Greetings!

Welcome back! Hope you all had a great summer. The upcoming academic year promises to be full of opportunities for you to have productive and eventful months ahead. Reflected in this newsletter is a compilation of the exciting activities and events of the past academic year.

In the next year, we hope to keep you apprised of the happenings in the Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP) and affiliated events each semester. Thanks for your interest in our program. If you have any ideas about topics that should be highlighted in this newsletter, please let us know.

Pat

Patricia A. Neilson, Ed.D.
Director, Asian American Student Success Program

About Paving Roads

_Paving Roads_ is the title of the Asian American Student Success Program’s second newsletter, because it is about the many different directions that AASSP and the UMass Boston community are going, as well as the many places that we have come from.

Just as all roads are interconnected, we hope to highlight the intersections, conjunctions, and new places our paths are taking us. As the first student-produced AASSP newsletter, it is our goal to pave this new road for many more issues to come.
Cambodian American Writing Initiative

The Cambodian American Writing Initiative was founded in the beginning of the 2013 Fall Semester to provide a safe space for UMass Boston Cambodian American students to express themselves while developing writing skills. The group allows students to connect with like-minded peers through the writing and performance of poetry, short stories, and spoken word. Thary Lim, a sophomore, explained, “There is always something to reflect on about our daily lives. These things bring our spirits up and down. The Cambodian American writing group helps me reflect on my days and makes me feel better the next day.”

The Cambodian American Writing Initiative released their first anthology of student work titled “Footprints: I Smell Lemongrass” this Spring Semester. “I Smell Lemongrass” is an anthology composed of writings and artwork from Cambodian Americans in the UMass Boston community. The pieces delve into the topics of one’s roots, home, and resilience. The anthology gives a voice to the experiences of today’s Cambodian American youth and demonstrates the ways in which previous generations’ struggles have shaped us today. The production of such an anthology is one step closer to filling the gap left by the underrepresentation of Cambodian Americans in literature.

College Outreach Visits

This spring, AASSP hosted three college visits for prospective students to come see the UMass Boston campus, learn how to get into college, and hear about the support and resources available here.

The first visit was with students from the Asian American Civic Association on March 24th. The morning consisted of a presentation by UMass Boston Admissions Counselor Richard Truong, an engaging college trivia game, a guided campus tour by Beacon Ambassador Van Tran, and a student panel of current UMass Boston students. To close the visit, our visitors worked with students in Professor Peter Kiang’s Asians in the U.S. class on a film response assignment.

On April 23rd, AASSP hosted six students from Lynn Classical High School. The high school students learned about the services that AASSP provides with an emphasis on the Peer-to-Peer (P2P) mentoring program for freshman and first-year transfer students at UMass Boston. They also received information about UMass Boston admissions requirements and played a college trivia game. At the end of the presentation, there was a discussion about personal statement essays, since several students had many questions about this aspect of their college applications.

Charlestown High School’s eleventh grade Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) students visited UMass Boston on June 9th. Thirteen students visited the campus to learn more about college life and transitioning from high school. During lunch in the cafeteria, two UMass Boston undergraduates who graduated from Charlestown High School came to speak with the students about their experiences at UMass Boston, choosing a major, and college life in general. The visit ended with the students sitting in on Professor Christopher Fung’s Peoples and Cultures of China class.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) Mentoring Program

AASSP completed another successful year of its Peer-to-Peer (P2P) mentoring program. Since September of 2012, P2P has been connecting UMass Boston’s upperclassmen (mentors) with new incoming UMass Boston students (mentees). Mentors and mentees were matched through a selection process based on the mentee’s preference and/or needs.

The goal of this peer mentoring program is to provide the mentee with support through their academic, professional, and social development while also connecting them to other students as a way to foster a sense of belonging on campus. AASSP understands that it can be a challenge for new students to transition to the college environment, especially at a commuter campus like UMass Boston.

Coming into its third year, P2P has been a success with the students it serves. We have seen an increase in the number of both mentors as well as mentees. According to Moi Le, a freshman mentee, participating in P2P gave him a newfound appreciation for having a mentor, someone to talk to about topics other than academics such as identity and self-discovery.
Asian American Career Development Workshop Series

Career Specialist Amanda Stupakevich advises students during the Career Exploration session

This Spring Semester, AASSP and the Office of Career Services and Internships co-hosted the fifth semester-long Asian American Career Development Workshop Series. The series was designed to inform, encourage, and empower Asian American students as they work towards their career goals.

In addition to the four workshops that have been offered in the past (Shattering Perceptions, Career Exploration, The Hidden Job Market, and The Interview), two new sessions were piloted this spring. At the new Dress for Success session, students learned about the main body type classifications and how to dress professionally for an interview or in the workplace according to their own individual body type. The new Etiquette Dinner workshop taught participants the importance of knowing formal dining customs in the professional world. Students learned the specifics of formal dining in a real life setting as they were led step-by-step through a full four course meal.

Students participating in the Dress for Success session

Peer Tutoring Program

This past year, AASSP implemented its first Peer Tutoring Program. The mission of this program is to provide culturally responsive, high quality critical reading and writing tutoring, and development for Asian American first generation, refugee, and immigrant students at UMass Boston to increase student retention, persistence, course completion, and graduation rates.

In this first year, the tutoring program was able to assist many students and accumulated a caseload of forty-five students who used the services at least twice a month. The program was also successful in helping students complete their course writing assignments, write scholarship essays, and pass UMass Boston’s required Writing Proficiency Exam. Next year, AASSP plans to grow the program by providing study skills workshops as well as study groups.

Community Spotlights

Graduating student Kim Soun Ty

Kim Soun Ty is a second generation Cambodian American young woman of refugee parents from Dorchester, Massachusetts. She completed her bachelor’s degree this past May in Asian American Studies and Sociology. Through her passion for and dedication to urban youth work and her scholarly work within the Asian American Studies Program, Kim has been able to work closely with faculty and students to apply what she has learned to work with Chinese American and Cambodian American youth.

This spring, Kim received the East Coast Asian American Student Union (ECAASU) 2014 Trailblazer award. The Trailblazer award is given each year to a student who embodies ECAASU’s goal to inspire, educate, and empower those interested in Asian American issues and communities. As this year’s award winner, Kim spoke at the 2014 ECAASU Conference in Washington, D.C. In the Fall Semester of 2012, Kim also received the Provost Undergraduate Research Scholarship award. This designation allowed her to explore the kinds of struggles urban youth go through at UMass Boston through the research of digital stories as Professor Shirley Tang’s research assistant.

Kim continues to strive to create pathways into college for high school students and is currently working with students from Lynn Classical High School. She inspires youths like herself to attend college and become actively engaged. Last year, Kim led a group of thoughtful and passionate undergraduate students as the President of the Khmer Culture Association at UMass Boston. Kim pushed the energy of the group towards thinking about the underrepresentation of Cambodian Americans in higher education. Kim sets her goals high and has been able to achieve all that she has during her undergraduate career because of all of the support she has received from the
Asian American Student Success Program and the Asian American Studies Program’s dedicated faculty and staff. Kim says, “I invest so much into the programs, and the programs invest so much in me.” Faculty and staff including Tri Quach, Drs. Pat Neilson, Loan Dao, Shirley Tang, and Peter Kiang, as well as her peers, have helped her grow in different areas of her life personally, socially, politically, and academically. All of Kim’s hard work through advocacy, outreach, and activism blazes a trail to encourage urban Cambodian and Southeast Asian Americans to pursue their own higher education in local communities.

The struggles Kim faced growing up as a daughter of refugee parents has shown her the importance of higher education, especially for Cambodian Americans. Kim hopes to become an ethnic studies professor in the future and to continue her work with Asian American students and communities.

\[\text{IAAS Anthony Chan Student Award}\]

\[\text{Dr. Paul Watanabe, Director of the IAAS, presents Henry Ho with the Anthony Chan Student Award}\]

Each year, UMass Boston’s Institute for Asian American Studies awards the Anthony Chan Student Award to an exceptional undergraduate student to honor their achievements in Asian American Studies and engagement in Asian American communities. This year, AASSP would like to congratulate the 2014 Anthony Chan Student Award winner Henry Ho.

Henry has numerous accomplishments in both the Asian American Studies Program and in local Asian American communities to his credit. Over the course of his undergraduate career, he has completed a Program-of-Study in Asian American Studies and served as a peer mentor for Professor Shirley Tang’s Asian American Media Literacy class. Henry also participated in UMass Boston’s Provost Scholars program as an undergraduate research assistant for Professor Tang.

Henry’s accomplishments also extend beyond academics. He has also done instrumental work for 8centric, a local organization focused on benefiting Asian American communities, facilitating ESL courses. In 2012, Henry won the Boston Asian American Film Festival (BAAFF)’s annual Short Waves competition with a short film based on his family.

\[\text{Asian-American Women’s Political Initiative (AAWPI) State House Fellowship Graduation}\]

Celebrating the fifth year anniversary since its founding, the Asian-American Women’s Political Initiative (AAWPI) graduated another class of young women from its State House Fellowship Program this May. The graduation took place on May 17th at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) with guests such as State Representative Tacky Chan, Megan Costello of the Boston Women’s Commission, and speeches from State Senator Linda Dorcena Forry and Mayor of Fitchburg Lisa Wong.

Among the seven graduates was UMass Boston’s very own Thary Sun Lim. Thary is a junior majoring in Asian American Studies and minoring in East Asian Studies. On her experience with the AAWPI program, Thary said, “The love and support of the strong sisterhood of AAWPI gave me the confidence to push through many challenges. I have learned a lot about politics at the State House and in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I have also learned a great deal from each of the sisters. I hope to further empower young women the way that AAWPI has empowered me.”

AAWPI is the only political leadership organization for Asian American women in the country. Its State House Fellowship Program seeks to address the dearth of Asian American women in government by offering extensive legislative training and mentoring to a new cohort of young Asian American women each year through a rigorous program at the Massachusetts State House each January through May.
Dr. Tomoko Tokunaga is a postdoctoral fellow who came to UMass Boston in March 2014 to complete a six-month visiting scholar residency with the Asian American Studies Program. Tomoko received her doctorate in Educational Policy Studies from the University of Maryland, College Park and received the 2013 Dissertation of the Year Award from the American Educational Research Association. Her dissertation entitled “Sites of belonging, sites of empowerment: How Asian American girls construct ‘home’ in a borderland world” focuses on the ways that Asian American high school girls construct notions of home.

Tomoko's research interest stems from her own experiences as a child growing up in different countries and having to learn to negotiate different cultures. During an exchange program at the University of California, San Diego during college, she noticed the marginalization of immigrant students she worked with. Tomoko later returned to Japan and decided to teach and mentor immigrant students. This led Tomoko to conduct research on Filipina immigrant girls in Japan during graduate school. Tomoko says, “One of my goals is to support the development of youth organizations and schools where marginalized immigrant youths can thrive.”

As a postdoctoral fellow, Tomoko is continuing her research on Asian immigrant youth in the U.S. and their notions of home, belonging, and citizenship. She hopes to give voice to youth and to use her international lens to bridge local and global communities.

Asian American Studies Program Graduation Celebration

UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program honored its graduating students at a celebration on May 22, 2014. There was one individual major and fourteen students who completed the six-course Program-of-Study, making this year the program's most prolific graduation.

In order to commemorate this achievement, AASSP sponsored a student-led project to create handmade graduation stoles and handkerchiefs for the graduates. The gifts were designed and produced by a committee of students. The committee designed the stoles with strips of ikat fabric running across the width of the stoles since various forms of ikat fabric are produced in almost all cultures around the world, especially in Asia. The stoles were presented to each graduate as a symbol of the meaningful experiences and lasting connections that students gain in the Asian American Studies Program. The handkerchiefs were hand embroidered with each graduate's initials and a personalized font to signify the individual journey and growth that is such a distinct aspect of the Asian American Studies Program as well.

10th Annual Asian American Digital Storytelling Festival

UMass Boston’s Asian American Studies Program held its 10th Annual Asian American Digital Storytelling Festival on May 13, 2014. The event was co-sponsored by AASSP and was held on the 11th floor of the Healey Library.

Showcasing digital stories created by the students of Professor Shirley Tang’s Asian American Studies (AsAmSt) 370 Asian American Media Literacy class, the event is known for the emotional stories that students often share.
These stories take a closer look into real-life events, hardships, and histories in the lives of students and their families.

Digital stories produced by students in Professor Tang’s class have been honored each year since 2011 at the Boston Asian American Film Festival (BAAFF). This year, Jose Soto, a senior, won BAAFF’s Short Waves Competition, a screening of short videos in honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May. Jose’s video titled “Who I Really Am...” portrays his experience of reclaiming his Khmer identity after being reintroduced to an Asian American community at UMass Boston. “speak_easy,” a video by Allister Quilon, a junior, was also selected as a Short Waves finalist. Allister’s video touched upon the issue of the generation gap in the midst of migration and changing cultural values.

“Moving images move people to make movement” is Professor Tang’s philosophy behind her AsAmSt 370 class. Known by her students for her interactive teaching style and passion for her work, she is the architect behind the course and the annual Digital Storytelling Festival. Artistic advisor Tri V. Quach, along with this semester’s peer mentors, Henry Ho, Kim Soun Ty, Mary Ouk, and Ally Yee, assisted Professor Tang throughout the semester to make this event possible.

At the end of the semester, students prepare for final after final. To help students through the tough final exam period and to celebrate the end of classes and their semester accomplishments, the Asian American Student Success Program hosted two End-of-Semester Open Houses this year. These events gave students an opportunity to take a break from hectic paper writing and studying to enjoy food and activities while spending time with friends and meeting new ones. The open houses were also great opportunities for students who were not familiar with AASSP to learn about its mission and the support the office can offer them.

The Winter Open House took place on December 18, 2013. Students participated in games and activities such as pin-the-nose-on-the-reindeer, cookie decorating, and a photo booth for students to get their pictures taken with props. Students even got to sing karaoke together.

The End-of-Semester Field Day took place on May 14, 2014. The beautiful spring day drew in many students to take part in a number of activities on the Campus Center Circle Lawn such as flag football, Frisbee, string horseshoes, origami, and a water balloon toss. AASSP Director Dr. Patricia Neilson even brought in her Hawaiian shave ice machine to serve up delicious ice cones for everyone.
Asian American Women in Politics Panel

On April 14, 2014, AASSP hosted a panel discussion featuring a number of Asian American women doing groundbreaking work in the political arena. Panelists Alderman At-Large Amy Mah Sangiolo, Councilor At-Large Michelle Wu, Mayor of Fitchburg Lisa Wong, Representative Keiko Orrall, and Massachusetts State Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz all shared their stories and experiences with the audience. The Asian American Women In Politics panel discussion was co-sponsored by AASSP, the Asian-American Women’s Political Initiative (AAWPI), and the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies.

The panelists shared their personal stories as trailblazers including struggles, challenges, and highlights of working in politics, a field where there is a lack of Asian American female representation. The lively discussion was moderated by Diana Hwang, Founder and Executive Director of AAWPI and Eliza Yuen, AASSP’s Mentoring/Connections Coordinator. The panel was a first of its kind and created an intimate space for students to engage in a discussion with elected officials paving the way for other Asian American women aspiring to build careers in politics.

2nd Annual Night Market

On April 17, 2014, AASSP and UMass Boston’s Asian Student Center (ASC) hosted the second annual Night Market on campus. As stated in the Night Market passports: “This year’s event is focused on raising awareness and creating dialogue on campus about important issues affecting Asian American communities today while also showcasing the creativity and innovation of our students.”

The event consisted of seven different interactive activity booths covering topics from issues of mental health in Asian American communities to family history. Students received “passports” to get stamped after participating in each activity. Participants could also pose for photographs to show their solidarity with the University of California, Los Angeles in response to a racist and sexist flyer mailed to the UCLA Asian American Center.

The Night Market proved to be a success with a high turnout. Darlene Dao, a freshman student at UMass Boston, said, “[The issues] are out there, but they’re not usually specifically pointed out. The Night Market did a good job, because they brought up things that were happening to me that I didn’t realize myself.”

Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) Conference Trip

Professor Peter Kiang’s Asian American Studies (AsAmSt) 498 Teaching and Learning in Asian American Studies II class attended the 2014 Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) conference in San Francisco this April to present their semester-long research projects. The eight students in the class, six undergraduate and two graduate, hosted two panels to present their research on UMass Boston’s models of Asian American Studies curriculum, pedagogy, and student development.
The AsAmSt 498 class, also known as the Asian American Leadership Opportunities Program (AALOP), is an AANAPISI grant-funded course designed to familiarize students with research methods in Asian American Studies and education.

The eight AALOP students were able to meet many influential Asian Americans in higher education, such as Dr. Patrick Hayashi, former Associate President of the University of California, and Frank Wu, Chancellor and Dean of University of California, Hastings College of Law. According to undergraduate student Huiyan Huang, “A moment of inspiration was to have the opportunity to shake hands and have a conversation with a president of a university. What are the chances you’ll have to meet someone so influential and interact with them on a personal level? It was such an honor.”

**Journeys Home: 3rd Annual Asian American Adoptee Symposium**

On April 9, 2014, AASSP held its third annual Asian American Adoptee Symposium in the Ryan Lounge. The event built upon last year’s Symposium, The AdopTree Project, to highlight the academic study of transnational adoption as another important way to raise awareness about Asian American adoptee experiences.

This year’s Symposium featured UMass Boston sociology professor Dr. Leslie Wang who gave a talk on the subject of transnational adoption between China and the United States. Professor Wang discussed various aspects of transnational adoption, including the ulterior motives that may lead the U.S. and China to engage in the practice. Adoption between countries, Wang says, is a geopolitical affair. Essentially, it is a mutually beneficial business partnership between two countries. The cost of adopting a child is quite substantial, and while China gains monetary benefits from such a partnership, the availability of children to adopt in the U.S. continues to dwindle. With nowhere left to turn to, families who wish to adopt have begun to look to other countries as alternatives.

Professor Wang’s research offered insight into the larger intentions countries may have when taking part in the practice of transnational adoption. While it may benefit families who wish to have children, it also benefits the participating countries.

**East Coast Asian American Student Union (ECAASU) Mental Health Summit**

On March 29, 2014, AASSP, the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA), and the Office of Multicultural Affairs at the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, co-sponsored the East Coast Asian American Student Union (ECAASU) Mental Health Summit. The event had over one hundred registered attendees and brought together students, faculty members, and health professionals from all along the East Coast to discuss mental health issues in Asian American communities and to form strategies for addressing them.
academic achievements. Since 2003, APIASF has distributed over $70 million in scholarships to students all over the country.

In addition to the AANAPISI scholarships, APIASF awarded two UMass Boston students, Tsz Chung Chau and Muhammad Khalid, travel grants to attend the 2014 APIASF Higher Education Summit in Washington, D.C. this past July.

AASSP is happy to announce that our partnership with APIASF will continue next year, and another group of UMass Boston students will receive scholarships for the upcoming 2015 Spring Semester. For more information about how to apply for this round of scholarships, please contact AASSP@umb.edu.

Congratulations to our 2014 Spring APIASF AANAPISI Scholars!

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2014 Spring APIASF AANAPISI Scholarship Recipients

Tsz Ling (Zoey) Au  
Senior Biology major

Mirani Bhagat  
Sophomore Exercise & Health Sciences major

Tsz Chung (Tony) Chau  
Sophomore Economics and Philosophy double major

Susan Du  
Senior Management major

Lay Hai  
Senior Nursing major

Fiona Hoang  
Junior Biology major

Muhammad Khalid  
Junior Management major

Xing Li  
Senior Management major

Jenny Mean  
Sophomore Exercise & Health Sciences major

Luc Nguyen  
Junior Computer Science major

Thanh Nguyen  
Sophomore Biochemistry major

Yen Phan  
Senior Biochemistry major

Emily Quach  
Junior Biology major

Samantha Singh  
Freshman Criminal Justice major

Kim Soun Ty  
Senior Asian American Studies and Sociology double major

Tuyen Vo  
Junior Management major

Ting Wu  
Senior Nursing major

Junhao Yu  
Junior Political Science major
Orange Rock Classic Asian American Basketball Tournament

On November 17, 2013, AASSP sponsored a team of UMass Boston students to play in the Orange Rock Classic Asian American Basketball Tournament. Team AASSP consisted of seven undergraduate students, one graduate student, and Pratna Kem, AASSP’s Critical Reading and Writing Specialist. The tournament was hosted by the Boston Hurricanes, an athletic club focused on providing high level sports programs to young adults with ties to Boston’s Chinatown community, at John F. Kennedy Middle School in Waltham, Massachusetts.

In addition to resource tabling, the event’s programming included student performances and announcements from student organizations. Carole Do sang the song “Hãy Khóc Đi Em” by Du Thiên, and Xinli Huang sang Miley Cyrus’ “The Climb.” Kim Soun Ty closed out the performances with an original spoken work piece titled “My Favorite Lipstick.” Student organization leaders from the Asian Student Center, Khmer Culture Association, Martial Arts and Lion Dance Club, and the Vietnamese Student Association introduced the missions of their various groups and any events or initiatives planned for the new school year.

Sponsoring Team AASSP in the Orange Rock Classic Asian American Basketball Tournament was a great opportunity to expand our network and meet new Asian American students who we have not seen at our academic or career development events. The tournament was also an opportunity to build community through sportsmanship. Pratna Kem says, “We lost every game by at least twenty points. We lost our last game by sixty, but we had a good time, and the point was not to win the game. It was to bring out Asian American students that we don’t normally see at our other events and to make them feel like they are a part of a community.”

2nd Annual Welcome Lunch

On October 10, 2013, AASSP held the second annual Welcome Lunch. The Welcome Lunch is an opportunity each year for Asian American students, faculty, and staff to come together in one space to share stories, meet new people, make new friends, and learn about helpful resources and how to access those resources throughout the university.

The Welcome Lunch also served as an opportunity for students to meet each other and learn about ways to get involved on campus. Transfer student and Economics major Yeon-ho Kim attended the lunch and volunteered to help serve food. In his first semester at UMass Boston, Yeon-ho said that attending the lunch allowed him to get better acquainted with his new classmates. Now finishing his second semester at UMass Boston, Yeon-ho is very active on campus serving as a Writing Tutor for AASSP and mentor to Lynn Classical High School’s Asian American Club through the Asian American Studies Program.
Many thanks to the *Paving Roads* committee and contributors!

Dedicated to gathering and sharing AASSP’s stories, the *Paving Roads* student contributors spent many hours attending events around campus, gathering information, and writing articles to produce this newsletter. Thank you to all of the students who volunteered their time to make this the first student-produced AASSP newsletter.

Thank you to all of our contributors.

Yeon-ho Kim  
Thary Sun Lim  
Justin Liu  
Sue Phan  
Linda Thiem  
Emmi Tran  
Kim Soun Ty  
Sidney Yau  
Sara Boxell  
Frances K. Chow  
Pratna Kem  
Eliza Yuen
What is AASSP?
The Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP) is an academic support office, which means that we help students at UMass Boston in many ways. AASSP works closely with Asian American students, especially those whose families do not have a lot of money and/or who are the first in their family to go to college. Our two main goals are to help Asian American students get into college and to make sure they succeed, both academically and socially.

How do we help students succeed?
As part of the university’s Academic Support Services, AASSP collaborates with a number of other offices to make students aware of resources and services that will help them successfully navigate the college system. For example, we work closely with UMass Boston’s nationally recognized Asian American Studies Program and Institute for Asian American Studies to bring students news of events and support services that will help them get through college while connecting them to the histories and current stories from national and local Asian American communities.

Where to find us:
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