

Second AAS candidate visits campus

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Daily Texan Staff

Thursday's visit of the second candidate for director of the Asian-American Studies program marked another step toward the implementation of the program at the University.

Nazli Kibria, a sociology professor at Boston University, met with a group of 10 students to discuss her vision of an AAS program at the University. Robert Lee, associate professor of American Civilization at

Brown University, had come to the University and met with students last Friday.

Kibria and Lee were invited after a two student-, five faculty-member search committee selected them to speak to students after reviewing about 60 to 80 applications.

The program has been in the works since 1994, and recent disputes began last March when administrators refused to explain why they chose UT professor of sociology, Arthur

Sakamoto, as interim director of the program instead of hiring as permanent director the student-endorsed Thomas Nakayama, a professor of sociology at Arizona State University.

In response, students from the Asian-American Relations Group and the Anti-Racist Organizing Committee protested the postponement of the program's inception in May with a rally and five-hour sit-in at the liberal arts building, which led to the arrest of 10 protesters.

Kibria said student movements have been central to beginning AAS programs all over the nation.

"Students must be at the heart of this program, too. We must listen to their concerns and use that to shape what we work towards," said Kibria, who helped found a similar program at the University of North Carolina.

The committee members will use student feedback from the

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session when making a recommendation to Richard Lariviere, dean of Liberal Arts.

The search committee has not announced when they will submit their recommendation.

Marian Thambynayagam, a theater and dance/Plan II senior, said recent changes to the selection procedure are

unfair. Last year, a search committee reviewed the applications and ranked them in order of preference. This year, the recommendations will be submitted to the dean without rankings.

"I think it is meant to give the dean more liberty in his decision," said Thambynayagam, an AARG member. "Last time, we used the rankings to

oppose the decision. I think they are trying to avoid that happening again."

Lariviere was unavailable for comment.

Thambynayagam said there is still some tension and mistrust between students and administrators because of the arrests made last year, but stu-

Junaid Rana, Linta Varqese, an anthropology graduate student, and Dennis Donahue, a sociology graduate student, meet with candidates for the director position for the Asian-American Studies Program Thursday.



Yen-Yi Liu/
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dents are ready to move forward with the program.

"I do think things are going better," Thambynayagam said. "If we don't have a director by this year, I think we will all have a heart attack. This process is so lengthy and expensive. Nobody wants to do it all over again."