

It's AARCC's 5th year Anniversary—and Asian American Awareness Month!

By Corinne Kodama, Associate Director

April 2010 marks the 5th anniversary of AARCC. At first we worked out of cubicles and my former office in the back of the Office of Career Services (thanks, Andres) while waiting for Taft 101 to be renovated. I remember our opening ceremony in Taft Hall where we had people lined up and down the hallway and crowded into the Oasis to celebrate the beginning of something they had worked hard to achieve.

I look back at different points in our journey that has gotten us here: our first "staff lunch" where Karen, Elvin, and I got to know each other and started to figure out what we wanted AARCC to be; the meeting where we came up with the idea for the first Ice Cream Social, now our largest annual event; the discussion when my husband came up with the name for this newsletter which is read by hundreds of people both in print and online. I think back to the first year of the Asian American Mentor Program when we didn't know if anyone would sign up to be mentors OR mentees, which has since impacted hundreds of students. I remember the craziness of redesigning the Asian American Resource Book over e-mail and phone calls with a student who was in San Francisco (thanks, Joyce), and another student convincing the staff we had to get on Facebook for AARCC when there were few non-college students on it at the time (thanks, Phill—I think).

AARCC has changed since the early years when the only people who set foot in our office were student workers or those we had meetings with, and occasionally a few random students who needed a quiet place to study. Now there are so many students here that people are stepping over and on top of backpacks and laptops, and the volume level sometimes approaches something more like a party than an office.

However, there are many things that remain the same since the day AARCC started: the commitment of our staff to developing a vibrant, educated, and engaged Asian American community; the energy and involvement of our Asian American student organizations and student leaders; and—believe it or not—the original bamboo plant given to us by UIUC's Asian American Cultural Center staff at our Grand Opening (thanks to the meticulous care of Elvin).

We hope that you join us in celebrating our 5th anniversary on **Wednesday, April 7th** and throughout Asian American Awareness Month. Take advantage of these opportunities to learn, engage, and celebrate the Asian American community at UIC.

History of AARCC Alumni Lunch Panel Wednesday, April 7; Noon-1:00 Student Center East Room #509

Learn from alumni, faculty, & staff about how AARCC got started. Lunch will be provided, RSVP to karensu@uic.edu by Friday, April 2. Cosponsored by UI Alumni Association.

AARCC's 5th Anniversary Celebration Wednesday, April 7; 4 p.m.-6 p.m. Student Center East Illinois Room

Join students, staff, faculty, and alumni for a retrospective look at AARCC's 5 years at UIC. This event will feature personal reflections, performances by student organizations, a video/slide show, and a raffle featuring items from Asian American faculty, past speakers, and performers! Reception following.



Our first "AARCC staff" picture at our Grand Opening in 2005!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Kip Fulbeck: 2
**Part Asian,
100% Hapa**

Asian 3
**American
Studies**

Reflections 4-5,
on 5 years of 7
AARCC

AARCC 6
**Essay
Contest
Winners**

Artists: win 8
\$100!

Also, don't forget to pick up your AAA Month Calendar at AARCC or at any of the month's events!

Kip Fulbeck: Part Asian, 100% Hapa

ha•pa (hä'pä) **adj.** 1. *Slang.* of mixed ethnic heritage with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry. **n.** 2. *Slang.* a person of such ancestry. [*der./Hawaiian: hapa haole.* (half white)]

Once a derogatory label derived from the Hawaiian word for “half,” *Hapa* has since been embraced as a term of pride by many whose mixed racial heritage includes Asian or Pacific Island descent. Kip Fulbeck began *The Hapa Project* as a forum for Hapas to answer the question “What are you?” in their own words and be pictured in simple head-on portraits. The project now manifests as a book, traveling photographic exhibition, and online community.

Kip Fulbeck has been making films and art about Hapa identity since 1990. He speaks nationwide on identity, multi-raciality and pop culture — mixing together spoken word, stand-up comedy, political activism and personal stories. Fulbeck is currently Professor and Chair of Art at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he is also an affiliate faculty member in Asian American Studies and Film Studies. Fulbeck has been featured on CNN, MTV, and PBS, and has performed and exhibited in over 20 countries.

The following questions are excerpted from an interview conducted by Discover Nikkei of the Japanese American National Museum, to see the entire interview visit <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2008/3/18/kip-fulbeck/>

How did you come up with the idea for The Hapa Project?

The idea actually came to me as a kid, sometime in elementary school. I just thought it would have been cool to know there were other people around going through what I was going through, other people who couldn't answer the “check one box only” question honestly.

How did you pick who went in the book?

They were all volunteers from around the country. I'd post a shoot on the website and people would come out of the woodwork. I originally culled 250 portraits from the 1200 I shot. We planned to use one person per page but for artistic reasons cut the number by 50%. Trouble was, I was too attached to each image to cut any more – every single photograph represented a relationship to me, albeit often a short one, but a valid and real experience nonetheless. I actually found every person's image and statement interesting on their own terms. It was hard enough cutting down to 250 and now I was supposed to kill off half more of my kids? Eventually, what happened was we laid out 250 images and the editors and myself walked around with little stick-on red dots each, placing them on each image we chose. It was a bit surreal ... quiet and thoughtful, everyone in their own little worlds picking images.

What surprised you about doing this project?

Many things surprised me about this project. The first is the way it's been embraced. I had no idea it would take off the way it has, and I'm very thankful for the wonderful outpouring of support I've received from so many people. Every day I get emails from people who have found the book or seen the show, telling me it's the first time they actually felt part of something – be that a shared identity of not fitting in, some sort of intangible community, or even a discussion. For many of us, when it came to discussing ethnic identity, we were never offered a seat at the table. I feel that the Hapa Project is more than a project about race or ethnicity. It's a project about identity.

Don't miss hearing from Kip Fulbeck in person (book signing follows):

What Are You? The Changing Face of America
Monday, April 12
4:00-6:00 p.m.
Student Center East Illinois Room

Exhibit at Field Museum: *kip fulbeck: part asian, 100% hapa*
April 2-September 6, 2010

http://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibits/partasian_tempexhib.htm



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 I think when
 you've gone
 your whole
 life not fit-
 ting into
 these boxes,
 you've got a
 lot to say
 about it.

-Kip Fulbeck
 =====

Asian American Studies (ASAM) Update!

By Mark Chiang, ASAM Coordinator



I am very pleased to announce our main event that we are planning for Asian American Awareness month in April:

2nd annual ASAM Knowledge Bowl and Inauguration of the Asian American Studies Program and Minor
Wednesday, April 21 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m.
Student Center East Room 302



The first Knowledge Bowl last year was a lot of fun, so I hope you will come to watch and cheer on the students who will compete to win \$ and prizes for their student organizations!

I hope you will stay because immediately following the Knowledge Bowl, there will be a party to celebrate the inauguration of the Asian American Studies Program to start Fall 2010. This program is the result of a great deal of work and many efforts on the part of students, staff and faculty, so this is a time for us all to appreciate what we have accomplished together.

On a related note, we have already begun to get inquiries about the **ASAM minor**. Information about the minor is listed in the online course catalog at:

<http://www.uic.edu/ucatalog/LAASAM.htm>

but in a nutshell, the minor consists of five ASAM courses (some other courses may also count) with ASAM 125, Introduction to Asian American Studies, as the only required course. If you have any more questions, you can contact Bill Gallaga in the ASAM office at 809 University Hall, 312-355-3448 or gallaga@uic.edu, or Mark Chiang at 312-413-0463.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Knowledge Bowl and ASAM celebration in April!

Asian American Studies Courses for Fall 2010

ASAM/ENGL 123	Introduction to Asian American Literature	<i>M. Chiang. MWF 12:00 p.m.-12:50 p.m.</i>
ASAM/ASST/SOC 228	Sociology of Asia and Asian Americans	<i>A. Guevarra. TR 12:30-1:45 p.m.</i>
ASAM/ENGL 328	Asian American Literature	<i>H. Jun. T Th 12:30-1:45p.m.</i>
ASAM/SOC 428	Asian/Asian American Women in the Global Economy	<i>A. Guevarra. T Th 3:30-4:45 p.m.</i>

Need a Job for next year (or this summer)? Work at AARCC!

We are looking for motivated, enthusiastic, and organized students to work at AARCC for 2010-2011! AARCC is a great place to work, develop organizational and leadership skills, and learn more about Asian American issues—plus we think we're fun people to hang out with!

Campus Outreach (undergraduate): Responsible for working with UIC Asian American student organizations, AARCC's annual leadership retreat, AAA Month, and publicizing events. This position will start May 2010.

Community Outreach (undergraduate): Responsible for working on programs that connect UIC students to Chicagoland Asian American communities and organizations, including service projects and outings to community events. This position will start August 2010.

Mentor Program Graduate Assistant (graduate students only): This position is a 25% appointment (10 hours a week) from summer through the academic year. The G.A. will assist in supervising undergraduate peer mentors, coordinating events, and administrative tasks for the Asian American Peer Mentor program. Preferred background in social work, psychology, counseling, or education. This position will start May 2010.

We anticipate these positions will be 10-15 hours per week, and welcome students on Work-Study. More details as well as applications are available on our website at <http://aarcc.uic.edu> or in the AARCC office in 101 Taft Hall. Applications will be due Friday, April 9th. For more information, contact AARCC at 312-413-9569 or Corinne Kodama at ckodama@uic.edu.

In commemoration of AARCC's 5th anniversary, we have asked former students to reflect on their memories of AARCC (or helping to get AARCC started, for those that were here pre-2005).

We hope that these will provide you with a sense of our brief history and perspective on the Asian American community at UIC.

Reflections on 5 years of AARCC

Wow, I cannot believe AARCC is 5 years old already. Although I wasn't able to fully benefit from AARCC as I graduated around the time it opened, I was involved in the initial stages of working with UIC administration to establish the center. This work--as well as my involvement in other Asian American student organizations--largely defined my UIC undergraduate experience. I'm grateful for the lessons I gained along the way, and I hope that others will be inspired to work to achieve their goals in the same way we did to open AARCC.

Steven Tham, '05 (helped write the original student proposal for AARCC)



My years at UIC were defined by my involvement in the movement for AARCC and Asian American Studies which altered the trajectory of my life. As a sheltered suburban kid with almost no "ethnic consciousness," I first became involved because I saw opportunities for leadership and wanted to put something on my resume (so typical, right?). But as I learned more about the inequalities in my Asian American community and the silence around my Asian American identity, I realized that I was hooked for the long-haul. The late-night and weekend meetings, the stimulating discussions, the coalition building, the grassroots organizing, the closed-door strategizing...all of it was invaluable. The struggle and fruition of AARCC has been the profound example in my life experience of how persistent, concerted, and strategic action can achieve great things, even if just from a few. As the 5-year anniversary of AARCC comes around, I am struck by how important it was for that struggle to have existed, for that voice to have been heard.

Sae Rom Chae, '05 (helped write the original student proposal for AARCC)

Having been one of the many that worked to push for the creation of AARCC, I learned a tremendous amount about my identity as an API activist and as a person of color. I can honestly say that it was because of my work with AACC and AARCC that I am where I am today -- a third year law student at Howard University School of Law in Washington, DC. When AARCC finally arrived on the scene, it carried tangible and intangible meanings for me. In the form of the tangible, it was a space where like-minded APIs could gather to form a collective identity. For the intangible, it was the cumulation of efforts from so many for gains that were not realized until many of us had faded from the UIC spotlight. I congratulate the AARCC staff for all of their hard work!

Brandon Mita '06 (President, Asian American Coalition Committee, '05-'06)



My time working as a graduate assistant at AARCC was an amazing opportunity to be a part of and create a special community at UIC. AARCC is one of the few places I've worked that truly empowers both the people who work at the center and creates an empowering space for others as well. The opportunity for me as an individual to have support from my co-workers while I was working on my degree cannot be quantified, and was reflected in the other graduate and undergraduate students I saw coming into the center. Too often students are left to struggle in academia, and students knew and continue to know that they will receive both the academic and emotional support when coming in to AARCC.

Sandhya Krishnan, M.S. '06

(1st AARCC Graduate Assistant and ASAM 125 Teaching Assistant, '05-'06)

Wow, AARCC's 5th year anniversary! That is just incredible; because it seems like it was just a few years ago when AARCC first started. My favorite memory of AARCC would have to be the summer leadership conference that I went to couple years ago. It's not that often where there is a team building activity that involves climbing over a huge wall! Although this summer outing was meant to better our skills as student organization officers, this outing helped me become friends with other students from other organizations and become closer to the AARCC staff. It was more than just networking, because we all became closer to one another throughout our years at UIC. In addition, the staff at AARCC was helpful and supportive in the academics and personal lives of the students that came to them. I appreciate all the things that AARCC has done to help me and other students grow as a person and succeed!



John Nguyen '07 (Vietnamese Student Association officer)



I would not be where I am today without AARCC. Today, I'm a competent first year pharmacy student, standing on my own two feet, on a solid road to my career. Of course my family and friends have always been around to back me up, but AARCC was a huge part of the process. Being part of the mentoring program taught me more than I could have asked for and provided me with leadership experience that I still use today. For my last three years at UIC, Taft101 became like a comfort zone for me, where I could study, meet, eat, and relax. The staff was always pleasant and hospitable, and in a way, they served like the mentors to the mentors. From there, I learned that as mentors, and leaders, we are not always expected to know everything, and sometimes we just need to know where to turn. Fortunately for me, AARCC was one of the places I could turn to. AARCC is a hidden gem at UIC that more people should take advantage of.

Madelle Olea '09 (AAMP Mentor, '06-'08)

I'll be honest, I didn't step foot into AARCC until the end of my freshman year. AARCC had only been open for about a year and I was totally intimidated. At that point in my life, I was [and still am] going through that wonderful and simultaneously tortuous process of 'figuring out who I am as an Asian American.' And to find out that a place like AARCC existed was almost mind-blowing to me. I don't know if I've ever felt such a sense of belonging and community before coming to work at AARCC. Everyday I would come into AARCC and I always felt welcomed. It felt great to be in a space with my fellow Asian Americans and know that this AARCC community, albeit relatively small, existed and was rapidly growing. AARCC is crucial to student life on the UIC campus. Not only does it provide educational programming and resources, it's also safe space where the aforementioned 'community' is fostered; no other places can provide or replicate that.



Joyce Yin, '09 (AARCC Publications Coordinator '06-'07; '08-'09)



If it were not for the mentor program I would have probably experienced a pretty boring college life, whittling away my time in the Art and Architecture building. Without the mentor program I would probably not have blossomed to the "social" bug that I am. I believe the friends that I made in the mentor program made me realize what it means to be a friend and I have seen myself become a better person because of this.

However, the thing I am most grateful about AARCC is the staff—they are the greatest people I have ever met, working with them has definitely been a joy, they are like a second family to me. I do not know how I would have developed as a person if it were not for the people I met here because of AARCC. These are the people I am happy to see everyday, they are what makes my day. I hope everyone has experience this phenomenon that is known as AARCC.

David Mei, '10 (AAMP Mentor '07-09 and AARCC Publications Coordinator, '07-'08)

The Kamal Kishore Kapur Memorial Prize is awarded annually to an undergraduate student at UIC for an essay sharing a perspective on Asian American experiences. All essay submissions are judged anonymously by a panel made up of members representing the AARCC Advisory Board, AARCC staff, and Asian American Studies faculty.

AARCC launched the essay contest in 2008 with a generous contribution by a donor who wanted to honor her grandfather's commitment to education that helps one find one's voice in the world and use it. The goal of the prize is to foster student engagement with social and political issues as a way to create new ways of knowing and being that will transform our community.



AARCC Essay Contest Winner: Our Future Locked Behind the Door

by Edmar Vloria

This year's essay prompt was "A Day Without AARCC." Please join us in congratulating the winners and all of the essay contest writers who honored the spirit of this award by taking seriously their voices as students and the vital role that students play in shaping our society.

Our winner Edmar Vloria is a sophomore English Major. He says "I am a Filipino American raised in the north side of Chicago all of my life. I am the product of the lessons and hard work that my Mother and Grandparents put into me."

The lights of Taft 101 were turned off. The door was locked. No sign of return. There would be no welcoming spot for countless numbers of Asian American students and for many other students on campus. There would be no Professor Karen Su, no Corinne Kodama and no Elvin Chan. There would be no friendly sounds of laughter. There would be no traces of students frantically studying to get ready for their midterms. There would be no planning for AAAMonth. There was only emptiness and silence. The Asian American Resource and Cultural Center was closed for the entire day without reason why. There was no indication if it would even be open the next day. There was just a closed door.

For us, who went to AARCC occasionally, everyday or even for the first time, that closed door meant a day without guidance in college and future careers. It was a day without counseling on our Asian American identity. It was a day without shelter from the brutal Chicago weather and from the overwhelming judgment of the world. It meant a day without a couch to nap on for a moment's rest. It meant a day without each other. We were without help and relief. Without the people we came to depend upon and related to. We were separated from our family home and from our family. We were displaced and isolated.

AARCC came to mean more than just a place. It was more than a resource. It became a part of our identity and history. It helped us shape ourselves. AARCC empowered us. By uniting us together, it gave us voice. We were no longer that quiet mass of students. We had clear purpose and vision. AARCC became a collection of the hopes and dreams of the students and the families that supported them throughout their lives. AARCC was building upon those hopes and dreams in order to create a brighter future for us all. That day AARCC was closed, was a dark day to carry a tremendous weight alone and to hope AARCC would be there again tomorrow.

2nd place: "A Day Without AARCC" by **Wen Jun Norman Chen** (Freshman double majoring in Economics and English with a Creative Writing Concentration)

Honorable Mention:

- "A Day Without AARCC" by **Amrita John** (Sophomore majoring in the Teaching of English in Secondary Education)
- "Seaweed Girl" by **Jennifer Kim** (Freshman majoring in English)

Reflections on 5 years of AARCC (continued)

Moving from Seattle, it was a cultural shock for me to live and work in the Midwest, I thought I was one of the only Asian American graduate students on campus. Luckily, I found AARCC and a home away from home which provided me with amazing opportunities to learn more about UIC and Chicago, to network with faculty members and community leaders, and most importantly to work with our undergraduate students. My work at AARCC solidified my interest and passion to work with Asian American youth. My graduate school career would have been a lot more challenging without AARCC. I was able to more easily recruit participants for my dissertation because I worked with many Asian American student leaders closely as a GA at AARCC. Also, I met two of my dissertation committee members while working at AARCC who have become my mentors and have been providing me with great guidance in terms of my research and my professional development as an Asian American scholar.

Winnie Chan, '10 (AARCC Graduate Assistant & ASAM 125 Teaching Asst., '06-'08)



AARCC saved my college experience: I had no connection to campus life my first year at UIC. I commuted from home, and had a minimal number of new friends and contacts on campus. College felt a lot like high school: wake up in the morning, go to school, go home, do homework, repeat. It was very much just “going through the motions.”

I took an Asian American Studies course which introduced me to AARCC. It was a pathway to connecting to the Asian American community in Chicago through volunteer and internship opportunities, participation in student organizations, and a professional network (I currently work for an Asian American community based organization). I was able to meet incredible students during my time at AARCC, students with whom I might not have connected otherwise. AARCC has helped to develop this community of students from different backgrounds (not just ethnic backgrounds, but also commuter and dorm students, diversity in academic paths, and people from different areas of Illinois and the country) who have all gotten a lot out of having a resource center available to meet their needs. AARCC was the biggest player in my college experience. Asian American Studies and AARCC certainly saved my college experience from being one that was incredibly empty to one that ended up being more fulfilling, enjoyable, and worthwhile than I could have imagined.

Brandon Lee, '09 (AARCC Mentor and Community Outreach Coordinator, '08-'09)

Being involved with AARCC, as a student staff assistant and an AAMP mentor, was a memorable experience that enriched my undergraduate college career and provided me with valuable opportunities to serve the APA student body and Chicago’s Asian American communities. AARCC also increased my interest in public service, particularly when serving immigrant and minority communities, which I have applied towards my professional pursuits in Washington, DC. It was a great avenue to grow as a student and stay connected to a vibrant API college community.

Rommel Calderwood, '07 (AAMP Mentor and AARCC Community Outreach Coordinator '06-'07)



I worked at AARCC my sophomore year of UIC and it was one of the best experiences of my life. I learned so much at AARCC that has helped me with life after college. I learned a lot about my identity as an Asian American. However, the most meaningful thing I learned is how great it feels to make a difference on campus. Planning these events and bringing student groups together really made an impact on campus that I am proud of. I am certain that these things have helped me secure my current job at an Asian American civil rights nonprofit in Washington, DC.

There are many shout-outs I have from working at AARCC. Aaditi, Brandon, Joyce, and Rommel have all worked AARCC jobs and this bond makes them some of my best friends from UIC. The biggest shout-outs go to Karen, Cori, and Elvin. Not only have they helped develop AARCC in 5 years, but they have helped me develop as a person. When I tell others “some of my best friends I made in college are adults,” I am talking about them. They have been great mentors to me for advice on academic, career, and life decisions. They are wise and experienced, and most of all, they care deeply about their students. I am eternally thankful to them. I truly believe that AARCC has made a meaningful mark on campus and has certainly made a meaningful influence on me. I am glad to have been a part of it.

Phillip Ozaki, '09 (AARCC Outreach Coordinator, '06-'07)

UIC Asian American Resource and Cultural Center

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AARCC Resource Book Cover Contest

Want to win \$100?

Design the next Asian American Resource Book cover!

Deadline: Friday, April 23rd

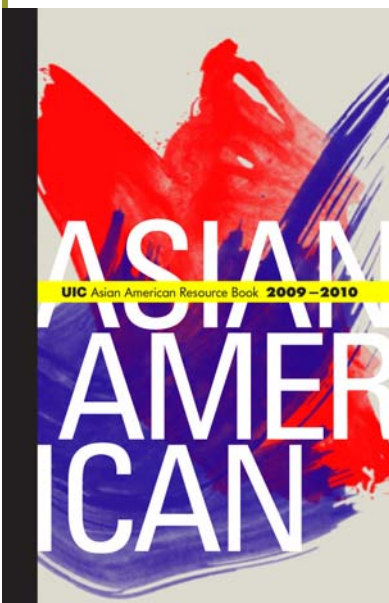
Dimensions: 5.5" x 8.5"

Cover must include the following:

Front: Asian American Resource Book 2010-2011

Back: Presented By:
Asian American Resource and Cultural Center
Taft Hall, Room 101; 826 S. Halsted Street (MC 203)
Chicago, IL 60607-7029
312-413-9569; aarcc.uic.edu

Please also include the AARCC logo somewhere in the design.



Last year's cover design

**For complete details visit aarcc.uic.edu or contact Corinne Kodama at 312-413-9653 or ckodama@uic.edu, Elvin Chan at 312-413-9569.