Asian American scholars from across the national convened in Austin for the national Asian American Studies conference April 4 to 10. The Center for Asian American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin hosted the event at the Omni Hotel downtown.

The Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, and the Center for Asian American Studies at UT Austin celebrates its 10th anniversary.

“It’s a great opportunity to assess the field and to look specifically at Texas,” said Madeline Hsu, UT Center for Asian American Studies director and associate professor.

Texas is home to the third largest population of Asian Pacific Americans, and hosting the conference in Austin is an opportunity to draw attention to Asians in the southern United States, Hsu said.

This year’s theme, “Emergent Cartographies” highlighted a new way of examining Asian American immigration through the Americas at large, including Latin America and Mexico. Some of the earliest Asians to immigrate to the Americas came via Mexico in 1560 through the Spanish galleon trade, Hsu said.

Evelyn Hu-Dehart, professor of history at Brown University, received the lifetime achievement award for her pioneering work researching Asian immigration from Latin America.

One session re-united former student activists known as the “UT-10” who were arrested during a demonstration at the UT Tower demanding the creation of the Center for Asian American Studies at UT.

UT graduate Debbie Chen commented from the audience about earlier efforts to push for more Asian American studies courses in the late 1980s and early 1990s when she was a student.

“It’s been a long time coming,” she said. “From when we went to school to now, there is more of an Asian American identity. You see this emerging self-awareness.”

One audience member compared the activism of the UT-10 in 1999 to the battles students are currently fighting as the University cuts the budget and programs. He encouraged people to get involved with the Stop the Cuts coalition.

“The economic situation facing everyone is turning the promise of an education to ‘Generation Debt,’ with no guarantee of a decent job,” he said. “It really matters what kind of education you get, and this is the perfect opportunity to shape the education you are getting at UT.”

Community service awards were given to recognize local Austin activists. Amy Wong Mok, founder and CEO of the Asian American Cultural Center, received the Individual Community Service Award; Masashi Niwano of the Austin Asian American Film Festival received the Event Community Service Award, and SAHELI for Asian Families received the Organizational Community Service award.

The 30th Anniversary of AAAS brought together most of the past presidents: [back] Mary Yu Danico (President Elect), Gail Nomura, Stephen Sumida, Josephine Lee, Rick Bonus (President), & Gary Okimoto, [front] Shirley Hune, Dana Tahagi, Douglas Lee (Founding President) & Franklin Odo.
MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR
MADELINE Y. HSU, PH.D.
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Friends and Colleagues:

During this past year, CAAS enjoyed a flourishing of community networks and connections in support of our mission. Nationally, we hosted the Association for Asian American Studies Annual conference in partnership with our amazing colleagues staffing the Secretariat at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, giving us a wonderful opportunity to showcase southern approaches to Asian American Studies. Within Austin, we helped to develop greater resources and outreach among Asian Pacific Americans in conjunction with Esther Chung, the Asian American Neighborhood Liaison at the Austin History Center, Masashi Niwano, director of the Austin Asian American Film Festival, and Nancy Bui and Linda Ho Peche of the Vietnamese American Heritage Foundation’s 500 Oral History Project. On campus, CAAS has forged new working relationships with dedicated and inspired colleagues such as Dr. Ge Chen and Jennifer Wang of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement to develop the Texas Exes Asian Alumni Network and other outreach students to APA longhorns, Jaya Soni of the Multicultural Information Center, Dr. Leena Batra of Counseling, Learning and Career Services for the Asian American Students’ Lunch Series, the Asian American Culture Committee, and our gracious colleagues in Fine Arts, Cherise Smith and Michael Ray Charles, who conceived and helped us execute the “Lectures in Art and Diaspora: Asians in America” speaker series.

2009-2010 also witnessed an expansion of CAAS faculty ranks. Dr. Eric Tang will be joining as core faculty housed in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies and serving as co-director of the Community Engagement Center. We also welcomed several new affiliates: Snehal Shingavi in English, Wenhong Chen in Radio-Television-Film, and Beili Liu in Fine Arts.

We look forward to continued adventures in growth in 2010-2011!

Madeline Y. Hsu, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Asian American Studies
Associate Professor, Department of History

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 2000, The Center for Asian American Studies (CAAS) is the newest Ethnic Studies center at the University of Texas. We are an interdisciplinary program providing diverse programming promoting awareness of Asian Pacific American (APA) issues and community through a undergraduate major and minor degrees, an honors program, lectures, films, conferences, speakers series, discussion forums, and collaborative partnerships with community and campus organizations. CAAS seeks to develop and highlight transnational and hemispheric perspectives and narratives of Asians in the Americas.

To join CAAS’s Listserv, email us at: aas@austin.utexas.edu

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This September, Eric Tang joins the core faculty of the Center for Asian American Studies. He holds an appointment as assistant professor in UT's newly minted African and African Diaspora Studies Department, and he will also serve as the Associate Director of the UT Community Engagement Center (part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement). Last year, Tang was a visiting faculty member of CAAS, and prior to this he was an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago (African American Studies Department and the Asian American Studies program). In 2006, he completed his doctorate in American Studies at New York University. Tang was born and raised in New York City, and his current manuscript, entitled Unsettled, focuses on the struggles of Cambodian refugees who, following the genocidal wars of the 1970s, were resettled to the Bronx during the early-to-mid 1980s. It is an ethnographic work that stems from his years as a community organizer in the refugee neighborhoods of the Northwest Bronx. Unsettled explores the lives of refugees as they intersected with African Americans and Puerto Ricans of the Bronx who were experiencing a war of their own: the "urban crisis" marked by endemic poverty, deteriorating housing stock, government neglect, business disinvestment and urban conflagration. Indeed, the refugees arrived to the Bronx during a time when the area was known throughout the country for its fire epidemic. Since 2006, Tang has also conducted field research in post-Katrina New Orleans, specifically in New Orleans East, a predominantly black section of the city that is also home to the city's largest concentration of Vietnamese Americans. His research here focuses on the nuanced forms of solidarity that emerged between blacks and Asians following the great storm. In 2007, Tang earned the New America Media prize for "Outstanding Katrina reporting" and in 2009 he received the Comparative Ethnic Studies prize of the American Studies Association for his paper "On Alternative Citizenships: the Vietnamese of Black New Orleans East." Tang's next project will explore racial violence in New York City during the 1980s.

On matters closer home, Tang will serve as the Associate Director of the UT Community Engagement Center (located on East 11th Street near I-35). Here he will direct the Community Engagement Incubator which supports grassroots, social justice groups in Austin by linking them with faculty and other university resources that can support specific projects such as community organizing trainings, collaborative research and community documentation. In this capacity he is currently working with the Center for Asian American Studies to compile a social mapping of Austin's Asian communities. Finally, Tang will serve as CAAS' representative on the Network of Asian American Organizations.

A. Naomi Paik is an assistant professor of American studies and Asian American studies at the University of Texas, Austin. She earned her Ph.D. in American studies from Yale University and was a postdoctoral fellow in Asian American studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She is working on a project entitled Testifying to Rightlessness, which reads testimonial narratives of subjects rendered rightless by the U.S. state through their imprisonment in camps, and has an article forthcoming in Social Text, which discusses HIV positive Haitian refugees’ testifying to their indefinite imprisonment in a Guantánamo refugee camp.

Her research and teaching interests include Asian American and comparative ethnic studies; transnational U.S. cultural studies; U.S. imperialism; social and cultural approaches to legal studies; theories of race and imperialism; transnational feminism; carceral spaces; and labor, race, and migration.

Eric Tang, CAAS Core Faculty
Assistant Professor; African and African Diaspora Studies & Associate Director, UT Community Engagement Center (DCE)

Beili Liu, CAAS Faculty Affiliate
Assistant Professor, 3D Foundations Area Head, Department of Art and Art History

Beili Liu’s research and creative work have followed two parallel paths: conceptualization and discovery through materials and process and examination of her Asian American cultural background in an effort to create work that bridges cultural differences. These two trajectories influence and strengthen each other.

Liu’s work depends on a genuine connection to the material. By playing with the material—testing, manipulating, experimenting and examining, even leaving it for months—she watches for the moment of surprise, when the material responds to one or a series of actions, and leads to an exciting physical or conceptual outcome. Liu embraces a broad variety of materials in her creative process from natural elements such as salt, water, and clay, to digitally processed images, video, and sound. She employs a wide range of working methods to create her installation and sculptural work. Liu’s processes have included not only traditional techniques such as woodworking, metal fabrication, hand sewing, fabric dying and weaving, but also unusual processes that she has discovered through experimenting with the material. Often the unlikely results from these processes lend to the conceptual foundation of the work.

Creative practice today, Beili Liu believes, must adapt to the challenge of sharing a vision both rooted in and transcendent of cultural circumstances. Study, research and pay attention to culture, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality issues and subjects, both from the past and our current time. Cultural awareness will afford you open eyes and mind in seeking meaning and depth in your creative work, and will contribute greatly in your growth as future artists.

Liu would like to encourage students, especially Asian American students to base their creative activity on the understanding and respect of their own culture, as well as differences that exist among different cultures. Examining where we originate from and where we reside today is crucial in cultivating our understanding and respect of cultural differences.
Asian American Staff Spotlights

Dr. Ge Chen

Dr. Ge Chen is the Assistant Vice President of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin. She oversees the division-wide assessment efforts and initiatives and coordinates the assessment of student learning and program effectiveness for a wide array of units in DDCE. Her other administrative responsibility includes guiding and supporting several academic success programs administered by the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence in DDCE. The programs in LCAE assist underrepresented college students for college success and a completion of a postsecondary education. She serves as the liaison of DDCE to collaborate with other campus entities in enhancing diversity outreach, recruitment and retention for both undergraduate students and graduate students at UT Austin. Ge Chen’s instruction and administration experiences include instructor for Critical Thinking, Research Strategies, and Reading at three institutions of higher education and a TRIO appointment at Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas.

For the last fifteen years, Ge Chen has devoted her professional skills and knowledge to serving under-represented students for college matriculation and continued success in higher education. She brings strong knowledge and skills in higher education administration, student trends and development, and best practices for first year experience and student retention. Chen has served on numerous University wide committees and task forces to promote equity and excellence in higher education and to improve recruitment, retention, and advancement of under-represented student populations. As the President of the Asian/Asian American Faculty & Staff Association at UT Austin, Dr. Chen firmly believes in developing more APA faculty, staff and student leaders and in giving back to the community. She works persistently to encourage and support the APA civic engagement activities and create opportunities for leadership development through the association.

Ge Chen earned her bachelor degree of arts from Jilin Normal University in Siping, China, and her master degree and doctorate from the University of Arkansas College of Education, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Jaya Soni

Jaya Soni is the Leadership Program Coordinator in the Multicultural Information Center (MIC) of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin. In her role, she advises the Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective (APAC) and Queer People of Color and Allies (QPOCA). APAC and QPOCA are student run agencies that organize educational events aimed at uniting their respective communities and advancing social justice. Jaya Soni also coordinates all assessment activities within the office and is responsible for providing leadership opportunities and training to MIC students.

Next year Jaya Soni will be teaching a course for the Center for Asian American Studies that will encourage active community participation and highlight some of the major contemporary Asian American Issues. As part of a “conscious raising” process, one course component will be that students follow current news topics through updated community blogs and be required to journal their reflections.

Jaya is pursuing her doctorate in Sociology and will be taking her comprehensive exams in the fall. Her research interests include: Asian American issues, identity, race, ethnicity, gender, immigration, sexuality, and organizing.

Jaya earned an Honors BA in Social Anthropology and BA in Communications from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor in 2005. She earned her MA in sociology from the University of Texas in 2007 in which her thesis focused on the social networks of South Asian immigrant gas station workers in central Texas.

RAISE AWARDS

The RAISE Excellence Awards, co-sponsored by the Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective (APAC) and the Asian/Asian American Faculty and Staff Association (AAAFSA) is a chance for the UT community to come together and celebrate the outstanding accomplishments of Asian Americans on campus. Awards are given to students, faculty, and staff who represent excellence in the Asian American community. This year’s RAISE Excellence Awards celebrates an “Asian Americans Today” theme and will have Austin’s First Asian American Municipal Court Judge Ramey Ko as the keynote speaker. The award ceremony took place Thursday, April 22nd from 5-7pm at the Santa Rita Room in the Texas Union.

APAC Winners:
✦ Emerging Leaders: Ishita Paul,
✦ Sonali Brahmbhatt
✦ Established Leaders: Jenn Lee,
✦ Daphne Hong
✦ Professional/Academic: Asian
✦ Business Students Association
✦ Service: Delta Epsilon Psi
✦ Social: Indian Students Association
✦ Cultural: Hindu Students Council

AAAFSA Winners:
✦ Staff: Smita Ruzicka
✦ Faculty: Dr. Patrick Wong
AAS 2008 Graduate
Sabrina Jiwani

As a transfer student at the University of Texas, I didn’t really have a set path – I was looking to magically be led to a major that I would thoroughly enjoy and that would allow me to further my intellectual interests. I fell into Asian American Studies because a mentor of mine had been a major and told me that I might enjoy a class or two here and there. After meeting the CAAS staff and taking some really great classes, I realized that I would have regretted not getting a foundation in something so integral to my life: Asian American history. As a small major, AAS helped me develop strong relationships with my professors and other CAAS staff, develop my research and writing skills, and allowed me the freedom and mobility I wanted to peruse different types of graduate school.

Because of the relationships I created through CAAS, I was able to explore different possibilities; the entire staff was so supportive of what I wanted to do and the variety of classes enabled me to delve into what I was really interested in: oppressed culture and the ethical and personal ramifications of not creating your own future as an Asian American. I didn’t want to live under the guise of my overprotective family anymore. After graduation, I went straight into law school and it was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. Because of the profound analytical skill and writing ability I honed through CAAS, I have been able to successfully navigate my way through law school and have been able to experience things that I’ve wanted my entire life.

I spent this past summer in Accra, Ghana interning for a legal NGO called the Legal Resources Centre, doing human rights/human trafficking work and gaining litigation experience in court. My experiences in Ghana were amazing: not only was I there to work but I got to volunteer in an orphanage, teach a class in a small public school, engage in cultural Ghanaian activities, and travel to other bordering countries like Togo and Côte d’Ivoire. It also allowed me the freedom to travel afterwards to Paris, Nice, and Dublin. After law school I plan on moving to Chicago to practice and then seeing where life takes me. All in all, Asian American Studies led me to the nontraditional path while still allowing me the opportunities to maintain all the traditional concepts of an undergraduate major/education. But most importantly, I’m happier than I can ever remember and I don’t think this feeling is going to falter anytime soon!

AAS Major Spotlight
Hanna Huang

What factors were involved when you decided to become an AAS major?
When I made the decision to become an AAS major, it was largely due to my involvement in Asian American organizations on campus and in the intercollegiate arena. Through my experiences as a student leader in the Asian American community, I encountered many of the issues and was exposed to topics that I realized I also learned in the introductory Asian American studies courses I was taking.

How has being an AAS major reflected in your academic and personal life?
Academically, being an AAS major has really improved my GPA because the classes are more engaging and pertinent to me. I’m
essentially learning a lot about myself! Personally, I find myself more aware of the AA community I belong to and have met so many wonderful friends and mentors through AAS classes and CAAS.

What personal benefits have you received by being an active member of your UT-Austin community?
Being an active member of the UT Austin community has been a rich and rewarding experience. I have been able to meet amazing leaders by being involved and am more aware of the issues that we face in our community daily. By being active, I’m more engaged and connected to the community.

In what ways have you been involved with the UT-Austin/ Austin community or Global Asian/ Asian American communities?
Through one of my AAS courses, I became involved with volunteering with SAHELI, a wonderful non-profit organization located in Austin. Since becoming involved with SAHELI as well as working on events for the UT-Austin Asian American community, I have found that the Austin Asian American community is a small but engaging one that is extremely welcoming and tight-knit. Seeing familiar faces at Asian American events on campus and in the local community is very endearing. I have also been involved in the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association for the past two years, and am currently the Philanthropy Director, a new addition to the organization this year.

If someone was interested in becoming active members of their community, what would you advise them to do or think about?
Attend events and don’t be afraid to flag down and talk to someone who is involved in the planning process. Chances are, they can point you toward the right direction. I also recommend volunteering for events in the community to get to know the who’s who behind all of them!

If someone was interested in majoring/minoring in AAS, how would you advise them?
Asian American Studies courses are definitely great classes to take! Not only do you learn about contemporary issues, you can learn a lot about your own history as an Asian American. The courses bridge a variety of topics to suit any interest and major. Not only does it look good diversity-wise on your transcript, the classes are very engaging and tend to be in smaller class settings.

Organization Event Spotlight:
ITASA 2010 Midwest Conference
March 26-28, 2010

(TASA) of The University of Texas at Austin, was attended by over a hundred students from around the nation this past spring. The Round Up theme of the conference was a hearty celebration of Austin’s Texan roots and indicative of how the Taiwanese American community is a melting pot of diverse individuals.

ITASA is a non-profit organization providing events and resources that explore and celebrate Taiwanese American identity in order to inspire, empower, and activate its community. The local TASA student chapter at the University of Texas at Austin is a social and cultural organization dedicated to providing a sense of community for ethnic Taiwanese Americans, as well as those interested in Taiwanese culture.

"This conference was an opportunity for those individuals to gather and share their experiences, engage in the greater Taiwanese American community, and to connect with inspirational leaders," said Patrick Lu, public relations chair of the conference. The Round Up's vision was to continue a tradition of fostering a community that is culturally aware and active in the Taiwanese American community.

As a first time host for an ITASA conference, the 2010 Midwest Conference Team had plenty of exciting activities for participants as well as a dedication to bringing out great leaders and scholars in the Taiwanese American community to explore the issues of Identity, Community, and Culture. Although the conference is centered on Taiwanese American topics, most are pertinent issues in the Asian American community as well. Speakers included Singer-Songwriter Cynthia Lin, Taiwanese American Community Activist Ho Chie Tsai, Producer Will Tiao, Actor Kelvin Yu renowned Historian Dr. Madeline Hsu, Graphic Artist Jerry Ma, Political/Community Activist Ramey Ko, AAPI Activist Eugenia Beh and many more.

UT-Austin Organization Spotlight:
Texas Exes Asian Alumni Network

The mission of the Texas Exes Asian Alumni Network is to connect Asian alumni with each other and with the Asian student community through scholarships, fellowship, and mentoring. We aim to preserve Asian culture and heritage and to build a stronger, more visible Asian community at The University of Texas at Austin.

All Asian alumni of The University of Texas at Austin are welcome to join the Texas Exes Asian Alumni Network. To sign up for the TEAAN e-newsletter, please visit the website below. As an official network of Texas Exes, we encourage you to become a member of the larger organization. Membership levels and fee vary depending on what you may be looking for.

Recently, TEAAN held its first social that officially launched the organization and its first annual GraduAsian to celebrate the graduation of Class of 2010 Asian students at UT. TEAAN’s upcoming events include a Fall Social, which the network is currently seeking support for. To participate on the Planning Committee for this event, see contact information below. TEAAN will also be looking forward to collaborating with many UT alumni for the Spring Break Externship Program, which will be launched in Spring 2011.

To get more involved or for more information, contact Jennifer Wang at asianalumni@alumni.utexas.net or visit the website at www.asiantexasesxes.org
Center for Asian American Studies

2009-2010 Programming

Ethnic Studies: 40 Years in the University & Beyond - Round Table Discussion
- The John L. Warfield Center for African & African American Studies
  Dr. Edmond Gordon
  Associate Professor in Anthropology
- Center for Asian American Studies
  Dr. Madeline Y. Hsu
  CAAS Director & Associate Professor of History
  Dr. Lok Siu (moderator), Associate Professor of Anthropology
- Center for Mexican American Studies
  Dr. Domino Renee Perez
  CMAS Acting Director & Associate Professor of English
- Indigenous Studies Initiative
  Dr. Shannon Speed
  Associate Professor of Anthropology

Lectures in Art and Diaspora: Asian in America
- Why Asian Americans Have No Art History
  Gordon H. Chang
- An American Diary
  Roger Shimomura
- Curator & Artist in Conversation
  Karin Higa & Wangechi Mutu
- Mining the Material: Time and Process
  Beili Liu
- Artist Talk
  Patty Chang

APA Lunch Discussions
Year Long Discussion Series Co-Sponsored with Counseling and Mental Health Center featuring psychologist Dr. Shalini Batra
- How Do You Define Yourself
- Forming Healthy Relationships in the APA Community
- Consciousness Raising and Activism
- What’s On Your Plate?
- APA Women and Career/Leadership Development

“Are You Angry Yet?!: Austin Asian American Film Festival Panel Discussion
- Angry Asian Man
  Philip Yu
- Nhi Lieu, Ph.D.
  Associate Professor in American Studies

2010 Association for Asian American Studies Annual Conference
Emergent Cartographies: Asian American Studies in the Twenty-First Century

“UT 10”: Student Activism & Ethnic Studies - Panel Discussion
In May 1999 a group of students opposing the arrest of 10 student protesters ended a week of unrest when administrators agreed to meet with them to discuss creating a new Asian American Studies Program. “UT 10” back at UT-Austin: Who were they, what they are doing now, and what you can do for your community.
Thank You for your contribution & continued support!

GIFTS & DONATION FORM

We invite all individuals who are interested in Asian American issues to support our Center. Our goal is to increase awareness of Asian American issues by facilitating multidisciplinary teaching and research enabling students to become active members of their community. Contributors will allow our Center to develop new courses, provide scholarships for students, increase research opportunities, and sponsor university and public programs.

Name: _________________________________________________________________

Mailing Address: _________________________________________________________

Email: _________________________________________________________________

Phone Number: (_________) __________________ - ___________________________

Targeted Giving

(Please check any of the following)

_____ Student Scholarships

_____ Faculty Development

_____ Community Outreach

Please find enclosed check for:

_____ $50 Supporter

_____ $100 CAAS Family Member

_____ $300 CAAS Leader Circle

_____ $500 500 Club Member

_____ Other (please specify amount $______________ )

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