

VOLUME 4  
ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2008



## [ inside this issue ]

An APSC for All	2
Journey to a Second Home	2
ACE: The APSC Advisory Commission	3
Rallying for Asian American Studies	3
APAs in the Workplace	3
The Years to Come...	4
Making the APA Community More Accessible	4
The Key Is Collabor[Asian]	4
ITASA 2008 at Penn!	5
KASCON XXIII Comes to Penn!	5
PAACH: My Home Away from Home	5
University of Pennsylvania Asian Alumni Network	6

## Time Flies When You're Having Fun

by June Y. Chu, PAACH Director

*Time flies when you're having fun.* You hear it, but I only came to believe it this year, when a student reminded me that I had been with PAACH for four, not three, years. I had been under the impression I was completing my third year, when, in fact, this was the close of my fourth academic year as a member of the PAACH staff. Truly, time flies.

PAACH has come to a place where we are stable—we are staffed by full timers who know and love the programs and who do not dread the commute to work because we know that each day will be vibrant, inspirational and that, in some small way, we'll touch someone's heart.

If you are unfamiliar with PAACH, it is hard to explain what we do. As a resource center, we try to do everything to make this large intimidating university a small one for the students. Not only do we provide programming for those who are new to the Asian American diaspora, but also for those who are searching for what it means to be a bicultural Asian American in a society where there exist the model minority myth, feelings of being a perpetual foreigner, and a glass ceiling. We provide advising, ad-hoc counseling, connections to resources, a safe haven from the academic rigors of each day, and lest you forget - a couch to take a nap on and a home where we share and love our students.

We continue to offer our signature programs, the Asian Pacific American Leadership Initiative (APALI) and the Promoting Enriching Experiences and Relationships (PEER) mentoring program. This year saw the generous donation of Eric T. Lee '98 to APALI, helping us to sustain the program for the upcoming year. Asian Pacific American Heritage Week (APAHW) celebrated 15 years (16 celebrations!) with its theme, "The [A] Word", asking campus to define what it means to be Asian American. Many of the members of the Penn Taiwanese Society served as board members for the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Student Conference in February 2008. The ARCH building has been incorporated into the University's plans for remodeling, and PAACH has been assigned a person in the Development Office to seek out those who would be interested in supporting our initiatives and the sustainable continuation of our programs. It has been a great year!

And what's on our agenda for the future? Of course, there is APAHW 2008, themed "Intersections", under the leadership of Mary He '09, Brian Chi '10 and Pia Banerjee '10. Bryan Ko '09 is leading the Korean American Student Conference team, with KASCON bringing over 600 students nationwide to our campus in Spring 09! Carlin Yuen '10 and Justin Ching '11 are leading the East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference Bid Team, hoping to bring the conference back to Penn in 2010 (needless to say, PAACH staff have become quite the experts in helping to advise and organize national conferences!). APALI will continue to educate and empower Asian American students with its new facilitators, Raj Parikh '09 and Nina Panaligan '09. PEER will ensure the adjustment of a new crop of incoming freshman, with Neelam Shah '09 and Jessica Leung '09 organizing the programming for the year. We will continue to work closely with the Asian Pacific Student Coalition and its chair, Ben Alisuag '09. And, who knows what else the year might bring? Speakers, lunches, movie screenings, and collaborations are expected—but with the ingenuity of our students, anything can happen!

Thanks to all who support PAACH, its students and its programming. Alumni mentorship and support remain critical to our success and when you are on campus, please come by to say hello. If you are unfamiliar with PAACH, we are always happy to talk more about what it means to have a resource center dedicated to supporting the Asian America diaspora on campus!



Oracle Senior Honor Society  
Class of 2008

## An APSC for All

by Benjamin Alisuag, Asian Pacific Student Coalition (APSC) Chair, C'09

In February, Penn's Punchbowl magazine released an issue that angered many members of our Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) community. The magazine portrayed APIAs in very stereotypical roles and the Asian Pacific Student Coalition (APSC) made an immediate response by hosting discussions concerning the line between comedy and racism. Besides the publicity we received from angryasianman.com and Ivy Blog, the most important outcome was the amount of support received from alumni and APIA advocacy groups.

It was a moving sight to see so many passionate APIA leaders, both Penn and non-Penn affiliated, excited to help out with our cause. However, no one knew how to effectively utilize all the support, especially at such a decentralized University.

In only half a term as APSC Chair, I have learned a very helpful fact about leadership on this campus: that there is more than one path to accomplish a goal. When we all met to discuss the Punchbowl incident, we came up with many ideas. However, although our goal was indeed the

same, the ways in which we wanted to accomplish this goal were in conflict. This problem has plagued APSC boards for years... how can alumni and others who are not on campus help? Sure, we can ask for financial support, but it is something greater when all of these individuals can work together and not just sign a check.

I think the key is to fully understand the strengths of each group. For example, alumni are an excellent way to learn how past programming and legislation has/has not worked in the past. Groups like the Organization of Chinese Americans can provide a national network, specialized training in programs like hate crime education, and general mentorship.

Of course, I realize that the strength of a coalition also lies in a close and comfortable internal structure. However, there's obvious strength in numbers, making a stronger external community just as important. More than that, it provides creativity, peer education and community organization.

APSC is not just an alliance of constituent groups. APSC is students, alumni, interested community members, and APIA advocacy groups nationwide...APSC is you.

## Journey to a Second Home

by Kusum Soin, PAACH Office Coordinator

When my husband was a student at Penn's Graduate School of Design, I spent most of my evenings at the Button in front of the library with my three children. Every evening, I would spend two hours admiring the students with their backpacks and freedom. I didn't feel shy about talking with them and discussing their activities and daily life. This was a whole new world to me after spending 10 years in Kuwait and 28 years in India living a very sheltered and comfortable life. I had a very small world; I was always surrounded by my family and children. Sitting in front of the Button, I wondered if I could have the same opportunities as the students walking across the campus. Maybe I'd even have some chance of a job at Penn. Or maybe I was dreaming too much.

I learned quickly that I could share what I know with others by becoming a volunteer, so I found an opportunity preparing elderly Indian immigrants for the US citizenship test at the Greenfield Intercultural Center. Through this experience, I met staff, students, and found a community. My world began to grow.

After applying for a position at a new center at Penn, I received a phone call from Dr. Karen Su offering me a job at PAACH. I could not believe it. I was thrilled and immediately thought that I had the chance to work at one of the best universities in the country.

Working at PAACH, a student center, makes me feel young again. I have started identifying with the needs and lifestyles of the upcoming generation. PAACH is one of the happiest places and a second home for me. I look forward to going there everyday and admire the students who come to the center. They are great leaders and hard workers, focused on their studies. I also enjoy their company and sometimes invite them to my house for a home-cooked meal.

I have come to be known as the "PAACH mom", often



listening to students about their concerns, whether they are personal or academic. I even tell them to clean up after themselves before they leave. At the end of the day, all my students inspire me through their hard work and busy schedules. Somehow, they still find the time to help me around the office and answer my questions. Though they are younger than me, I don't hesitate to learn from them. I like it when they come and ask me, "Kusum, who is your favorite student?" They all want to hear their names, but all of them are my favorites - just in different ways.

For the last seven years, I have stood on Locust Walk to watch the commencement procession. I am very proud and sad that this year again so many of my beloved students have graduated. As a proud wife and mother of three Penn alumni, I have another dream. Though my major would be undecided, after four years of study and hard work, perhaps, one day, I will also walk in the commencement procession. Then my students can watch their PAACH mom wearing a cap and gown. Maybe one day that dream will also come true.

Thank you to PAACH and the students that have helped me grow and touched my life in the past seven years.

## ACE: The APSC Advisory Commission

by Pratik Patel, APSC Vice Chair, C'09, W'09

Last year, as APSC considered the direction of our coalition under former Chair Jun Li, we recognized the need to cultivate and nurture rising leaders for both APSC and its constituent groups. As such, APSC created a new initiative aimed at underclassmen, the APSC Advisory Commission.

The Advisory Commission (ACE), headed first by last year's Vice Chair, Lisa Zhu, and now by Pratik Patel, allows underclassmen to explore APIA issues in an intimate discussion setting, with an emphasis on application within the University. For example, the "APSC Board Quiz" is a comprehensive guide to navigating through a highly decentralized University.

Near the end of their training phase, underclassmen research or identify an issue they feel is relevant to the APIA community, at Penn or at large, and propose how they plan to

address it. During this phase of ACE, underclassmen make valuable connections with other student leaders, faculty, and administrators, under the mentorship of APSC Board, while getting hands-on experience about what it means to make change on this campus.

Projects range from a study of mental health issues in young APIA women in conjunction with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) by Jacinda Li (C '11) to a grassroots movement to increase APIA voter mobilization during the recent Pennsylvania primary and upcoming general election by Justin Ching (C '11) and Michael Ro (C '11).

With four of the Fall 2007 participants currently serving on APSC Board, ACE has flourished and will continue to give a valuable leadership opportunity to motivated APIA underclassmen.

## Rallying for Asian American Studies

by Justin Ching, APSC Vice Chair of Political Affairs, C'11

Last March, the University of Pennsylvania announced a 25% budget decrease for the Asian American Studies (ASAM) program. Since the program was already so poorly funded, this cut would have reduced the number of classes only to those that were cross-listed with other departments. This would have ultimately terminated the Asian American Studies minor. The director of the program, Dr. Grace Kao, threatened to resign after receiving notice of the budget cut.

However, while this was a terrible crisis to encounter, its use as a rallying point made it a great catalyst for revitalizing and intensifying activism within the APIA community. APSC promptly responded to the cut by starting a petition with the ASAM Undergraduate Advisory Board, which rapidly began circulating not only across the University, but also across alumni networks all over the world. Amazingly, we were able to obtain nearly two thousand signatures in our support. APSC then drafted and submitted letters to University President Amy Gutmann and College Dean Dennis DeTurck expressing their disappointment and discontent with the University's actions. These letters offered the administration a twenty four hour ultimatum: reverse the budget cut or face a mass protest on College Green from supporters of our cause.

The night before the protest, APSC gathered a roundtable of APIA leaders on campus, planning our rally until the whispers of daybreak. Without a doubt, every individual there felt mutually inspired not only by each other, but by the passion the entire community had shown in response to the budget crisis. As an individual, the experience was a profound reminder of why I decided to join APSC and pursue student activism.

Just hours before the deadline we had set for the administration, we received a call from Dean DeTurck agreeing to reverse the cut into a budget increase.

Our rally was held as planned, only this time, in celebration.



UPAAN Fall Mentoring Program

## APAs in the Workplace

by Andy Xu, APSC Vice Chair of Development, W'11

With the coming of summer comes the time for work and interning. While most students are thrilled with the prospect of gaining hands-on experience there are many problems facing APIAs that may be unseen and unnoticed. As a way of addressing the challenges that APIAs face at work, APSC will be continuing its annual Speaker Series entitled "APIAs in the Workplace". Started this past semester as a means of exploring the validity and reasons behind why the APIA community seems to be over-represented in certain fields and positions, the series will continue in the fall with new speakers and a broader, more diverse focus.

The series will host a number of alumni speakers, ranging from the arts to corporate management. Topics of discussion include stereotyping and racism in the workplace, common obstacles that APIAs face at work, and methods of addressing and overcoming these obstacles. In addition to the Speaker Series, a student-to-mentor mentoring program is also being constructed as a means of connecting students with APIA professionals working in their fields of interest. APSC is currently looking for speakers and mentors for these initiatives. If you are looking for a way to contribute to the growth of the current and future APIA community at Penn, please don't hesitate to contact the board at

[apsboard@googlegroups.com](mailto:apsboard@googlegroups.com).

## The Years to Come...

by Samir Malik, C'08, W'08

For so many at Penn, PAACH has been a blessing. "Home away from home" or "my family at Penn" are not only common endearing sentiments from students, but also truthful testaments to the importance of PAACH to so many students. Very fortunately, PAACH has achieved great heights since its inception, now brandishing three exceptional staffers, a nice cozy space in the heart of campus, and student involvement that rivals that of any other organization. PAACH is a hub for students to find people, clubs and courses that interest them, find mentors and advice when needed, and most importantly, find themselves.

But PAACH has so much potential to become a whole lot more. Where we are now is a tremendous starting point towards achieving a larger goal: making Penn attractive to Pan-Asian Americans across the country because of its outstanding community. Between APALI, APSC, events like APAHW, and the resources at PAACH's disposal, PAACH is making a name for itself in the APIA community in this country. By staying committed to cultivating the next generation of APIA leaders through a wide range of programs and activities, administrators at PAACH will continue to plant roots in the Penn that we all love; however, it is only the continued brilliance and inspiration of the students there that will open the door for PAACH to become a beacon not only at Penn but to the entire APIA community nationwide.



Congrats to the Class of 2008!

## Making the APIA Community More Accessible

by Therese Parker, Vice Chair of Communications, N'11

There are many ways for students who are interested in the APIA community on campus to get involved. Besides the newly created ACE program, there are a number of other ways for students to learn about issues affecting the APIA community, improve and hone their leadership skills, and spread awareness within and outside the APIA community. APAHW is held annually at the beginning of the fall semester. This week includes APIA keynote speakers and performers, an organization fair, candlelight vigil, and various other events. The Asian Pacific American Leadership Initiative is held every semester and includes around fifteen

students of all years.

Students can find their niche within any of the twenty groups in APSC, including Asian-interest Greek organizations, numerous ethnic groups, and discussion groups. Weekly emails detail upcoming events, opportunities to join organizations, and notices about important events throughout the area. If a student wants more information about an organization or group, they need only to stop at PAACH or just show up at an APSC general body meeting. Though the opportunities available are abundant, the connections within the APIA community make them easy to navigate.

## The Key is Collabor[Asian]

by Pia Banerjee, Vice Chair of Cultural Programming, C'10, W'10

Collaboration has been an ongoing objective for APSC as we build a strong, united APIA community. A number of APSC groups have whole-heartedly embraced this initiative and held successful collaborative events. Among these are the Japan Student Association's annual Iron Chef, a cook-off involving different constituent groups, a charity basketball tournament jointly hosted by the Penn Taiwanese Society and Chinese Student Association, and the annual Asian Student Union charity date auction with representation from almost every APSC group.

In this spirit of bringing diverse groups together, APSC as a coalition has developed a number of projects designed to

foster friendship and camaraderie among constituent group members. We recently began a speaker series featuring successful Asian Americans in the workplace, an initiative that we believe draws interest from many different backgrounds. We host monthly social events for student group presidents and APSC liaisons in the hopes that friendship between leaders will lead to collaboration. In the same vein, our annual Spring Potluck often provokes excitement. APSC has also broadened our interaction with the Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Like last year, APSC is partnering to host an APIA community fair as well as involving cultural groups in performances throughout the week.



Members of the Class of 2008 (l-r):  
Milan Shah, Samir Sheth, Shirley Liang,  
Ashley Thomas, Samir Malik

## ITASA 2008 at Penn!

by Joyce Lin, C'08, W'08

Every year, one school hosts the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students Association (ITASA) East Coast Conference, established in 1992. About 400 students come together for a whirlwind weekend of workshops, keynote speakers, and social events. This year, Penn had the honor of hosting this conference.

The planning for this daunting task began about a year in advance, right after the bid was secured. As with any large-scale event, there were plenty of mishaps along the way. However, our conference team was lucky enough to have not only a strong board, but also strong mentors. I can't even keep track of how many times the PAACH staff came to our rescue, from helping us contact keynote speakers to letting us take over the center with our boxes of supplies. Penn alumni who had worked on previous ITASA conferences offered not only advice, but also their services as discussion facilitators. Whenever we faced a seemingly insurmountable obstacle, there was someone looking out for us.

By popular consensus, the conference was a huge success. A total of 340 students from 53 schools attended the conference, which featured 17 workshops and 3 keynote speakers, including a live address by actress Michelle Krusiec and taped addresses by former President of Taiwan, Lee Tung-Hui, and current Vice President of Taiwan, Annette Lu. For those three days, Houston Hall was a beehive of activity, with participants buzzing excitedly between workshops and events and staff members flitting around to make sure the conference was running smoothly.

Afterwards, it was hard to believe that a conference two years in the making was all over in three days. But what an amazing three days they were.



ITASA Board with keynote speaker Michelle Krusiec

## KASCON XXIII comes to Penn!

by Bryan Ko, C'09

The twenty-third Korean American Students Conference (KASCON) is coming to Penn in the spring of 2009! KASCON is one of the longest-running and largest ethnic student conferences in the nation, having brought together more than 10,000 students since its founding in 1987. Each year, KASCON looks to gather hundreds of attendees and influential speakers from a variety of fields to build new perspectives and gain insights into current issues affecting the Korean American community. It is KASCON's goal to inspire and engage participants in effecting change in their respective campuses, communities, and cities as they advance our generation in America and elsewhere.

KASCON XXIII marks an historic moment as the fifteenth anniversary since the University of Pennsylvania last hosted the conference in 1994. Much has changed since then, and KASCON Board looks to make our conference both a reflection of this progress and also a strong foundation for a bright future.



Some APALI members (l-r):  
Richa Gupta W'11, Dong Chen W'11,  
Ben Alisuag C'09, Carlin Yuen C'10,  
Sabina Khanna E'10



PEER Board 2007-2009 (l-r): Jessica Leung W'09,  
Annie Wei C'10, Rohak Doshi W'10,  
Michael Shaw C'11, Neelam Shah C'09,  
Vyas Ramanan E'11 W'11, Rahima Dosani C'09

## PAACH: My Home Away from Home

by Julie Son, C'11

**"You enter as a stranger, but you leave with an entire family."  
-Julie Son**

When I first came to Penn, I was so nervous that as a commuter student, I was not going to be able to remain connected to campus. During the typical freshman New Student Orientation days, I was introduced to PAACH by two of my now closest friends, Ben Alisuag and Leslie Mah. They took our proseminar group to visit PAACH and see what the center could provide for us in terms of services, support, and most importantly, new friends. At that moment I knew that this was the place where I would end up spending most of my free time while I am on campus.

As the first semester of freshman year began, I was having

a hard time trying to manage my transition from high school to college and I was beginning to question my ability to handle the pressure of being a pre-med student at such a competitive university. I felt like there was no one I could talk to who would really understand me. But then, to my rescue, came PAACH. I walked in after my first batch of midterms and sat down with everyone I knew at PAACH, including the amazing duo of Shiella and June. Everyone reassured me that things would work out and everything would be much better. I left with a sense of relief because, for the first time, I did not have to live up to any expectations and still had people who cared so much about me. Up until this day, PAACH is still my place of comfort and I know I can always go there and find someone to listen to my stories, give me advice, and make me smile. But most of all, PAACH is not just a place for me to retreat or see my friends, it is my home and the people there are my family.

## [ PAACH STAFF ]

June Y. Chu, Ph.D., Director  
jychu@upenn.edu

Shiella M. Cervantes, Associate Director  
shiella@upenn.edu

Kusum Soin, Office Coordinator  
kusums@upenn.edu

2007-2008 Work-study Students:  
Ben Alisuag, Claire Choi, Martin Yu,  
Kevin Tucker, Quan Phung, Khanh Tran



UPAAN Boston Summer Dim Sum Event at Chau Chow City in Boston's Chinatown. Clockwise: Natsuko Koko Kitutake, Christina Liu, David Yang, Lionel Nicolau, Antonio David, Gizelle Gopez, Edy Yang, Thomas Malec



UPAAN Fall Mentoring Program (I-r): Shiella Cervantes, Calvin Chen, Eric Lee, Jason Chan, Laura Lin, Franklin Shen



UPAAN San Francisco at Shabusen

## University of Pennsylvania Asian Alumni Network (UPAAN)

by Jason Chan, C'02

### *The Year In Review...*

Greetings from UPAAN, and congratulations and welcome to the Class of 2008! We've had another dynamic year of activities, with regional chapters busy organizing an array of events for their members.

Community-building events have continued to prove popular among alumni, from **UPAAN-Philly's** happy hours and **UPAAN-Boston's** dim sum brunches to **UPAAN-NYC's** trip to the Shinjo Ito exhibit and **UPAAN-DC's** summer karaoke night. **UPAAN-NYC** also hosted dinner programs featuring New York Times reporter and author Jennifer Lee and Dr. Ajay Nair, former PAACH Director and ASAM Assistant Director and the newly appointed Associate Vice Provost for University Life. Over on the West Coast, **UPAAN-LA** organized a beach volleyball outing and several successful mixers, including one with Stanford alumni, and **UPAAN-SF** just recently launched "Roots Around the Bay", a year-long series exploring and connecting the ethnic communities of San Francisco.

UPAAN also continued its on-campus programming this year; in addition to the annual **Mentoring Program** during last fall's APAHW and the **Toast to Seniors & Alumni** during Alumni Weekend, we hosted a discussion on Hollywood and racial stereotypes featuring actor and visiting faculty member Kal Penn and screenwriter/producer Jon Hurwitz (W'00). All three events attracted dozens of alumni back to Penn to connect with each other and with current students. We were also pleased to recognize Helen Gym (C'93), Eric T. Lee (W'98), Eugena Oh (C'03), and Jun Li (C'08) during Alumni Weekend for their dedication and contribution to the APA community at Penn and beyond.

Getting involved with UPAAN is really easy – simply contact a chapter representative or a member of the executive committee! We will soon be gearing up for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Mentoring Program this fall, and encourage anyone interested in serving on the planning committee or as a mentor to be in touch. Also, APA Heritage Week is seeking alumni submissions for the DP supplement this fall; if you have ideas, suggestions, or a desire to write an article, let us know!

Have a great summer everyone, and keep an eye out for upcoming announcements about this fall's Homecoming!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

visit [www.upaan.org](http://www.upaan.org) for exact dates and more information

### AUGUST

- UPAAN-SF** "Roots Around the Bay": Little India
- UPAAN-NYC** 14th Annual Asian Alumni Networking Picnic (joint event with other schools)
- UPAAN-DC** Summer BBQ and Karaoke
- UPAAN-PHL** Summer Happy Hour

### SEPTEMBER

- UPAAN-NYC** Guided Tour of the Museum of Chinese in the Americas (MoCA) with Maya Lin
- All Chapters** New Alumni Happy Hour: Welcome Class of 2008

Consider giving to PAACH ... ask us how!

{ <http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/paach> }