AASSP Welcome Lunch

On September 19, 2017, AASSP hosted its sixth annual Welcome Lunch in the Ryan Lounge. Even with the setback of a fire alarm that erupted moments before the program began, it did not dampen the spirits and energy of the room. Once reunited, faculty, staff, and students took time out of their day to build and rekindle connections.

The Director of AASSP, Patricia Neilson, kicked off the event with a welcome and an acknowledgement of the demographics of the room; waves of hands from students, staff, and faculty lit up the room. She then presented highlights and data that has been collected over the years. As UMass Boston is currently a second-time recipient of the Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving (Continue on page 8)

IN THIS ISSUE

Welcome from AASSP Director
Pages 2-3

Featured Student Spotlight
Page 4

Mentoring Program Highlights
Page 4

Undergraduate Summer Research
Pages 6-7

Planting Seeds for Change
By Helen Ngo

This past summer, I was a part of a national fellowship called Seeding Change – A Center for Asian American Movement Building, where aspiring Asian American activists are placed in different Asian American organizations all across the U.S. In addition to the hands-on grassroots (Continue on page 2)

J QUS Summer 2017
By Aimee Chan & Ayaka Ueike

This summer, AASSP partnered with the Josiah Quincy Upper School's (JQUS) Summer Enrichment Program for the third year of its partnership, with undergraduate student interns from UMB working with JQUS teachers in teaching middle and high school students. The collaboration between AASSP and JQUS was established as part of a pipeline between local high school communities and UMB.

Throughout the four week program, the interns worked to bridge the gap between teacher and student by acting as mentors to the students. In addition to helping teachers in the classroom in ensuring smooth classroom and program operation, interns were also role models to the students and encouraged them to set (Continue on page 3)
experience, it also provides a series of in-depth, intense trainings and workshops to critically reflect and to be intentional about our activism and community engagement work. The program was created through the Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) in San Francisco in 2014.

In this cohort of 30, we were placed at 15 host sites that either focused on community organizing or civic engagement. For my placement site, I worked with the Asian American Organizing Project (AAOP), which started in 2014, in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul), Minnesota, doing civic engagement work within Southeast Asian American communities. Lead with a gender justice framework, AAOP focused heavily on its civic engagement work along with its community and cultural organizing.

In addition to my summer fellowship, I was also a part of a local program of the Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) called MOVEE (Making Our Voices Effective for Equity). It was a 5-week pilot program to organize local Minneapolis Asian Americans to gain the skills to advocate for themselves while creating an agenda to address a particular issue within the community. The topic of focus was civic engagement. I, along with my cohort of 26 passionate community activists, presented about the current status of civic engagement in Minneapolis Asian American communities and areas of growth to a panel of political leaders.

Through AAOP, I was able to hone my previous civic engagement skills in door-knocking, but also learned new methods like phone banking, different types of canvassing, and engaging in 1-on-1’s in English and Vietnamese. Even as a person who is not originally from the community, I was able to see myself in the work. I created an issue-based workshop that focused around higher education accessibility of Southeast Asian youth in Minnesota and connected it back to civic engagement. Alongside registering and pledging people to vote, I conducted a community survey to understand where community members stood on this particular issue and to give an opportunity for them to voice their thoughts in this year’s election in which St. Paul was having an election on its school board members.

In my time spent in the Twin Cities and with Seeding Change, my framework in activism, especially through the means of civic engagement, have been transformed. I have found a new appreciation for civic engagement work and a deeper meaning for myself that is beyond the means of voting. I have learned the importance of creating spaces that allow for love and tenderness and to also be rooted in those values other than anger. The best gift of all this summer was being able to create “home” with the people I have met through this amazing opportunity.
and achieve their own goals. It was important for the interns to get to know each of the students individually so that they were able to help them in ways tailored to their growth and learning styles. Additionally, it was important that the students learned more about the intern’s experiences and struggles in order to set their own goals for the future, including exposure to college and learning more about UMB. The students visited UMB as a group prior to the start of the program for a tour led by the interns.

The interns also spent time with students outside of class — eating lunch with them every day, facilitating activities at recess, and helping to lead field trips. These activities helped the interns build a closer relationship between interns and students and also between the students themselves. For example, interns were able to help facilitate bonds between students from different groups and grades through a shared hobby during recess time.

Through the program, interns were able to gain classroom facilitation skills, and through that, grow their own leadership abilities. The interns themselves also learned during the program, such as how to operate the 3D printer in order to teach students how to use it. One student printed a model, making a light box for the culmination of his summer project.

Each year, the Summer Enrichment Program and the partnership with JQUS has continued to grow. We hope to continue the partnership for many more summers to come. We also look forward to seeing past students again when they start the process of applying to and choosing their colleges.

Lunar New Year was celebrated on February 16th, commencing the Year of the Earth Dog.

Whether you subscribe to the solar calendar, a lunar calendar, or both, the new year brings with it a multitude of new opportunities and adventures. May your 2018 be filled with many accomplishments and new beginnings. Enjoy!

Warm regards,
Pat
Patricia A. Neilson, Ed.D.
Director, Asian American Student Success Program
Building Community with Peers

By Satyak Som

The goal of AASSP’s Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program events are to encapsulate what AASSP is all about: creating space for students to feel like they have what they need to succeed. That is exactly what the AASSP staff and peer mentors did by taking what the office space has done for the past several years and projecting it on a larger scale with these events. Student mentors were able to organize four different events during the course of the past semester to mark the progress students were making. Each event followed by the next was a reminder that the end of the semester was getting closer and closer. The October Ramen Event saw mentees and mentors bond by playing games and sharing their varied ramen cooking techniques with each other. Although our plan was halted by a few electrical problems, the staff and student mentors did not falter and made sure mentees were given what had been promised to them: a nice hot bowl of ramen. The month of November is known for large gatherings, sharing various dishes, and being able to sit around at a dinner table to share what their year has been like. At our Thanksgiving Potluck Event, mentors and mentees brought all types of different foods to share with one another, and we were even able to write all of our names down on feathers and pin them on a
Celebrating 30 Years of Asian American Studies

By Zainab Salejwala

After several months of dedicated planning, which started in the summer by current students, recent alumni, and staff, the celebration of the 30th anniversary of Asian American Studies at UMass Boston came to fruition. The event was held on November 27th in the Campus Center ballrooms from 1-7 pm with green and gold decorations, a gallery showcasing digital stories, student art work, and course work, and a reception. The 30th anniversary of UMass Boston’s Asian American Studies Program coincided with the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) 30th anniversary. Dr. Peter Kiang, Director of the Asian American Studies Program, reactivated a course called Asian Minorities in America in Spring 1987 that was created by the late Dr. T. Scott Miyakawa.

Throughout the event, current students, alumni, and guests bustled in and out, with a buzz of lively energy from second graders visiting from the Mather School. This was the first time we decided to celebrate Asian American Studies. Thirty years is a short time and simultaneously a long time, too. To showcase 30 years of Asian American Studies excellence, 30 markers of impact curated by current and former students in Asian American Studies were used as a guide to organize a multimedia display of photos, paintings, and other creative and collaboratively co-produced original works to present a small reflective glimpse of the deep and wide-ranging impacts that Asian American Studies has had for individuals, families, communities, and institutions. The purpose of our event was to have a space to celebrate, (re)connect, and reflect. It brought together 30 years of Asian American Studies in the same room. We wanted to recognize the investment and hard work that generations of students, faculty, and staff have contributed to make Asian American Studies what it is today.
In the summer of 2017, AASSP offered for the first time Undergraduate Summer Research Assistantship opportunities to students interested in research focused on Asian American topics and issues. These four students were paired with UMB faculty engaged in research projects and worked closely with them over the summer.

YuJin Kim

This past summer, I worked with Denise Khor (American Studies Department) on a research project called, ‘Owned, Controlled, and Operated by Japanese’: Racial Uplift and Japanese American Film Production, 1912 to 1930s. Our project explored the history of Japanese American film productions from the silent period to the early sound era. By using the digital database "Hoji Shinbun Digital Collection," I was able to review and search for newspaper articles, film ephemera, and other primary sources on film culture between the dates 1900 to 1945. Through this research experience, I was able to learn more about Japanese American film productions and how different time periods focused on different aspects of films, media, and articles. It was fascinating to read different newspaper articles to learn what was happening specifically in the West Coast and Hawaii from 1900 to 1945. All in all, I was able to learn more about the Japanese American conflicts and how film was used to address those conflicts as a means of communication.

Rey-Todd Li

Over the summer, I worked with Leslie Wang (Sociology Department) on a research project called, Chasing the American Dream Abroad: Chinese American Professionals in China. The research project was about Chinese families in the United States that send their children to China to be raised. A lot of interviews were conducted, both in China, for the families that raised the child sent back, and in the U.S., for families that sent their child back. The study focused on whether or not kids being sent to China to be raised for a few years suffered any long-term negative effects, or have any long-term positive influences.

Anna Nguyen

As a co-research assistant working with Johnny Vo under Son Ca Lam (Asian American Studies Program), I helped Son Ca with her PhD project, Shifting grounds: How refugee women (re)construct home across generations, which focuses on the lives of Vietnamese women in the family with refugee status. Through interview transcriptions, we observed the daily and cultural practices of these Vietnamese women and how they are affected by displacement over time. To observe this time piece, we studied each generation (daughter, mother, grandmother) to showcase how these practices change over time and how cultural intergenerational gaps develop within the family. Son Ca addressed a common theme that displacement has an impact, and this impact can be observed through generations in the family through language. While working, she encouraged us to think about these types of questions: What struggles did the
Vietnamese female refugees encounter? What struggles did they encounter once they arrived in the United States? How did relationships within their families progress? What cultural practices are kept and passed down? What is lost? What is passed down as "Vietnamese American"?

Son Ca gave us three main long-term tasks throughout the assistantship: 1) recruit potential family participants, 2) transcribe interview audio, and 3) develop a Vietnamese American cookbook. The main priority was to recruit as many families as we could for interviews and shadowing before Son Ca left for Vietnam to meet the grandmothers. We mainly recruited via social media and word-of-mouth. Luckily, we were able to recruit enough participants in time despite the struggle. Lastly, due to time constraints and schedule conflicts in September, Johnny and I were not able to start the cookbook. We decided to make up the work some other time later in the year.

Looking back, I feel that I have learned a lot. I’ve learned different ways of researching the Vietnamese community that are different than Western conventional ways of researching populations. A lot of Vietnamese words have become very familiar to me, thanks to transcribing/translating interviews. I’ve learned a lot about the hard work and resiliency that the women in my community have that often goes unnoticed. This includes the women in my family as well, and I have developed much appreciation for the things that they go out of their way to do. I have begun to acknowledge the value of bilingualism a lot more and the responsibilities that come with knowing more than one language. All in all, I am very grateful to have worked with Anna and Son Ca and to have been able to help Son Ca with her research. I did not expect those few months to have had such a large impact on my life.
specially crafted turkey poster! Our last event was the Holiday Special. December is a time where students need to be reminded that they have almost made it through the semester, and what better way to celebrate than by decorating cookies with bright colors with your friends while movies are playing in the background? The shared experiences between mentors and mentees this semester were nothing short of wonderful. The bonds and moments shared are what makes UMass Boston and the Asian American Student Success Program so great.

(Continued from page 4)

Institution (AANAPISI) grant, the AASSP Director shared her hopes and goals for the upcoming years and the importance of the AANAPISI grant being a part of AASSP’s journey.

During the event, there were faculty, staff, and student speakers, and there was an introduction of AASSP’s newest staff member Joyce Wang, the Career and Alumni Coordinator. Each speaker shared their story and connection to AASSP as well as the work that they do respectively.

Decorating the tables were origami persimmons and an origami activity. With various paper sizes and folding directions, attendees were asked to make a crane. The cranes were placed in a clear box display at the entrance of the event. To this day, the UMass Boston community can see this collaborative art display in the AASSP office. This stands as a reminder of the intentional connections that were made at the beginning of the school year from AASSP to the UMass Boston community: to build together as a community.