



Mission & Vision

The Department of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Irvine offers an undergraduate major, minor, the country's first 4+1 B.A./M.A. program, and a graduate emphasis in the School of Humanities. Formerly the Interdisciplinary Studies Program (since 1991), Asian American Studies explores the intersections of race, gender, citizenship, ethnicity, and dis/ability within Asian American histories, experience, and cultural production. The Department offers more than twenty cross-disciplinary courses annually such as Asian American Community, Asian American History, Asian American Literature, Asian American Media and Music, Asian American Women, Ethnic Food & Identity, and Politics of Protest.

Message from the Chair



I feel privileged to serve as the chair of UCI's Asian American Studies Department. I joined the UCI faculty in 2015, after receiving my Ph.D. in U.S. History from Stanford University in 1998 and teaching at the Ohio State University (located "East of California" as described by AAS scholars) for seventeen or so years. I first learned that there was a field of study called Asian American Studies as an undergraduate student.

I believe that universities should be leaders in creating inclusive learning communities. Our society collectively needs spaces where people of diverse backgrounds have the opportunity to learn about pressing social issues, analyze social inequalities, and work towards social justice. My research projects have explored the life of the first American-born Chinese woman doctor (To find out more, please see: "[Dr. Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards](#)," *A Digital Narrative*, May 2009, the international travels of people of color and women anti-war activists, and now the political career of Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color U.S. Congressional Representative and the namesake for Title IX. I am thrilled to live in a region of the country with such vibrant and diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. I particularly enjoy [mentoring students in research projects](#) and fostering collective intellectual communities of learning. I feel honored to teach, conduct research, and contribute to the intellectual mission of a university federally recognized as an AANAPISI (an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution).

- Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, chair & professor of Asian American Studies

Viet Stories

Led by Linda Trinh Vo, [Viet Stories](#) assembles, preserves, and disseminates the life stories of Vietnamese Americans in Southern California. The project collaborates closely with the UCI Southeast Asian Archive with the primary goal of capturing first generation stories for students, researchers, and the community. There are 200 digitalized interviews online and 200 more to be processed. Viet Stories serves as a model for oral history projects across the nation. Professor Vo (director of Viet Stories and named one of the most influential in Orange County), Dr. Thuy Vo Dang (curator of the Southeast Asian Archive) and Tram Le (former associate director of Viet Stories) also co-authored *Vietnamese in Orange County*, a pictorial history of the community. In addition, Viet Stories curates exhibitions about Vietnamese American art, community, and history displayed in Santa Ana, UCI, and the Nixon Presidential Library and Museum.

Making an impact

Five UC students, under the guidance of Professor and Chair Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, took on a research project to capture the histories and voices of the path-breaking Asian American and Pacific Islander activists who organized the first nationwide AAPI Women's Conference in Washington D.C in 1980. The students' goal was to present their findings at the 40th anniversary of the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas.

The students faced a hiccup in their plan--current state guidelines restrict the use of public funds to travel to Texas. The students would have to find a way to support their travels outside of the university.

Exercising the kind of grassroots activism found at the heart of the National Women's Conference, the students launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise the \$1,800 needed to cover their travel expenses. They used Zotfunder, UCI's online crowdfunding platform, to garner support for their project, which they titled "AAPI Women on the Move."

The result is the fastest-funded campaign in Zotfunder history. Within six days, the campaign had been fully funded. When the campaign closed, they had raised \$2,524 from 68 donors—many of whom are scholars and activists.

With support from the community, the students were able not only to travel to Texas to present their research, but also to commemorate the voices and impact of women who first stood up for AAPI women's rights at a pivotal moment in history.



Graduate student spotlight



Laureen Hom (doctoral student in Urban Planning and Public Policy) co-authored with Professor Linda Trinh Vo [Transforming Orange County: Assets and Needs of Asian Americans & Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders](#), a ground-breaking [report](#) that explores how the AA&NHPI community has transformed OC, which is now home to the third largest AA&NHPI population in the nation.

The report was supported through a university-community partnership with Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Orange County, a non-profit legal and civil rights organization. Laureen is completing her dissertation on urban revitalization and community development in Los Angeles Chinatown.

Alumni spotlights



Alex Nguyen (Class of 2017) graduated from UCI with a double major in Asian American Studies and Public Health. He served as Vice Chair in APSA (the Asian Pacific Student Association) and helped to launch what is now called [BADAAS](#), a student research group that investigated the Beginnings of Activism

for the Department of Asian American Studies. Alex is a current MPH student at UCLA in the Fielding School of Public Health and will begin a dual degree program to earn both the MPH as well as an MA in Asian American Studies.

B.A.D.A.A.S.



Current students and alumni of the Department created “The Beginnings of Activism for the Department of Asian American Studies” (B.A.D.A.A.S). By sifting through archival materials and interviewing former activists, the group is uncovering what led to the eventual creation of the Asian American Studies department. Mentored by Dr. Thuy

Vo Dang (Curator for UCI’s Southeast Asian Archive) and Professor Judy Tzu-Chun Wu (Chair of AAS), the B.A.D.A.A.S. team gained valuable research skills and learned innovative ways to present their findings by creating a [website](#), designing exhibits and posters of historical materials they unearthed, and creating short digital narratives that feature their interviews with inspirational alums.

Funding priorities

New Fast-Track Scholarships: 4+1 B.A. / M.A.

UCI is the first university in the country to offer a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree in Asian American Studies in a five year program. The M.A., however, is the most expensive education at UCI, since the students are not eligible for undergraduate financial aid or doctoral fellowships. A 4+1 scholarship will lessen the financial burden of tuition costs and enable low-income, first generation students to achieve a M.A. degree.

Travel grants for professional conferences

Travel grants allow our students to attend professional conferences to present papers and research, network with other academics, and build their professional resume. These travel opportunities are extremely valuable – the students will gain confidence, learn more about the field, and begin to build a career network, which can lead to their first job after college.

Community/University Internships

An internship provides a professional opportunity for students to utilize their training in Asian American Studies, partner with community organizations or on-campus academic units, and cultivate their leadership and collaboration skills for the advancement of the Asian American Pacific Islander community. Alliances with local organizations could also support intern research projects, designed to benefit both the student and the community.

The “Friends of Asian American Studies” are currently raising funds to support student scholarships, travel funds, and internships in the name of Professor John Liu and Dr. Mary Ann Takemoto, who offered the first two Asian American Studies courses at UCI.

Engage

Want to get involved?

- “Like” our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/uciasianam>
- Attend our community events: <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/aas/>
- Make a gift online by visiting: <http://connect.uci.edu/Friends-Asian-American-Studies>
- For more information on ways to engage with and support the program, please contact Sean Fischer, associate director of development, at (949) 824-0438 or seandf@uci.edu