

California State University
Northridge

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES NEWSLETTER

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Monday to Friday
8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Issue #4, Spring 2012

Welcome!

This year was another big year full of activities. We commemorated the 20th anniversary of the LA Uprising and many AAS students along with Chicano/a students went to Arizona on a campaign to save Ethnic Studies. We also celebrated API Heritage Month and two of our faculty had a chance to meet CSUN alumnus Joan Chen. Our former chairs of AAS also set up scholarships for students and continued their legacy of community empowerment.

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Former Chairs Continue To Contribute To Their Legacies

Two former chairs of the Asian American Studies Department—Dr. Kenyon Chan and Dr. Enrique de la Cruz--have established separate funds for developing student leadership training. Dr. Chan, who established the department's Kenyon Chan Leadership Award, served as the first chair of CSUN's Asian American Studies Department from 1990-98. Dr. Chan's illustrious career has included serving as faculty at UCLA's School of Education and School of Medicine, as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at LMU, as Vice President and then Acting President of Occidental College, and, currently, as Chancellor of University of Washington, Bothell. He is funding the leadership award and is providing funding for the establishment of leadership training for AAS students.



Dr. de la Cruz has served as both professor and Chair of the Asian American Studies Department from 2000-2010. A renowned scholar, Dr. de la Cruz has written on Asian Americans, Filipino Americans and Philippine-U.S. Relations, and his work *Forbidden Book: The Philippine American War in Political Cartoons* (2005), was recognized with a Book of The Year (2005) award from the Gustavus Myers Center for The Study of Bigotry and Human Rights. Prior to coming to CSUN, he served as the Assistant Director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. In 2010 the Department established the Enrique de la Cruz Social Justice Award and he will be funding the social justice award and training for students focusing on social justice issues in the next five years.

Currently, faculty are setting protocols for the awarding of the student stipends and the Chair will announce the application process for the training stipends in Fall 2012. The Department has been lucky to continue its affiliation with both former chairs, both of whom have left impressive legacies for Asian American Studies.

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The Distinguished Lecturer and Student Awards Event Featuring Kip Fulbeck



On May 1st, 2012, the Asian American Studies Department presented the Distinguished Lecture and Asian American Studies/ Educational Opportunity Program Student Awards. Professor Teresa Williams-León, of the Asian American Studies Department, introduced Kip Fulbeck as the featured speaker, whom she described as a well-known published artist and “one cool surfer dude.” Not only is Kip Fulbeck a published artist, he is an internationally renowned filmmaker, poet, writer, performer, scholar, teacher, and mentor. He is also a professor at the University of California Santa Barbara in the Film and Media Studies Department and an affiliated professor for UCSB’s Asian American Department.

Kip Fulbeck has performed and exhibited his work in over twenty countries. During his multi-media talk, Professor Fulbeck shared his current multiracial identity project, called The Hapa Project. The Hapa Project consists of multiple forms, including a published book, interactive photographic exhibitions in museums, and presentations about awareness of identity across the nation. He ended his talk with a clip of another project called Lilo & Me.



After Kip Fulbeck’s moving and educational presentation, twenty-five students were recognized for their excellence in academic and community work. The Promising Freshmen Awards went to Yesenia Alarcon, Marjory Cabrera, Aneidra Carrion, Kaylah Cooley, Jeffrey Haro, Vanessa Marcial, Jessie Ochoa, Luis Reyes, Vivian Tran, and Jason Yau. The Promising Sophomore Awards went to Mary Ly and John Michael Ricon. The Promising Transfer Awards went to Louise Fonua, Ilaisaane Fonua, Kevin Guzman, and Emi Vallega, and two Promising Future Teacher Awards went to Christopher Castillo and Carolina Quintanilla. Brandon Kimpark and Seokwon (Jason) Yoon received the Special Achievement Awards.



James Sohn, who dedicated time and effort in the Save Ethnic Studies Campaign, received the Outstanding Service Award. Tran Le, who showed excellence in her academics, received the Academic Achievement Award. The Kenyon Chan Outstanding Leadership award went to Linda Yu and Courtney (CJ) Berina for their hard work and noteworthy leadership. Lastly, the Enrique de La Cruz Social Justice Award went to Lorraine Zapata for her countless hours of community service, her efforts to promote education through the arts, and, most of all, her dedicated commitment to improving her world.



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LA Riots/Rebellion/Uprising

Fatima Orcino

On the last day of April in the Grand Salon at California State University Northridge, the Asian American Studies Department presented a panel on the 20th Anniversary of the Los Angeles Riots/Uprising, entitled 20 Years Later: Have We Gotten Along? 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion/Riots/Uprising Revisited.

Twenty-one years ago, Rodney King, an African American man, was brutally beaten by four police officers. A year later a verdict that acquitted three of the police officers who beat King sparked the flames of the Los Angeles Riots/Rebellion. The 1992 LA Riots/Uprising, affected everybody--Latinos, Koreans, Blacks, and Whites—and brought racial tensions to the surface. The point of this panel was to encourage the audience to reflect upon the 1992 event and engage in a discussion. Each distinguished panelist had a personal story that was related to the aspects of the Los Angeles Riots/Uprising.



The panel consisted of six educators from different backgrounds coming together to talk about the Los Angeles Rebellion/Riots/Uprising: Dr. Beatriz Cortez, Dr. Velina Hasu Houston, Dr. Edward Park, Dr. David Rodriguez, Professor Johnie Scott, and Dr. Curtiss Takada Rooks. A professor in the Central American Studies Program at CSUN, Dr. Cortez connected her Salvadorian history to the Los Angeles Riots and highlighted parallels between the Los Angeles Riots/Uprisings and the Salvadorian War. Playwright, poet, and screenwriter, Dr. Houston, who is also Professor, Associate Dean of Faculty, and Director of Dramatic Writing at University of Southern California, stated that “racism is not dead” and that racism is created and cultivated. She asserted that problems associated with King’s beating—such as racial profiling—are currently happening today. Like Dr. Houston, Dr. Edward Park, Professor and Director of the Asian Pacific American Studies Program at Loyola Marymount University, believes that, as a whole, “we still haven’t gotten better” and that there is still much racial tension in Los Angeles. However, he also shared three stories about brave people involved in promoting social justice—stories that provided hope for the audience.

California State University Northridge's
Asian American Studies Department presents:

**20 Years Later:
Have We Gotten Along?**
1992 Los Angeles Rebellion/Riots/Uprising Revisited

Panel Presentation & Discussion:

Dr. Curtiss Takada Rooks
(Associate Dean, Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, Loyola Marymount University)

Dr. Velina Hasu Houston
(Professor, Associate Dean of Faculty, Director of Dramatic Writing, USC)

Professor Johnie Scott
(Professor, Pan-African Studies, CSUN)

Dr. David Rodriguez
(Professor & Chair, Chicana/o Studies, CSUN)

Dr. Beatriz Cortez
(Professor, Central American Studies Program, CSUN)

Dr. Edward Park
(Professor, Director of the Asian Pacific American Studies Program, LMU)

Date: April 30, 2012
Time: 2-5 p.m.
Location: Grand Salon/USU
(light refreshments served)

Co-sponsored by:
Gender and Women's Studies Department
Chicana/o Studies Department - Pan-African Studies Department
Central American Studies Program - Department of Journalism



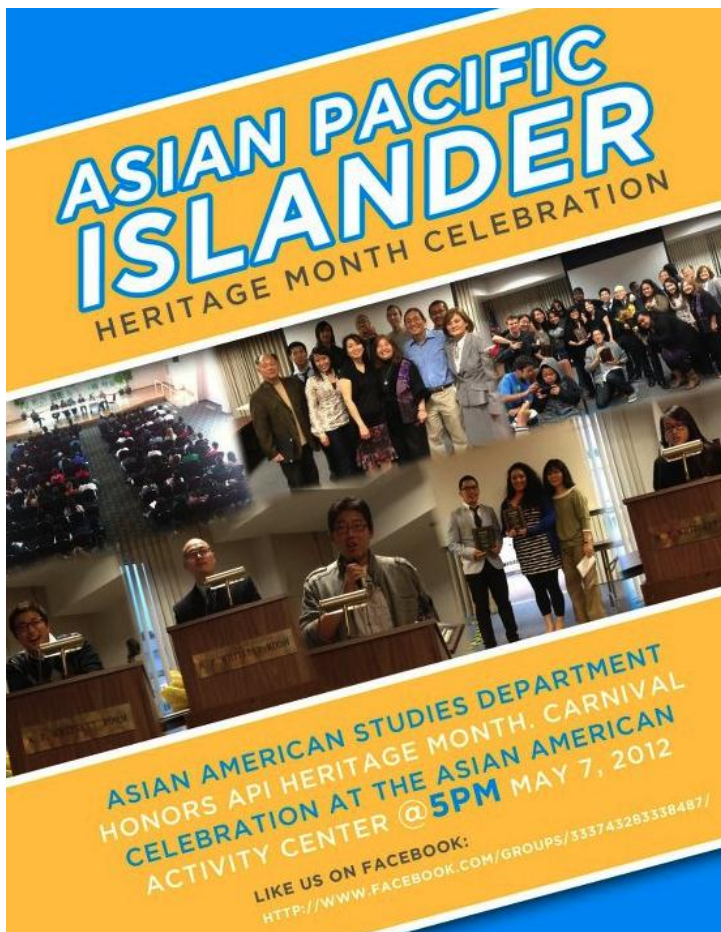
Dr. Rodriguez, Professor and the Chair of the Chicano Studies Department at CSUN, mainly focused on class perspectives and the economic inequalities underlying the 1992 Rebellion. Professor Scott of the Pan-African Studies Department at CSUN focused on the racial violence in the cities. Sharing such stories as the tragic death of an African American girl Natasha Harlings and his own personal story of racism while driving, he showed that racial violence and tension continues to exist in U.S. society. Finally, Dr. Curtis Takada Rooks, the Associate Dean of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts at Loyola Marymount University, reminded students that we have the power to change the present and future.

The panel 20 Years Later: Have We Gotten Along? 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion/Riots/Uprising Revisited was a very educational and eye-opening discussion. Even though the Los Angeles Riots happened twenty years ago, the social issues are still very alive in today's society. In commemorating such an event, the panel helped to educate students about this memorable issue.

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The AAS Heritage Celebration— In Honor of Asian American History Month

Tran Le



On Monday, May 7, 2012, the Asian American Studies Department sponsored the Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration, which was filled with great food and educational games. Two classes in particular organized the event: Professor Glenn Omatsu's AAS 390 Asian American Communities: Field Practicum, and Professor Turnmeyer's AAS 430 Asian American Popular Culture. While the AAS 430 students prepared delicious food booths, students in AAS 390 helped to manage the activities. The concept of the event was not only to celebrate API Heritage Month but also to honor the hard work of students all year long.



On one side of the Asian American activities center, students gathered round at the entrance to dive into the mouth-watering food. Five different food booths were set up with the concept of reinventing a “street food” scene. The foods included Korean “war-time” fare, Japanese okonomiyaki pancakes, Tongan otai drink, and Pilipino adobo. For the Korean “war-time” booth in particular, participants had to correctly match a list of famous battles in Asia from the last century. Megan Lum, a junior studying Psychology and Asian American studies, explains, “The list was very difficult actually. Most students did not get it correct the first time around. It’s surprising that we don’t learn more about popular Asian battles.”

The otai food booth included an activity entitled, “Mystery Drink: Guess the Ingredients.” Otai is a traditional fruit drink that originated in Polynesia and is associated with Tongan cuisine. The delicious pulp texture of the drink consists of a blend of coconut cream, water, coconut meat, mango, pineapple, and a variety of other fruits. The street food battle followed as attendees were given only one meal ticket. They had to be swayed by the marketing tactics of the competing food stands. In the second half of the Asian American activities center, students from AAS 430 created a highbrow and lowbrow culture scenario. Highbrow is the concept of “high culture,” practiced by the wealthy and elite. Lowbrow culture is embedded in “common” people customs. These concepts are a reflection of the classist society we live in. Max Agabon, a junior double majoring in Finance and Asian American Studies, reflected, “The purpose of our presentation was to let them [classmates] compare how reactions and perceptions of food were made based off intrinsic versus perceived values [of the] meals. We made the same dish with same ingredients while presenting it aesthetically different in two environments. The key objective was to see how environmental factors like service, taste, and presentation affected how they perceived the taste.”

These activities were both entertaining and meaningful to the purpose of AAS.

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Save Ethnic Studies Trip to Tucson, February 24-26, 2012

by James Sohn



The trip to Tucson, Arizona was a response to Arizona's State Bill 2281, which declares the teaching of ethnic studies unjust and bans it from the Arizona public school curriculum. The trip was three days long (Friday to Sunday) and the students visited historical monuments, the border town of Nogales, the U.S. Mexico border, community centers, and a local high school. The students also had a chance to listen to local students who were present at the day of the announcement of the banning of ethnic studies and to community leaders who organized the original protests. The trip was sponsored by a local alumnus who was filming a documentary on the trip and was supported by CSUN's Asian American Studies and Chicano/a Studies students and faculty. The trip to Tucson allowed students to witness the effects of Bill 2281 on high school students and their communities and broaden our views on the issues ethnic studies faces. The trip to Tucson is the second Save Ethnic Studies trip to Arizona. The first trip took place in Phoenix, Arizona in mid November 2011 and focused more on educating students than protesting Bill 2281.

In May of 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed House Bill 2281 which banned any ethnically exclusive courses funded by the state. Arizona's State Bill 2281 states the following:

The Legislature finds and declares that public school pupils should be taught to treat and value each other as individuals and not be taught to resent or hate other races or classes of people. A School District or Charter School in this State shall not include in its program of instruction any courses or classes that include any of the following:

- Promote the overthrow of the United States Government.
- Promote resentment toward a race or class of people.
- Are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group.
- Advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals.

Students and faculty from both the Asian American Studies and Chicana/Chicano Studies departments volunteered their time to prepare for and go on the trip to show support for students in Arizona who were directly affected by Bill 2281. Students who participated in the trip showed support by donating books that were banned by the government and provided encouragement. The Asian American Studies group was led by Professor Maria Turnmeyer who played an important role in organizing the trip. The Chicana/Chicano Studies group was led by Professor Rudy Acuña: a professor, activist, and historian of Chicano/a Studies. The bridge between the two ethnic studies groups allowed students to examine the issues brought up by Bill 2281 from different perspectives.



The goal of the trip was to educate students from all over the country about Bill 2281 and similar policies and laws that might threaten the existence of ethnic studies. The trip taught students the value of education as well as the power of government. Students were also taught to be united under a cause and support one another in times of need regardless of one's race or ethnicity. We are all in it together. Thank you to all those who participated in and who helped organize the trip

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CSUN Celebrates Distinguished Alumnus Joan Chen

Fatima Mae



On Saturday, April 21, 2012 CSUN celebrated the career of distinguished alumni Joan Chen at the Four Seasons Hotel in Westlake Village. Chen is an internationally acclaimed Chinese American actress, producer, screenwriter, and director. Her stardom began in China with her performance in *Little Flower* in 1980 and escalated with films like *The Last Emperor*, *Saving Face*, and *The Home Song Stories* and TV series *Twin Peaks*. Chen also directed and produced *Xiu Xiu: The Sent Down Girl*.

Beyond her acting career, Chen is also notable for her support of Asian American issues. In 2008 she spoke out against AIDS/HIV related stigma in Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities in the Banyan Tree Project, a national campaign to end the silence and shame surrounding HIV/AIDS in API communities.

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Alumni News Corner

- **Arniel Brown** was one of the first 4 graduates from the CSUN Asian American Studies program in 1999. After graduation, he worked in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles (Dreamworks and Hollywood Digital) before moving back home to San Francisco in Summer 2000. He continued to work in media until 2002 and then made a career change to become an educator. In 2005, he left for Japan to be an English instructor and has been there ever since. He has been living in the Tokyo area since 2009. He's now married and has a soon-to-be 2-year-old son.
- **Steve Cho** is currently working as a personal trainer in Koreatown and is taking prerequisite classes necessary to get into a Physical Therapy graduate program.
- **JP deGuzman '04**, a History PhD candidate at UCLA, was recently awarded a \$20,000 fellowship from the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation in addition to smaller grants from the UC Humanities Research Institute and USC's Doheny Library. His most recent publications include "The Twenty-Year Tale of Interpreting a Multiethnic Urban Uprising: Towards an Historiography of Sa-I-Gu" and, with members of UCLA's Graduate Coalition of the Native Pacific, "The Possibilities for Pacific Islander Studies in the Continental United States," both in *Amerasia Journal*.
- **Kolina "Koko" Koltai** is currently working as a research assistant on several different projects at CSUN. She is working in the Systems Engineering Research Laboratory (SERL) with Dr. Ho and Dr. Masequesmay on how cultural and organizational factors and automation capability influence the way pilots rely on automation. She is also working with Dr. Ma in the psychology department creating a database of Asian American facial expressions for future research. She is also working with Dr. MacDonald in the Human Sexuality department analyzing data on student opinions about sexuality.
- **Wanda Pathomrit** worked for the Thai Community Development Center after graduation. Recently, she was accepted to the M.A. in Asian American Studies Program at UCLA for Fall 2012.

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