PAACH ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are so pleased to share some great news with you! As you know, PAACH’s programming can only be sustained in perpetuity through the generosity and support of our alumni.

Mr. Thomas J. Lee (W’91) has recently committed $100,000 to the establishment of the Thomas J. Lee Endowment Fund to support the Promoting Enriching Experiences and Relationships (PEER) Mentoring program at PAACH! Mr. Lee’s commitment to PAACH programming reflects his own great memories of Penn, as well as his support of PAACH’s campus-wide endeavor to sharing the Asian American experience with the entire Penn community.

Mr. Eric T. Lee (W’98) additionally continues his third year of full support for the Asian Pacific American Leadership Initiative (APALI), while also supporting the Eric T. Lee Endowed Scholarship Fund at the University.

We at PAACH are most grateful for the support of wonderful alumni, and would love the opportunity to share with you other opportunities for philanthropy and engagement in the services we provide at Penn.
A QUICK RECAP by June Y Chu, PAACH Director

A few years back, comedian Margaret Cho came to campus. One of the quotes I vividly remember from her show: “I love it when any Asian, does anything, anywhere.” Working at the Pan-Asian American Community House and watching the Asian American student body, I can certainly attest to the fact that the “anything” that the students do will always wind up being fun, inspirational, educational and more—perhaps the best word would be amazing.

Advising these students in every area from academic to extracurricular to life in general, the three of us at PAACH feel lucky to be able to make this place a home. This past year, in fact, we unveiled a new logo for our center. We chose to use a house to represent what we would like our space to be for the students at Penn, a “home away from home” where they can find a safe space to escape the rigor of Penn and seek out counsel and support from staff who are invested in diversity programming on campus. And lest you think that the colors we chose were just random, they are not—we chose brown and yellow, to represent our “pan” Asian mission!

So a quick re-cap of this past year? Our signature programs, the Asian Pacific American Leadership Initiative and the Promoting Enriching Experiences Relationships Mentoring Program, continued to teach a new generation of leaders about the Asian American Diaspora and connect students with one another from across all walks of Penn campus life. Asian Pacific American Heritage Week was held in October 2008 and Chairs Mary He ('09), Brian Chi ('10) and Pia Banerjee ('10) successfully led a team of students who brought actor Aaron Yoo to campus as well as comedian Dat Phan. Bryan Ko ('09) led an incredible team of students in organizing the 23rd Annual Korean American Student Conference (KASCOn), which brought over 500 students from across the country to Penn’s campus in March. The weekend was anchored by an inspirational keynote address from Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools. And, Carlin Yuen ('10) led a team of students who were victorious in their bid to host the East Coast Asian American Student Union Conference (ECAASU) at Penn this coming Spring 2010. Along with Co-Directors Edith Chao ('10) and Rohan Grover ('10), the students seek to actualize their theme for the Conference, “Behind These Eyes”.

Every year, I write about the students and the programming (as well I should), but I thought I might take a bit of time this year to share about the two staff members who work alongside me from day to day. Kusum Soin, our Office Coordinator, has been with PAACH since it opened in 2000. She serves as the institutional memory for Asian American students on this campus and without her, we would be lost. When I first came to PAACH in 2004, it was she who served as my guide through our Division, and it was her sound advice and guidance that helped me to quickly learn how to navigate the labyrinth that is Penn. She is quick to respond to questions, is known as the “go to” person for logistical issues on campus, and always has a moment to make sure the students are embraced with a sense of familiarity as they walk through our doors. Shiella Cervantes ('04), our Associate Director, is a miracle worker when it comes to managing our students’ programming, attending almost every single event/show that there is (and with over 55 plus Asian American student groups on campus, that’s a lot of dedication), and being the voice of wisdom, having been a PAACH “regular” herself. I always have to say this when I speak about Shiella: “True dedication to PAACH—in three years, this woman has yet to take a sick day!” Not only do I feel blessed to work with wonderful students who are looking to shape and change the voice of Asian America, but I am honored to work with two women who are so critical to our success.

As you read through this newsletter, I hope you are inspired by our amazing student body and all that they do. Our students write with eloquence about their passion and we are hopeful that their experience at Penn is augmented by their connection to PAACH programming. Alumni support is critical in helping to push forward our programming, and we are always encouraged by discussions with Asian American alumni who offer their support for our work. We wish you the happiest of summers, and if you are unfamiliar with PAACH but would like to learn more, please do not hesitate to get in touch—via phone, email, Facebook or Twitter!

Follow PAACH on Twitter! http://www.twitter.com/paach

Become PAACH’s fan on Facebook! http://www.facebook.com/paachatupenn
APSC: LOOKING BEYOND THE “C”OMMUNITY by Raymond Flores, APSC Chair

In January, the Asian Pacific Student Coalition (APSC) executive board set out to strengthen communication and collaboration within and out of the coalition. In a time when Twitter and blogs have become culturally ingrained, we continue to strive for open, accurate, and frequent communication with and among our constituents and peer organizations across campus. The increasingly open attitude towards communication has allowed APSC to engage both our constituents and external organizations in collaboration.

We attribute many of the spring semester’s accomplishments to efforts we have made to strengthen communication. For the benefit of our constituents, we revamped the APSC website (www.upennapsc.org). This newly redesigned website is one of our primary means of communicating with constituents and includes updated announcements, a consolidated calendar with constituents’ events, contact information for constituent groups, and serves as a repository for important documents, such as funding applications, a campus resource guide, etc. These shared utilities have facilitated open communication between the board and APSC’s constituent groups, promoting collaboration among groups on and off campus. Looking forward, an APSC blog is slated for the fall.

Strengthening communications has transcended the virtual space, past weekly e-mails and website updates and towards outreach to and collaboration with key partners. At the beginning of the spring semester, we re-established our relationship with the Asian American (ASAM) Studies Program, reaffirming our support for ASAM and its programming. In partnership with ASAM, PAACH, and SPEC Connaissance, APSC held a screening of Vincent Who?, with a Q&A with producer Curtis Chin. Additionally, APSC played an instrumental role in planning the 2nd Annual Mental Health Camp, in conjunction with Penn’s Counseling and Psychological Services and a host of other campus entities, drawing over 100 attendees.

While APSC’s relationships with ASAM and the Mental Health Camp have continued, APSC’s past initiatives, the board engaged in new opportunities too. APSC worked alongside the Undergraduate Assembly (UA) and the other minority coalitions in an effort to pass the ‘Status of Minorities in Undergraduate Education’ proposal through the UA, paving the way for the UA and APSC to work closely together on academic issues affecting the Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) community. Specifically, APSC will work with the UA in the upcoming academic year to increase ASAM course enrollment and investigate the effect of classroom participation on APIs: APSC topped off the year with five other minority coalitions to hold MOSAIC: the 1st Annual Intercultural Ball of the University of Pennsylvania.

The ‘C’ in APSC stands for community, but communication and collaboration lie within its core.

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MOSAIC: THE 1st ANNUAL INTERCULTURAL BALL AT PENN by Justin Ching, APSC Vice Chair

For many years, APSC has worked intimately with five other on-campus minority coalitions: Lambda Alliance, Latino Coalition, Penn Consortium of Undergraduate Women, UMOJA, and the United Minorities Council, to push forth initiatives to the University administration and further interculturalism. This past year, APSC in conjunction with these groups made history with MOSAIC: The 1st Annual Intercultural Ball of the University of Pennsylvania. This event marked the first major programming collaboration between these organizations on the coalition level, and celebrated their work while providing a venue to exercise interculturalism amongst the diverse peoples of the undergraduate University community.

MOSAIC quickly proved to be one of the most exciting social events of the year. In keeping with the ambitions of this landmark event, the planning organizations packed the Penn with 250 members from our respective constituencies as well as the greater University community for a night of intercultural inspiration and entertainment. The Ball also paid tribute to the body of work among the minority coalitions with speeches from past leaders as well as Reverend William Gipson, Association Vice Provost for University Life.

A testament to the collaborative progress between Penn’s minority coalitions, MOSAIC has definitely asserted itself as an event with staying power for the future.

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2nd ANNUAL MENTAL HEALTH CAMP: “KEEP THE SMILES ROLLING” by Therese Parker, VC of Cultural Programming

For the past few years, APSC has been focusing on mental health issues related to Asian Americans. This past semester, APSC helped to plan the Second Annual Mental Health Camp. Working with Penn’s Counseling and Psychological Services, the LGBT Center, the United Minorities Council, the Penn Women’s Center, Tangible Change, and other campus entities, APSC packed a classroom with over 100 attendees for the camp, titled “Keep the Smiles Rolling.”

The keynote speaker, Dr. Russ Ramsay, kicked off the camp with a talk about attention, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, and the use and misuse of stimulant medication. Following Dr. Ramsay’s talk were dinner and two breakout sessions covering various topics including depression, perfectionism, how to help a friend, and minority mental health.

APSC focuses so strongly on mental health issues because of overwhelming statistics which show that Asian Americans are more likely to commit suicide than white Americans, African Americans, and Latinos. More alarming is the fact that Asian American women aged 15-24 are the highest suicide rate of any race or ethnic group within that age group.

Along with “model minority” expectations and pressures to excel, it is generally a taboo in Asian culture to seek help for mental health. APSC and other groups such as APAU, PEER, and the APSC Advisory Commission focus on dispelling this stigma and encouraging students to speak to mental health providers. The mental health camps are great tools that can help students with mental health issues and APSC will continue to work on improving Asian American mental health awareness.
REACHING BEYOND CAMPUS: ENGAGING IN PHILADELPHIA
By Rohan Grover, APSC VC of Political Affairs

The 2009 APSC board began its term slightly earlier than usual this year after being elected in the middle of pressing circumstances in our community. The Philadelphia City Council had just approved the re-zoning of a significant portion of Chinatown to permit the construction of a new Foxwoods casino, threatening the history, culture, and safety of the neighborhood and galvanizing the local APIA community.

The outgoing and incoming boards worked together to bring a sizeable audience to the Undergraduate Assembly meeting in support of commissioning a panel to raise awareness of the issue. Hours after the proposal passed, APSC worked with the UA, the United Minorities Council, and the Living Water Christian Fellowship to organize the Center City Casino Panel less than two weeks later.

The event included 6 panelists from the Asian American Studies Program, Asian Americans United, Casino-Free Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and Econsult Corporation, and was moderated by Dr. Ajay Nair, Penn’s Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs. Panelists were purposefully selected to present a balanced panel, with both favorable and unfavorable opinions towards the casino, so that students could make their own decisions.

The panel was just the beginning of a host of outreach and engagement events that APSC has pursued. Since then, it has worked with the Philadelphia chapter of Asian Pacific Americans for Progress to bring Vincent Who?, a documentary about the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin, established an internship position with Casino-Free Philadelphia for a student to liaise between the organization and our campus; and opened up lines of communication with OCA of Greater Philadelphia, Asian Arts Initiative, and APIA student organizations at nearby colleges and universities.

Indeed, the Center City Casino Panel helped establish strong relationships with local community-based organizations and set a precedent for encouraging engagement in our home city of Philadelphia that will continue for years to come.

MULTICULTURAL SCHOLARS WEEKEND
by Andrew Lum, VC of External Affairs

Every year, Penn’s Undergraduate Admissions Department invites accepted students from various underrepresented minority demographics to Penn for an extended preview experience, highlighting the multicultural atmosphere on campus. This eclectic group consists of students such as female engineers, Southeast Asians, and Pacific Islanders. Students arrive a day early and spend two days as real Penn students, attending classes, eating at food carts, and experiencing the vibrant student life on campus.

Unlike previous years, Admissions decided to put the organization of this year’s entertainment in the hands of five minority coalitions on campus: the Asian Pacific Student Coalition, the United Minorities Council, the Latino Coalition, UMOJA, and Lambda Alliance. Through the combined collaboration of these organizations, the prospective Penn freshmen got a taste of life on campus. This collaboration was also able to recruit a surplus of hosts for the visiting students, which has been a concern every year.

The Sunday night entertainment, enuced by APSC’s Vice Chair Justin Ching, featured a diverse array of Penn’s cultural performing arts groups, such as Penn Masala, Penn Yo, Onda Latina, and the Pan Asian Dance Troupe. With the success of this past year’s Multicultural Scholars weekend, Penn’s Undergraduate Admissions department is eagerly awaiting further collaboration with the minority coalitions in the future.

SUPPORTING THE ASAM STUDIES PROGRAM by Nicky Singh, VC of University Relations

Since its establishment, one of the principal goals of APSC has been to ensure that Asian Pacific Islander Americans have equal educational opportunities. This past March, APSC helped to pass a proposal to the Undergraduate Assembly (UA) regarding the educational status of APIAs and the Asian American Studies Program (ASAM). UA Member G.J. Melendez-Torres, with five minority coalitions on campus, worked especially hard to also create an extensive report on the status of undergraduate minorities at Penn.

Each coalition submitted and passed a proposal emphasizing its own specific issues regarding undergraduate education. The APSC/ASAM proposal focused on initiatives that were needed for the UA Academic Affairs Committee to continue to promote the ASAM program and ensure consistent cross-listing for ASAM courses. It also accentuated the importance of assessing equality in the classroom and ensuring that the breadth of opportunities remain uniform across students on campus.

The passing of the five proposals was met with a standing ovation from student leaders of all ethnicities. Melendez-Torres put it best when asserting his hope that the University will "finally put a ring on its commitment to gender and ethnic minorities."

CAMPUS CLIMATE by Tenn Nuchkasem, VC of Development

In the spring of 2009, the Penn undergraduate population participated in the University-wide Perceptions of Undergraduate Life and Student Experiences (PULSE) survey. Conducted by the Office of Institutional Research & Analysis, the PULSE survey is designed to facilitate communication between the undergraduate body and the Penn administration, allowing students to tell University administrators about their experiences on campus. For four weeks, the PULSE survey collected data on a wide spectrum of concerns including academic experiences and opportunities, classroom environment, faculty-student relations, and community/social issues. The final product will be a comprehensive analysis of the campus climate at Penn available to the student body.

The information gathered from the PULSE survey is used by the administration to enhance the experience of Penn students. APSC, along with other minority coalitions on campus (UMOJA, the Latino Coalition, Lambda Alliance, and the United Minorities Council), encouraged their constituents to complete the survey in order to represent the interests of the entire community.

The Penn PULSE survey paved the way for APSC’s own study on the satisfaction of our constituent members, and at the end of the year, constituent members completed the APSC Stakeholder Survey. With questions ranging from awareness of APA issues, future APSC initiatives, and constituent member satisfaction with the APSC administration, the Stakeholder Survey enabled members to be proactive about calling for improvements in the organization.

A top level summary report for the PULSE survey will be available in the fall of 2009 and is scheduled to be used again in the spring of 2013. The results of the APSC Stakeholder Survey will be discussed and new initiatives will be presented in the fall of 2009. APSC will continue to ensure that the needs of the APIA community are met and to serve as a resource for the community.
What is PAACH?

“...A roof that doesn’t always keep out the rain but always keeps the love in. Four walls that shudder with all the construction next door? Free Painting? Free food? Yes, but PAACH is more than that. It is the 80000 of Swathi Bonda, the song of our Disney sing-alongs, Ben’s mohawk, Rhea’s sleeping figure on the long couch, Sheila’s coffee machine, Kusum’s “WHO LEFT THIS AND DID NOT CLEAN THIS!!?!” June’s attempts to make us exercise & eat healthy, Aaron’s daily afternoon (after work) naps, Justin’s version of Janet’s “Feedback”, the place to eat lunch and get Thursday’s crossword answers & daily horoscope, lights from happy (sleep deprived) eyes, the strength of our community, warmth of loving hearts. This is what the PAaaaaaach (Carlin’s pronunciation) means.”

~ Leslie Mah, C’08

What is home?

“A roof to keep out the rain? Four walls to keep out the cold? Yes, but home is more than that. It is the laugh of a baby, the song of a mother, the strength of a father, warmth of loving hearts, lights from happy eyes, kindness, loyalty, comradeship. Home is first school and first church for young ones, where they learn what is right, what is good, and what is kind, where they go for comfort when they are hurt or sick; where joy is shared and sorrow eased; where fathers and mothers are respected and loved, where children are wanted; where the simplest food is good enough for kings because it is earned; where money is not as important as loving-kindness; where even the tea kettle sings from happiness. That is home. God bless it!”

~ Ernestine Schumann-Heink

People often say that what one decides to make of his or her own time and energy in college will largely determine the overall richness of the experience—from academics to extracurricular activities to work to socializing and partying. Now, as a newly-minted alumnus, I can certainly attest the reality of that thinking, and I believe that PAACH played a very significant role in my own involvements both inside and outside of the classroom.

For me, what was even more important than the PAACH programming was the everlasting support that the community and its staff offered me. This foundation was absolutely the most valuable aspect of PAACH in my Penn experience, particularly when I was not directly participating in PAACH programs. As my interests, especially extracurricular but also academically, became less community-focused over time, I think that the experiences I had and the relationships that I established through PAACH became that much more important. PAACH helped me to gain the confidence and knowhow that was necessary to set my expectations high and achieve in a meaningful way at Penn.

One of the unintended consequences of this ambition ultimately was my becoming a leader in student government. While I think that being the UA Chair was a great experience—one that I am very proud of—I know that being the first UA Chair who was Asian American made the experience even better. There is no doubt that besides a personal sense of pride, I am actually more proud that I was a product of PAACH, its community, and its programming. I think that I was one of the unluckiest of candidates to excel in traditional campus activities, and I am fortunate that I was well-prepared to step it up.

As with all organizations, I believe that there is more work ahead for PAACH, but that in its short history, PAACH as a resource and community center has become an invaluable asset to not only Asian and Asian American students and the broader student body, but to the entire Penn community.

~ Wilson Tong, W’09

“Five Things About PAACH That Stayed the Same Since I Was a Student”
Shielia Cervantes, PAACH Associate Director, C’04

5. Kusum still doubles as a personal life advisor.
4. Students still spend more time here than they planned.
3. Asking for advice about what you should have for lunch just makes it more complicated.
2. It’s still hard to find a place to sit because all the couches are being used for naps.
1. Spontaneous and organic conversations still lead to amazing things.

“Top Five Miscellaneous Director Duties”
June Y. Chu, PAACH Director

5. Frozen yogurt outings with students
4. Handing out band-aids
3. Learning how to fix the copy machine
2. Justin Timberlake concert with student
1. Getting to be young again

ANOTHER ROUND FOR PENN: ECAASU 2010 by Carlin Vuyen, C’10

Not too long ago, ECAASU 2005 came to the University of Pennsylvania and blew people away with a host of inspiring speakers, fantastic entertainment, and a taste of sunny Philadelphia. It is with great pleasure that I announce that Penn will have the opportunity to host the conference once again in the spring of 2010!

With over 1,200 attendees in 2009, the East Coast Asian American Student Union (ECAASU) Conference is the largest ethnic-interest collegiate conference in the nation. Since its humble beginnings in 1978, starting as a gathering of some 200 participants from 35 colleges at Princeton University, ECAASU has continued to stand as a testament to social change for over three decades—for student activism and leadership within Asian American communities across the nation. The conference has proudly expanded its program to over six times its original size, adding both social networking and professional career opportunities to its repertoire of interactive educational workshops, keynote speeches, and showcase entertainment.

ECAASU primarily serves as a forum for open dialogue and a promoter of awareness through education for any person with an interest in Asian American, minority or culture-related topics. Our focus is to empower and mobilize the college-aged population of this nation to make a positive impact in the world we live in, and we aim to achieve this through the conference and other programming organized by our national entity, ECAASU National. In this particular day and age, we find it all the more important to offer this opportunity for our generation of Asian Americans to rediscover the beauty in the shared diversity of our background, experiences, and perspectives.

To find out more, visit us at http://www.ecaasu2010.org.

“Five Things About PAACH”
Kusum Soin, PAACH Office Coordinator

5. It’s like a second home.
4. The students make me feel young and I look forward to coming to PAACH every day—it’s a happy place to work.
3. I love it when students come and ask me who my favorite student is.
2. At the end of the year dinner, listening to students reflect about PAACH.
1. Over the last nine years, watching the students on Locust Walk on Commencement Day. I am very proud of them and I hug them and like to take lots of pictures of their last day at Penn. This is one of my favorite moments and I remember it because I watched them grow at PAACH throughout their four years here.

“Five Things You Miss About PAACH”
Rhea Gargullo, C’08

Luis Chia, C’07:

5. Constant supply of spoons, napkins, and water
4. Disney movie marathons
3. Happy hour companions
2. Couches for napping, eating, philosophizing, etc.
1. Just being in it.

“Five Favorite Things About PAACH”
Shielia Cervantes, PAACH Associate Director, C’04

5. Couches to sleep on
4. Free printing
3. Occasional free food and snacks
2. Free Disney movie screenings
1. Couches to sleep on for hours

“Top Five Miscellaneous Director Duties”
June Y. Chu, PAACH Director

5. Frozen yogurt outings with students
4. Handing out band-aids
3. Learning how to fix the copy machine
2. Justin Timberlake concert with student
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University of Pennsylvania Asian Alumni Network (UPAAN)
By Laura Lin E’02 and Calvin Chen W’97

A YEAR OF CHANGE

Greetings from UPAAN! We warmly congratulate the Class of 2009 on their achievements, and welcome the incoming Class of 2013. This past year has seen our country go through a period of dynamic change, and the future promises to be nothing less than exciting.

This past year for UPAAN has been an exciting one as well, with a plethora of national and regional events that engaged a diverse pool of alumni from around the country. This past Fall 2008 Homecoming Weekend, UPAAN held its annual Mentoring Program as part of our continuing commitment to strengthening the ties between the alumni network and current students. At Alumni Weekend 2009, we honored APA student and alumni leaders at our annual Toast to Classes event. We were pleased to recognize some very outstanding individuals: Benjamin Alisuag (C’09), and Shiella M. Cervantes (C’04). They have endlessly dedicated themselves to the Penn APA community, and we wish them continued success.

Looking to get involved with UPAAN? We encourage both alumni and students to become involved! The Mentoring Program is an excellent opportunity for students to get expert advice on various careers and life after Penn. It is also a wonderful opportunity to hone your networking skills. The annual Mentoring Program is being held again on Homecoming Weekend this year, so look for announcements on campus this fall. Our regional chapters (New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, San Francisco, and Los Angeles) also hold many events in their respective cities, and we hope to see you there whenever you’re in town. Have a wonderful summer, we look forward to catching up with you soon!

To receive news about upcoming events or sign up for regional mailing lists, visit our website at www.upaan.org or join UPAAN on Facebook!

The University of Pennsylvania Asian Alumni Network (UPAAN) is an alumni society of the University of Pennsylvania focused primarily on University matriculants and graduates of Asian and Pacific Islander descent and supplementing the role and functions of the Penn Alumni, the alumni society of the University of Pennsylvania.

The mission statement of UPAAN is to inspire, develop and nurture the interests of Asian and Pacific Islander alumni, students and the University. The objectives of UPAAN are to

• develop and maintain an international network of Asian and Pacific Islander alumni from the University of Pennsylvania
• support the academic and career development of Asian and Pacific Islander students at the University of Pennsylvania
• facilitate the exchange of ideas and information between Asian and Pacific Islander alumni, Asian and Pacific Islander students and the University.

Consider giving to PAACH ... ask us how!
http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/paach