Message from the Director

Dear Friends and Supporters of CAAS,

The Asian American community continues to make political inroads in central Texas by developing and strengthening its civic presence. The opening of the Asian American Resource Center culminated 15 years of hard fought campaigning for recognition and resources and promises to serve and advocate for Asian Americans under the auspices of the City of Austin’s Parks and Recreation department. This rapidly growing, predominantly immigrant population is gaining visibility as well in electoral politics, perhaps the heart of democratic processes in America. Building upon the election of Jennifer Kim to city council in 2006, Betty Hwang was elected to the board of Austin Community College and this summer and fall witnessed the campaigns of several APA candidates for local and state offices including Jade Chang Shepherd, Richard Jung of the CAAS Advisory Committee, Ramey Ko a CAAS lecturer, and Todd Wong. Although Chang Shepherd did not win the special election for the District 50 state legislative seat, her campaign lays the foundation for future runs for political office for herself and other APA candidates, including elections to be held this coming spring.

CAAS programs have addressed the challenges of Asian American visibility and integration through programs featuring the immigration historian, Mae Ngai, “Undocumented Longhorns” week, and the Middle Eastern Studies professor Deepa Kumar. As a predominantly immigrant population, Asian Americans face particular challenges in gaining visibility in electoral processes in the form of more barriers to gaining the vote and perceptions of lack of relevance or lesser priority. However, persistence in the uphill struggle to forge alliances and articulate needs and priorities is essential if Asian Americans are to claim their stake in central Texas’s society and political landscape—a stage of incorporation that every earlier generation of immigrant has had to accomplish.

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

Fall 2013 Programming

“Constructing the Muslim Enemy from the Crusades to 9/11,” talk by Dr. Deepa Kumar

On September 12, 2013, CAAS hosted a public lecture by Deepa Kumar, associate professor of media studies and Middle Eastern studies at Rutgers University. Dr. Kumar discussed how the “Muslim enemy” has historically been mobilized to suit the goals of empire. Watch the public lecture on CAAS’s website. Dr. Kumar’s event was a continuation of programming CAAS has organized around the issue of Islamophobia. In conjunction with the Campus Diversity and Strategic Initiatives and the Multicultural Engagement Center, CAAS organized staff and student workshops led by Dr. Kumar on strategies to confront Islamophobia at UT Austin campus. Read more about her visit here. These events were made possible with generous support from the
Of the President, the Department of English, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, and the Center of Middle Eastern Studies and the South Asia Institute.

"A Nation of Immigrants? History, Politics and Immigration Reform," talk by Dr. Mae Ngai

Mae Ngai, professor of history and Lung Family professor of Asian American studies, is a pre-eminent U.S. legal and political historian examining the intersection of immigration, citizenship, and nationalism. She is author of the multiple award-winning Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America (Princeton, 2004) and The Lucky Ones: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America (Oxford, 2010). CAAS organized her visit and public talk in October 2014. The event was co-sponsored with the Institute for Historical Studies in the Department of History, Department of American Studies, and the Clark Center for Australia and New Zealand Studies. View photos of the event and read more about Ngai’s visit here. The talk was part of Undocumented Longhorns Week, a series of events highlighting immigration reform and the issues and concerns for undocumented students.

Undocu-Asian Teach-In

CAAS collaborated with UT graduate Ainee Athar and current student Arbeene Thapa, the University Leadership Initiative, and the Multicultural Engagement Center to host a teach-in on the impact of immigration law upon Asian Americans. The teach-in highlighted the stories of Asian youth who came out as undocumented and unafraid on campuses all over the nation. The guided discussion, led by Athar, herself undocumented, provided resources for undocumented Longhorns such as the Longhorn Dreamers Project and how to support the cause of immigrant justice. Read more about the event here and view Athar’s prezi presentation to learn more about the issue. This event was part of Undocumented Longhorns Week.

Community News

City of Austin’s Asian American Resource Center Grand Opening

On September 28, 2013 the Asian American Resource Center celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony with city officials and Asian American leaders, presentation on the history of Asians in Texas, a fashion and dance show showcasing the diversity within the Asian community, and a street festival including community booths and food trucks. CAAS participated by tabling at the event and also curated an exhibit about CAAS’s history and programming at UT Austin. The exhibit is on display until April 2014. For more information, visit the Asian American Resource Center’s website.

People at CAAS

CAAS Advisory Committee
CAAS is proud to announce the establishment of its first advisory committee. The advisory committee will work with the director and staff to raise funds and support to carry out the Center’s academic mission and programs. The committee consists of committed community and business leaders that recognize the importance of Asian American Studies courses and research.

Dr. Heather Hindman Publishes Book

Heather Hindman, assistant professor in the department of Asian studies and core faculty in Asian American studies, published Meeting the Global: Expatria’s Forms and Consequences in Kathmandu (Stanford University Press, 2013). Mediating the Global uncovers the day-to-day experiences of elite foreign workers and their families living in Nepal, and the policies and practices that determine their daily lives. In this book, Hindman calls for a consideration of the complex role that global middlemen and women play, not merely in implementing policies, but as objects of policy.

Director Madeline Hsu Delivers Talks on Both Coasts

Madeline Hsu delivered lectures about her most recent research project in both California and New York. On September 26, at the invitation of migration historian, Jose Moya, she discussed “Immigration Selection and the Strategic Production of Chinese Immigrants as Model Minorities, 1948-1965” at the Columbia University Forum on Migration. On November 4, she spoke about “How Chinese Immigrants Became Model Minorities: Intellectuals, Refugees, and Immigration Selection, 1908-1962” at the Athenueum of Claremont McKenna College.

CAAS Faculty Affiliate Beili Liu’s Fall Exhibits

Beili Liu, associate professor in the department of art and art history, participated in 'Miniartextil' an annual international exhibition of contemporary art showing the best in Textile Art. The event was organized by the Cultural Association Arte&Arte in Como, Italy. Liu conceived Thirst, a collaborative public art project presented by Women and Their Work Gallery. Installed between the Pfluger and Lamar bridges in Town Lake, Thirst features a tree felled in the recent Bastrop fires to evoke the 300 million trees lost in the recent Texas drought. The installation is on display till December 16, 2013. See ThirstArt.org

Dr. A. Naomi Paik Publishes Two Articles and Receives Summer Studies Fellowship


Dr. Sharmila Rudrappa Receives Faculty Research Assistant Grant

Sharmila Rudrappa, associate professor in Sociology and core faculty in Asian American Studies, is on teaching leave for Fall 2013. She has received a Faculty Research Assistance Grant from the university to work on her book manuscript on surrogate mothers in India, tentatively titled “Outsourced: Surrogate Mothers on Bangalore’s Reproductive Assembly Lines.”

Upcoming Events

War, Genocide, and Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work
Time: TBD / Mar 3, 2013
Location: TBD

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