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Asian American Studies Program
University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Bridges is the newsletter of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin.

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Bridges

First Amy Ling Award Goes to Three Students in Asian American Studies

Three outstanding students in Asian American Studies received the first Amy Ling Award. The winners were Andrew Fearnside, Sherherzade Jafari, and Teri Sedlack. The students received \$100 in recognition of their accomplishment.

Fearnside was a student in Peggy Choy's course on Asian American Movement. He wrote an essay called "What is Asian American Movement?" that was accompanied by a "movement piece."

Jafari was a student in Shilpa Davé's course on Asian American Women and Literature. She wrote an essay about how Asian American literature challenges mainstream literature by deconstructing what it means to be "foreign" or "exotic."

Sedlack was a student in the Survey of Asian American Literature course, also taught by Davé. Sedlack was recognized for her essay on Carlos Bulosan and his narratives on being Filipino in America. The Amy Ling Award was established after Ling's untimely death in August 1999.



Teri Sedlack (second from left) and Sherherzade Jafari (far right) received the Amy Ling Award. Arthur Hinds (far left) makes the presentation as AASP director Hemant Shah looks on.

News From Ingraham Hall

From the Director

At the end of the summer I'll be stepping down as director of Asian American Studies. Michael Thornton, Professor in the Department of Afro-American Studies, will take over in August. Michael is not totally new to the job since he served as interim director in 1993. Needless to say, the leadership of the Program will be in excellent and experienced hands.

The Program's main concern during the spring semester was faculty hiring. We had joint searches with four departments: Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, and Communication Arts. There were no job applicants acceptable to both units in the Psychology and Political Science search. We did, however, interview one candidate each with Sociology and Communication Arts. Unfortunately neither of these candidates met the needs of both units.

One of the issues that has hurt us in terms of hiring faculty, is that the Program must always hire jointly with an academic unit that has either departmental status or de facto department status (such as Women's

Studies). Our recent experience has been that the Program and the department with which we searched have not been in agreement about the strength, potential, and/or intellectual "fit" with departmental and Program needs. Sometimes the Program is very enthusiastic about an applicant and the department is not; sometimes the department is excited about the applicant, but the Program may be lukewarm. What has become abundantly clear to me and to members of the Faculty Advisory Committee is that the Program needs to have more power in the hiring process. I'm not certain how that could come about given the existing campus governance structure, but it's certainly worth exploring possibilities.

On the subject of faculty, I want to remind everyone that Rhacel Parrenas will be joining us in fall after her post doc at UCLA. She has been working on her book and traveling to the Philippines getting started on her next project. Rhacel will have an office in the Women's Studies department on first floor of Ingraham Hall. She will teach classes on Asian American Women in the fall semester as well as a

course in the Women's Studies program.

Also joining us – or rather, staying with us – will be Shilpa Davé, who has agreed to stay at UW as a Visiting Assistant Professor teaching classes in the English department and in Asian American Studies. In fall, Shilpa will teach South Asian Americans/South Asian Diaspora and Asian American Women Writers.

The Program maintained high visibility on campus and beyond with a very active and ambitious set of cultural programs. Spring semester is always a busy one because of the annual film festival and Asian American Month, but this past semester we also continued a speaker series that brought several Asian American activists to campus. Details about all these activities are inside.

There are a couple of changes in the AASP office that everyone should know about. First, program assistant Sharon Lee left us in March to take position with the Asian American studies program at University of Illinois. She is helping their program develop and implement programming, writing grant proposals, and taking an active role in establishing a campus presence for the

program at University of Illinois. I often joked (actually only half-joked) that Sharon ran the Program at UW, but in many ways that was true. She knew the ins and outs of paperwork, campus networks, budgets, etc., more thoroughly than anyone else in the Program did. She also was generous with her time as an active participant in Asian American student groups and helped organize many activities on behalf of the Program. Needless to say, everyone associated with the Program will miss Sharon both personally and professionally.

Jeanette Rutschow replaced Sharon as program assistant in mid-February. Jeanette had hardly any time to adjust and learn the ropes in a new part of campus with new administrators and new staff. Before she knew it, the film festival and Asian American Month were in full swing and she was handling paperwork, taking phone calls, advising student groups, and generally holding down the fort in 303 Ingraham Hall. Jeanette had a trial by fire, so to speak, but was admirably calm and collected through the whole thing.

Finally, as I approach the end of my three-year term as director, I want to thank

members of the Faculty Advisory Committee for their help and support. I also want to thank all the students in the Association of Asian American Graduate Students and the Asian American Student Union for their enthusiasm and activism on behalf of the Program and Asian American studies. I plan to stay active on the Faculty Advisory Committee and support the Program.

Jeanette Rutschow Joins AASP

We'd like to welcome Jeanette Rutschow as the new Program Assistant in the Asian American Studies Program office. She started working with the Program February 14.

Born in Mondovi, WI, Jeanette received her BA in Secondary Education, majoring in English, from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. She moved to Madison in 1981.

She's worked for the University of Wisconsin as a Program Assistant in the Dean's Office, Cooperative Extension; the Engineering Research Center for Plasma-Aided Manufacturing; and the Endocrinology-Reproductive Physiology Program, a graduate program where she worked for the last 3 ½ years.

Asian American Studies Fall 2000 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: Pam Oliver
Lecture 1: 2:30-3:45 TR
3 credits
Cross-listed with Sociology

260 Topics in Asian American Culture: Asian/Asian American Dance

Instructor: Peggy Choy
Lab 1: 12:45-2:00 TR
2 credits
Meets with Dance 560

443 Mutual Perceptions of Racial Minorities

Instructor: Michael Thornton
Lecture 1: 2:25-4:55 W
3 credits
Cross-listed with Afro Am Studies

540 Topics in Asian American Studies: Asian Women in the United States

Instructor: Rhacel Parrenas
Lecture 1: 1:00-4:00 W
3 credits

560 Topics in Asian American Studies: South Asians and Asian American Studies

Instructor: Shilpa Dave
Lecture 1: 9:30-10:45 TR
3 credits

595 Asian American Women Writers

Instructor: Shilpa Dave
Lecture 1: 1:00-2:15 TR
3 credits
Cross-listed with English and Women's Studies

662 Mass Media and Minorities

Instructor: Jim Danky
Lecture 1: 9:30-10:45 TR
4 credits

Farewell Party for AAAGS Co-founder and AASP Program Assistant Sharon Lee

By May Caroline Chan

Just before Sharon left her job with AASP, Eden Inoway-Ronnie and Linda Park organized a luncheon in her honor. Various members of the faculty, AAAGS, and AASU attended. The conference room was transformed into a crowded space filled with the smells of food and sounds of good conversation. I was immensely sad about Sharon leaving us. No amount of Chinese food could make it better. Nor could seeing all these interesting and intelligent people enjoying each other's company help hide the real reason that we were together: to say goodbye to a dear friend.

So it was a little odd that we were chatting along and enjoying our food as if it were a normal luncheon. But the conversation was not always so ordinary, as I remember asking Sharon about her new apartment (Three bathrooms - why on earth would you need three bathrooms? There are only two of you!) and the cat's reaction to the moving boxes at the Madison home: sometimes Ruby gets lost. The feeling got stronger as

lunch food moved to pieces of sheet cake, and Hemant addressed the gathering, praising Sharon and her tremendous contributions to AASP. Then, despite Sharon's earlier objections, she talked to the group, told all of us how much she'd miss us and how much she learned from working in AASP. Heheheheh, she'll come crawling back to us soon enough, some of us thought, as we conjured up images of a dumpy apartment, a crummy student union, and a bunch of crazed bureaucrats running her new work. Hey, maybe even her cat will come running back, just like those animals in that kid's story -- was it "The Incredible Journey"? And what about Jim - he won't find a good sailing lake out there! Then she'll just give up on that Illinois idea.

With Sharon's departure, the early AAAGS instigators have now become a part of campus history to be passed down to other students. This weighs heavily on my mind as I have watched AAAGS change, and worried about whether the energy I had seen and experienced would continue.

Sometimes I walk over to Ingraham Hall for lecture, and think about going there early to chat with Sharon, as I would often do when I

taught summer school. Then I recall the reality that Sharon isn't at Ingraham anymore. I remember the good times, even the moments of utter chaos and panic, and hope for other chances to make more happy memories.

Spring Events

Richard Fung, Filmmaker, Writer, Activist, Visits Madison

Video artist, writer, and gay rights activist Richard Fung was in Madison to present some of his latest work and to meet with students and community members. Fung, a Chinese-Trinidadian now living in Toronto, presented sections of his latest video in the Memorial Union February 25.



Richard Fung

The project explores the notion of the "Chinese-ness" of his own family. Through a montage of scenes compiled from home movies, photographs, and other mementos from his own childhood, Fung raised questions about the idea of stable personal identities.

His own biographical trajectory, Fung suggested, should force all of to ask how we construct our notions of self and why so many of us insist that our identities are stable and unwavering. Fung's videos not only raise the somewhat abstract notions of cultural identity formation in postcolonial contexts, but also represent archives of his own family's personal history by including images of family members, tales from his childhood, and stories about the ethnic complexity of his immediate and extended family. For example, Fung told the audience that among his many cousins, he is about the only one with two ethnically Chinese parents. Fung said he always thought of himself as Trinidadian until he moved to Toronto, where he felt compelled to think of himself as Chinese because of the city's ethnic politics.

Fung is currently an independent video producer who has produced and directed dozens of films and

videos. He has received grants from the Toronto Arts Council, the Ontario Film Development Corporation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and Banff Center for the Arts, among others. Fung lectures frequently at colleges and universities across North America, and writes for newspapers and magazines regularly. He also is actively involved in the Committee Against Homophobia, Gay Asian AIDS Project and the Toronto Academy of Karate.

Eighth Annual Asian American Film Festival

Asian American film-making has a long history in the United States, going back at least to Haworth Productions, organized by Sesue Hayakawa in the 1930s to counter the stereotypes of Asians in Hollywood films. Of course, Hollywood stereotypes did not disappear, and during the US Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Asian American visual artists developed what they called "triangular cinema" to emphasize community building, political activism, and an Asian American aesthetic. In many ways, contemporary Asian American filmmaking is informed by this integrative vision of art, community, and politics.

The Asian American Studies Program, with support from the Asian American Student Union, Association of Asian American Graduate Students, and Cinematheque, sponsored the annual film festival to showcase recent accomplishments in Asian American film. Past film festivals have emphasized films that illustrate the central components of "triangular cinema."

This year, the festival featured the work of two young stars and one established veteran of Asian American film. The first day of the festival, March 24, screened, "Too Tired to Die." The film is a black comedy about Kenji (Takeshi Kaneshiro), an aimless young Japanese man, seeking his identity in the trendy life of downtown New York City. He is visited by "Death," portrayed as a hip seductress (Mira Sorvino), and told he has just 12 hours to live. A standing-room only crowd of 200 attended the screening. An additional 50 people were turned away at the door. Director Wonsuk Chin, who was in attendance, answered questions for an hour after the show.

The second day, March 25, featured a number of shorts in the afternoon program and the film

"Rabbit in the Moon" (award winner for Best Cinematography at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival) by Emiko Omiri in the evening. Omiri also was at the showing Saturday and answered questions about the film and the experiences of Issei and Nissei Japanese American families in the internment camps during WWII. Members of the Japanese American community in Madison attended the screening and added to the discussion.

The last day, March 26, featured "Karma Local," by Darshan Bhagat. The film is a story of hopes and realities, fate and chance, and the mythic journey from innocence to experience as it follows the multicultural visions of the American Dream through the experiences of a young Indian American and his extended family living in New York City. The film drew a surprisingly large crowd that attended in spite of the rain and the competition with the televised Academy Awards.

All of the films in the March 2000 Asian American Film Festival exemplified, to one extent or another, the issues of community, political activism, and authentic aesthetic representation of the Asian experience in America. In

that sense, these films help AASP accomplish our long-standing goal of bringing the most relevant and significant films made by Asian Americans to the university and community at large.

FAC Members Attend La Crosse Symposium on Asian American Studies

On Friday, April 7, 2000, several members of the UW-Madison AASP Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) went to UW-La Crosse to participate in the Symposium on Asian American Studies. The UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity sponsored the event.

Jan Miyasaki, Shilpa Davé and Eden Inoway-Ronnie presented a session called "Building an Asian American Studies Program: The History and Current Status of AASP at UW-Madison." Shilpa Davé, with Asha Sen of UW Eau Claire, presented a session called "Asian American Panethnicity: South Asian Americans and Asian American Studies."

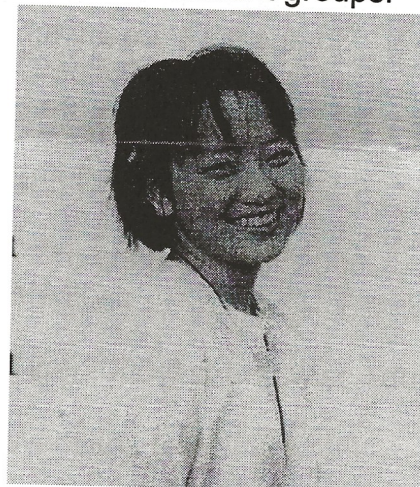
The conference provided an opportunity to share information and meet faculty and staff members across the state who are interested in expanding Asian American Studies. In the plenary discussion at the

end of the day, Jan suggested creating some sort of Asian American Association within the UW System to support and encourage the development of Asian American Studies and to facilitate connections between those who teach or work on similar issues

Student News

Akiko Ikeno is Student Leader of the Month

Akiko Ikeno, an active member of the Asian American Student Union, was named as one of three student leaders of the month in March 2000. Akiko has been instrumental in helping various Asian American student groups forge coalition-based campus politics. She helped found the Asian and Pacific American Council, which will represent all Asian American student groups.



Akiko Ikeno

APAC to Get Under Way in Summer 2000

APAC (Asian and Pacific American Council) has had several new developments during the spring semester. Currently there are 17 member organizations on the council. APAC chairperson is Deepa Pawar. Three administrative positions will be filled this summer.

APAC's main upcoming project is the OrientAsian. Faculty, staff, and students will cooperatively plan this event. APAC will begin work on the event during summer 2000. OrientAsian will be held during the Welcome Week in fall. For more information, contact Deepa at 264-0072.

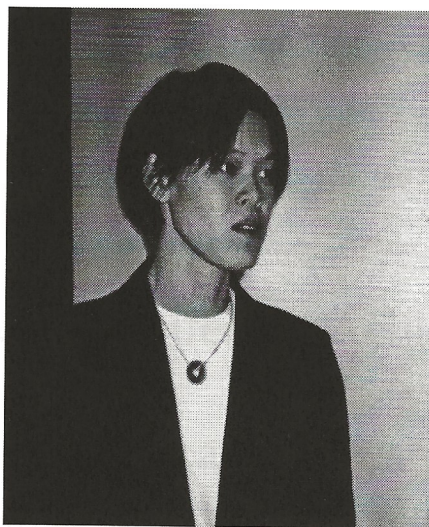
Update from Tiger 2000: Committee for Korean Studies

By the Tiger 2000: Committee for Korean Studies

Tiger 2000 is dedicated to increasing academic offerings related to Korean and Korean American studies at UW. Our major projects this academic year have been efforts to establish a study abroad program with a Korean university for UW-Madison students and to bring about the hiring of full-time, permanent, tenure track faculty who can teach in

Korean and Korean American studies. We conducted a survey of UW-Madison students, and found there was a lot of interest, not only among Korean and Korean American students, but among the general student population as well.

We recently donated subscriptions to "Korean Quarterly," a Korean American periodical published in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to the College Library and the Multicultural Student Center. The "Korean Quarterly" is a great resource for keeping up with what's going on in the Korean American community.



International Korean Adoptee Activist and Artist Natalie Lemoine (a.k.a. Mihee Cho)

To increase awareness and understanding of Korean and Korean American issues on campus and in the Madison

community, Tiger 2000: Committee for Korean Studies has sponsored a series of events on campus this academic year. In the fall, we sponsored a film series of two Korean films, "Sopyonje" (Korea, 1993, Dir. Im Kwon-Taek) and "Beat" (Korea, 1997, Dir. Kim Sung-Soo).

Our Spring 2000 Festival Series "Uncovering Truths: Korea and Korean America" included a total of 6 events, ranging from academic lectures to films and cultural performances.

We had excellent turnouts for all these events even on the night of a late spring blizzard! The remaining three events were the documentary film "Silence Broken: Korean Comfort Women" which featured a pre- and post-film discussion with Korean-American director, Dai-Sil Kim Gibson; Peggy Choy's danscape "Passage of Oracles"; and the cultural performance "A Night of Traditional Korean Dance and Drumming."

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Amy Ling to Receive Lifetime Achievement Award

The Association of Asian American Studies will honor Amy Ling for her contributions to Asian American Studies at its annual conference in Phoenix, May 25-28, 2000.