



AAPI Students

At a Glance

Fall 2018 Newsletter

Fellow Anteaters,

Hello! Welcome to the first issue of the *At a Glance* newsletter – the news source that’s all about UCI’s Asian American and Pacific Islander students!

As many students both at UCI and in the nation at large would know and understand, invisibility is one of the biggest hurdles facing the AAPI community today. Our histories are rarely talked of or looked at in public education. In terms of news, we rarely receive coverage, even though we are facing such major issues like immigration, poverty, and racism. Even in something like superhero films, we rarely turn up as the hero or heroine that gets to save the world or galaxy from destruction.

This newsletter was created in response to this problem of invisibility. AAPI students make up nearly 50% of UCI’s total demographic. In addition, there are over 40 officially recognized AAPI student organizations at UCI. As such, this newsletter seeks to shed light on these many faces and voices, to do the important work of telling and preserving our stories, from big to small, from communal to individual. Ultimately, this is about saying, “Yes, you matter and what you do matters, because you are part of a greater history and community.”

So please enjoy this Fall Quarter spotlight over some of the many AAPI students and organizations at UCI! Hopefully, even at a “glance,” you’ll see just how much AAPI pride and wonder there is to behold!

- Jonathan, *AAPI Special Events Intern*

Can reach me at: jagena@uci.edu



Top-Right: Konnect UCI showing us how selling boba is done!

Top-Left: Sri Lanka United showing off some Sri Lankan pride during Club Rush.

Middle-Right: Asian American Christian Fellowship at their first-ever cook-off event.

Bottom: Hansori: Korean Cultural Awareness Group at UCI hanging at Bethel Church.



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Upcoming Community Events!

Japanese Oshogatsu Family Festival (Jan. 6)

Stop by the Japanese American National Museum in LA for some fun family activities and free admission to its latest exhibits!

SoCal Slack Key Festival (Jan. 20)

Experience some of Hawaii's greatest cultural hits, as well as some amazing hula dancing, 'ono Hawaiian food, and island themed gifts at the Performing Arts Center in Redondo Beach!

Vietnamese Tết New Year Festival (Feb. 8-10)

Come to Costa Mesa and celebrate the Year of the Pig at the largest Tết New Year Festival in the country! (Contact VSA for info on transportation arrangements.)

AAPI Student Organizations (2018-2019)

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| Alyansa Ng Mga Kababayan | Japanese Student Association | Southeast Asian Student Association |
| APAMSA Undergraduate Chapter | Kababayan | Sri Lanka United |
| Asian American Christian Fellowship | Konnect: Korean Cultural Awareness Group | Surabhi – The Indian Students Association |
| Asian Pacific American Law Student Association | Korean American Student Association | Taiwanese American Organization |
| Asian Pacific Student Association | Korean Graduate Student Association | Taiwanese Graduate Student Association |
| Cambodian Awareness Organization | Korean Health Association | Teo-Chew Association |
| Chinese Association | Korean Job Search Club | Thai Culture Association |
| Chinese Students and Scholars Association | Korean-American Campus Mission | Tomo No Kai |
| Dragon Boat | Na' Opio O Ka 'Aina – Hawaii Club | Vietnamese Student Association |
| Hansori | Pakistani Student Association | |
| Hmong Student Association | Pilipino Pre-Health Undergraduate Student Org. | |
| Hong Kong Student Union | Pilipino-Americans in Social Studies | *Fraternities/sororities not included in list |
| Indian Sub-Continental Club | Rang De Irvine | |
| Indonesian Students | South Asian Student Union | |



Scholarship Spotlight!

APIA Scholarship (due Jan. 20) – Max. \$20,000.
More info: www.apiasf.org.

Gold Mountain Scholarship (due Apr.15) – Max. \$2,000.
More info: www.ocanational.org.



Such a “Rosy” Time as This!

VSAUCI’s 18th Annual Rose Pageant



Saturday Week 7 turned out to be a really special night for twenty-three ladies of the Vietnamese community! For the eighteenth time now, UCI’s Vietnamese Student Association held their annual Rose Pageant at the Student Center’s Crystal Cove auditorium.

Viewers got to see a number of contestants, who come from various Cal State Universities, UC schools, and VSA orgs all across SoCal, adorn their fabulous cultural dresses, which, as Pageant Director **Valery Truong** informs us, are silk, modern stylings of the Vietnamese traditional *au dai* gown.

Viewers also had the pleasure of seeing a number of cultural performances from several Vietnamese groups, some from UCI and some from the local community, such as Gio Nam Mua Lan (Southern Wind Lion Dance), Level 5 Modern Dance, Traditional Dance, and VSAUCI Choir. All in all, it was a memorable night of community at UC Irvine!



The theme for this year's pageant was the Vietnamese phrase, *Con Rồng cháu Tiên*, which in English means "Children of Dragon, Grandchildren of Gods." The phrase comes from an old Vietnamese legend about how Vietnam and its people came to be.

The story goes that **Lạc Long Quân**, king of the dragons, and **Âu Cơ**, a fairy from the bird kingdom, fell in love and married each other, resulting in the birth of a hundred noble sons.

Although initially joyful, Quân would later become concerned, confessing, "I am a descendant of the Dragon, you are descendant of the Fairy. Fire and water cannot live together in harmony." In light of this, the two immortals decided to split their children, with one half moving with their mother to the northern mountains, the other moving with their father to the southern lowlands. Despite their unfortunate separation, these two lovers are revered for having brought about Vietnam's first dynasty via an extraordinary union between the dragons and the fairies.

This story holds special meaning for the pageant in terms of community love and engagement. As Valery explains: "My goal is to remind everyone that we are culturally from the same heritage and to acknowledge the power of community. Like the legend, I want to promote unity by emphasizing that everyone should love, honor, and protect one another, just as Lạc Long Quân and Âu Cơ have promised each other."

In this spirit of community love and fellowship, profits for the pageant will be donated to the Children of Vietnam Organization, which is known for providing aid to impoverished children in the Vietnamese Da Nang region.

Ultimately, it was an overwhelmingly joyous and sentimental night for many, particularly for VSA leader **Sharon Ngoc Hamy Mai**, who reflected:

"It is such a humbling experience to be president my senior year and see Rose Pageant grow! CBN, a Vietnamese broadcasting station is actually broadcasting it on TV! It was such a great night with friends and family. I will definitely miss being here with VSAUCI after this year (because I'm graduating)! It was most a beautiful night to celebrate culture, heritage and traditions. Rose Pageant is all about coming together to make a difference and to make a statement!"

With such an amazing passion for their community legacy and history, these leaders, contestants, dancers, and helpers truly are, in their own unique way, living up to the loving legacy of Quân and Cơ. "Children of Dragons, Grandchildren of Gods," indeed!





OCTOBER NIGHT CHILLS



Left: Taiwanese Student Association celebrating their Hallow's Eve aboard the spooky Queen Mary in Long Beach during its Dark Harbor maze event.



Right: Na `Opio O Ka `Aina, a.k.a. UCI's Hawai'i Club hanging out at Johnson's Bros. Pumpkin Patch in Irvine for their first fall social.



Left: Kconnect UCI preparing for their Horror Nights craziness.



Above: Cambodian Awareness Organization telling ghost stories and having fun with a costume contest.

Student Leader Spotlight

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE
**ASIAN PACIFIC
STUDENT ASSOCIATION**

Quynh Theresa Huong Do

What was one tough or challenging experience you had as an AAPI individual growing up?

I grew up in a predominantly Asian community so I felt no trouble fitting in with my peers at the time. Being in such an environment, however, limited my scope on the varying treatment of AAPIs within different areas. I found that my preconceived notions from living in a "bubble" city did not translate as I experienced new cities for school. I hope to grow from these experiences and learn how to fight prejudices not only within my own community, but for other communities as well.



Homeplace: Bay Area, North Cal

Year: Second

Major: Biological Sciences



What is one great thing about having an AAPI heritage?

One great thing about having an AAPI heritage is our nuanced history and connection with America. Contrary to what many Americans commonly believe about the "refugee" narrative, all of our stories are actually unique. I am a child of two immigrant Vietnamese parents trying to escape Vietnam as an immediate reaction to the fall of Saigon.

They successfully arrived to the U.S. in the 1990s. Yet, I know that other Vietnamese children have distinctive backgrounds and arrival time, which may influence their viewpoints on their identity. Setting all of these differences apart, we still manage to come together around the year, despite our previous political affiliations and our general differences, to celebrate holidays that remain fundamental to our identity. We focus on the remnants of our previous life but also rebuild our identity through our new family and communities in America.

What is APSA and what does its history and focus mean to you personally?

The Asian Pacific Student Association (known more commonly as APSA) was founded on March, 1981 by Terry Hayamizu in response to several suicide attempts made by Asian American students who felt trapped between two cultures. At that time, APSA was formally named as the Asian/Pacific Student and Staff Association at the University of California, Irvine. This organization functioned as a social support network, which sought to promote cultural sensitivity and awareness through educating UCI staff and students. As the needs of the students changed, so did the focus of the organization. Consequently, the Asian Pacific Student Association was formed in 1988 to better address the specific needs of students. Since then, APSA has grown as an organization. In addition to its role as a social support network, APSA has established itself as a political entity challenging the issues that affect Asian and Pacific Islander students. For me, APSA thrives to be a network between various AAPIDesi cultural groups on campus to better understand and support one another by providing a space for students to discuss the concerns and issues within their communities.

You have just discovered a beautiful new country out in the Pacific that is completely deserted. As this land's official founder, you get to make the rules. What is the first rule you enact?

If I had just discovered a beautiful new country out in the Pacific that is completely deserted, the first rule I enact as the land's official founder would be "know before assuming, understand before judging, and think before speaking." A lot of problems that arise between individuals are usually caused by misunderstandings and assumptions. I hope that with this rule, there will be much less conflicts. Other important rules to consider are "just because they are not your problems does not be they are not problems" and "patience is a virtue."

It's Lift Off for AsianAm Grads!

First-Year AAPI Grad Students Recount Their First Quarter in the Asian American Studies 4+1 BA/MA Program

About the Program: The 4+1 B.A./M.A. program, established in 2016, is a unique Master's graduate program in which all current UCI undergraduate students can build upon their undergraduate work to complete an MA in Asian American Studies in one additional year beyond the completion of the Bachelor's degree.



I really enjoyed my first quarter as a graduate student in the Asian American Studies 4+1 program! There's so much independence as a graduate student - both in regards to your own research topic(s) and the overall experience of being in academia beyond undergraduate school. Classes with my small four-person cohort and dedicated professors are so intellectually engaging, and at the same time, very personally rewarding because each of us are contributing our own unique experiences as Asian American academics and activists in order to create a unifying space for debate and collaboration. I wholeheartedly recommend applying to anyone interested!

- **Gunindu Sithunada Abeysekera**

Research Interest(s): South Asian dance performance and nostalgia without memory theory



My first quarter in the Asian American Studies 4+1 program has been excellent. I'm loving how tailored the courses are to our individual research interests and how beautifully critical they've been. The department has been wonderfully supportive, but what I'm enjoying most is my cohort - the classes and material can get difficult and the thesis daunting, but the emotional and intellectual solidarity among my peers and friends is what really makes the program.

- **Ravi Seng**

Research Interest(s): Cambodian memory work in genocidal trauma and state-sponsored oppression



As my first quarter of being a 4+1 grad student comes to end, I am feeling reflective of the journey. It continues to be a whirlwind of emotions, but also filled with appreciation for many things. I'm grateful for the cultivation of spaces to grow intellectually and be vulnerable in. Thank you to my cohort, colleagues, faculty, and staff at Asian American Studies for always being a home for me.

- **Sophaline Chuong**

Research Interest(s): Southeast Asian mental health studies



To be completely honest, when I first went into the 4+1, I didn't know what to expect. I heard all sorts of troubling things about grad school, such as how grueling it was or criticizing the professors were. Suffice it to say, I was a little freaked out! Thankfully, "grueling" and "criticizing" weren't the case at all. In fact, this first quarter with the 4+1 has truly been one of the most worthwhile experiences of my academic career. The professors, Dr. Julia Lee and Dr. Judy Wu, have been some of the best professors I've ever had at UCI. The courses and readings - sure, some are hefty, but they really do challenge you and help you to grow intellectually and maturely. And my fellow 4+1 peeps, they are, without a doubt, super smart, super funny, and super kind. Overall, I would recommend the 4+1 to anyone who aims to make a real impact on our society!

- **Jonathan Agena**

Research Interest(s): Asian American representation in Hollywood superhero films and pop culture

Applications for Fall 2019 are due February 15! All those interested in the program should contact Dr. Julia Lee, Director of Graduate Study, at juliahl1@uci.edu, or Arielle Hinojosa-Garcia, Assistant Director of Humanities Graduate Study, at hinojosa@uci.edu, to discuss program eligibility and coursework opportunities.

Be sure to enroll in Dr. Linda Vo's "Asian American Communities" class for Winter Quarter 2019 for a great and highly recommended introduction to AsianAm Studies!