Message from the Director

Dear Friends and Supporters of CAAS,

As 2012 winds down a year of many accomplishments, on campus we look forward to the great prospects of 2013. This fall, the presidential election and the Supreme Court case on affirmative action, Fisher v. UT, directed attention to UT and issues concerning diversity and political representation. CAAS organized several events that explored the participation of Asian Americans in American and Texan society and culture, including talks by internationally renowned speakers, George Lipsitz on “Why Asian American Studies Matters Now” and Caroline Brettell on “Participatory Citizenship and Civic Engagement: Asian Immigrants in DFW” and the panels “Asian Americans & Fisher v. Texas” and “Fisher v. UT & You: A Conversation with Civil Rights Leaders.” Such programs draw attention to the challenges faced by Asian Americans in gaining fuller integration in the United States.

Fall 2012 also witnessed the completion of CAAS’ strategic plan (view PDF), which maps out a three-year course of action in the areas of academic curriculum, programming, student and community outreach, communications, and fundraising. We heartily thank our hardworking and dedicated committee members: Ge Chen, Esther Chung, Rowena Fong, Smita Ruzicka, Lok Siu, Channy Soeur, Tony Vo, and Jennifer Wang, with particular applause going to our consultant Linda Dickens and program coordinator, Sona Shah, who spearheaded the process. With this roadmap in hand, CAAS is bound for a more expansive future serving Asian American students on campus and generating greater awareness and resources to support their perspectives.

We ask for your support in ensuring that Asian American Studies enjoys a vibrant future at UT by making a tax-deductible year-end donation to CAAS. CAAS is one of only a handful of programs that promotes research and understanding about Asian Americans in the South and Southwest. Your investment will help us build a more integrated and representative society and campus community for APA students.

My best wishes for your holiday season!

Madeline Y. Hsu
Director, Center for Asian American Studies
Associate Professor, Department of History

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Fall 2012 Programming

“Why Asian American Studies Matters Now” talk by Dr. George Lipsitz

In early September, CAAS hosted a public lecture by renowned American Studies scholar Dr. George Lipsitz, professor of Black Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has written numerous books and articles including: The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics (1998), American Studies in a Moment of Danger (2001), and How Racism Takes Place (2011). This event was made possible with support from
“Participatory Citizenship and Civic Engagement: Asian Immigrants in DFW,” talk by Dr. Caroline Brettell

How do Asian immigrants to the United States participate in the public sphere and hence become citizens, not only in the legal sense but also socially and culturally, thorough various forms of civic engagement? Drawing theoretically on a community of practice model that emphasizes situated learning, Dr. Caroline Brettell, University Distinguished Professor at Southern Methodist University, discussed how Asian immigrants in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area have developed a sense of belonging and learned forms of civic engagement in the United States. The lecture was hosted by CAAS with support from the Asian American Resource Center, the departments of Anthropology and Asian Studies, and the Center for East Asian Studies. Read more about Brettell’s lecture.

Asian Americans and Fisher v. Texas

In November, CAAS organized a panel discussion on affirmative action and its implications for Asian American students and faculty. The panelists included: Tu-Uyen Nguyen, classics and Asian American studies major; Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa, associate professor in sociology and Asian American studies; Dr. Eric Tang, assistant professor in African and African diaspora studies and Asian American studies; Dr. Kamala Visweswaran, associate professor in anthropology and Asian American studies; and Tony Vo, Asian American studies alumnus and staff at the Multicultural Engagement Center. Dr. Edmund T. Gordon, chair of the department of African and African diaspora studies moderated the panel. Listen to the audio from the panel and view photos here. This event was co-sponsored with Asian/Asian American Faculty and Staff Association, Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective, and Texas Exes Asian Alumni Network.

Islamophobia

CAAS worked with the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) to coordinate a discussion on Islamophobia in early December in response to recent hate crimes against Sikhs and Muslim Americans. Nueces Mosque, located in west campus, graciously offered to host the event in their prayer room. The panel included: Dr. Snehal Shingavi, assistant professor of English and Asian American studies; Lesley Varghese, executive director of the AARC; and Sheikh Umer from Nueces Mosque. You can listen to the audio of the presentation and discussion and view photos here. Special thanks to the Office of the President for providing funding and to several campus and community organizations that co-sponsored the event by helping with publicity.

Community News

Asian American Studies Course Featured in New York Times Article on Affirmative Action

This fall CAAS offered the course “Race, Identity & Politics in Asian America” taught by Lesley Varghese, executive director of the Asian American Resource Center. The semester began with an exciting visit from New York Times reporter Ethan Bronner who was researching Asian Americans and affirmative action. Bronner covered a class debate concerning the merits and policy implications of the Fisher vs. UT case, a pending constitutional challenge to affirmative action at the University of Texas. Read the full New York Times article, which quotes several students and read more about Professor Varghese’s class. (Photo copyright Michael Stravato for The New York Times)

CAAS Director Receives Community Leadership Award

Read more about the lecture or watch the video recording.
The Network of Asian American Organizations and Asian American Resource Center awarded Dr. Madeline Hsu, director of the Center for Asian American Studies, the 2012 Community Leadership Award at the “Building Bridges Between Asia and Austin” charity gala in September at the Four Seasons Hotel benefiting the Asian American Resource Center. View photos from the event here.

Dr. Snehal Shingavi Gives Keynote Address at AAAFSA Fall Welcome Event

The Asian/Asian American Faculty and Staff Association hosted their fall welcome event on September 20. The association invited Dr. Snehal Shingavi, CAAS core faculty member, to give the keynote address on Asian American activism. Shingavi was last year’s recipient of AAAFSA’s RAISE Faculty Award. You can read his full speech here.

ACE Foundation Scholarships Awards Scholarships to UT Students

Three UT Austin students received $500 scholarships each from the ACE Foundation. The foundations’ mission is to ensure the growth and success of Austin’s Asian American community through education and financial support. CAAS worked with ACE Foundation again this year to identify UT students based on merit and leadership activities. CAAS selected Tu-Uyen Nguyen, Asian American Studies and Classics double major, Lalini Pedris, CAAS student associate and double major in International Relation and Global Studies and Geography, and Jennifer Tran, Asian American Studies and Government double major. Congratulations to these amazing students!

People at CAAS

New Core Faculty at CAAS

CAAS welcomes six new core faculty members. Core faculty members work closely with the director and staff on academic planning and programming for CAAS. Read more about them here.

Dr. Beili Liu Receives the 2012 Regents’ Outstanding Teaching

Congratulations to CAAS faculty affiliate, Beili Liu, for receiving a 2012 Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award. Twenty-seven faculty members from The University of Texas at Austin received the UT System Board of Regents’ highest teaching honor in 2012.

Dr. Eric Tang Awarded Constance M. Rourke Prize for Best Essay in American Quarterly

Each year the American Studies Association awards the Constance Rourke prize to the best essay published in the journal American Quarterly. This year’s prize goes to CAAS core faculty Eric Tang, assistant professor in African and African Diaspora Studies and the Center for Asian American Studies. Tang won for his essay "A Gulf Unites Us: The Vietnamese Americans of Black New Orleans East" 63:1 (March 2011) which examines the forms of community life and solidarity created by Black and Vietnamese Americans in New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Dr. Thomas A. Tweed Elected Vice President of the American Academy of Religion

CAAS faculty affiliate, Dr. Thomas A. Tweed, was elected vice-president, and future president of the American Academy of Religion, the largest professional organization for scholars of religion.

Alumni Stay Connected to CAAS

Did you graduate from The University of Texas in Asian American Studies? CAAS wants to hear from you! Please email us with your contact information on where you are and what you’re up to.
Upcoming Events

Spring 2013 Speaker Series
Feb. 1, 2012 at noon
SAC 5.118

More...

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Support CAAS by making an online gift donation today. Donations are used to support programming, education, and outreach efforts.

Center for Asian American Studies

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