

Statement from the AAS Chair

By Gina Masequesmay

The 2015-2016 academic year was one of the busiest we've experienced and marked by yearlong preparation for the department's 25th anniversary celebration.

Fall 2015 began with an AAS faculty meeting, and student retreat where students had an LGBTIQQA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersexual, queer, questioning, asexual) ally training. We hosted our annual welcome back gathering with food to say hello to new and returning students, and to introduce them to our program. We supported the Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) monument dedication, which commemorates the trailblazers of EOP at CSUN, and reminds the campus community of the origins of Ethnic Studies at CSUN and its relationship to EOP. And off campus, alumni Wanda Pathomrit and JP deGuzman along with their friend, Gift, organized a Wat Thai tour where members of the San Fernando Valley Hongwanji Buddhist Temple also joined us.

In Spring 2016, faculty and students participated in two conferences and organized the 25th anniversary, the latter which combined our Distinguished Lecturer and student awards events. The 25th anniversary brought together students, faculty and alumni to honor our founders, mark our milestones, and celebrate student achievements. The event drew almost 200 people and served as a springboard for our alumni and friends to organize an Asian American Studies Alumni and Friends Chapter. We want to thank our alumni, students and friends who generously donated. In particular, we have deep gratitude for our former Chair, Dr. Kenyon Chan, for his \$25,000 endowment gift; and Professor Glenn Omatsu and the Kaiser Permanente Asian Pacific Islander Network for the donations that made the reception free for all participants.

A week after our 25th anniversary celebration, Professors Eunai Shrake, Edith Chen and Tomo Hattori and AAS student, Samantha Jones, attended and presented at the Association for Asian American Studies Conference in Florida. Around the same time, 19 students in the AAS 455: Asian American Gender and Sexualities course, attended the annual Queer & Asian Conference (QACON) at the University of California, Berkeley where two student groups presented their original research on the role of Filipino Churches on LGBTIQ lives, and Thai and Cambodian community attitudes toward LGBTIQ members, respectively. Students also had a chance to tour San Francisco State University and meet the College of Ethnic Studies Associate Dean, Dr. Amy Sueyoshi, to learn more about the master's programs in the College of Ethnic Studies, as well as the budget cuts the College was facing. (We are happy that the student hunger strike and community support had won demands made by student activists.) Some of the 19 students also had the opportunity to visit Angel Island's U.S. Immigration Station, the GLBT History Museum, a tour of the Castro neighborhood, and Eastwind Books in Berkeley where they met two of the original activists from the I-Hotel.

To end an eventful year, we celebrated the Class of 2016 at our annual AAS graduation event. Sorrowfully, we also had to say goodbye to two colleagues this past year: UCLA Asian American Studies professor, Dr. Don Nakanishi; and CSUN EOP Director, Mr. José Luis Vargas – both of whom paved the way for generations of community-based scholars and cultural workers. Our thoughts are also with the victims and survivors of the mass shooting in Orlando, Florida, most whom were LGBTIQ and from communities of color.

In looking ahead, I want to announce that during AY 2016-2017 I will be on sabbatical for one year to research the role of ethnic enclaves on ethnic entrepreneurship. Dr. Eunai Shrake will take over as Interim Chair of the AAS Department from mid-August 2016 to mid-August 2017. In mid-July, I will finish my first year of my second term as Chair and Professor Shrake will serve as Associate Chair during mid-July to mid-August of 2016. Please contact her at Eunai.Shrake@csun.edu if you have questions regarding departmental matters. I will resume my role and last term as Chair from mid-August 2017 to July 2018.

Thank you to the students, faculty, alumni and friends for making 2015-2016 one of our busiest and most successful years ever! In this newsletter, please enjoy reading accounts of some of the events that our community truly enjoyed.

AAS Students and Alumni Represent at APALA 2015

By Cielito Fernandez, Lorenzo Mutia, and Bhernard Tila

On Wednesday, August 12, 2015, Asian American Studies (AAS) majors, Cielito Fernandez, Lorenzo Mutia, Karl Pascasio, and Bhernard Tila, traveled to San Diego Bayside to participate in the 13th Biennial Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) Conference. APALA is not only a coalition among labor unions, but represents different community partnerships among social justice organizations. In efforts to bring back information to their peers and communities, Fernandez and Tila attended as representatives of Dreams to be Heard (DTBH), a student-led organization addressing the needs of the undocumented students on campus. Similarly, Pascasio and Mutia attended as representatives of Asian Pacific Student Union (APSU), another student-led group on campus that seeks to empower and develop leadership while addressing issues within the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

For most, the APALA Conference was the first conference they had ever attended as college students. For Tila, it was also the first time he ever left the San Fernando Valley area as an openly out undocumented individual. Since San Diego is known for its very strict immigration security, he experienced some anxiety traveling to the conference. However, anxiety turned to excitement upon arrival to the conference hotel. Tila attended the Undocumented Strategizing Summit, which focused on immigration and community issues. The student-led organization behind the programming, Asian Students Promoting Immigrant Rights through Education (ASPIRE), successfully conveyed the urgency of addressing issues faced by the undocumented Asian American youth.

Upon entrance to the room, all attendees were stopped outside the door and only those who are undocumented were able to enter the summit. This purposeful practice enabled individuals who were facing similar the issues to be comfortable and have time to develop undocumented-receptive strategies that they could bring to their campuses. However, Tila's most unforgettable moment of the event was the healing circle that he participated in during the conference. In the healing circle, he realized that as an individual who focuses on social justice for undocumented students, it is important to take care of oneself before taking care of others. Tila said that being surrounded with issues and hardship can take a toll on an individual and subsequently affect those we attempt to serve. Thus, self-preservation is very important in the handling of social justice issues that can have emotional and physical implications on our bodies.

Before attending this conference, Mutia was familiar with APALA and had volunteered at and attended several events held by the Los Angeles chapter. The alliance of API unionists greatly resonated with him because his family has benefited from the work of his unionized mother.

One of the workshops Mutia enjoyed attending was "Intersectionality: Radicalization of AAPI Community and How to Talk about Progressive Issues with your Conservative Uncle." One of the presenters of the workshop was CSUN Asian American Studies alum, Emi Vallega. The workshop presenters shared how they became socially conscious and how this affected interactions with their relatives, the example being the stereotypical "conservative uncle and aunt." Current APSU members often struggle to share our progressive selves with our more conservative relatives and friends out of fear of developing awkward relationships or causing disruption to "harmony." In his capacity as a representative of APSU, one of the key points Mutia took away from this workshop is that introducing progressive issues to the conservative people in our lives is a process. The process can include long conversations, arguments, disagreements, and silence; is different for different people; and is agonizingly slow. However, slow and steady can be the best way to go.

For Fernandez, she enjoyed the wide range of topics the conference covered. As a Media Management and Asian American Studies double major, Fernandez was most interested in the contemporary examples of how the incorporation of a virtual economy (the Internet) in the workforce can innovate or perpetuate exploitative methods to circumvent labor laws, and foster poor working conditions and the exploitation of the working class. One of the most memorable presentations she attended was a panel titled "Labor and Technology: Uber, Lyft, Airbnb and the Impact of Shared Economy Systems." Since such ride-share companies such as Uber and Lyft target college campuses for recruiting drivers and drawing customers, there is salience in acknowledging the negative effects these systems have on the local market (independent taxi drivers) as well as the ride-share drivers themselves.

Overall, Fernandez and the other participants had an opportunity to take Asian American Studies beyond the classroom and explore their place as Asian American millennials in the contemporary realm of labor movements.



CSUN AAS students and alumni were among the attendees and organizers at the 13th biennial APALA conference in San Diego, CA
PC: Cielito Fernandez

AAS Department Welcome Back

By Jeannie Chen



Left: AAS alumni Khiem Nguyen and Alina Nguyen; Right: Professor Kelly Fong and A3M representative; PC: Jeannie Chen

The CSUN Asian American Studies Department hosted its annual welcome back event on September 9, 2015. At 100° Fahrenheit, it was a sweltering day, and yet the Omatsu House was quickly getting full, with students filing into and filling both rooms. With delectable refreshments set out against a beautiful dragon and koi fish wall mural, the atmosphere felt warm and welcoming to both newcomers and longtime participants. A hip hop soundtrack played in the background, creating a relaxed ambiance as people arrived. Talking to the students sitting next to me, I felt an immediate sense of connection, the same I have felt in many of my interactions with the faculty and students of the AAS Department.

This awareness of community and friendship is really what sets the Asian American Studies Department apart from the rest of the university, a sentiment that resonated in Dr. Gina Masequesmay's warm welcoming address. Several AAS faculty members joined in for introductions, including Professor Eunai Shrake, Dr. Teresa Williams-Leon, Dr. Tracy Buenavista, Professor Kelly Fong, and Dr. Clement Lai. Dr. Masequesmay explained that the AAS Welcome Back is an annual event to which students from all departments are welcome to join and learn more about Asian American Studies. In her brief introduction of the AAS major and department, she also emphasized that the AAS Department gives students "the personal attention they need, unlike at larger majors and departments."

In my own experience in taking courses from the Asian American Studies Department, I have always been struck by the strong community aspect of the course structure, especially when I first learned about the Asian American Movement and their tight-knit connection with many of the AAS faculty at CSUN. Although I am unfortunately a graduating senior now, if I had known sooner about the AAS Department and everything it offered to students, I can say with confidence that I would have seriously considered majoring in Asian American Studies rather than in English. However, thanks to the few courses I have taken at this department and the English department courses with an

Asian American focus, I am able to apply a more interdisciplinary approach to my own writing and research interests, and this skill has served me well, whether in presenting at academic conferences around the world or writing about Asian American Literature.

During the Welcome Back event, Dr. Masequesmay also introduced some special alumni members of CSUN's Asian American Studies major, including Khiem Nguyen, who is a masters' student at CSUN and President of the Northridge Creative Writers' Circle, and Alina Nguyen (no relation), who is now enrolled in the MFA Creative Writing Program at CSU Long Beach. Both expressed deeply felt gratitude to CSUN AAS for fueling their passion for discovery and research and continuing to motivate them in their graduate studies and future career prospects. I truly felt that being able to see actual student alumni of the Asian American Studies program lent a greater sense of the many ways in which newly incoming students could become interested and involved within communities at the university, city, and national levels. According to Dr. Masequesmay, students majoring in Asian American Studies are able to "connect to the community and be distinguished from the rest of the applicant pool" when considering future careers, and that students "can do anything with an Asian American Studies major."

As proof, too, of the AAS Department's emphasis on and commitment to community engagement, she introduced a member Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches (A3M), which is an organization dedicated to helping motivate more people of Asian descent to join a bone marrow registry. Currently, Asians comprise only 7% of the registry, and by encouraging more Asian Americans to join the bone marrow registry, A3M also helps increase the chances of those in need of bone marrow transplants to find their match within the Asian American donor pool and overcome life-threatening diseases. I found this information very inspiring, as I had previously been motivated to join the bone marrow registry when I learned of Kinesiology Professor and Faculty President Shane Frehlich's struggle with acute myeloid leukemia earlier this year. Unfortunately, Professor Frehlich succumbed to this disease later on in September of 2015, leaving his wife and two very young children behind, but through the efforts of organizations like A3M, people in the CSUN community can help by joining the bone marrow registry, thereby increasing the chances of patients with similar struggles finding marrow matches and gaining a fighting chance against fatal diseases.

After hearing about A3M, students had the chance to go around the room and introduce themselves briefly to the other participants. I learned that although many of the students were present on class assignment, several also expressed a genuine interest in learning more about Asian American Studies at CSUN. Followed by friendly independent discussion, the purpose of the Glenn Omatsu House could be seen at its best, as both a convenient place for holding events such as the Welcome Back gathering, as well as a community space to discuss important current issues and topics. I got the opportunity to talk to several AAS faculty members including Professor Kelly Fong, who spoke

extensively on her background in anthropology and her current involvement in the Asian American Studies Department. What really stood out to me was her intriguing interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research. I also made valuable connections with the two student alumni present, Khiem and Alina, as well as several students attending the Welcome Back event, of which three are pictured above. I could finally see a glimpse of the community togetherness that keeps students, faculty, and alumni connected. I engaged in a friendly and stimulating discussion with these fellow students over a wide spectrum of topics, including Asian American literature and graphic narratives, as well as past and upcoming academic conferences and several exciting events being organized for students in Asian American studies.

The AAS Welcome Back Event provided the perfect backdrop and starting point for many valuable friendships and

connections to arise among the people participating. I especially enjoyed talking to and getting to know the professors and students I met there, and left with new friendships and new knowledge regarding Asian American Studies as a major. Being a part of this event has renewed and strengthened my own resolve to maintain my focus on Asian American Literature, Postcolonial Studies, and Critical Theory, no matter which field I plan to enter as I transition to graduate school. I encourage anyone who is interested in Asian American Studies to get involved with occasions (such as the Welcome Back Event) to obtain a solid working knowledge in what the major entails and to learn about the possibilities for future careers in Asian American Studies after graduation. Most significantly, the Welcome Back Event provides the opportunity to form strong networks with amazing people and develop a deeper relationship with both the Asian American and wider community at CSUN and beyond.



Left: Students and Professor Gina Masequesmay during her opening remarks at the AAS Welcome Back;
Right: Students waiting in line for lunch at the Glenn Omatsu House;
PC: Jeannie Chen

Four graduates in black gowns and stoles are standing in front of a white curtain, holding diplomas. The stoles have names and years on them: 'FOYIHOPE', 'RENZOM 2016', 'GLENNOM 2016', and 'BIBENA'.

Stay in touch with CSUN Asian American Studies!
Contact Dr. Edith Chen and Dr. Tomo Hattori to learn more about the AAS Alumni & Friends group, and Dr. Gina Masequesmay and Dr. Eunai Shrake to make donations to the department, or visit our website at:
www.csun.edu/humanities/asian-american-studies

Asian Americans and the CSUN DREAM Center

By Cielito Fernandez and Bhernard Tila

With support from Campus Quality Fee, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) launched the CSUN Dreamers, Resources, Empowerment, Advocacy, and Mentorship (DREAM) Project in January 2015. One year later, the project has expanded to the “DREAM Center” and is one of five undocumented student resource centers in the California State University (CSU) system. The DREAM Center serves more than 1,000 undocumented students at CSUN, or approximately 17% of the entire undocumented student population in the CSU system.

Prior to the conception of the DREAM Center, generations of immigrant students and allies – including Asian Americans –pushed the university to acknowledge the struggles faced by undocumented students and advocated for formal support systems on campus. In particular, the grassroots student organization Dreams to be Heard (DTBH) centered its advocacy on demanding a centralized resource space for undocumented students. Staying true to student and alumni demands, Asian American Studies professor Dr. Tracy Lachica Buenavista and College of Humanities Student Services Center/EOP Satellite Director Marvin Villanueva successfully developed and proposed the DREAM Project; and under the leadership of the EOP Director, the late José Luis Vargas, hired Dario Fernandez as the Coordinator.

On April 20, 2015, the DREAM Project staffed its office with an inaugural group of interns: nine students from various backgrounds and departments who were charged with the development of programs and services. Among the nine were AAS students, Cielito Fernandez and Bhernard Tila, who were hired due to their bilingualism and experiences working with (im)migrant communities.



AAS students and faculty are among the CSUN DREAM Center Staff and Interns
PC: Jordan Beltran Gonzales

In its infancy, the DREAM Project was housed in a less than 200-square foot office with a couch, two desks and three iMac desktop computers. As one can surmise, the limitation of space and privacy made it troublesome for all nine interns to navigate a working tempo. Given the sensitivity of the information the interns were working with, describing the working conditions as carefully choreographed was an understatement. The DREAM Project staff members’ creativity and problem-solving skills were constantly challenged as the number of students served continued to increase. For example, in less than one year, staff responded to more than 2,700 inquiries through office hours, emails, and phone calls; and serviced almost 500 individual students.

The CSUN DREAM Center is a centralized space that provides resources, workshops, scholarships and mentorship to undocumented students and allies. Due to undocumented students being ineligible for federal financial aid, a key service is assisting students with their California Dream Act application – a state-sponsored financial aid program. At the same time, the Center provides a system of peer mentorship that bridges undocumented students, many of whom are first time college students, with the mentors and other resources needed during their time in college.

For most of the students and interns, the DREAM Center has become a home away from home, including Tila. Tila is an AB 540 student, a state designation that enables non-resident students to qualify for in-state tuition pending fulfillment of a long list of requirements. As an AB 540 student, Tila sought the expertise of Coordinator Fernandez to navigate the complex California Dream Act application. Due to the assistance, Tila was able to receive the financial support he needed for school and in addition, was inspired to pursue and be awarded other financial aid opportunities, including the prestigious University scholarship.

Today, the DREAM Center has grown to serve and assist many more students like Tila who are in the same situation at CSUN. However, there are still many others who are affected by the stigma and criminalization of being undocumented, and are discouraged and/or fear pursuing services. As such, the Center believes in the importance of outreach. To do outreach, the Center needs more help from faculty and staff in referring students who lack resources due to their status. At the same time it requires students, regardless of status, to be aware and knowledgeable of the resources and allies on campus receptive to undocumented students.

For more information, please visit the DREAM Center in the USU, Building C, or call (818) 677-7069.

CSUN Asian American Studies Celebrates its 25th Anniversary by Honoring its Past and Envisioning its Future

By Hansook Oh



2016 Student Awardees, PC: Kelly Fong

California State University, Northridge's Department of Asian American Studies celebrated its landmark 25th anniversary with a rare gathering of the department's founders, faculty, alumni, students, campus officials and community members on April 23 on campus in the Grand Salon at the University Student Union.

The 25th Anniversary and Student Awards event was a self-reflection of the quarter-century journey of the department's struggles, successes and the deep commitment to its students, which remains to this day. It honored the department's founders — former CSUN Vice President of Academic Affairs Bob Suzuki, faculty George Uba, Laura Uba and Warren Furumoto, former department chair Enrique de la Cruz, alumnus Gary Mayeda, and founders not in attendance, including former department chair Kenyon Chan, former faculty members Gordon Nakagawa, Michael Ego and Emily Lawsin. Asian American studies students as well as students from the CSUN Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) also were recognized for their outstanding achievements.

The evening began with student performances. CSUN's Filipino American Student Association, the campus' oldest Asian-American student group, performed a traditional Filipino dance called the Tinikling. Members of the Asian-American fraternity Alpha Psi Rho did a step performance and CSUN Asian American studies Alumna and poet Alina Nguyen recited an original piece titled Genealogy.

CSUN Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Yi Li welcomed the 200 attendees on behalf of the university. Li was a young international graduate student of mathematics when he emigrated to the United States, and talked about how as an Asian-American, he discovered the challenges and hardships impacting the Asian-American community while serving as Wright State University's Dean of the College of Science and Mathematics. He cited the importance of supporting Asian-Americans' access to higher education.

"Higher education attainment is not just an educational issue, it is actually a social justice issue," Li said. "It is an issue of our children and our future generation — whether or not they have a good standard of living, whether or not they can achieve their dreams. Higher education is so important to the life of our future and we must, as a higher education [institution], help our community to achieve that goal."

CSUN Dean of the College of Humanities Elizabeth Say, who earned her bachelor's degree at the university, reflected on seeing the department grow.

"Watching the Asian American studies department develop has been one of the great joys of being part of this college," Say said. "They have tremendous faculty, amazing students, and their staff are outstanding. I've never known a group of faculty who are more committed to their students than the faculty of Asian American Studies — we have ones who are just as committed, but not more committed."

John Lee, chief of staff for Los Angeles City Councilman Mitch Englander and a CSUN alumnus, presented a proclamation by the city recognizing the historic achievement of the CSUN Department of Asian American Studies, which was the second in the nation to gain departmental status.

Former Vice President for Academic Affairs Suzuki, who taught Asian American studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst before coming to CSUN, highlighted the importance of the positive impact that Asian American studies has on student achievement. Suzuki — who was mentioned throughout the night by faculty and other founders as being the key figure who made the Asian American studies department possible by pushing for a department and not just a program — put the attention on the important work of the students and faculty who pressed for Asian American studies during the late 1980s.

"The idea of Asian American studies came about from students who felt they needed to take some courses in Asian American studies," Suzuki said. "They worked with some of the few Asian-American faculty we had at that time [to draft a position paper] on why we needed Asian American studies."



Current and former faculty and administrators, PC: Kelly Fong

CSUN alumnus Mayeda, who was one of the student pioneers who worked on the position paper in the late 1980s, also spoke about what it was like to fight for an Asian American studies program during a time when Asian-American students faced much more hostility, discrimination and alienation from greater society. Mayeda helped form the Asian Pacific Student Association and organized an Asian-American cultural awareness week that helped bring visibility to Asian-Americans on campus. He said he admired the department today and the milestone it has reached.

“As a student I never would have dreamed it would be this big,” Mayeda said. “But you just know when something is good and you know something is there for you — not only for you, but for the community and greater Los Angeles. We just never realized it would be this impactful.”

After more founders spoke, the attention turned to the students who were also being rewarded for their excellence and contributions to the department. Dozens of students from EOP were given “Promising Freshman” awards, celebrating the strong connection between the department and EOP. Over a dozen Asian American studies majors and double majors received awards, such as the Promising Sophomore and Transfer Award, Community Builders Award, Promising Future Teacher Award, Donna Kawamoto Special Achievement Award, Laura Uba Academic Achievement Award, Enrique de la Cruz Social Justice Award and the Kenyon Chan Leadership Award.

In thanking the department, the students spoke about how crucial the department has been, not only to their academic success as students, but to their well-being, sense of self and world view.

Asian American studies major Cielito Fernandez, who won the Kenyon Chan Leadership Award for her positive influence among students, said the department helped her to realize who she is as an Asian-American and as a CSUN student.

“Asian American studies made me realize my potential as a student,” Fernandez said. “My capacity as a person has expanded and I believe in myself a lot more. Asian American studies is so important — if you don’t study it, you will forget about the hard work of previous generations. It can provide a road to self-actualization in this society, especially when as a person of color, you don’t physically fit into the larger narrative.”

Asian American studies major Lorenzo Mutia, who won the Enrique de la Cruz Social Justice Award, said Asian American studies gave him a sense of empowerment.

“What Asian American studies means to me is realizing the power that exists in the communities we live in,”



Left: Master of ceremonies, Professor Allan Aquino; Right: Professor Laura Uba and community educator, Tony Osumi; PC: Kelly Fong

Mutia said. “There are a lot of unheard stories in the mainstream. There are so many positive assets in our communities that aren’t heard about out there, that are kind of lying in secret, waiting to be used. A lot of times we are told that what we have to offer does not matter. Asian America Studies gives us an outlet to be utilized for the benefit of ourselves and others.”

Asian American studies alumni also spoke of their gratitude to the department for helping shape their identities and prepare them for their adult lives.

“Coming into my identity as an Asian-American person was based on learning about multiple histories and multiple experiences, of different trials and tribulations,” said alumnus Jean-Paul deGuzman, who teaches Asian American studies at University of California, Santa Barbara. “American American studies has a dual purpose — on the one hand it’s personal, it’s about situating our own identities and stories, and on a practical and a more political level, it helps students to think critically about the world around them, to deconstruct what they see in the media, in history books and in the news. Those tools are very powerful no matter what profession you move on to.”

Alumna Emi Vallega, who is currently coordinating Communications and Resource Development at Pilipino Workers Center as well as at the California Domestic Workers Coalition, said Asian American studies transformed her academic life and inspired her to work in community organizing.

“Walking into my first class with professor Laura Uba changed my life,” Vallega said. “Learning more about your own history — because you don’t get that in regular school — was important for me. You don’t hear about yourself and your family in mainstream history classes. Developing my own consciousness around my own familial issues and being able to discuss them was very powerful for me.”



Students and families in the Grand Salon
PC: Kelly Fong

Alumnus CJ Berina, who owns a store called Collective Lifestyle LA in Northridge and was just awarded a \$15,000 grant from Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's office to do an arts activation campaign on Reseda Blvd. this summer, said he learned from Asian American studies that the most important thing in life is making the world a better place.

"One thing we are doing with our company is change the world in a positive way," Berina said. "Everything that we do is for people. A lot of people start businesses to make a profit, but we started it for the people. We wanted to provide culture to the Valley, through fashion, music art and live events and fill a need [for arts] in the Valley. Life is all about the people around you, serving the people and not just yourself."

Asian American studies professor Allan Aquino, who served as the master of ceremonies for the event, reflected the same sentiment back to the students with his own message of thanks.

"You, our students, are the heartbeat of our purpose," Aquino said. "You will always be the source of our joy, our reason to get up each morning, our reason to embrace our calling as educators — this is a calling, not just a job. And I for one am proud to embrace all of you as comrades and as dear friends, and members of a community family. No matter what happens in the rest of our lives, our hearts are full of joy right here, right now, because all of you are here and we love you."

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Los Angeles City Council Proclamation

By Edith Wen-Chu Chen



CSUN students, faculty, alumni and friends with LA Councilman Mitchell Englander; PC: Seme Park

Mitchell Englander, Councilman for Council District 12, presented a Proclamation to commemorate the Department's 25th Anniversary at Los Angeles City Hall on May 31st, 2016, the last day of Asian Pacific Heritage Month.

Present to accept the award on behalf of the department were faculty members Edith Chen, Tomo Hattori, and Allan Aquino. Alumni who were present included recent Kenyon Chan Leadership Award recipient Lorenzo Mutia; and CJ Berina who is the founder of the Collective Lifestyle LA Store, which serves the community through fashion, music, and art. Also in attendance were Taehyun Kim, Professor of Journalism and Max Reyes, Assistant Director of Government & Community Relations at CSUN. Family members Mr. Izu Hattori, Mrs. Sadako Hattori, and Angelo Mutia were also there to show their support.

In receiving the Proclamation, Professor Chen remarked, "Not too long ago in Los Angeles history, Asian American immigrants were not allowed to become citizens, vote or testify in court, let alone be recognized for their contributions to the historical, economic, political, and cultural development in California and the nation. In the late 1960s, students, faculty, and community fought to establish the discipline of Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies for a curriculum that reflected the experiences and perspectives of Asian Americans, that helped serve our communities... While today, Asian Americans continue to struggle to claim their place as real Americans, I'm honored and moved to accept this proclamation by the LA City Council, which affirms what we do at CSUN."

When Seme Park, Legislative Deputy to Mitchell Englander, who also is a CSUN alumna (MPA degree), heard that the department was celebrating their 25th Anniversary, she reached out to the department to arrange for a proclamation to be given by the Los Angeles City Council. Look for her as a department guest speaker on Asian Americans and politics!

After the ceremony, Seme Park and Max Reyes provided a tour of City Hall and participants admired the architectural details and grandeur of the stately building. Upon learning it was completed in 1928, Professor Aquino pondered if was at the very same building the LA County city clerk denied a marriage license to Salvador Roldan, a Filipino immigrant, and Marjorie Rogers, a British White woman, the couple at the center of the Roldan vs. LA County case in 1931.



Top left: Alumnus Nathan Tuvalu and Professor Kelly Fong; Top right: Professor Eunai Shrake, Professor Kimberly Carroll, and baby Cassandra; Bottom left: Professor Clem Lai, Provost Yi Li, Professor Gina Masequesmay, and Alumnus Gary Mayeda; Bottom right: AAS Founder, Bob Suzuki
PC: Kelly Fong

Queer and Asian Conference

By Tracy Lachica Buenavista

In conjunction with the course AAS 455: Asian American Gender and Sexuality, Professor Gina Masequesmay organized CSUN students to attend the 9th annual Queer and Asian Conference (QACON) at University of California, Berkeley from April 29-May 1, 2016. QACON is a "safe, healing, and constructive space for those in the intersection of the Queer and Asian identities." The theme of the 2016 QACON conference was "In(di)visible," which reflected the goal to make visible and strengthen diverse queer communities.

Several students presented research projects developed through the AAS 455 course and in doing so, gained an important academic experience not common for undergraduates. Beyond QACON, students also had opportunities to meet with scholars in the San Francisco Bay Area and learn more about Ethnic Studies history and contemporary movements, including a visit to the Asian American bookstore, Eastwind Books. The following stories are accounts by AAS 455 students of their visits to the GLBT Historical Society Archives and Museum, Angel Island, and San Francisco State University.

The GLBT Museum

By Sara Gibbons



AAS 455 students at the GLBT Historical Society Archive and Museum in San Francisco, CA; PC: Gina Masequesmay

One of the highlights of the QACON trip was the GLBT Museum. The museum is located on 18th Street in the Castro district of San Francisco which is their equivalent to our West Hollywood. It is small and run by volunteers but has a lot of fascinating artifacts. The museum was created in order to share the information and memorabilia of the GLBT community that the Historical Society had collected. The museum sees the historical importance of collecting a wide array of artifacts. The museum has kept love notes, sex toys, and other memorabilia. There is a collection of matchbooks from various gay bars around San Francisco. These are important because these gay bars are where people socialized and they were meaningful to people's lives. The majority of the museum is of local San Francisco artifacts.

Near the entrance to the museum is a red wall covered with

posters created by LGBT individuals and transwomen of color as part of their efforts to achieve sexual freedom and economic fairness dating back to the 1970s. The wall across from the red wall shows memorabilia honoring dancers and sharing their contribution. Some of these things we saw at the museum were new to us and helped us see some of the reasons behind the activism and struggles of the LGBT community.

The main exhibit at the museum was the Harvey Milk exhibit. Harvey Milk was one of the first openly gay politicians but was murdered just a year after he was elected. When a button is pressed on the display, a light comes on and shows his bloodied, bullet hole ridden suit that he died in. While the suit is being illuminated, a tape recording of Harvey Milk himself plays. He recorded a message just in case he was assassinated. It also had Harvey Milk's bullhorn too. It was eerie but interesting. It is a very important part of history that was showcased. This trip and the visit to the museum helped to make real the struggles and issues that the LGBT community has had to deal with historically and are still dealing with today. To actually see all of this in person raised our empathy level and made us more determined to support our LGBT friends and family members. I know it took a lot of work to coordinate, but Professor Masequesmay's efforts, I believe, paid off and left her class far more educated on the subject than they would have been just reading about it.

Traveling to Angel Island

By Lorenzo Mutia

During our time at QACON, students had the opportunity to visit historically significant and relevant parts of the San Francisco Bay Area, Angel Island being one of them. The island is home to an immigration station and detention center where many Asian immigrants, most of them Chinese, were forcibly interned on arrival during the era of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Sara Gibbons, Cielito Fernandez, and Lorenzo Mutia, were accompanied to the island by Professor Masequesmay and her friend and fellow scholar Julie Underhill, based at UC Berkeley.



Crossing the San Francisco Bay to Angel Island; PC: Gina Masequesmay

The group went on a tram tour of the island, that today mainly serves a recreation site that is staffed by the U.S. National Park Service. Hidden to the "mainstream" for many years was the immigration station and detention center.

Today, the building that housed the migrants is a museum. Up to 200 people could be crammed into a room that was obviously not built to accommodate them. One of the more well-known characteristics of the museum are the walls. Many of them feature carvings of Chinese poetry, much of it referring to the suffering endured while under detention.

The migrants would be detained until they could be deported or allowed into the country. This detention could last months, going on to years.

All of this history was housed on an island of rather idyllic natural beauty. Without the work of preservationists and Asian American activists, the site would have been demolished and its historical significance gone with it.

San Francisco State University and the Third World Liberation Front

By Von Bondoc

Our trip to the San Francisco Bay Area immediately began with a visit to San Francisco State University, home to the only College of Ethnic Studies in the United States.

We were greeted by Associate Dean Amy Sueyoshi. Together, we discussed the history of Ethnic Studies at SF State, as well as the current state of the field. In 1968, there was a strike in San Francisco State that lasted for five months. The strike was due to the lack of diversity within the university's curriculum and was led by the Third World Liberation Front. The Third World Liberation Front was a coalition of student-of-color groups on campus and community-based organizations.

Visiting the College of Ethnic Studies reminded me of the lessons learned in the course AAS 495: Asian Americans and Social Movements, with Professor Clement Lai. I could not believe I was where it all began – this was the mecca of Ethnic Studies. However, while we often learn of the struggles of Ethnic Studies as a historical phenomenon, Sueyoshi informed us of the current issues affecting the College of Ethnic Studies. At the time of our visit, the administration threatened to cut funding for the College by 40% in the next academic year. In response, four students – who called themselves the TWLF 2016 – staged a hunger strike to raise awareness of the unfair budget cuts. Hundreds of people supported the students

and organizations across the nation sent statements of solidarity to the students. One student had to go to the hospital, but returned shortly after. After 10 days, SF State administrators met with the hunger strikers and other Ethnic Studies representatives and signed an agreement with a list of demands that would be met.

We also met with CSUN alumnus and SF State AAS master's student, Gregory Pancho. We learned about the different resources on campus. I was impressed with the Asian American Studies Program, and organizations like the Pilipino American Collegiate Endeavor (PACE) had their own space on campus. Visiting SF State showed me Ethnic/Asian American Studies on a grander scale, and outside of CSUN. In my Asian American Studies courses, we delved into readings, had class discussions and research projects. This trip supplemented what we were taught in a more hands-on fashion.

Ethnic Studies/Asian American Studies is essential because it teaches the history of People of Color in the United States, which is empowering. Prior to taking AAS courses, I was unaware of the struggle and oppression Asian Americans had faced other than the internment of Japanese Americans in 1942 as a panicked response to the attack on Pearl Harbor. Ethnic Studies/Asian American Studies gives the opportunity for students to learn and discuss social justice issues and become more aware of racism and discrimination that is engrained in our society. With the current political climate in America, I feel it is crucial more than ever to be equipped with this knowledge.



Lorenzo Mutia, Sara Gibbons, Von Bondoc, Gina Masequesmay, and Cielito Fernandez visit SF State



CSUN AAS Alumnus and SF State AAS MA student Gregory Pancho
PC: Gina Masequesmay