

RIPPLES

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

UMass Boston Students Participate in Queens College Asian/American Center's Summer Institute on "Exploring the Global in the Local"



UMass Boston students Chu Huang (front row, fourth from left) and Malissa Lach (front row, third from left) with other Summer Institute participants (Photo courtesy of Kenny Lo)

From July 25 to July 31, UMass Boston Asian American Studies students Chu Huang and Malissa Lach were two of seventeen students selected nationally to participate in the Queens College Asian/American Center's Summer Institute in Queens, New York, the most ethnically diverse county in the nation.

Chu Huang is a senior double majoring in Sociology and Asian American Studies.

I first heard about the summer institute from my Asian American Studies professors Peter Kiang and Shirley Tang. They recommended this new program to me because of my strong interest in Asian American Studies. I felt that I could gain a lot of experience and learn a lot from the program and vice versa. The theme this past summer was studying the global in the local in

the multicultural community of Queens, New York. I was excited!

The program only lasted a week, but it was an intensive week. Each day began at 8 in the morning and lasted until 9 something at night. We would eat breakfast and then have lectures/presentations/discussions throughout the day. Asian Americans from a diverse range of fields came in and talked about the importance of their work in relation to their identity. The presenters were professors or they came from community organizations, media and entertainment, health practices, politics and more. In the late afternoon, before dinner, there would be a tour to help us understand the rich history and diversity of Queens. Every meal of the day would be a different ethnic cuisine; it was great! Then, we would return to the college and have some more presentations and discussions to wrap up the night.

I got to connect with many of the participants. We were split into 2 hallways and mixed with different roommates. The summer participants came from many different parts of the United States like California, Seattle, other boroughs of New York City, and Boston. Along with the rich diversity of the group, people were from different ethnic backgrounds and had different majors. Some people had interests in learning more about the Asian American experience and some were more familiar with it. Everyone was really friendly (staff, professors, and students). People brought in different insights and were very curious to learn from the program. Everyone kept an open mind and were receptive in learning from each other.



Summer Institute participants at a lecture presentation at Queens College (Photo courtesy of Chu Huang)



*Summer Institute participants visiting local community organization Flushing Chinese Business Association (FCBA)
(Photo courtesy of Nannan Hu)*

The mentors that were with us have made the greatest impact on me. They have been great mentors throughout the program for me. I was able to relate with one of the mentors through similar family struggles — being raised by a single parent. It made it easier for me to express myself and be more comfortable in getting to know everyone. It definitely helped create a lasting friendship between the people that I have met.

On one occasion, we were given a presentation on the culture of Hawai'i through the importance of hula dancing. Something unexpected happened. The information that the presenter shared was certainly biased and was not an accurate representation of Hawai'i. A summer institute participant spoke up about this misinformation, because she had taken a course on Hawai'i before. It was really great to have her speak up and allow us to have a follow up discussion on it.

Something that I learned and that affected me deeply is I realized how important it is to have individuals in the community be civically and politically engaged. It is important for the leaders in politics to keep running for their positions and to help make a difference for their community. Another important lesson that I learned from the experience is the importance of speaking up. The organizations really had to voice the community's concerns and rally for their rights. Another thing that I have taken away from the institute is to not give up and keep believing in myself. The political and community aspects of the program really made that stand out to me. I also learned the importance of bridging communities together. We all have issues, but if we realize that we can help each other and join together, then we can make a bigger difference as one.

This experience definitely made an impact on my future career plans and goals. I want to be more involved in my community as well as others. The experience has helped reassure me and made it more clear to me that it is something that I want to continue doing. One way is by teaching and sharing your experiences with others.

Malissa Lach is a senior majoring in Sociology and is completing a program of study in Asian American Studies.

I wanted to participate in the Summer Institute because I wanted to gain more experiences and take what I learned from the Queens community and bring new ideas and changes to my own, the Cambodian community in Lowell.

During my time at the institute, I visited several Asian American communities and saw how diverse and unified their institutions were. It was evident through speakers, community site visits, and the people I spoke with from the community that there was movement, and it was inspiring because the people in that area are working towards the same goal: providing resources for Asian Americans and gaining Asian American political representation.



*Chu Huang, Dr. Roger Sanjek, Dr. Madhulika Khandelwal, and Malissa Lach at Dera Restaurant after a tour around Elmhurst
(Photo courtesy of Jay Chen)*

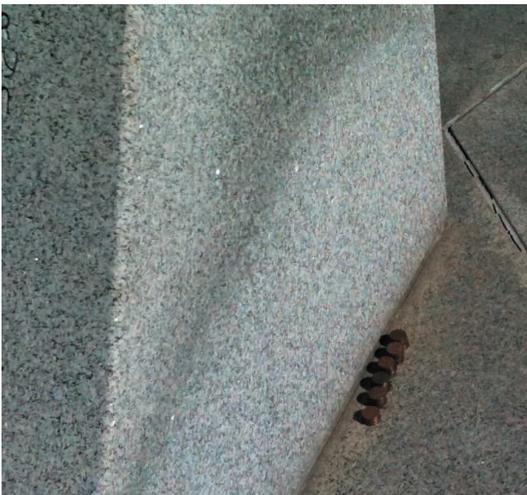


Summer Institute participants with supporting faculty celebrating the completion of the summer program (Photo courtesy of Nancy Barelis)

With RIPPLES,
we spread news in
continuous movements of
circles. We share the same
center. All of us. Our
work are circles within
each other - staff, students,
families, and communities.
The transformation begins
within ourselves, our own
center. We make ripples
by being fluid like water -
as we are touched by,
and touch, others.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 UMass Boston Students Participate
in Queens College Asian/American
Center's Summer Institute on
"Exploring the Global in the Local"
- 4 Creating a Service-Learning
Program in Cambodia
- 5 CAPAY Summer 2010 Programs
- 6 The Revival of PAASSAGE
- 6 Amache Field School
- 7 NAFEA & Hepatitis B Conferences
- 8 Student Reflections on
ASPIRE 2010 Conference
- 9 Presenting at BAASIC
- 10 Field Trip to White Gate Farm
- 11 Interview with Lisa Buenaventura
- 12 New Graduate Students



(Photo by Peter Kiang)

**Where is this site and
why is it important to
Asian American Studies
at UMass Boston?**

Creating a Service-Learning Program in Cambodia



Dr. Haeok Lee (center), Linda Cheng (third from right), and Yevin Roh (far right) with local teachers in front of an English school (Photo courtesy of Yevin Roh)

Kevin Tan is a UMass Boston undergraduate majoring in International Business Management with a program-of-study in Asian American Studies. He served as president of UMass Boston's Khmer Culture Association in 2009 and 2010.

What was the purpose of your trip to Cambodia?

The primary purpose of our trip to Cambodia was to conduct a community needs assessment in rural areas of the country. Our group consisted of students Linda Cheng, Yevin Roh, myself, as well as Dr. Haeok Lee, a professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. It was great because we have different experiences and skills. It gives us the advantage of understanding things from different perspectives. We spent four weeks this past summer in Cambodia because we wanted to discover more about health practices and education in the country in order to develop a community-based service-learning program between UMass Boston students and rural communities in Cambodia. The trip was sponsored by the Office of International and Transnational Affairs (OITA) with encouragement from the Asian American Studies Program.

Which places did you visit and why?

Before we conducted any of our community visits, we first set some time aside for an initial cultural immersion. It was the first time in Cambodia for everyone in the group besides myself, so we visited various museums, markets, and ate at different restaurants in the capital city of Phnom Penh, and also dropped by Siem Reap where Angkor Wat is located. We made the decision to do a cultural immersion because we felt that in order to help the people we wanted to, we had to understand how they lived their day-

to-day lives first. After the cultural immersion, we visited several sites in the Battambang province of Cambodia which included health clinics and local NGOs in rural areas. We wanted to understand the types of resources that were available to people and note the resources that were not available to the average person in that area.

What will you do now with the information you gathered in Cambodia?

Each of us will be writing up different reports. Mine will be on social justice, Linda's will be on education, Yevin's will be on public health, and Dr. Lee's will be on health. We are going to use those reports to create a pilot program in collaboration with the rural areas that we visited to develop the community-based service-learning project. Another trip to Cambodia to start the pilot program is in the planning stages.

What was the most exciting aspect of the trip for you?

The most exciting aspect of the trip was my reason for visiting the country. I have been to Cambodia twice before,



Kevin Tan meeting rural school children (Photo courtesy of Yevin Roh)

and each time was for a different reason. My first trip was to visit family, second time was as a student on a study abroad, and this time was to do some meaningful research in hopes of potentially setting up a program to provide support for people in rural areas.

What were some experiences that left an impression on you?

One of the things that stood out to me during my last trip was a whole community of youth and young adults that were raised in a commune. They formed a nonprofit organization to help people where they are from, and later expanded to schools and other types of resource centers. To see first hand how there are those who want to better the local areas where they are from, if they have the opportunity, was inspiring. I have heard many people say they wanted to leave for the sake of their careers, but the group we had the chance to meet with, there was a genuine will to give back to their own community, despite lacking the funding and support from the government. It gives non-natives the reassurance that they aren't the only ones trying to better the current standard of living.

What did this trip mean to you personally?

This is a place where I could have called home if it weren't for the Khmer Rouge genocide. To be able to finally start to do something to help my parents' homeland... I've wanted to get involved, but didn't know how. If this opportunity never came my way, I would still be brainstorming ideas of how I can help.

Is there anything else you want to say about your needs assessment trip?

Please visit my weblog, <http://www.xanga.com/american>, for some of my reflections on the sites we visited and the people we met in Cambodia.

CAPAY Summer 2010 Programs

by Molly Higgins, CAPAY AmeriCorps VISTA

Go to YouTube. Search for "CAPAYmovement" and click through to the CAPAYmovement channel to see some of the videos compiled at UMass Boston this summer. The videos were made by Asian American high school students through the Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth (CAPAY), a youth program that shares office space and resources with the Asian American Studies Program.

Last summer, CAPAY ran two programs. One was the Asian American Studies Workshop (AASW), an eight-

week program that combined Asian American history and multimedia projects. Every week, participants learned about a time period of Asian American history, like the development of Chinatown or Southeast Asian refugee resettlement, and explored recurring themes like exclusion and exploitation through art projects.



*CAPAY youth creating a video about Asian American history
(Photo courtesy of Molly Higgins)*

During one workshop, AASW participants had to define race. They looked at maps of the world and at U.S. census categories. After a morning of debating whether race should be defined according to geography or laws or the way people look, the students had come to very few conclusions, except that race has consequences that can't be ignored. It's easy to say that race is a social construction, but harder to define what that really means.

CAPAY also ran the Dorchester Initiative for Youth (DIY). In DIY, six high school students explored Dorchester and local Southeast Asian history while learning to make movies. The program teaches participants the complete filmmaking process from pre- to post-production. Participants are expected to write, film, and edit their own 4-8 minute film over the course of the summer.

This year, the films revolved around food. For many of the youth, cooking means making instant noodles in the microwave or frying an egg. The DIY program asks them to consider how the food they eat relates to not only their health but also their culture. One movie involves the characters from Twilight competing for Bella's love by trying to make the best fried rice. In another movie, a giant pizza attacks a town, and a group called the Food Rangers must fight it off.

Finally, CAPAY joined several other youth programs to launch the Boston Asian American Steering Committee, a coordinating network of Asian American youth from metro Boston who are developing collaborative plans for programs, projects, trainings, grants, and advocacy efforts.

The Revival of PAASSAGE



Fall 2010 dinner with PAASSAGE members at Peach Farm in Chinatown (Photo courtesy of Fanny Ng)

by Fanny Ng, PhD student in Clinical Psychology

PAASSAGE stands for the Pacific Asian American Students/Studies Association in Graduate Education. This UMass Boston graduate student organization was first established 11 years ago in the fall of 1999 with the goal of providing “social, academic and personal support” for Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander American graduate students and graduate students interested in Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander American studies. Since its founding, PAASSAGE has undergone many cycles of activity and dormancy, but its primary purpose has remained essentially unchanged.

On Friday, September 10, 2010, PAASSAGE was reawakened from a period of slumber with a great turnout at its first social dinner of the Fall semester. Graduate students representing seven different academic disciplines came together for this initial gathering from departments such as Clinical Psychology, Education, Historical Archaeology, American Studies, Gerontology, International Relations, and Applied Linguistics.

PAASSAGE aims to provide a safe space for graduate students across disciplines to meet and organize. In the past, PAASSAGE has promoted Asian American studies on campus and in the community, and we hope to revive this mission in the coming semester. As we pick up momentum during this academic year, we hope to reach out and connect with even more graduate students and further build upon the growing PAASSAGE community.

For more information, contact paassage.umb@gmail.com

Amache Field School

by Laura Ng

This past summer, I had the opportunity to participate in a four-week field school at a World War II Japanese American internment camp in southeastern Colorado called Amache as part of my graduate training in Historical Archaeology. The archaeological dig was directed by Dr. Bonnie Clark of the University of Denver.



Excavating an entryway garden in front of an internee barracks in Block 7G (Photo courtesy of Carlene Tinker)

The focus of the dig was on internee-built gardens, so we had many different experts in soil chemistry, in archaeobotanical remains, and in ground penetrating radar joining us. As a participant in the field school, I helped conduct pedestrian surveys of the barrack blocks internees lived in, mapped archaeological features, and excavated internee-built gardens.

Another component of the field school was our afternoon work at the local museum which was dedicated to telling the story of Amache. I learned how to archive documents and objects and even created a text panel for the museum on terminology used to talk about the incarceration of Japanese Americans. Dr. Clark also gave me the opportunity to do an hour-long oral history interview with two former internees who actually helped excavate with us the last two weeks. They were two ladies in their 70's who were only three years old when they were interned at Amache. They only remembered a few things, but it was interesting how both of them said they wanted to participate first-hand in the archaeology at Amache because they wanted to know what it was like for their family members to be incarcerated at Amache. Both yearned to know about their parents' experiences in camp,

but their parents had refused to talk to their children about it because it was such a painful time. It makes me feel good to know that the work that we were doing at Amache, recovering the past, has a real and meaningful impact on people living today.



Duncan Kelley and Laura Ng excavating at Block 12K, Victory Garden 2, Unit 1003N 998E (Photo courtesy of Laura Ng)

NAFEA & Hepatitis B Conferences

by Kevin Tan

The National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian and Vietnamese Americans (NAFEA) hosted its 35th annual national education conference over the weekend of October 23, 2010. The guests featured educators, students, and community leaders of various organizations and universities from all over the country. The conference consisted of various student presentations, workshop panels, and many guest speakers. At the conference, the discussions were based on Southeast Asian student education in K-12, Southeast Asian language and culture programs, Southeast Asian higher education access and opportunities, and Southeast Asian communities. Much to my surprise, I was invited to speak as a student leader representing the Khmer Culture Association of UMass Boston.

I accepted the offer for a number of reasons. First, it would be my first time at any type of national, professional conference to which I could make a real impact to better my community. Second, it was a great chance to gain new networking opportunities with fellow students across the country and Southeast Asian professionals already working in their fields. Third, it

was a chance to provide a voice for the Khmer Culture Association, UMass Boston, and Southeast Asian students from Massachusetts. It turned out that Dr. Peter Kiang, Mr. Rithy Uong and I were the only representatives from Massachusetts and the northeast region of the United States for that matter. Leading up to the event, I was both excited and extremely nervous. I wanted to make a good impression and provide some informative and useful data.

I had spent several hours in the days leading up to the actual presentation day preparing and reviewing how I could present. I think in large part, the “national” word got to me a little more than it should have, causing lots of stress on my part. When the day had finally come, I was anxious, continually telling myself to stay calm. Based on the schedule that was compiled the week before, I thought I would be somewhere in the middle of the order mixed in with all the other students, but again to my surprise, I was asked to speak first. Just when I started to calm down, the nerves came rushing back.

When it came time to speak, I forced myself to just do it. In about five to seven short minutes, I was finished and felt more comfortable. I had done my part, and now I could just enjoy the atmosphere, capitalize on some networking opportunities, and listen to a number of individuals who advocate for Southeast Asian American advancement. Soon enough, the conference was over, and it was time to head home. Having this experience was crucial in my development as a student, person, and leader.

Interestingly enough, the next weekend in Boston on October 30, 2010, the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) hosted a national hepatitis B conference at the Hilton Hotel in Back Bay, Boston. The meeting consisted of renowned hepatologists that lectured and provided insight to some of their past and ongoing projects. Hepatologists gathered from around the country and led students in smaller sessions to discuss and brainstorm about hepatitis B outreach projects in their local communities. There were also student posters around the room with information gathered from various research projects from all over the country. Later in the evening, a student panel spoke more in depth about the achievements of their university’s research projects regarding hepatitis B and their future goals.

This was another great event to be a part of. I found myself being only one of two undergraduate students in attendance and one of few students that were enrolled in a public university. It was a much more comfortable setting for me because there were more students. It is important for students everywhere to be active and attend events like these because they provide good networking opportunities and can inform us about the multiple programs and projects that are already ongoing throughout the country.

Student Reflections on ASPIRE 2010 Conference

Two students from the Fall 2010 Asian Women in the US course (AsAmSt 228L) taught by Dr. Patricia Neilson reflect on their experiences after attending the October 2010 Asian American Women in Leadership Conference sponsored by ASPIRE (Asian Sisters Participating In Reaching Excellence).

ASPIRE is a Boston-based non-profit organization dedicated to developing career and leadership skills for Asian American girls and women.

Josephine Yang ~

I was not sure what the conference was about and what its purpose was before attending the conference. After spending a whole day at the event, I saw that the conference was quite beneficial to Asian American girls in that it was all about inspiration and learning about the different convos of support an Asian American woman can get while trying to succeed in the United States. I was quite awed and very inspired myself.

I learned a great deal from the personal stories of the Asian women speakers and enjoyed the advice of the women who spoke on the panels. I think that a main issue I got the most out of was how to deal with being Asian and being a woman in the work force. I was especially touched by how many of the panelists had to deal with such barriers, and they were still able to achieve what they wanted to be or what they wanted to do.

I think I always knew that I could be a leader, but the conference did help me realize that I would love to further my education in psychology. I was assured after this meeting that what I want to do with psychology will be worthwhile. I felt that by hearing about all the skills needed to be a leader and how to aid others, I was more fueled to find myself in the career of multicultural psychology, a field that is really new to psychology and would be difficult to become established in. By going to this conference, it helped me gain more confidence to stick with this. And I am more confident that the education I am getting now to attain this degree will be use. I want a career in psychology not for the success (reputation or money) but so that I can succeed in making my dreams to help everyday people come true.

I enjoyed the feeling of support throughout the whole conference. I liked how open and very welcoming the whole ASPIRE team was. I liked seeing the different viewpoints of Asian women who have already had some experience or experienced some of the struggles to being

who they are now. I liked most of the set-up in that there were panelists who could share about their struggles. I did feel, however, that more time could have been spent on group discussions so that even the attendees could share their experiences or current struggles. This, I think, would have furthered ASPIRE's goal to help Asian girls and women feel less alone in their pursuit of a professional career.

Shiho Enomoto ~

The thing that surprised me the most at the conference was how many incredible women had to struggle to discover what they wanted and to overcome the expectations of their family and society as Asian American women. Many of the speakers had experienced the conflict between what was expected of them as model daughters and what they truly loved and felt passionate about. This is actually the issue I have been struggling with as well. The answer all the speakers gave was to follow your passion. Do what you love.

The conference started with a welcome and opening remarks with a speech by an organizer followed by the morning keynote speech by Linda Chin, the president of ATASK (Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence). After the great talk, three morning panels were held: Practical Financial Advice (Personal Finance 101), Confronting the Glass Ceiling, and Growing Up Asian, which I attended.

Listening to the experiences of the panelists, what struck me most was their conflicts with their identities. They had asked themselves where they belonged. Growing up in communities which were dominated by people who did not look like them made them consider their own identities. For example, one of the panelists, Leah Driska, is a Korean adoptee. Leah's parents are English and Polish. When she was 13, Leah tried to get cosmetic surgery on her eyelids. Recalling the moment, she said that she probably wanted to look like her parents and the people around her. Now, she is glad that she did not get the surgery and thinks that it was a ridiculous idea. Another issue that she had to overcome was not fully belonging to the Korean culture, but people expected her to be familiar with it just because of her appearance. Moreover, she felt that she also did not fully belong to the American culture. Leah is an Asian American. The feeling of not belonging to either cultures fully made her lonely and frustrated. And she is still struggling to find out her identity.

Dimple Rana is second generation Indian, South Asian American. She said that identifying as South Asian American is complicated sometimes because some people will not consider her as Asian. She had to discover herself as not Asian, nor Indian, nor American, but as a South Asian American woman. When Dimple was in a high school, all of her friends were African American people, and she

was a part of a so-called gang. It was her journey to find out who she was. It was a struggle. Her parents did not understand why all of her friends were Black and worried about her not having friends of her own ethnic and cultural background. Dimple did not understand why her friends' ethnicities bothered her parents so much.

As an international student, I sometimes have similar feelings. I write and speak in English most of the time, but since it is not my native language, I do not feel like it fully covers what I want to say. I grew up using Japanese; however, after over five years living in America, I also feel like my Japanese is not complete either. It definitely makes me feel like I am alone in the middle of nowhere.

The afternoon keynote was given by Jeannie Suk, a professor of law at Harvard Law School who experienced heartbreak with her career as a dancer. She had the dilemma of continuing her dance career or going into the law, as her parents expected her to. I could feel her deep love for dancing through her speech. Even now, she regrets that she gave up the path to becoming a dancer. Jeannie was lucky, however, because she found something new to fall in love with again. Now, she is passionate about studying law. She loves discovering the new field, the truth, how society works, etc. Do what you love, she says. Do what makes you feel like you can not wait to get up in the morning. Do not worry about the conflicts of being a model daughter and going your own way because a person can be two different people at the same time. The most important thing toward becoming a great leader is to have the experience of being led well. Having a good mentor is very important. Being a leader is a risky job because not everyone will see things in the same way you see them. Some people may even hate your views. However, tell the truth as you see it. Do not be afraid to take that risk. Jeannie's energetic speech and her motivation in her field impressed me. I thought that risk was a reason not to do what I actually wanted to. Her speech encouraged me to take the responsibility to do something great. It is still scary, but it sounds rather exciting to be a leader, and Jeannie's shining face showed that.

The afternoon panels followed: Road Less Taken, Public Speaking Workshop, and Mental Health. I attended the Road Less Taken panel. Although Asian Americans are often expected to go into finance, science, and medical fields, there are many Asian American women who took the risk and discovered their own paths in the arts. The panelists were Christina Chan, Payal Kadakia, Christine Liu, and Sophia Moon. As an artist myself, I was impressed by an idea that Sophia suggested: be clear about what your passion is, know who you are. Without knowing that, how do we make our plans? People often say "believe in yourself" and "do what you want to." However, again, Sophia asked us, how can you believe in what you don't

know well? How can you know what you want if you don't know yourself?

The last panel discussion was what connected the entire conference together for me. There are many conflicts such as identity, expectations from parents and society, dreams and risks. But how can you be a responsible leader if you do not care and do not love what you do? Do not be afraid to face yourself and see what you truly want. The art is the risk, Christine Liu, a writer that has worked at Boston's Weekly Dig and the Boston Globe, says. Throughout the ages, many famous and outrageous artists had hard times, especially financially. Today, people say not to give up because of the money issue. It is not an easy matter to ignore, but those experiences and struggles are worth a lot. You have only yourself to blame for being unhappy in the future. You are responsible to your future and your goals. Do what you want and be a leader of what you love.

Finally, Sophia shared some experiences of her mother. Her mother worked full-time to raise her family. And when she came back at night, Sophia would find her studying English in the kitchen. She must have been exhausted, Sophia recalls. However, the image of her mother studying English in the kitchen at night still encourages her and gives her strength to grow as an Asian American woman leader. Women's power runs through generation to generation. Maybe our situations are different from what our parents' or grandparents' generation had to go through, but our desire to discover our identity and to be a part of America are still the same, or even stronger.

Presenting at BAASIC

by Dr. Kiran Arora, Assistant Professor, Department of Counseling and School Psychology and affiliated with Asian American Studies

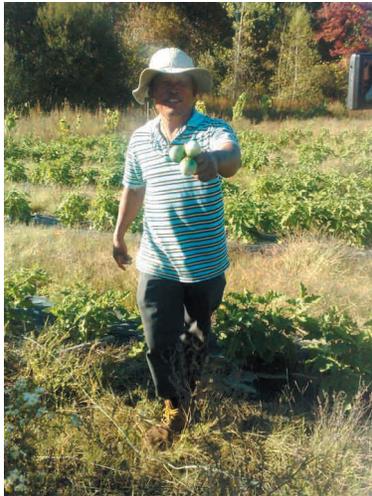
Participating as a presenter at BAASIC (Boston Asian American Students' Intercollegiate Conference) on October 2nd at MIT was a real privilege. It was inspiring to see so many students come out and engage in dialogue examining the historical narratives of the struggles and celebrations of communities of color. In my workshop, students were forthcoming in sharing their personal wisdom on the dominant cultural stories which shape their lives and relationships. This allowed for both an appreciation and critique of some of these powerful stories while making space for marginalized stories that often go unheard. BAASIC provided a much-needed space for people to come together. I look forward to connecting further with the BAASIC community!

Field Trip to White Gate Farm

Excerpt from “Harvesting Melon Stories in Asian American Studies: Reflections, Recipes, and other Green Possibilities from AsAmSt 423L Boston’s Asian American Communities, UMass Boston - Fall 2010”

by Thomas Nguyen

Being given the opportunity to come to this farm established by the late John Ogonowski and his family was very rewarding. The experience gave me a different insight on farming. Our groups left UMB at different times so we arrived in Dracut, MA separately. Our car was second to arrive. The farm was a part of a bigger land trust that the owners lease to immigrant/refugee farmers, keeping alive the commitment of John Ogonowski, one of the American Airlines pilots killed on 9/11. Upon our arrival at White Gate Farm, we met Mr. Rechhat Proum who seemed small, yet very strong. He reminded me of my cousins in Vietnam. They were small and skinny, but could carry 100 kg bags of rice on their backs with ease; 100 kg is equivalent to over 200 lbs.



Mr. Proum holding green eggplants native to Cambodia that he grows on his farm (Photos by Thomas Nguyen)



Greens grown by Mr. Proum, a Cambodian farmer

Mr. Proum was very happy to see us. He kept asking each of us, “Are you Khmer? Are you Khmer?” He received word that some of our students were of Khmer descent [They didn’t arrive until later though]. He walked us around his rented land and showed us many different varieties of plants and vegetables that



he grew. Mr. Proum mentioned that the crops did very well this year, unlike last year when there was not enough water at another area of farmland he used. He



Mr. Proum holding one of his Thai red chili peppers

also walked us to a pond where he has many catfish. They’re like his “sons.” He tells nearby kids that they can fish there but just make sure to throw the fish back. When there’s not enough rain, Mr. Proum uses the water from that pond to water his plants.

Our main contact at the farm, Jennifer Hashley, the woman who runs the New Entry Sustainable Farming project from Tufts University, suggested that we also see Mr. Proum’s greenhouse.

In his greenhouse, he had freshly wrapped greens that were prepared to be sold to the local markets. It was in this greenhouse where he emotionally emphasized to all of us about the importance of school from his perspective. He says, “sometimes I do all this work, and if the markets don’t like it, they won’t buy it. It’s not easy. You must go to school and do good. If not, then you can do this work. Be a farmer.” Mr. Proum came as a refugee from Cambodia. Everything he does is for his children.

Seeing this perspective and this experience was very touching. Mr. Proum’s growing organic fruits and vegetables and being Cambodian and my working at Whole Foods which promotes buying from local farms helped me to better understand the issues he was telling us about. Hearing him talk in person was very different from just reading about immigrant farmers in articles or on-line.



Mr. Proum packaging cabbage to sell at the market

I first became interested in food last fall when I took a UMB freshman seminar called “Food and Society.” It showed us how food production and consumption have changed over the last 200 hundred years. It sparked my interest and made me think twice now about going to McDonald’s. Last spring, I got hired at Whole Foods which gave me even more knowledge about food, for example, from team member training classes that inform workers about the importance of nutrition in everyday life.

Meanwhile, I plan to go back and talk/listen/learn with Mr. Proum some more...

Interview with Lisa Buenaventura

Interviewed by Chu Huang

Lisa Buenaventura is the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Co-Curricular Learning and Assessment at UMass Boston. She received her M.Ed. in Educational Psychology from the University of Washington's School of Psychology and Counseling and her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Seattle University.



Chu: Why did you choose to work at UMass Boston? How does your experience at UMass Boston compare to where you have previously worked?

Lisa: The elements of the position [as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Co-Curricular Learning and Assessment] just fit. Having the campus in Boston near the water made it even more enticing. The physical environment of the campus mirrors the urban characteristics of Boston with its diverse cultures. UMass Boston reflects what it means to be engaged in public higher education. Some of the important values reflected by the university include its commitment to social justice, civic engagement, and ethics. These values appear to guide the University's decision-making and actions and also serve as a reminder of what is critical to living and working in a global society.

UMass Boston is the most diverse higher education institution in which I have worked, so this experience is very exciting. I hope to become better acquainted with faculty and staff who are committed to social justice, civic engagement, inclusion, ethical and moral leadership, cultural competency, global awareness and sensitivity, and in the preparation of future generations of leaders. It is important to get to know everyone — to develop relationships and to be open to understanding others' worldviews.

Chu: What is the most rewarding part of your job? What do you like least about it?

Lisa: What is most rewarding is building relationships across sectors (students, faculty, staff, administration). I am curious about learning the history of the campus and, through listening to

people's stories, gaining a better understanding of UMass Boston.

There is not much to dislike because I am clear about my reasons and purpose for being here. The institutional environment is what I have been looking for.

Chu: What motivates you to put forth your greatest efforts?

Lisa: I have a long-standing commitment to education, learning, and mentoring/coaching people (colleagues, students, others I meet). I believe we all have talents and skills that can bring out the best in others. It is wonderful to be able to help "shine the light" on others' talents — others who may not always recognize or acknowledge these talents — and to help them develop the confidence to move forward. I feel a responsibility to help others prepare themselves to do good work, and I enjoy watching them "bloom." It is a pleasure to be a part of someone's life and to be able to help that person grow and transform. There is joy that comes from helping others fulfill commitments, dreams, and goals. It is important to connect with people and not ignore those who come into your life and into whose lives you have entered.

Chu: How has your identity(ies) affected your career path? How has it brought you to where you are now?

Lisa: As a multiracial/multiethnic individual, it has made it relatively easy for me to be comfortable in any cultural environment.

Chu: What are some short-term and long-term goals that you have for UMass Boston?

Lisa: A short-term goal is to build and sustain relationships through collaboration and connections with people. This is not about individual achievement. When people do things together, people can do great things. In Student Affairs, I want to strengthen or expand the work it does and better serve students and community. We can continue to build strong, healthy partnerships with other areas of campus, and to strengthen our sensitivity to diversity.

Chu: How would you like to connect with the Asian American Studies Program now or in the future at UMass Boston?

Lisa: I would like to help out in any way. I am interested in mentoring and coaching students. I would also like to be able to teach in the program, advise, and become better connected to the community in order to contribute to local community projects.

New Graduate Students

May Kyi Han

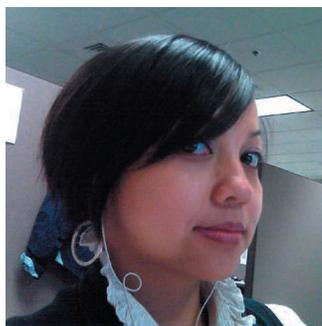
M.Ed. Learning, Teaching &
Educational Transformation, 2012

I am May. I am an international student from Burma. I graduated on May 23, 2010, from Suffolk University with my undergraduate degree majoring in English and minoring in Education with honors. Now, I am studying for a Master of Education here at UMass Boston. A professor from the English department introduced me to Professor Peter Kiang and to the Asian American Studies Program. I was a TA for Professor Kiang last semester, and the course (AsAmSt 225L) taught me historical experiences and issues of Asian American people and contributions of diverse Asian populations in the United States. What I appreciated most about the course was learning about real life stories of refugee people and the trials and tribulations they have had to endure. The stories are so powerful and really opened my eyes. Thank you for building bridges between people and generations.



Truc Lai

M.Ed. Special Education, 2016



I was born in Vietnam. My family left Vietnam in the middle of the night on a fishing boat, so I am one of the boat people. I lived in Lynn and went through the Lynn Public School system from kindergarten until I graduated in 2000. In case you wonder where my attitude comes

from, you will know why. => I also have a Bostonian accent when I say words like “car”, “park”, “Harvard”, etc. I just can’t help it.

I was a Youth-Learn member for CAPAY when I was in high school. CAPAY was where I was able to connect to people that were going through the same struggles that I was going through as an Asian American. I

also learned the history of Asians in America and gained a little more in-depth understanding of my voyage as a refugee from Vietnam.

I went to Bryant College for my undergraduate education and majored in Marketing and Management and minored in Psychology. I currently serve on the board of the Asian American Resource Workshop. I am also a core member of Asian Pacific Islander Movement. CAPAY taught me to be involved with my community; therefore, I give back to CAPAY by serving as an Adult Advisor.

I wanted to get my M.A. in Education because I am a helpful person; I love to help and provide information – seems like what a teacher would do. I have a lot of history with UMass Boston, and a lot of my mentors and community peers work at or went to UMass Boston for their education, so it just seemed to be the right fit.

After completing my Master’s Degree in Education, I hope to teach in a diverse school where I can help students get the best education they can. I grew up with a sister who lost her hearing, and it was very difficult for our family to get her resources. I hope to become an advocate for Asian American families to access resources in the community.

Sơn Ca Lâm

M.A. Applied Linguistics, 2012



I love UMass Boston. I have been at UMass Boston first as a CAPAY youth in high school, then as an undergraduate student in the Asian American Studies Program, and now as a graduate student in the Applied Linguistics program. As an undergraduate student, I double majored in Environmental, Earth and Oceanic Science (EEOS) and Comparative Ethnic Studies with a focus in Asian

American Studies. I feel like I grew up in this place. And I still have a lot of growing left to do here. The community and the people here are like home and family to me.

Below is an excerpt from my graduate admissions essay to give you an idea of why I am pursuing a degree in Applied Linguistics:

“We do not only use language, we live and experience language. Seeing language as an agent that forms my worldview is like seeing the world while recognizing the limitations of the lenses with which I have been equipped to view and make sense of it. Growing up in an urban diverse immigrant community – language is not just about communication – it is having access and ownership over your life.”

Pratna Kem
M.Ed. Teacher Education, 2012



I was born in Boston, MA, and have lived in the Greater Boston Area all of my life. I received my Bachelor of Arts Degree here at UMass Boston in English. In my freshman year of college, a friend of mine introduced me to the Asian American Studies Outreach program and to Professor Peter Kiang. Being a second generation Cambodian American, I found that a lot of what the Asian American Studies Program was doing seemed to be relevant to my life and my community. With the encouragement and support of the professors and my peers, I decided that I wanted to work in the Cambodian American community here in Massachusetts. Everything after that seemed to fall into place. So here I am, back at UMass Boston, working towards my Master's in Education in hopes of teaching high school English in the public school system of Lowell, MA.

Samuel Tsoi
M.S. Public Affairs: International Relations, 2012



I am thrilled to study at UMass Boston, where I plan to deepen my grasp of political theory, history, and public policy approaches and contemporary affairs – especially for witnessing the escalating drama of U.S.-China relations. I immigrated to America with my family from Hong Kong as a child, a journey that continues to inform my work and academic interests. I graduated from Boston Public schools, Gordon College, and spent a semester studying and working in a newsroom in Beijing.

I am currently a Policy Associate at the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, where I contribute to policy analysis, coalition-building, and advocacy campaigns for the purpose of advancing opportunities and protecting the rights of the foreign-born. I write for the Sampan Newspaper, where I cover civic developments in Boston's Chinatown, education, local politics and Asian American issues. I also worked in the field of corporate social responsibility and interned at a state senator's office – experiences which illustrated for me the critical need for collaboration and innovation among public, private and not-for-profit sectors in tackling complex local and global challenges.

My wife Amanda and I are residents in Arlington and members of the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church.



(Photo by Peter Kiang)

Asian American Studies - Spring 2011 Course Listing

AsAmSt 220 Special Topics: Asian & African Diasporas in the Americas

Dr. Chris Fung MWF 11:00-11:50am W-1-46

This course is a comparative investigation of the similarities and differences between Asian and African Diasporas in four New World contexts: Hawaii, Cuba, the U.S. and Brazil. The emphasis will be on introducing students to the ways in which social, political, economic, and historical forces operate in areas of the Americas where both Black and Asian communities exist and the relations (or lack of relations) between them.

AsAmSt/AmSt/Soc 223L Asians in the US

Mr. Jon Iftikar MWF 2:00-2:50pm M-1-209

This multi-disciplinary course examines the social, historical, and structural contexts defining the historical experiences of Asians in the U.S. Topics include immigration, labor, community settlement, race relations, gender, stereotypes, international politics, and local communities.

AsAmSt 226 Becoming South Asians

Dr. Elora Chowdhury TuTh 9:30-10:45am W-1-41
TuTh 11:00am-12:15pm W-1-12

This course examines the history and contemporary issues of people in the U.S. with ancestry from countries such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Through course readings, films, guest lectures, and student projects, the course will explore global migration patterns, the formation of diverse South Asian communities, and cross-cutting issues of race, ethnicity, culture, class, and gender.

AsAmSt 228L Asian Women in the US

Dr. Patricia Nakamoto Neilson Tuesdays 4:00-6:45pm W-1-29

Drawing on women's voices in literature, sociocultural research, and historical analysis, this course examines the experiences of Asian women in the U.S. Topics include transformation of traditional cultural roles; resistance to race, gender, class oppression; and global contexts.

AsAmSt 326 Multiracial Experiences

Mr. John Tawa TuTh 2:00-3:15pm W-1-12

This course explores the experiences of multiracial individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. We will examine historical and current meanings of race and racialization, including the personal, community, and political implications of racial categorizations, racial purity, and newer ideas of multiraciality and changing boundaries. We will consider racial identities, not only as personal creations, but also as social experiences that reflect group issues of belonging, exclusion, and the negotiation of multiple, complex, and contradicting meanings of race and racialization. We will consider issues of mental health, education, and community organizing for, by, and in relation to multiracial peoples.

AsAmSt 345 Asian American Cultures and Health Practices

Dr. Haeok Lee Thursdays 4:00-6:45pm W-1-47

Students examine critical health issues among diverse Asian cultures and communities, including cultural influences on health behaviors and practices of Asian Americans and the relationship between health of Asian Americans and social, political, and economic contexts. Students conduct field work in diverse Asian communities and develop culturally appropriate health intervention strategies or policies for individuals, families, and groups in local Asian communities.

AsAmSt/Engl 350L Asian American Literary Voices

Ms. Suji Kwock Kim TuTh 12:30-1:45pm W-1-61

What themes can we find in the poems, stories, plays, and novels of Asian American writers? How does an Asian American writer's individual voice reflect her/his socio-cultural context? Through critical reading, writing, and shared discussion, these questions are explored in literary works by a variety of Asian American immigrant and U.S.-born writers.

AsAmSt 370 Asian American Media Literacy

Dr. Shirley Tang TuTh 12:30-1:45pm W-1-60

This course enables students to develop a critical eye toward images and representations in the media, to examine thoughtfully how their media use has affected their attitudes and identities, and to explore the possibilities of creating alternative media to express Asian American voices and experiences more effectively.

AsAmSt 375L Indian Cinema

Dr. Lakshmi Srinivas Tuesdays 5:30-8:15pm M-2-207
Thursdays 5:30-8:15pm W-1-48

This course will provide an introduction to Indian cinema and to Indian culture and society through the study of films. The Indian film industry is the largest producer of feature films in the world. In this class, we will examine the films as entertainment as well as cultural narratives and commentaries on society, exploring themes such as social change, the family and gender.

AsAmSt 397 Applied Research in Asian American Studies I

Dr. Shirley Tang TuTh 2:00-3:15pm W-4-122

This course will support upper-level AsAmSt students who wish to continue digital story development, production, and exhibition opportunities on a range of topics, including, but not limited to Cambodian American community health and education.

AsAmSt 398 Applied Research in Asian American Studies II

— The Iraq War: Refugees & Veterans

Dr. Rajini Srikanth Thursdays 4:00-6:45pm W-1-29
& Ms. Widad Al-Edanie

This special co-led course collaboration between the Asian American Studies Program and University Honors Program will enable students to explore the distinct and diverse voices and experiences of two populations who have each been profoundly affected by the war in Iraq: Iraqi refugees and U.S. veterans. How are their specific perspectives and issues unique? How do they interact and converge? How do they diverge and contradict? Presentations by local community leaders, writers, and educators will highlight the course.

AsAmSt 497 Teaching and Learning in Asian American Studies I

Staff Thursdays 5:30-8:15pm W-1-55

This collaboratively-taught seminar by UMB AsAmSt faculty and staff enables advanced undergraduates, graduate students, and practitioners to review critical research and policy studies concerning Asian Americans and education while developing specific Asian American Studies education projects relevant to K-12, higher education, and community education settings that serve Asian American populations.

AsAmSt 479 Independent Study II

RIPPLES

Asian American Studies Program Newsletter

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UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program offers culturally-responsive instruction in the classroom with holistic practices of mentoring, community-building, service-learning, and advocacy to address the social and academic needs of students as well as the critical capacity-building needs of local Asian American communities. For more information, questions, comments on the program and/or newsletter, please contact us.

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