Happy 2015! I hope that your holiday season was filled with love and good cheer. I am pleased to present to you this newsletter which reflects the variety of recent events and accomplishments of the Asian American students, faculty, and staff at UMass Boston as reported by a student editorial staff.

In the Asian community, the coming of the new year is a very important event. It is a time to reflect on the previous year and look forward to all of the new opportunities for the future, as we celebrate with family and friends, both past and present. And though the Asian community has now adopted many new customs here in the U.S., we still hold true to many of our old traditions.

According to the Chinese calendar, the year 2015 is the 4712th Chinese year. And although the Gregorian calendar has established that January 1st is celebrated as the first day of the new year, the date of the Chinese New Year varies with the cycle of the moon. This year, February 4th is the first day of the Wooden Ram, and Chinese New Year day falls on February 19, 2015. “Although China has adopted the Gregorian calendar in common with most other countries in the world for official business purposes, the Chinese calendar or the Chinese Zodiac continues to define the dates and festivals. It is based on a unique combination of astronomy and geography” (Travel China Guide).

Whether you subscribe to the Gregorian calendar, Chinese calendar, or both, the new year brings with it a multitude of new opportunities and adventures. May your 2015 be filled with many accomplishments and new beginnings. Enjoy!

Warm regards,

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 student-produced newsletter, because it is about the many different directions that AASSP and UMass Boston’s Asian American 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, and it is our goal to pave this new road for many more issues to come.
UMass Boston’s first AANAPISI grant-funded staff development workshop, Coordinating Asian American Staff Leadership, convened in September of 2014. This group consisted of staff members from Asian or Asian American backgrounds who worked directly or indirectly with students in a wide variety of areas of the University, including the University Advising Center, Financial Aid Services, and Undergraduate Admissions. The purpose of this workshop was to extend connections among Asian American campus staff and to provide staff with a better understanding of the AANAPISI grant and the resources that it offers UMass Boston students. The workshop session was largely discussion based and allowed staff members the opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives regarding working with Asian American students at UMass Boston.

This staff development group also worked closely with students in Professor Peter Kiang’s Asian American Studies 223L Asians in the U.S. class on a poster project featuring the voices of staff members, including their migration story, family history, educational and career history, and thoughts regarding the AANAPISI project on campus. These posters were exhibited at AASSP’s Welcome Lunch on September 25th.

The staff development workshop and poster project helped to further the connections among UMass Boston’s Asian American staff in various departments and also showed the campus community that there is a community of diverse Asian American professionals working at UMass Boston.

One of the main goals of UMass Boston’s AANAPISI grant is to strengthen the institution’s capacity to work effectively with Asian American students. As part of this effort, two AANAPISI-funded faculty development workshops were introduced in September of 2014.

The first workshop group, Faculty Affiliates of Color in Ethnic Studies, consisted of nine UMass Boston faculty members teaching Ethnic Studies-related courses in various departments, including American Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, Women’s and Gender Studies, and Latin@ Studies. These nine faculty members attended workshop sessions to discuss resources on campus to help them best support their Asian American students. The sessions and discussions were highly interactive and gave faculty members the chance to talk about their own experiences, issues they have encountered, and ways to problem solve them.

The second group, Resourcing Asian Faculty Leaders, drew from Asian-born faculty members teaching in departments and colleges outside of Ethnic Studies, such as the Colleges of Management, Nursing and Health Sciences, and Science and Mathematics. The faculty were also introduced to the resources on campus and were taught about the issues Asian American students face and best practices for effectively advising and mentoring Asian American students within their own departments.
AANAPISI Co-Principal Investigator and Associate Professor of Political Science Paul Watanabe brought two students, Teresa Yeh and Thary Sun Lim, to the Annual American Political Science Association Conference in Washington, D.C. this past August.

Over the course of the trip, Professor Watanabe, Teresa, and Thary engaged in discussion panels, met with researchers and scholars, and viewed some of the historical sites within the nation’s capital.

Professor Watanabe stated that he hoped the students would gain a “spark of interest” in subjects relevant to the conference. He always tries to “encourage support for students of all capabilities,” mentioning that the trip was “all a part of AASSP’s efforts for student development.”

Teresa Yeh is a Social Psychology major with a minor in Political Science. Thary Sun Lim is an Asian American Studies major and a Student Leadership Coordinator and Peer-2-Peer Mentor with AASSP.

In August 2014, the Duskin Disability Leadership Program at UMass Boston brought three Japanese young women, Saki Kuramato, Mai Kawabata, and Kanae Kido, to Boston to participate in an extensive five-month specialized training and internship program to become future leaders for the disabled community in Japan.

Saki, Mai, and Kanae participated in weekly workshops facilitated by staff members from AASSP and UMass Boston’s Asian American Studies Program. These workshops stressed critical reading and writing development and focused on the Duskin trainees’ self-identity as Asian American women with disabilities in society. Trainee Saki Kuramoto noted that the workshops allowed her to focus attention on herself and be honest about her feelings and thoughts. She stated, “I never had a chance to talk about my identity and also listen to others about these issues.”

On December 18, 2014, at the Institute for Community Inclusion’s offices at 20 Park Plaza, the Duskin Fellows were awarded certificates of program completion and gave presentations on what they learned during their stay in Boston.
On September 25, 2014, AASSP held our 3rd Annual Welcome Lunch. This event brought together Asian American students, faculty, and staff from around the University. Students were encouraged to learn about helpful resources offered throughout the campus. Various university departments, programs, and clubs, such as the Office of Career Service and Internships, Student Support Services, Asian American Studies Program, and Khmer Culture Association, hosted tables to offer information to students who might be interested in or benefit from their support.

This event featured an exhibit of posters produced by students in the Spring 2014 Asian American Studies 223L course Asians in the U.S. taught by Professor Peter Kiang. These posters featured various Asian American staff members working in a variety of positions and fields around the University.

Along with the poster presentation, the Welcome Lunch also featured student performances. Allister Quilon wrote and sang a song titled “Who’s Loving You,” Ammany Ty performed an untitled spoken word piece, and Alex Woo performed a Chen-Style tai chi piece.

On September 30, 2014, AASSP, the Asian American Studies Program, and the Asian Student Center sponsored an event titled Fear the Yellow Peril which was inspired by New York University Associate Professor Jack Tchen’s book, “Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear.” The on-campus event explored and discussed the culture of de-humanizing certain kinds of people and characterizing them as a threat. While Jack Tchen’s book focuses mainly on the plight of Asian Americans, this event had performances from students, faculty, and staff involving all different groups of people. The organizers imagined the event as linked to all people of conscience who stand up and shout, “Enough is Enough!”

The Yellow Peril event provided a space for students to express and learn more about struggles for justice, both on a local and global level, through performance art and to prompt a sense of solidarity and community on campus.

According to Linda Thiem, teaching assistant for an Asian American Studies class on Cambodian American Community and Culture that participated in the event, “For me, Yellow Peril does exist, but it is not recognized. This event legitimized and made it all so public through the arts. It was needed.”
On September 30th, AASSP and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission joined together to host the first Young Leaders Symposium at UMass Boston. The symposium gathered powerful voices from the local Asian American community to provide a platform to expose students to a diverse group of Asian Americans holding leadership positions around the Greater Boston area. The event provided young leaders an opportunity to see themselves as faces within underrepresented fields such as in the federal government.

Over one hundred attendees participated in panel discussions and dynamic mentoring sessions with professionals from a wide variety of fields, including government agencies, theater, politics, and non-profit organizations.

The Asian American Commission’s Rising Star Award was presented to Dorchester Organizing Training Initiative (DOT-I), a fellowship program for young leaders within the Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW) that works to provide leadership development through community organizing around social justice.

Phi Tran, a UMass Boston student double majoring in Art and Asian American Studies and co-founder of DOT-I, accepted the award on behalf of the group. Phi believes strongly in the Asian American community and notes that, “It is very important to push young people and let them know they have a strong responsibility to their communities as cultural bridges for the older generation. It’s a responsibility that we shouldn’t take lightly, and it is an honor to have.”

AASSP is proud to present its Student Leadership Council (SLC), a newly-formed committee of UMass Boston students who will oversee and plan activities and services for AASSP’s students.

The primary goal of the SLC is to increase student involvement by placing students in leadership positions that will encourage development of skills and experience. In addition, the council actively recruits volunteers while acting as a “central hub” for AASSP, working to coordinate events the program holds.

The SLC is comprised of current UMass Boston students: Thary Sun Lim, Charlie Phan, Erica Lam, Yeon-ho Kim, Sue Phan, Tiffany Chen, Spencer Dang, Ivy Bui, Thary Lim, Hieu Le, and Hung Nguyen.

The SLC is currently planning a number of different events for the upcoming Spring semester, including the 4th Annual Night Market, End-of-Semester Open House, a Major Exploration Fair for local high school students, and an event for new and returning transfer students.
AASSP has partnered with fellow AANAPISI programs at Mt. San Antonio College and Mission College in California to develop programs to support students in developing first person digital storytelling narratives to address critical issues related to college success, equity, retention, persistence, and graduation. 

Early this past semester, a team of staff, faculty, and alumni from AASSP and UMass Boston’s Asian American Studies Program traveled to the California campuses to hold three-day trainings on the use and process of producing these digital storytelling narratives. 

Students explored, shared, and reflected on their own “real life real stories” during the trainings and viewed digital stories about the struggles and aspirations of students in the Asian American Studies Program at UMass Boston. The training also served as a platform for reflective learning and teaching about Asian American histories, families, and communities. When asked about what students gained, Asian American Studies Program alum Kim Soun Ty, who documented the trip and assisted in the workshops, said students got “a chance to sit down and think about their family history and greater history and how all of these things coincide with their own personal lives.” 

The participating college teams will convene at UMass Boston in June of 2015 for “AANAPISIs’ Digital Storytelling in Asian American Studies Summit” to highlight the work of students at these trainings as well as future course work in the upcoming Spring semester at UMass Boston. 

AASSP hosted our 4th Annual Asian American Adoptee event on campus this November in recognition of National Adoption Awareness Month. The event consisted of an interactive exhibit titled “The AdopTree Project” and was organized and led by Leela Paine-Masters, a freshman Nursing student, and Anna Kim Reilly, a graduate student in Applied Linguistics. 

The AdopTree Project featured a number of statistics and graphics on the history of U.S. adoption from Asia, as well as spotlights on a number of adoptees and adoptive parents affiliated with the UMass Boston community. The purpose of the exhibit was to raise awareness by sharing the experiences of those whose lives have been affected by adoption and to encourage participants to express their own thoughts on adoption and voice any questions that they might have. The AdopTree Project is also a space for the University community to learn about and engage with the topic.
Of the experience, Leela said, "I was surprised at the number of people that had been touched by adoption in such different ways, because I had always thought of it as a much smaller community and found it rare to find other adoptees." Before working on the project, she was not aware that there was interest in adoption on campus, because she did not know of many other adoptees. The AdopTree Project was an opportunity for her to share her experiences, and her interactions during the exhibit made her think about how other people’s experiences of adoption may differ from hers. Working on the project was also an eye-opening experience for Anna Kim, who said that for her the project “was more emotional than I thought it would be, because it was the first time that I had discussed my adoption in an academic way. It was surprisingly empowering.”

AASSP’s Student Leadership Council organized this past semester’s End-of-Semester Winter Wonderland Open House that took place on December 4th to help students celebrate the end of classes and their semester accomplishments, have some fun and de-stress in preparation for final exams and papers, and check in with AASSP staff and peer mentors. Activities included cookie decorating, ornament making, karaoke, and games.
AASSP is very proud to highlight the achievements of UMass Boston junior Antony Chau. Antony was selected to be a Scholar Presenter at the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund’s (APIASF) 2014 Today’s Minds, Tomorrow’s Future Benefit on November 12th, where he spoke in front of the 200-plus audience about his educational experiences in Mainland China, Hong Kong, and finally in Charlestown High School and UMass Boston where he was also selected as a 2013 APIASF/USA Funds Scholar double majoring in Economics and Philosophy.

After being awarded the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) general scholarship, Antony also had the honor of receiving a Scholar Travel Grant to attend the 2014 APIASF Higher Education Summit, a one-day intensive workshop series held on June 17th in the International Trade Center in Washington, D.C. The focus of the series, which consisted of discussion panels, breakout sessions, and presentations, is to create meaningful change for Asian American and Pacific Islanders within higher education.

AASSP has partnered for a second year with the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) to award APIASF AANAPISI scholarships for the Spring 2015 semester to twelve deserving undergraduate recipients. This partnership was made possible by UMass Boston’s designation as an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) by the U.S. Department of Education.

APIASF is the largest non-profit organization in the United States dedicated to providing resources to Asian American and Pacific Islander students. Their goal is to provide students of Asian American and Pacific Islander backgrounds greater access to higher education and academic success. More specifically, there is a strong emphasis on first-generation college-goers who are financially disadvantaged or have attained exceptional academic achievements. Since 2003, APIASF has distributed over $70 million in scholarships to Asian American and Pacific Islander students all over the country.

APIASF’s AANAPISI Scholarship Program is a collaboration with AANAPISIs and the communities they serve to provide scholarships, expand institutional capacity, and mobilize local resources to help foster economic development. The APIASF AANAPISI Scholarship is available annually to students attending select APIASF AANAPISI partner campuses.
One of AASSP’s goals is to support research on Asian American students in higher education through AANAPISI-funded research grants awarded to scholars investigating a wide variety of topics relating to this field. The grants are coordinated through UMass Boston’s Institute for Asian American Studies. The latest group of scholars to receive funding include:

Daisy Ball, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Framingham State University
“Asian American Undergraduates at Non-Selective Universities: Experiences, Needs, and Identity Information”

Jeanette Luise Eberhardy, Massachusetts College of Art and Design
“The Cultural Weave: Five Asian Art Students Tell Their Stories”

Delia Cheung Hom, Director of the Asian American Center, Northeastern University
“Exploring the Experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander-Serving Administrators: Challenge, Support, Challenge”

Sue J. Kim, Associate Professor of English, University of Massachusetts Lowell
Phitsamay S. Uy, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Massachusetts Lowell
“Southeast Asian American College Readiness”

JoAnn Mulready-Shick, Undergraduate Nursing Program Director, University of Massachusetts Boston
“The Impact of Linguistic Modification of Multiple Choice Exam-type Test Items on Nursing Student Test Performance and Faculty Exam Writing Improvement: An Exploratory Study”

Samuel D. Museus, Associate Professor of Higher Education, University of Denver
“Understanding How Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) Create the Conditions for Students to Thrive”

Malaphone Phommasa, Ph.D. Candidate, Gevitz Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara
“Educational Experiences of Southeast Asian American College Students: Understanding Influences on Student Persistence and Retention”

Chao Vang, Ph.D. Candidate, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, California State University, Sacramento
“Hmong American College Students at California State University, Sacramento”
Thank you 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 second student-produced AASSP newsletter.

Tiffany Chen
Spencer Dang
Yeon-ho Kim
Thary Lim
Thary Sun Lim
Monica Orellana
Sidney Yau
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.

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