

AARCCConnections

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Welcome to the Inaugural Edition !

Welcome to the very first issue of AARCCConnections, the newsletter from the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center (AARCC). The goal of this newsletter is to inform you of AARCC's programs and upcoming events, raise awareness of issues facing UIC's Asian American community, and publicize other Asian American-related activities on campus. We hope to bring this newsletter to you twice a semester.

In this introductory issue, we highlight some of AARCC's recent programs, a Sept/Oct calendar of events, and an interview with Dr. Nazli Kibria, who will be our featured visiting speaker on October 12th. Read on for more information!

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for AARCCConnections, contact Corinne Kodama at ckodama@uic.edu or 312-413-9653. We look forward to hearing from you! Oh—and an extra thanks to Richard Kodama (hmm, a relation?) for the NAME of AARCCConnections!

Greetings from Karen Su, AARCC Director

One commonly asked question about the AARCC, is “Who do you include in the definition of Asian American?” so I thought I'd say something briefly about our working definition of Asian American at the AARCC.

At AARCC we define the term Asian American broadly (and the listed examples are NOT exhaustive): East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, Korean), South Asians (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan), Southeast Asians (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino). We are also asked, “What about Middle Easterners or Arab Americans (Syrian, Iranian), are they West Asians?” And, what about Pacific Islanders (native Hawaiian, Samoan)? Our definition is flexible; if Arab Americans or Pacific Islanders seek us out, we will certainly work with them, though we recognize their issues are often very different from the other groups listed above. Furthermore, I want to stress that Asian American is not simply a diversity of ethnic cultures, but a whole range of experiences inflected by differing degrees of acculturation, national origins, political points of view, religious beliefs, cultural practices, as well as gender, sexual orientation, social class.

Join us for more discussion on this topic of “Who Is Asian American” on Oct. 27th (see calendar) at Noon!

Another commonly asked question: Do you have to be Asian American to be involved in the AARCC? The answer is an emphatic NO. The fact that Asian Americans make up 21% of the UIC student population demands that ALL of us, no matter what our backgrounds, learn more about Asian Americans. Even those of us who are Asian American have much to learn about ourselves and others.

As I write this, students are about to hold Asiantation 2005 and I reminisce over last years Asiantation. I was officially on maternity leave and my son was 5 weeks old. He joined me for the daytime fair and slept soundly in his stroller while I chatted with students. Having given birth to my second child and also figuratively to my second cultural center within a month of each other, I can't help but draw parallels between their milestones. My son began walking on his own last week, and likewise, AARCC, too, is about to take off on its own. We have launched many new programs this year and look forward to many more firsts that we hope you will get involved with. Just as many caretakers nurture my son in his growth, I believe what will make AARCC thrive is the strength of student involvement and campus support.



Expanded Vision for Asian Americans: Dr. Nazli Kibria Emphasizes Global Perspectives

AARCC's upcoming guest speaker for the Asian American Studies Lecture Series is Dr. Nazli Kibria, who has researched and taught in the areas of family, race and ethnicity, gender and globalization with a focus on South Asia as well as the Asian American experience. She has studied Vietnamese, Chinese, Korean, and Bangladeshi Americans in her work. Her recent publications include the books *Becoming Asian American: Second Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities* and *Family Tigh trope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans*.

Dr. Kibria states about being an academic sociologist: "...it seemed like such a powerful way to ask the kind of questions I wanted to pursue, and these questions relate to power and power relations in society, and ways of achieving social justice. ...it would also give me a way to help people ask those questions or arrive at those same kinds of questions." She emphasizes a comparative focus because of the global perspective it gives, particularly as related to Asian Americans.

Dr. Kibria's research is "trying to make sense of the world, particularly the issue of power and how power is made and used and how it gets played out." She first identified as Asian American by reading fiction and other Asian American literature, and believes that being Asian American is not just a singular identity but a political one. Kibria states that "one consistent theme that Asian Americans have had to deal with, whether it was 200 years ago or yesterday, is the fact that they...are really viewed as foreigners...there was a concern with the Japanese taking over the American economy, and Asian Americans were scapegoated at that time. Today, it's South Asians who are being targeted...and scapegoated. So... the specific focus changes, but the theme of...being not American always stays the same." "...It's almost a shifting disc or glow—at times, the light shines at a certain segment of Asian Americans and at the same time people get scapegoated. What AAs need to know is that the glow may shift at any time, so what affects you right now may affect me later." In short, Dr. Kibria emphasizes that in order to learn from one another, we must work together, learn from each other, and only in that way can understanding come.

**Don't miss Dr. Nazli Kibria's talk: Oct. 12th at Noon in BSB #4102:
"Asian Americans and The Politics of Community"**



Dr. Nazli Kibria, Associate Professor of Sociology, Boston University

"What Asian Americans need to know is that the glow may shift at any time, so what affects you right now may affect me later."

AARCC Staff: So Who ARE these people, anyway?

Karen Su, Director, oversees the activities and direction of AARCC. She also works on academic initiatives, such as the speakers series and the movement for an Asian American Studies program on campus. Karen previously directed an Asian American center at U. of Pennsylvania, and has taught Asian American Studies at various campuses around the country. Sandhya Krishnan, Graduate Program Coordinator, assists Karen with programs and will be the T.A. for the spring ASAM class.

Corinne Kodama, Associate Director, is responsible for outreach to campus units and student groups. She also develops student programs. Corinne's background in in Student Affairs, most recently with the Office of Career Services here at UIC. Alexandra Nam, Student Outreach Coordinator, assists with a variety of projects (like this newsletter).

Elvin Chan, Assistant to the Director, manages the day to day administration of the AARCC office and the resource library. Elvin has extensive experience working with the Chicagoland Asian American community as well as a leadership program at Northwestern University. He will be developing connections with the Chicagoland Asian American communities with help from Louie Fabicon, Student Resource Coordinator.



Can you guess which one is Karen and which is Corinne? People often get us mixed up!

What's an ASAM Brown Bag?

The first ASAM Brown Bag, "Exploring Asian American Poetry and Spoken Word" on Sept. 14th gave students, staff, and faculty an opportunity to learn from each other as well as get to know each other better. For example, the poem, "Da Meaning of Fishing," by Eric Chock, a Hawaii poet, not only gave some a glimpse on language politics in Hawaii, but gave Brown Bag participants an opportunity to learn that Prof. Jun caught a 16 lb salmon from Lake Michigan! Karen Su shared her favorite poem about bumpy chicken from a book of poems written by elementary school kids, edited by Eric Chock. Brown Baggers got to watch Chicago-based Marlon Esguerra on HBO's Poetry Def Jam performing his piece "Morning Papers," shared by visiting lecturer Jane Hseu.

Brandon Mita did a rousing reading of a poem by Minnesota-based Bao Phi that stood white male fantasies on their head. It had everyone laughing yet grimacing with recognition of the racial dynamics Bao Phi explodes against in his piece.

As some students rushed off for 1 o'clock classes, others arrived including one asking if the poetry slam was still going! The discussion picked up with Sandhya Krishnan playing a piece by Chicago-based performance group, "I was born with two tongues," that confronted the objectifying exoticization of Asian American women. Prompted by Prof. Mark Chiang, Jane Hseu shared a brief history of Slam poetry and its origins in Chicago. Overall, the Brown Bag was lively, informal, and a way to explore serious issues relevant to Asian Americans.



The Asian American (ASAM) Brown Bag is an opportunity for informal conversations about Asian American Studies. Because it is a smaller setting, the Brown Bag will allow a deeper, more personal exchange. The topics will often be connected to campus or community lectures or events. We hope this will be an opportunity for UIC students, faculty, and staff to connect in a space that encourages open discussion and dialogue. The next one will be Oct. 5th at Noon at AARCC (101 Taft Hall)!

UIUC Opens Asian American Center

On September 9, the AARCC staff traveled to Urbana-Champaign to celebrate the opening of UIUC's Asian American Cultural Center. Though they have a similar staffing structure, their physical space is much bigger than UIC's AARCC: UIUC's Center is an entire building with several large rooms, meeting spaces, and a kitchen! They are physically connected to the building of UIUC's Asian American Studies Program, which is currently the 2nd largest in the country. For more information, visit their website at www.odos.uiuc.edu/aacc/.

Top: Karen Su, Linda Luk (UIUC G.A.), David Chih (UIUC Director), Elvin Chan

Bottom: Jeffrey Sichaleune (UIUC Asst. Director), Corinne Kodama



I Scream, You Scream, Asian Americans Scream for Ice Cream

The Asian American Resource & Cultural Center (AARCC) kicked off the year with an ice cream social to bring students and staff together for four reasons: learn about the AARCC and on-campus Asian American organizations (AA orgs), get to know each other, and of course, to eat ice cream.

The event took place on Friday, August 26th, from 2-4 pm, and the ice cream, catered by Village Creamery: Homemade Ice Creams, brought in Asian flavors such as green tea and mango. Sure enough, the ice cream ran out before the event was over, but that didn't stop the crowd from enjoying themselves.

The event had an attendance of over 250 students, faculty, and staff from all ethnic backgrounds,, which over-flooded the oasis outside of the AARCC office, located at Taft Hall 101. As students enjoyed themselves, the Directors of the AARCC and AA org leaders made announcements to promote their causes, as display boards, pamphlets and booklets were laid out for partakers to read and keep. The AARCC was also open to explore.

For more information on the AARCC: <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oaa/AARCC/>

For more information on Village Creamery ice cream: www.villagecreamery.com

September 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 ASAM Brown Bag: Spoken Word	15	16	17
18	19	20 Asiantation Daytime Fair	21	22 "What Is Asian American Studies?" "Asian American Sororities"	23 North Korea Truth Day (LiNK)	24
25	26	27	28 Asiantation Night Vision	29	30 APAMSA Natl Conference in Chicago!	

Schedule of Events

- Sept. 20: Asiantation Daytime Fair. Learn about Asian American student organizations and campus offices. 11 a.m.-2p.m. in the Quad.
- Sept. 22: "What Is Asian American Studies?" Join an interactive workshop highlighting how Asian American Studies can change your perspective. Presented by Karen Su. 3:00 p.m. Student Center East #713
- Sept. 22: "Asian American Sororities." Learn the history and development of Asian Americans in the Greek system. Presented by alpha Kappa Delta Phi. 4:00 p.m., Student Center East #713
- Sept. 23: "NK Truth Day": Chol-Hwan, survivor of North Korean prison camps, author of *The Aquariums of Pyongyang* will be coming to give his personal testimony. 4:00 p.m. Student Center East #713
- Sept. 28: Asiantation's Night Vision: Headliner will be IBU (Inspired By You) and DJChrisMix. 6-9 p.m., EPASW: L-285.
- Sept. 30-Oct. 2: Asian Pacific American Medical Student Assoc. National Conference: Northwestern University: www.apamsa.org/2005conference/

Learning in the Great Outdoors: The All-

On August 7-8, 2005, approximately 20 student leaders from 7 of UIC's Asian American student organizations left the urban environment of Chicago and headed to the great outdoors at YMCA Camp Duncan for the 1st Annual All-Asian American Organization Leadership Retreat.

The first part of the retreat was participating in an outdoor teams course, solving various physical obstacles to experience group dynamics and develop effective communication and problem solving skills.

The rest of the weekend students attended workshops on Asian American Studies, Racial Identity, Program Planning, Presentation Skills, and Retaining and Motivating Members.

They also enjoyed "bonding" moments during free time boating, playing games, and hanging out at the campfire.

October 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 APAMSA Conference
2 APAMSA Conference	3	4	5 ASAM Brown Bag: The Work of Dr. Kibria	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 Dr. Nazli Kibria: “Asian Americans and the Politics of Community”	13	14	15
16	17	18 ASAM Brown Bag: Asian American Psychology	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 UIC Volunteer Fair	27 “Who Is Asian American” workshop	28 Graduate & Prof. School Fair 1-5 p.m., PEB	29
30	31					

Asian American Organization Leadership Retreat

Everyone had a great time and learned a lot—in fact, many students wished it was longer! Students especially liked getting to know officers from different organizations outside their own. Next year we hope to make it even better by including more organizations and offering new workshops.

If you're interested in helping to coordinate next year's retreat, contact Corinne at AARCC!



Schedule of Events

- Oct. 5th: ASAM Brown Bag: “Not Asian, Black, or White? Reflections on South Asian American Racial Identity” by Dr Kibria.
- Oct. 12th: “Asian Americans and the Politics of Community. Dr. Nazli Kibria: Noon at BSB #4102. See article on p.2 !
- Oct. 18th: ASAM Brown Bag : Asian American Psychology. Presented by Dr. Angela Ebreo, Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy. Noon at AARCC (101 Taft Hall)
- Oct. 26th: Find out about volunteer opportunities in the Chicagoland community, including Asian American organizations! 11am-2pm, Student Center East Concourse.
- Oct. 27th: “Who Is Asian American?” Do you consider yourself “Asian American” or not? How do you define Asian American and what do you think that means? Join us for a discussion about identity! Noon at 200 Addams Hall (African Am Cult. Ctr).

**Asian American Resource
& Cultural Center**

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Did You Know:

- Asian American students make up 20% of the overall student body at UIC
- There are over 25 Asian and Asian American student organizations at UIC
- The largest Asian ethnic groups (according to the 2000 census) are: Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Korean
- The Asian American population in the Midwest grew 86% from 1990-2000
- There are over 400,000 Asian Americans in the Chicagoland area
- Asian Americans make up 4.5% of the U.S. population (projected to increase to 6% by the year 2020)



Note: The 2005-2006 edition of UIC's Asian American Resource Handbook is here! This book highlights student organizations, campus information, and community and national resources. Contact AARCC to get your copy.