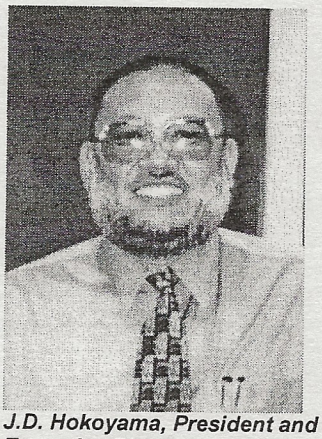
By Sharon Lee and Jennifer Park

LEAP (Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics) returned to UW-Madison in November. J.D. Hokoyama, executive director and president of LEAP, had visited Madison in October 1997 to present two mini-workshops, "Understanding Your Cultural Values," and "Risk Taking: Making Changes Happen." (See Bridges, Issue #8). Due to the positive response from LEAP workshop participants, the School of Business and the Asian American Studies Program invited Hokoyama back to UW to repeat the Cultural Values workshop and to present a new workshop titled, "Bridging the Gap: Key Issues in Understanding Asian Pacific Americans."

Hokoyama presented the "Bridging the Gap" workshop on November 6 to about 30 UW faculty, staff, and students. In this two hour workshop, he discussed the historical experience of Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) in the United States, APA demographic data, diversity within the APA community, myths and stereotypes about APAs, and APA cultural values-- how they influence behavior and how that behavior is perceived by others. He also discussed how certain issues (such as anti-Asian violence and media representation) are common to all APA ethnic groups, while other issues are ethnic specific or shared by only a few groups. Above all, Hokoyama emphasized that everyone has opportunities and an obligation to educate and to be educated about each other's communities.

On November 7, Hokoyama led an all-day workshop on Asian Pacific American cultural values to 11 Asian Pacific American students, faculty, and staff. In small groups, participants discussed stereotypes and perceptions the greater American public may have about APAs (e.g. being shy, having good math skills, focusing on brand names and appearances) and what behaviors might account for the stereotypes. Hokoyama explained how certain APA cultural values are expressed through behaviors, which often times are misinterpreted by the general public. He stressed that APAs shouldn't necessarily compromise their cultural values but instead should develop leadership skills that complement their values. These new skills will, in turn, contradict and challenge racial stereotypes.

Participants evaluated both workshops highly, saying that they learned a great deal and found Hokoyama to be an engaging speaker. The LEAP workshops were funded by the UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity. For more information about LEAP or to receive handout materials, contact the Asian American Studies Program (263-2976) or LEAP (see below).



J.D. Hokoyama, President and Executive Director of LEAP

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Community Potluck

Students, faculty, and friends enjoyed fine food and good company at the Asian American Community Potluck, held on Saturday, Nov. 14 in Union South. The Association of Asian American Graduate Students (AAAGS) organizes the event each semester and invites UW-Madison Asian American student groups and the Asian American Studies Program's faculty advisory committee to attend. Twenty-six people enjoyed a variety of rice, pasta, and vegetable dishes, as well as sweet & sour pork and pumpkin bread.

Diners included: Ron Kongsangobsakul; Powell Chee; Joyce Liu; Josh Higgin; Rich Chang; Vang Heu; Pahoua Yang; Pahoua's friends, Pa and Sao Thao; David Hsu; Robert Fyrst and his son,Tyler; Kevin Kumashiro; Janet Tom; Stu Kim; Molly Deugaw; Karen Kuo; and Eden Inoway-Ronnie, her husband Mark Ronnie, and their four-month-old baby Jack. Faculty members in attendance included AAS director Hemant Shah, his wife Jo Ellen Fair, and daughter Mela; Jim Moy; and AAS lecturer Jan Miyasaki.

Email Mobilizes Asian Americans

By Joyce Liu

This past Halloween, Urban Outfitters (UO) marketed a "Chinese man" costume, complete with glasses, a pigtail, and buckteeth. UO ads across the country announced that one could dress like a "Chinese man" for the holiday. The derogatory costume came to the attention of the Asian American psychological community via a list serve email from a graduate student at the University of Texas-Austin. Email quickly mobilized the Asian American community at both the University of Wisconsin and across the nation to successfully change racist business practices.

Dr. Richard Lee of UT-Austin contacted UO marketing executives and informed them of the racist nature of the costumes. In an email to Jay Hammer, the UO vice-president of marketing, Lee indicated that "...the portrayed image of Chinese men [as in this costume] dates back to early 20th century fears of Asian immigrants. In order to prevent these Asian immigrants from settling down in and populating America, racist immigration policies were instituted to prevent Asian immigrants from becoming U.S. citizens, marrying White women, and further immigrating to America.... Racist America then exploited the image of Asians as secretive, plotting, cunning, untrustworthy, etc. through caricatures of Asians, such as the one depicted in the 'Chinese Man Costume.' These images have perpetuated a stereotype of Asians which have continued to this day."

Email proved itself to be a powerful resource for the Asian American community. Email networks disseminated information about the costume, persons to contact, and progress about the situation to Asian American communities across the country. Asian Americans also launched a flurry of telephone calls to the UO headquarters. As a result, not only did UO remove the costumes from their shelves, but the original distributor recalled all their costumes from their retailers as well. The distributors also made a commitment to dismantling and removing the costumes from future distribution lists. Furthermore, UO announced that they would implement cultural awareness training for their employees.

AASP FACULTY ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWS

Peggy Choy (Associate Lecturer, Dance Program; Outreach Coordinator, Southeast Asian Studies) premiered her work "Transformation," at the Power Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan on October 2, 1998. The work was commissioned by Princeton University. Peggy produced and directed two concerts in conjunction with the AASP conference, "Re-searching Asian American Studies." She performed "Outsider/ Insider: Asian American Journeys" on October 23 with Dana Tai-Soon Burgess and "Across Bridges of Masks and Song: Dance and Music of Korea" with Chan Park and master dancers and musicians from Korea on October 24.

Joy L. Lei (Doctoral Student, Educational Policy Studies) is in her sixth year at UW as a graduate student. She is working on her dissertation, which studies how racial representation and identity construction can affect and be affected by race relations at a multiracial high school, with a specific focus on Asian Pacific American students. She is also the editorial assistant for an educational journal, Review of Educational Research, and is a teaching assistant for a class in Educational Policy Studies, "Race, Ethnicity, and Inequality in American Education." She is applying for pre-doctoral fellowships, which will allow her to move to the east coast where she plans to finish her dissertation.

Joy is editing a book with Carl Grant on international perspectives on multicultural education. She is also co-writing a chapter with a high school social studies teacher about the experiences of Asian American high school students for a book on critical pedagogy edited by Stacey Lee. Joy will co-chair a symposium on reviews of educational research at the upcoming American Educational Research Association annual meeting in Montreal.

Sumie Okazaki (Assistant Professor, Psychology and AAS) spent a busy summer adjusting to her new role as a proud (but sleep-deprived) mom. She gave birth to a healthy happy daughter, Abigail Naomi Poteshman, on May 12. At birth, Abigail was 7 lb. 12 oz. Abigail has gotten off to a good start being bicultural, with a collection of baby books in English and Japanese!

On the professional front, Sumie continues to work on her research project on the cultural meaning of depression and social anxiety. Earlier this year, Sumie published a paper on teaching gender issues in Asian American psychology. She also recently had a paper on symptom reporting among Asian American and White American university students accepted into the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology. In the spring semester, Sumie will teach Cultural and Ethnic Issues in Clinical Psychology (Psy 740).

Pamela Oliver (Professor, Sociology) traveled to Berlin, Montreal, and San Francisco over the summer to attend conferences and present research papers. Pam was on sabbatical fall semester working on data analysis and writing papers. Pam's current research is on police and media records of protests and other public events in Madison in the 1990s. She also is developing mathematical models of the diffusion of collective action. In the spring semester, Pam will teach Ethnic Movements in the United States (Soc and AAS 220).

Hemant Shah (Associate Professor, Journalism and Mass Communication) continued as director of the program for a second year. He and Michael Thornton are working on a race and news project in Akron, Ohio with the local newspaper there. Hemant is also co-leader of the Media, Performance, and Identity in Global Perspectives research circle sponsored by UW's International Institute.

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Asian American Film Festival 1999

--tentative schedule--

The Asian American Studies Program will host its annual Film Festival on March 27-28,1999 in 4070 Vilas Hall.

Saturday, March 27, 7:30 p.m. ***Ancestors in America, Part 1 & 2.*** **Directed by Loni Ding.**
Documentary series which presents the untold history and legacy of early Asian immigrants to the Americas, from the 1700's to the 1900's. Part 1: "Coolies, Sailors, Settlers." Part 2: "Chinese in the Frontier West: An American Story."

Sunday, March 28, 3 p.m. An afternoon of short films.
Fighting Grandpa, Mouse, Hisao, Where Shall I Eat Tonight?, 17 Years to Earth, First Daughter

Sunday, March 28, 7:30 p.m. ***Strawberry Fields.*** **Directed by Rea Tajiri.**
Irene, a troubled 16-year-old Japanese American girl, discovers her family history when she revisits the World War II internment camp where her mother and grandfather were imprisoned.

****

FLASH!!! We have submitted a proposal to bring Loni Ding, Rea Tajiri, Greg Pak, and Masahiro Sugano to UW Madison to talk about their films. Stay tuned! We'll be posting news about the Film Festival on our web site at: http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/aasp, or call us in March at (608) 263-2976.

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