My Year with Peer-to-Peer

By Satyak Som

In February, AASSP’s peer-to-peer mentoring program (P2P) organized a “Throwback Welcome Back,” event which featured classic video games, old board games, 2000s music, pizza, juice pouches, snacks, and tie-dye t-shirts. Mentees were able to challenge mentors for their video game crowns (albeit very unsuccessfully), indulge in sugary snacks that are three times the amount of recommended grams of sugar per day, and make various colors of tie-dye shirts. By the end of (Continued on page 10)

(Re)presenting at APAHE

For the fourth time, AASSP staff brought students from UMass Boston’s Asian American Studies course, Teaching and Learning in Asian American Studies taught by Dr. Peter Kiang, to California to attend and present at the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) national conference and to visit historical sites such as Angel Island and the I-Hotel. This opportunity was offered as part of the AANAPISI-funded Asian American Leadership Opportunities (Continued on page 9)
AASSP Director’s Message

Summer 2018 is coming to an end. Hope that it was a time to rest and rejuvenate for the upcoming academic year!

For those of you who have not heard already, I will be retiring from my position as the Director of the Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP). Although the decision was bittersweet, I look forward to embarking on the next chapter of my journey.

As I reflect on the past seven years, I have been extremely fortunate to have had the honor of being the Director of AASSP/AANAPISI program here at UMass Boston and to have the best team of Principal Investigators — Dr. Joan Becker, Dr. Peter Kiang, Dr. Paul Watanabe, and Dr. Shirley Tang — as advisors to the program.

Although I will miss them, I know that I will be leaving AASSP in the very capable hands of Sara Boxell, Pratna Kem, Frances Chow, and Joyce Wang, the extraordinary staff that I have become very fond of.

And, most of all, I will miss the wonderful students that I have had the privilege of serving. Being part of their journey during their time here at UMass Boston and beyond has been fulfilling and rewarding.

The journey has not been without challenges, but that makes the successes we’ve encountered together even sweeter. Thank you all for the incredible memories.

A hui ho (until we meet again), Pat
Getting Career-Ready!

During Spring 2018, the Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP), in collaboration with the Office of Career Services & Internships (OCSI), hosted a series of workshops to support Asian American students in their career exploration and development. The **Asian American Career Development Workshop Series** was comprised of eight workshops covering a variety of topics such as the job search process, the importance of dressing for success and of LinkedIn, and résumé and cover letter tips. Students who participated in four or more (Continued on page 12)

Joyce Wang of AASSP and Jennifer Barone of OCSI with students who completed the workshop series in Spring 2018 (Photo courtesy of Frances Chow)

---

Congratulations to 2018 Graduates!

On May 22, 2018, the Asian American Studies Program, in collaboration with the Asian American Student Success Program, hosted a graduation celebration that featured undergraduate students who completed an individual major or a program-of-study in Asian American Studies, doctoral and master’s degree students who are connected and have contributed to AsAmSt, and AASSP graduates. Helen Dang Ngo, Hung An Nguyen, and Tommy Nguyen presented their senior projects for their Asian American Studies individual majors. In addition to honoring both undergraduate and graduate students from AsAmSt and AASSP, two staff who are leaving UMass Boston were highlighted for their great contributions to the campus, students, and Boston community: Dr. Patricia Akemi Nakamoto Neilson and Kunthary Mum Thai-Johnson. AASSP presented all graduates with handmade graduation stoles designed using Japanese fabrics in traditional patterns: the dragonfly print, chosen for the AASSP students, symbolizes “never give up,” while the hemp leaf (or *asanoha*) print, chosen for the AsAmSt students, symbolizes “growth and good health.” AASSP also presented *lei*, picked out by AASSP Director Dr. Patricia Neilson and flown in from Hawai’i, to all graduates.
“I am excited to have completed my time at UMB. It has been a long road with more changes and construction than I had anticipated, but is it really UMB without the constant construction? I am both anxious about and looking forward to what the future has in store! I’m very thankful to all of the people I’ve been able to get to know and work with at AASSP. I’m sad I won’t be there to sit in the office all day anymore bothering all of the staff and keeping them from doing their work.”

- K.C.

Karen Chi, Ethics, Social & Political Philosophy, BA
John Du, Information Technology, BS
Jacky Huynh, Management, BS
Yeon-ho Kim, Economics, BA
Hieu Le, Exercise & Health Sciences, BS
Bradford Mei, Information Technology, BS
(from top to bottom)
UMass Boston and the Asian American Student Success Program have both left an indelible impact on my academic, professional, and personal growth. AASSP has provided students like me with opportunities to challenge myself and created an environment where students feel a sense of belonging.

- M.P.

“It’s been a long road for me that suddenly ended. I knew I’d be at my destination soon, but at the same time, I don’t want it to end. In the end, I’m glad I finished this journey.”

- B.M.

Helen Dang Ngo, Asian American Studies, BA
Tommy Nguyen, Asian American Studies, BA
Mai Pham, Global Comparative Public Administration, MPA
Kevin Tran, Criminology & Criminal Justice, BA
Ammany Ty, English, BA
Ayaka Ueike, Economics, BA
(from top to bottom)
Congratulations APIASF AANAPISI Scholars!

AASSP partnered for the fifth consecutive year with the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) to offer this scholarship opportunity to undergraduate Asian American students which was made possible by UMass Boston’s designation as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) by the U.S. Department of Education. A total of $20,400 in scholarships were awarded.

To celebrate the achievement of the scholarship recipients, AASSP invited recipients and their families and friends to a reception on April 5, 2018. Vice Provost for Academic Support Services and Undergraduate Studies and Principle Investigator of UMass Boston’s AANAPISI grant, Dr. Joan Becker, welcomed attendees. Karen Chi, APIASF AANAPISI Scholar in the 2015-2016 scholarship cycle, spoke at the reception about how receiving the scholarship has helped her and gave her best wishes to the new scholars.

The 2017-2018 APIASF AANAPISI Scholarship recipients are: Manas Aryal, Dat Le, Hieu Le, Baila Mir, Son Nguyen, Jennifer Pham, Carita Sum, and Khoa Truong.

“Being selected as one of the recipients of the APIASF AANAPISI scholarship was not only an honor but a sigh of relief financially as it gave me the confidence and comfort to finish the semester strong knowing that I had support for my tuition and fees. Upon receiving the scholarship, I was able to quit one of my part-time jobs and focus on my studies, on my involvement in school organizations, and on myself. I’m thankful that APIASF has invested in me and my success!”

-J.P.
“The APIASF AANAPISI scholarship I received this past spring has meant a lot to me, and its financial assistance was much appreciated. Because of the scholarship, I was able to avoid taking out any additional student loan for the spring semester. This past semester, I left my job to focus on school as a full-time student, so receiving this award was a huge financial relief that allowed me to concentrate on my schoolwork.”

-S.N.

“It was a thrill to be honored with the APIASF AANAPISI scholarship award that supported and motivated me to continue my education as an aspiring physical therapist. Being able to celebrate with my friends and family at the scholarship reception, and meeting the Asian American Student Success Program team that made it happen, made it even more worthwhile.”

- K. T.
Asian American Studies Program – Exhibiting 30+ Years of Impact and Innovation

During the month of February, as a follow-up to the November 27th celebration event, the Asian American Studies Program showcased 30+ years of Asian American Studies at UMass Boston with an interactive exhibition of art/media and curriculum resources in the Harbor Gallery curated by newly graduated Art and AsAmSt student, Nia Dương, and AsAmSt Program coordinator, Tri Quach. The exhibition space was also used for classes, discussions, and campus visits throughout the month. The culminating event for the exhibition featured performances and brought alumni from the AsAmSt Program and community members together.

Clockwise: “Break” performance by Nia Dương; AsAmSt faculty and students share stories; Tri Quach addresses the audience (photos courtesy of Peter Kiang)
Program (AALOP). The AALOP students presented two of their own workshops: “The Unfinished Business of Sexual Violence/Silence for AANAPISI Womxn Students” and “Connecting AANAPISI Students, Communities, and Campus/Curricular Resources for Student Success: A Collaboration between Bunker Hill Community College and UMass Boston.”

AASSP also presented a workshop at this year’s conference titled “Building Resiliency: Learning Skills Needed to Persist through Academic Struggles and Challenges.” With guidance and supervision from AASSP staff, the presentation was developed through a student-led research process in which AASSP’s student office assistants Karen Chi and Helen Ngo proposed guiding questions; conducted interviews and focus groups with pre-collegiate students, current students, persons not enrolled, and alumni who have been supported by AASSP; transcribed the interviews; and extrapolated major themes. Along with AASSP’s Program Coordinator, Sara Boxell, and Critical Reading and Writing Specialist, Pratna Kem, and students Hieu Le and Ivana Pham who provided first-hand testimonials, Karen and Helen were able to present their findings and AASSP’s best practices to a packed room.
the event, we were all able to leave with a bit of stress relief, happy taste buds, and a new DIY tie-dye shirt.

In preparation for the finals week, we rode the momentum of the first good weather of the year into a positive mindset for our May event. We had various outdoor activities, including a relay race, themed dodgeball games, and tons of fun with water balloons. It can be easy to get lost in the piles of work that come with finals week, so our last event of the 2017-2018 academic year aimed to make sure that everyone felt supported with activities that encompassed teamwork, teambuilding, healthy competition, and fun into one very stress-free day.

The spring semester P2P events’ goals were to ensure that everyone could create memories of their college years at UMass Boston and their involvement with the AASSP office. As an academic support office, it is our mission to do our best to make sure students have what they need to succeed. The P2P mentoring program pairs new UMass Boston students with current students and organizes events to remind students that they are never alone on the UMass Boston campus. To remind them that if they need help, advice, friends, or any other kind of support, the AASSP office staff and peer mentors are waiting on the third floor of the McCormack Hall building with open arms.
Continuing the Partnership with Excel High School

By Leslie Nguyen and Mai Pham

This past year, AASSP and Excel High School have continued to build upon the programming that was established in the previous year. AASSP undergraduate and graduate tutors have continued to go into the ESL classrooms at Excel High School on a daily basis to provide instructional and bilingual support to the ESL teaching staff and students.

In April, AASSP tutors organized a career fair catered to the Vietnamese ESL students that provided bilingual programming and opportunities to network with Vietnamese professionals in the Greater Boston area. The event consisted of a keynote speech given by Mary Truong, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI), a Vietnamese professionals’ panel in which students engaged with professionals as they talked about their experiences in finding the careers they are currently in, a speed networking activity in which students had the opportunity to interact with professionals from different fields, and resource tabling for students to connect to resources available to them in the community for work opportunities and support in applying to post-secondary options.

The students were very receptive and engaged throughout the event. This allowed them to practice networking and meet individuals within their own communities. Many students came away with a renewed sense of confidence and increased self-esteem, because they could relate to each professional they met. Students were inspired by the professionals’ stories of struggle and perseverance as immigrants or refugees. Through this event, we hoped to inspire and encourage Excel students to follow their aspirations in spite of the unique struggles they may face as immigrants. In the future, we hope to build upon the success of this first event and to continue to motivate our students to reach new heights.
workshop sessions from the Series were awarded a certificate of completion.

AASSP and OCSI also hosted a Networking Night where students were able to practice networking with various local Asian American professionals. Additionally, students had the opportunity to learn how to conduct themselves professionally and confidently in any social or business situation through a four-course Etiquette Dinner (Dining with Confidence Program) presented by Jean Papalia of A+ Etiquette.