



foundations

the past and present of the Asian American community at Yale



produced by the Asian American Students Alliance for the class of 2011
sponsored by the Asian American Cultural Center

Turley Ad Page



foundations

Dear Reader:

It is our pleasure to introduce to you the third edition of the Asian American Students Alliance's magazine, *Foundations*. The first year at Yale can be exhilarating and eye-opening, and we are excited about what is in store for you. As you begin this chapter of your life, we hope that you will find this copy of *Foundations* to be a helpful guide that will interest, motivate and encourage you.

Foundations was created to fill the need to heighten awareness about ourselves as Asian American students at Yale. We have organized this publication for both incoming freshmen and the Yale community at large: all of us can benefit from learning more about the rich history of Asian Americans at Yale University.

We sought to capture the most pivotal moments of our history at Yale. In cooperation with the Asian American Cultural Center and the member groups of the Asian American Students Alliance, we tracked down alumni who played crucial roles in these moments and asked them to tell us about their experiences. Included are a diverse set of stories: the founding of organizations, controversial issues that our community has encountered, and accounts of personal experiences. This publication also bears witness to efforts to display the beauty of our cultural backgrounds, the causes that we believe in and work towards, and how much the Asian American community as a whole has flourished and grown in the past few decades. The result is this magazine: a collection of sometimes captivating and momentous narratives that weave into the elaborate fabric that makes up our history.

So we invite you to turn the page and explore the decades of history that our community has seen at this university. *Foundations* was not created as something to be read once and tossed aside. We hope that this publication will be more than a static collection of history that goes no further than begging the question, "So what?" We hope that the stories included in these pages will provoke discussion, incite action, and remind all of us why we are or why we should be involved in the community. These stories are to remind all of us that we are part of a much larger legacy that we must sustain beyond our own time at Yale.

Foundations is as much about our future as it is about our past. Though what you will read in these pages is behind us, remember that one day your mark on this community may be passed on to future classes through this publication. You, as the present, are empowered to direct our future.

Sincerely,

Ming Min Hui
Editor-in-Chief

Christine Nguyen
AASA Co-Moderator

Marisa Landin
AASA Co-Moderator

editor-in-chief &
alumni relations coordinator
Ming Min Hui, DC '10

aasa co-moderators
Christine Nguyen, MC '09
Marisa Landin, BR '08

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Adrian Latortue, SM '10
May Liu, ES '10

asian american studies chair
Alice Shyy, ES '08
Becky Hua, MC '09

community outreach co-chairs
Leang Chaing, DC '10
Carl Kubler, TC '10

historian
Ashley Guttierrez, SM '10

political action & education co-chairs
Christina Park, SY '09
Jing Cao, TD '10

marketing director
Ria Harracksingh, ES '10

secretary
Nisreen H.asib, BK '10

treasurer
Khang Nguyen, CC '08

special thanks to
Dean Saveena Dhall

www.yale.edu/aasa

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asian american history at yale in a nutshell

1854	The Beginning. Yung Wing, a student from China, graduates from Yale College. He is the first Asian to graduate from Yale and the first Chinese to graduate from a U.S. college.
1969	Don Nakanishi, SY '71, forms the Asian American Students Association (AASA). The group is later renamed the Asian American Students Alliance.
1970	<p><i>Amerasia Journal</i>, an Asian American newsletter that has become the premier academic publication in Asian American Studies, is started at Yale.</p> <p>The first Asian American Studies course, "The Asian American Experience," is taught by Professor Chitoshi Yanaga.</p> <p>Don Nakanishi, SY '71, proposes a "floating counselor system" for students of color, which later evolves into the ethnic counselor system.</p> <p>Yale becomes the first institution to include Asian Americans in its affirmative action program.</p>
1972	AASA is given a one-room office in the basement of Durfee.
1973	PROP program begins, which later evolves into the Cultural Connections Program.
1977	ECAASU is founded at Yale.
1981	The Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) is established.
2004	<p>Yale celebrates the 150th Anniversary of Yung Wing's graduation from Yale College.</p> <p>AASA celebrates its 35th Anniversary.</p>
2007	<p>ECAASU returns to Yale for its 30th anniversary.</p> <p>The Class of 2011 arrives at Yale.</p>

aasa then



Don Nakanishi, the founder of AASA, is currently the director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. He is a political scientist by training with a PhD from Harvard University and has been chair of the Yale Alumni Schools Committee of Los Angeles County for the past 25 years.

AASA was not just a political thing.

A lot of it had to do with how the Asian American students were feeling themselves, and about their own identity, or how they thought

More generally, there was a feeling of isolation, of being marginalized. The mainstream of Yale life was not in any way committed to diversity or multiculturalism.

they were being viewed by others on campus. One thing that I always remember from my first or second year was the ways that Asian Americans interacted or didn't interact at Yale. I realized how strange I found it to walk down the street at Yale and see another Asian American student walk towards me. When the person got close to me, she would look at the ground and not look at me directly. More generally, there was a feeling

of isolation, of being marginalized. The mainstream of Yale life was not in any way committed to diversity or multiculturalism.

AASA's founding had a lot to do with the impact of African American students as well as the Mexican American students [organizing] themselves. The first group I joined was the Mexican American students' organization at Yale. The lessons I learned from that, I shared and applied to the founding of AASA. In addition, I was very much influenced by an incoming graduate student in psychology, Glen Omatsu, who I had met over the summer in 1969. Glen had been active in Asian American student activities at UC-Santa Cruz.

In the fall of 1969, I was inspired to start a similar group for Asian Americans. I knew some Asian American students in my class and knew some of the female Asian American students. There was a small group of us who decided we should try to pull all the Asian Americans together. We went to the telephone directory and picked out Asian surnames. We had something like 50 students out of the 4,600 students at Yale. After we compiled the list, a group of us just called up people and asked them to come eat dinner in Saybrook. There were around 35 students who showed. When we marched in, everybody was looking at us.

One of the things we decided was to take up issues involving the McCarran Act, a law that basically allowed the government to round up people and put them in concentration camps [as they did with] Japanese Americans. We decided we would go to every dining hall at Yale and we got 4,000 signatures and sent them to Congress. They put in the Congressional record that Yale University was in favor of the repeal of Title 2.

We also saw there were not enough Asian Americans, [especially] working-class Asian Americans, and so we formed another committee to go negotiate with the admissions office for recruitment. As a result of AASA's early efforts, Asian American students came to be considered as part of Yale's affirmative action and diversity programs.

In addition, we wanted a class for Asian Americans and asked Professor Chitoshi Yanaga, the first Japanese American to be a tenured professor at Yale, [to teach the first Asian American Studies class] in the spring of 1970. If I have any regret about Yale, it would be the fact that Asian American Studies hasn't gotten a stronger foothold.

Within two years, we saw some results. By the time we left, there were around 90 Asian Americans out of 4600. The course had been repeated, it was

Over the course of 35 years, I have seen the group as being very strong and also barely surviving.

going to be continued, and we were part of Yale's plan [to] recruit other Asian American students. We had held three very large regional conferences that had attracted three or four hundred people. We had also formed the Amerasia Journal with Lowell Chun-Hoon of Hawaii.

When we left, I think we were very optimistic about the organization, its long range future, as well as its [necessity]. Over the course of 35 years, I have seen the group as being very strong and also barely surviving.



2007 AASA Executive Board

Co-Moderators

Marisa Landin, BR '08
Christine Nguyen, MC '09

Secretary

Nisreen Hasib, BK '10

Treasurer

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Asian American Studies Chairs

Alice Shyy, ES '08
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Community Outreach Chairs

Leang Chaing, DC '10
Carl Kubler, TC '10

Marketing Director

Ria Harracksingh, ES '10

Historian

Ashley Guttierrez, SM '10

For more information about AASA and its constituent groups, visit www.yale.edu/aasa. To subscribe to AASA's weekly newsletter, please contact nisreen.hasib@yale.edu.



Timeline of Events

September

- Bluebooking Party
- Big Sib/Lil Sib Mixer
- Prelude Dance Party
- Freshmen Liaison Elections
- AASTF discussion

October

- PAEC Voter Registration Drive
- AASTF lecture
- Bone Marrow Drive

November

- Freshmen Study Break
- Alumni Mixer
- AALCY Conference

December

- AASTF lecture
- Basketball Tournament
- Board Elections

January

- Cultural Awareness Program (CAP)

February

- AASTF lecture

March

- Coffeehouse
- AASTF lecture

April

- Spring Formal
- Board Elections
- APA Heritage Month Dinner
- Rhythm and Fusion

May

- Basketball Tournament

aasa now

aacc then



Grant Din, BR '79, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in Sociology. He was an active member of AASA during his time at Yale and currently serves as Executive Director of the non-profit organization Asian Neighborhood Design in San Francisco, California.

I really enjoyed my Yale days, back in ancient history, and a large part of it was because of the friends I made in AASA (back then there were only a couple of Asian American organizations.).

It may be hard to believe for the recent grads in the group, but there were only 250 Asian Americans on campus in 1975 (back pre-PCs, when we had

Asians were much less diverse than we are now on campus, primarily Chinese, Japanese, and Korean American.

to type out drafts on our typewriters. Sheesh, what dinosaurs!). Asians were much less diverse than we are now on campus, primarily Chinese, Japanese, and Korean American.

Among other things, we laid the groundwork for Asian Community Services by starting a tutoring program in New Haven, ran a student-taught Asian American studies course for

credit in the sociology department, and advocated for the Asian American Cultural Center partly through a legendary 1978 meeting that Nick Chen '79 organized.

We had been hoping to get a larger facility for AASA than the two small rooms in the Bingham basement that

we had. This was a step up from the tiny room in the Durfee basement we used to have. Nick managed to get President Bart Giamatti to have

We had been hoping to get a larger facility for AASA than the two small rooms in the Bingham basement that we had.

a meeting with us about a cultural center. In a stroke of genius, Nick had the president come meet in our space.

We spread the word to every Asian American student on campus that if they came to one AASA event in their four years, they should come to this meeting. The place was packed, and everyone took off their shoes and put them outside the door.

President Giamatti and his aide could barely make it through the shoes and the people to their seats, and we all had a cordial discussion — he said he'd look into it. AASA students including Mary Li Hsu and others continued to work to get the center after we graduated in 1979, and we were thrilled to hear about their successful efforts.



Yung Wing (1828-1886)

Yung Wing was the first person of Chinese descent to graduate from an American university and the first Asian to earn a bachelor's degree from Yale. Yung was born in 1828 in a small village in Guangdong province. He received his early education in a missionary school under the tutelage of a Yale graduate,



the Reverend Samuel Robbins Brown. Yung accompanied Brown to the United States in 1847, where he enrolled in the Monson Academy and later at Yale College. After graduating in 1854, Yung Wing returned to China where he engaged in various projects to promote China's modernization. He is best known for having organized the Chinese Educational Mission, which brought 120 Chinese students to colleges in the Northeast, including Yale, in the 1870s. To commemorate the 150th anniversary of Yung Wing's graduation in 2004, the AACC collaborated with university departments and student groups, such as CASA and AASA, to organize a series of events highlighting Yung Wing and Asian American alumni.



2006-07 AACC Staff

Assistant Dean, Director of the Asian American Cultural Center
Dean Saveena Dhall

Graduate Assistant Coordinator
Quan Tran

Head Coordinator
Julie Yang, SY '09

Asian American Studies Coordinator
Quingan Zhou, CC '10

Alumni Outreach Coordinators
Leang Chaing, DC '10
Julie Yang, SY '09

Publicity Chair
Crystal Chen, MC '09

Historian
To be announced

Special Events Co-Coordinators
To be announced

Webmaster
Timothy Kau, BK '09

For more information about the AACC please visit their website at www.yale.edu/aacc or call (203) 432-2906. Further inquiries should be directed to saveena.dhall@yale.edu



asian american cultural center

Timeline of Events

September

- Blue Book Party
- Freshman BBQ
- AACC Open House
- Conversations Dinner

October

- Coffeehouse
- Sophomore/Senior Study Break
- Freshman Leadership Workshop
- Freshman Dinner

November

- Arts Festival
- Faculty Dinner
- Fusion

December

- Junior Study Break w/La Casa
- Banana Study Break

January

- Asian American Film Festival

February

- Life after Yale
- YES Talk

March

- Master's Tea
- AASTF Lecture

April

- Art Show
- APA Heritage Month Dinner
- Senior Banquet
- Rhythm and Fusion

aacc now



casa then



Steven Lin, SM '99, is a founding member of the Chinese American Students' Association. He graduated from Yale with a degree in Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry. He is currently a surgeon practicing in Chicago.

I guess this whole thing started my freshman year. There had been a CSA in the years before I came to campus, but before we started CASA, it became defunct because of a lack of participation. When I came in, there was a group ahead of me that

We decided to change the name to CASA to separate ourselves from the previous organization and to focus on our experiences of being Chinese and living in America.

had an interest in restarting it, and that was done the first semester I was there in 1995. At the time, TAS was the Taiwanese Club, and that was the group organized by Chinese students. In our first year, we were a pretty small group and there was a lot of intermingling between TAS and us, but they had a much stronger bent toward

the Taiwanese political situation. It was after the first semester that we decided to change the name to CASA to separate ourselves from the previous organization and to focus on our experiences of being Chinese and living in America.

We were practically a brand-new organization. We had nothing to do with the previous organization. We basically started from the ground up as a bunch of active freshmen. The only obstacle as a new group was getting bodies. In a way it was kind of easy because we were freshmen so we just got all of our friends to come. I think that over the years, as CASA got bigger and bigger, there was a lot more work in delineating among the different groups.

By the time I graduated it had changed a bit, but in my four years at Yale, KASY was the strongest organization. VISA was a close second and fairly powerful in its own right. AASA provided us with a path of legitimacy by having CASA on the board and being a recognized member group. We got funds from the Dean's Office, and we got a chance to put it on a level playing field with these other groups. On the flip side, the Asian community was quite ethnically separated at the time. Most groups tended to do their own thing.

In our first year, we actually did a lot of small things, like movie nights, where we would have a room where we would show Chinese movies, old cultural flicks or some more modern stuff from Taiwan. We also had dumpling nights and ski trips. The bigger events, such as the cultural show, started the year after me. The group after us also got in contact with the Chinese school that is on campus and started to get the sibling program going.

I am from North Carolina, so I did not grow up among Asian people. The first time I saw Asian people I was not related to was when I came to Yale. The long-term goal was to create a community for those people of Chinese descent regardless of where they were from, whether you were from overseas, from mainland, from Taiwan, whether you were born here or born there and lived here all your life. Our mission statement at the time was that we were all of Chinese descent and we were all living in America, and the idea of the Chinese American Students'

We were all of Chinese descent and we were all living in America, and the idea of the Chinese American Students' Association was about our lives as they were then.

Association was about our lives as they were then. We just wanted to create a place where people could get together and freshmen could meet people easily, to help each other, and to teach others a little bit about our heritage. I did not celebrate all those typical Chinese holidays growing up; I did not know the stories and legends. College is a place where you are growing and learning—a good place to learn all these things and hopefully to make friends. It is a wonderful thing that they have these traditions that just keep on going. It is great to see the continuity, and I think that they are doing a great job. I want to reiterate my admiration for everyone right now.

I helped start this, but by far, it was not only me, many people were involved, and with each generation, it grows and gets better and better.



2007 CASA Executive Board

President
Mitchell Ji, MC '09

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Vice President
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Secretary
Vina Pulido, SY '10

For more information about CASA visit their website at www.yale.edu/casa. To be added to the CASA email list, please contact gabriel.monteras@yale.edu.



chinese american students' association

September

- Freshman BBQ
- First General Meeting
- Fresman Liaison Dinner
- Family Pairing Event
- Freshman Liaison Elections
- CASA/TAS Food Night
- Family Olympics

Timeline of Events

October

- CASAssins
- Master's Tea
- Triad Night

November

- CASPY
- Board Nominations Night
- Board Elections
- Harvard-Yale Mixer

December

- Cultural Event
- Family Event

January

- First General Meeting
- CASA/TAS Happy Hour
- Board Turnover Banquet

February

- Lunar New Year Festival
- Hotpot Night

March

- Movie Screening
- Master's Tea

April

- Cultural Show
- CASPY

May

- Family BBQ
- Senior Banquet



CASA NOW

kasama then



Wendy Pizarro Campbell, SY '92, a founding member of KASAMA, currently serves as President & Chief Operating Officer of VIPMobile, Inc. She earned a B.A. and M.A. with honors from Yale University, a M.St. from Oxford University, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

We came together my freshman year, around the spring of 1989. We founded KASAMA because there was a need for us to find unity and a voice when it came to being Filipino. We could go to AASA meetings,

We founded KASAMA because there was a need for us to find unity and a voice when it came to being Filipino.

but we could not really connect with some of the experiences of the Korean American and Chinese American students. There was a great disparity between the history of Filipino Americans and how we were brought up and their history and upbringing.

We met every week at one of the colleges for dinner. We [also threw] some really good potluck dinners. We would have lumpia, pansit, all kinds of food for the greater Yale community, and that was really

neat – it was the first time at Yale a lot of people outside of our community were exposed to traditional Filipino food. Our dinners were very popular. The food was just great; the people just loved it. I remember we would spend all day cooking it ourselves. And the best part of our dinners was not just getting together and getting our friends to try our food, it was actually making the food. We would spend all day as a group making it together.

It was a pretty interesting time. This was during the fall of Marcos, and a lot of Filipinos in the country were very much on the political scene talking about democratization. If you remember, at the time, Imelda Marcos was on trial, and she was in exile in Hawaii for human rights abuses. And there was a class action suit against her, filed in New York. She actually came to Yale, and

KASAMA was a great outlet for us to come together and bond based on our background.

KASAMA was on the host committee for her with Yale Law School. She came to talk more about her trial and a little bit about the Philippines and so on. We co-hosted that event,

and again, that really was one of the defining moments of KASAMA.

As an alum, I like to be able to say that I recruited at least two KASAMA members to Yale personally. I wrote them letters to help them get in and did what I could to let them in. I helped them do their applications and talked to the people from the admissions office. And I hoped that the two people I recruited would recruit two people each. We need to look for candidates that have potential and promise. And that is how to get growth. It is up to us.

I am sure if you talk to any of us, one thing that we are happy continues is FIND (editor's note: FIND stands for the Filipino Intercollegiate Networking Dialogue, an organization founded by KASAMA in 1991 that now holds conferences for Filipino American students across the Eastern seaboard). FIND was our brainchild the second year after KASAMA was born. We had about 100 stu-

Let's make [FIND] fun, let's make it so people will want to come, let's not make it very militant. Let's make it more unifying.

dents attend the first conference. It was very social – we would just hang out with students from NYU, Columbia, Penn, or from wherever. We decided, "Let's make it fun, let's make it so people will want to come, let's not make it very militant. Let's make it more unifying." That is why we used the name FIND, which was one way to instill more coming together, a little more touchy-feely, less controversial than what people would use for other conferences. We just wanted people to come.

So what does KASAMA mean? KASAMA is about unity and it is about friendship. We founded KASAMA as a group to promote friendship, unity, dialogue and finding a sense of belonging at Yale. All of us did different things and so KASAMA was a great outlet for us to come together and bond based on our backgrounds.



2007 KASAMA Executive Board

Co-Presidents
 Audrey Tan, JE '09
 Ryan Salinas, BR '09

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 Tyler Dossantos-Tam, PC '10
 Katrina Landeta, BR '10

Social Chair
 Ashley Guttierrez, SM '10

Secretary/Treasurer
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For more information about KASAMA, the Filipino Club of Yale, please visit www.yale.edu/kasama. To subscribe to KASAMA's weekly newsletter, please contact joker.arroyo@yale.edu.



kasama: the filipino club of yale

Timeline of Events

September

- Freshman BBQ
- First General Meeting

October

- Halo Halloween

November

- Barrio Fiesta (Cultural Show)

December

- Christmas Banquet
- Board Elections

January

- Movie Night

February

- Cultural Event

March

- Community Outreach

April

- Kamayan (Cultural Dinner)

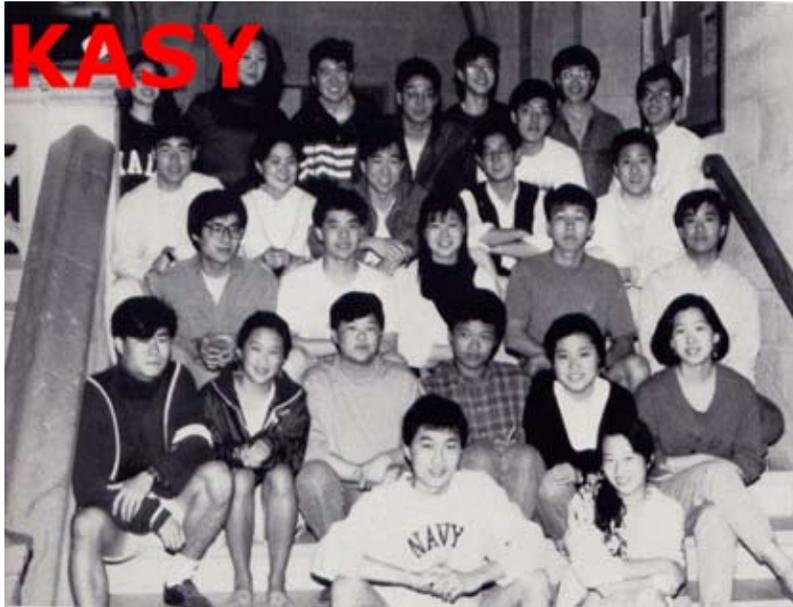
May

- Senior Banquet

kasama now



kasy then



Victor J. Lee, PC '91, served as the first KASY president from 1988 to 1989. He is currently employed by the firm Semper Ventures, and he and his wife recently had their first child.

In 1987, a small core group of Korean American students led by David Yeo (BK '88, then a senior) met informally, as Korean American students had in past years, under the banner of the Korean American Student Association (KASA). KASA was an unregistered organization and primarily social in nature. But 1987 was different. The incoming freshman class of 1991 had a sufficient critical mass of Korean American students (approximately 30) to sustain a multifaceted organization. There were already several outlets for Korean American students to congregate, three Korean churches in the New Haven area, the Korean American Journal, the East Rock Institute run by Dr. Hesung Koh, and last but not least, the Korean intercollegiate volleyball tournaments.

That year's Korean American students formally registered with the Yale College Dean's Office and came up with a new name unique to Yale, KASY. KASY was granted a modest

budget under the umbrella of AASA and was assigned to the office of the Dean of Asian American Affairs, Dean Joyce Baker, who was tremendously supportive of KASY. In addition, KASY established the Korean Studies Task Force, which successfully lobbied the administration to implement a Korean History course, and by 1990, Yale's first Korean language

KASY established the Korean Studies Task Force, which successfully lobbied the administration to implement a Korean History course, and by 1990, Yale's first Korean language course.

course. By the end of second semester, it came time to elect the first President of KASY. The voters had a choice between a freshman and a sophomore. Through active campaigning among the large freshman class, I, the freshman candidate, won the election.

The first active year of KASY, 1988-89, was a year of growing pains. In addition to establishing an effective organization and setting agendas

through our four committees (political, cultural, social, and financial), KASY was busy reaching out to organizations at other schools through social, cultural, athletic, and political events.

One incident, however, stands out. That year saw KASY at the forefront of the racially charged environment of that time. The second semester of 1989 heralded the first Korean History course, taught by a professor of Japanese history. Attesting to the pent-up demand for Korea-related courses, over 50 students signed

That year saw KASY at the forefront of the radically charged environment of that time.

up for the course, far exceeding the History department's expectations. One particularly outspoken Korean American student, dissatisfied with learning Korean history through the perspective of a scholar of Japanese history, was particularly vocal during class and raised acerbic questions throughout the semester. After receiving an "F" on her mid-term exam, the vocal student raised the accusation of racism in an editorial in a campus newspaper. In the ensuing uproar, as KASY's representative, I responded with another editorial that entreated the student body not to attack the vocal student, but to rather look at the facts of the case and the unfair grading. Needless to say, the Korean history course was subsequently dropped from the curriculum. Despite the setback in Korean studies that year, Yale introduced a Korean language class the following year, which became a highly popular course.

The ensuing KASY classes expanded upon the first KASY class's efforts, initiating community outreach programs with Korean adoptees in the Connecticut area and continuing traditions such as the KASY formal, originally called "Blackout".

It is with tremendous pride and great honor that I can contribute to the oral and written history of Korean American Students at Yale.



2007 KASY Executive Board

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YooJin Cheong, JE '09

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Political Chair
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Cultural Chair
Jane Jeong, MC '10

Social Chair
Alex Chung, TD '10

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David Lee, JE '10

Treasurer
John Oh, CC '10

Media Chair
Jason Kim, TD '10

For more information about KASY, please visit their website at www.yale.edu/kasy. To be added to KASY's email list, please contact jason.kim@yale.edu.



Korean American students at Yale

Timeline of Events

September

- Freshman BBQ
- Bluebook party
- First General Meeting
- Naples Night
- Second General Meeting
- Family Bowling Night

October

- Soccer Day
- Third General Meeting
- New York City Trip
- Guys/Girls Night Out
- Black Out Dance Party

November

- Fourth General Meeting
- Harvard-Yale Mixer
- Alumni Banquet

December

- Fifth General Meeting
- Adopted Friends
- Study Break

January

- First General Meeting

February

- Iron Chef
- Second General Meeting
- Political Event

March

- Third General Meeting
- Adopted Friends

April

- Fourth General Meeting
- Cultural Show

May

- Board Elections
- Senior Banquet

kasy now



msa then



Hasina Mohyuddin, co-founder of MSA, is currently employed by DDM, Inc. She holds an M.B.A. Vanderbilt University and a B.A. in Economics from Yale University.

When I first came to Yale, there were three Muslims in our freshman class in Berkeley College: Nael Al-Abdullah, our friend Nazish Agha, and myself. Nael (later my co-president) and I were both from Nashville, and we had met each other and our respective families before reaching New Haven. It was important to us that we were all together to support each other and feed off each other's ideas.

We all assumed that Yale would have an MSA or ISA, as they were fairly common at major universities. Unfortunately, there was none. We had heard later that there had been previous attempts, but when the leaders left Yale, the MSA/ISA had not survived. Our first discussions for an MSA/ISA started with the need for a place to pray Jummah

We all assumed that Yale would have an MSA or ISA, as they were fairly common at major universities. Unfortunately, there was none.

on Fridays. To use a University facility on a regular basis, you had to be an official Yale organization. In addition, we wanted to have special functions during Ramadan and Eid. Our primary

goal in the beginning was to be able to practice our religion on a regular basis and to have a way to maintain our Islamic traditions.

Once we got the paperwork going, we needed to get more members. Several of the grad students were instrumental in helping to organize our group and in establishing the Friday prayers. Yale was good about facilitating our requests, and we were able to have regular Jummahs, get food from our meal plans to keep in our dorms during Ramadan, and organize functions for Eid. We had a lot of overlapping membership with the South Asian Society and held joint events with organizations such as Hillel. My junior year, Yale hired the local New Haven Imam as a Muslim Chaplain, and we had a few events with the New Haven Masjid as well. Having the Imam helped us develop ties with the local Muslim community, and we also began to look at collaborating with MSAs at other colleges for conferences and other events.

Getting members was a slow process. The perception at the time was that if you were part of an MSA/ISA, you were a very conservative Muslim. I found this to be especially true for women. Many felt that if you didn't wear a hijab, you didn't have a place in the MSA. For this reason, the female participation in the MSA, and to a lesser extent, the male, was relatively low in the beginning. Graduate students were the most likely to come and were very regular in their attendance at meetings, prayers, and other gatherings.

Once people got to know members of our group personally, however, they were much more likely to join and participate in our activities. They realized that we were not out to criticize anyone but were just trying to provide a positive atmosphere in which

They realized that we were not out to criticize anyone but were just trying to provide a positive atmosphere in which to practice our religion.

By our third year (when Nael and I were getting ready to graduate), we had a good solid group from all classes — everyone from freshmen to seniors, and grad students as well.

By the time I left Yale, we had accomplished our short-term goals of providing space for Jummah and having Ramadan and Eid events. We were into the secondary stage of reaching out to the local community and other MSAs. But our biggest goal was to have longevity for the group. We did not want [what happened to previous MSAs at Yale] to happen again. We wanted to ensure that there was future leadership, and I think we were able to accomplish that.

As I was looking at the MSA website recently, I was impressed with how closely the current MSA articulated our original vision. It was amazing to

It is great that issues of Islamic identity continue to be discussed because these are issues we must all deal with on an everyday basis.

see how similar it was to what we were trying to do back then. It is great that issues of Islamic identity continue to be discussed because these are issues we must all deal with on an everyday basis. I hope the MSA continues to reach out to non-Muslims as well as Muslims and to let people know the truth about Islam.



2007-08 MSA Executive Board

President
Firat Erel, PC '09

Political Chair
Nisreen Hasib, BK '10

Alumni Relations/Historian
Faez Syed, JE '10

Vice President
Fatima Ghani, TC '09

Social Chair
Khadija Khan, MC '10

Graduate Liaison
Naufil Mulla

Treasurer
Usama Qadri, BK '10

Secretary/Librarian
Nuru Stracey, ES '09

For more information about MSA, please visit their website at www.yale.edu/msa. To subscribe to MSA's weekly newsletter, please contact firat.ere@yale.edu.



muslim students association

Timeline of Events

September

- Six Flags Trip
- Freshman BBQ
- General Meeting
- Freshman Liaison Elections
- Iftar

October

- Ramadan Banquet
- SAS-MSA Iftaar
- Eid al-Adha Dinner
- Political Speaker

November

- Bowling Event
- Harvard-Yale Game
- Chocolate Fountain
- Happy Hour

December

- Chill Session

January

- Eid al-Adha Dinner

February

- Islamic Awareness Week

March

- Whirling Dervishes Dance Performance

April

- Critical Islamic Reflections Conference
- Islamic Feminism Lecture
- Board Elections
- Mango Madness

May

- Senior Banquet

msa now



sas then



Ranjit Shastri, the founder of SAS, is currently employed by PSI, Inc. He holds an M.B.A. with honors from the Wharton School and a B.Sc. with honors in applied mathematics from Yale University.

It has been over 20 years since I founded the South Asia Society at Yale. I recall that it was in January 1983 (my junior year) that I prepared a list of all the students that I knew of South Asian origin, about 40 in all. I thought it would be fun to get together with some of them over a meal, just to get to know each other better. I then called 4 or 5 students and suggested that we meet for dinner. I asked each of my fellow students to contact 8 or 10 others in the same way and get those that they contacted to call the others. One of us was able to reserve the room at the far end of Commons dining hall.

When we all met, I was pleased to see that almost everyone on the list had shown up, plus a few that were not on the original list. The majority of those present were undergraduates, but a few graduate students also joined us. We passed around a sheet of paper so that everyone could record their contact

details. I am still in touch with several of the people who attended: Manu Bammi, who today is my business partner; Anuradha Malhotra, whom

Although most of us were of Indian origin, we decided to call the club the South Asian Society rather than the Indian Society to be as inclusive as possible.

I married 4 years later; K. "Nandu" Narayanan, whom I see whenever I'm in New York. I've unfortunately lost touch with many others.

In the discussion that ensued, it was agreed that we should get together more often. Although most of us were of Indian origin, we decided to call the club the South Asian Society rather than the Indian Society to be as inclusive as possible. While there already existed an Asian Society, few of us knew much about it or felt a strong connection to it.

By the fall of next year we had obtained official recognition from Yale College as a club, and since I was the main organizer I took on

the role of President.

One of the first events we organized in the fall of 1983 was a concert by Ajoy Chakravorty (vocal) and Viji Jog (Indian classical violin), whose trip from Calcutta Siddharth spearheaded. Rajiv Sahney and I drove along the highways around New Haven to collect funds from Indian-run motels. We told them that we were from Yale and were organizing a concert, and that we would put their name as benefactors on the program. We all chipped in to distribute fliers around campus, booked the hall and pressed our friends to attend. The event was a great success — the music was wonderful and the hall was overflowing with Yalies and non-Yalies (including the families of the motel owners!).

Over the course of the year we organized several other events, including an Odissi dance performance by Protima Bedi. Our goal was to expose Yale to the culture of South Asia, which we felt was a way for us to make a positive impact on the University. It also served as a way to connect with people who shared a common cultural experience. This was particularly attractive for those who were new to the United States; they sometimes needed that reassurance.

I'm happy to say that I continue to be involved in the South Asian Society. About six months ago I met with some of the leaders of the club in New Haven (to discuss the preparations for President Levin's recent visit to India), and am working with them on a monthly newsletter called "India Business & Investment Report", for which my company is providing financial support. I've also offered three summer internships to Yale students to work in my office in India through a new campus organization called "Yalies in India". Anu and I are also active in interviewing Indian high school students who are now applying to Yale.

I'm pleased to see that the South Asian Society has continued to grow and branch out in so many unpredictable ways, and I am grateful to have played a role in its creation.



2007-08 SAS Executive Board

President
Dilsher Singh Kairon, CC '09

Vice President
Kersi Shroff, BR '09

Cultural Chair
Zehra Ijaz, TC '10

Political Action Co-Chairs
Rishabh Khosla, TC '10
Gautam Kumar, TD '10

Treasurer
Janhavi Nilekani, SM '10

Social Chair
Dhruv Khullar, DC '09

Publicity Chair
Mahima Sukhdev, CC '10

Outreach Coordinator
Sannya Hede, DC '10

South Asian Studies Action Chair
Vidur Sehgal, ES '10

For more information about SAS, please visit their website at www.yale.edu/sas. To subscribe to MSA's weekly newsletter, please contact dilsher.singhkairon@yale.edu.



South Asian Society

September

- Big Sib/Little Sib Meeting
- Mixer Party
- Freshman Picnic
- General Meeting
- Freshman Liaison Elections

October

- General Meeting
- Roshni Meeting
- Gandhi Day of Service
- SAS-MSA Iftaar

Timeline of Events

November

- Roshni (Cultural Show)
- Afterparty

December

- Goodie Bags
- Study Break

January

- Big Sib/Little Sib Reunion
- Fellowship Meeting
- No Place Like Home
- Letter Writing Campaign

February

- No Place Like Home
- Regional Cooking Series
- Women's Night
- Music Night

March

- Regional Cuisine

April

- SAS Awareness Week
- Women's Night
- Holi
- Board Elections

SAS NOW



- May**
- Senior Banquet

tas then



Judy T. Lin, BK '92, a founding member of the Taiwanese American Society, received a bachelor's degree in psychology.

TAS started as simply the Taiwanese Language Table. As a freshman, I feared I would lose my ability to speak Taiwanese because I was away from home. Most Taiwanese-Americans of my generation grew up speaking English; often Taiwanese was a second language that our

As a freshman, I feared I would lose my ability to speak Taiwanese because I was away from home.

parents and older relatives spoke with each other, and only sometimes to us. Furthermore, even in Taiwan, the language was fading fast. In 1988, Mandarin had been the official language of the country for over 40 years under the Nationalist government, and many parents had decided it was more useful to teach their children Mandarin instead of Taiwanese. I was very worried that the language would become extinct, so I wanted to keep up my fluency. At the same time, I wanted to encourage others to see the

language as an important part of Taiwanese culture, as distinct from Chinese culture. I managed to convince a few friends that it would be really fun to have a Taiwanese Table and practice speaking Taiwanese, and that was how it all began.

During my freshman year, Taiwanese Table meetings were quite small—just myself and a handful of friends. Fortunately, as successive classes entered, more people joined, most notably Ula Hwang and Cindy Yeh, who were instrumental in the growth of the organization. In the following years, we evolved into a loosely-formed club that met regularly to discuss our experiences as Taiwanese Americans as well as

I wanted to encourage others to see the language as an important part of Taiwanese culture, as distinct from Chinese culture.

practice the language. We started doing cultural activities, such as having “dumpling night” and celebrating the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival, and also became more politically active. We were very pleased to find that Yale was one of the few

U.S. universities at the time to actually offer a class on Taiwanese history, and many of us eagerly signed up for the class, taught by Prof. Beatrice Bartlett.

In my junior or senior year, someone suggested that we register with the University and apply for funds to support our activities, so the Taiwanese Club became an “official” organization. The biggest challenge was getting people to participate

It made us feel more connected to the Taiwanese American community as a whole, and gave us the sense that what we were doing might actually have an impact beyond ourselves.

on a consistent basis. This was before e-mail became a prevalent form of communication, so I used to call everyone before each meeting to remind (read: beg, wheedle, cajole) them to come. Close contact with Taiwanese student organizations at other universities also helped to solidify the Taiwanese Club at Yale. It made us feel more connected to the Taiwanese American community as a whole, and gave us the sense that what we were doing might actually have an impact beyond ourselves. Many of the original members of the Yale group were involved in the formation of ITASA (Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Students' Association), and later after we graduated, SOTA (Society of Taiwanese Americans).

It has been 17 years since that first Taiwanese Table meeting, and many things have changed: in Taiwan, elected officials speak Taiwanese, and the Nationalists are no longer the ruling party; at Yale, the Taiwanese Club has renamed itself the Taiwanese American Society, to better acknowledge the American aspect of being Taiwanese American. I am gratified to see that the organization has evolved to meet the needs of a new generation of Taiwanese Americans, and I hope that it continues to do so.



2007 TAS Executive Board

Co-Moderators
Richard Shieh, CC '09
Eric Feng, BK '09

Secretary/Treasurer
Randy Tang, BK '09

Cultural Chair
My Khanh Ngo, DC '10

Social Chair
Andrew Lai, TC '10

Education Chair
Jennifer Pan, JE '10

Political Chair
Jin Chen, PC '10

Historian/Webmaster
Justin W. Lo, ES '10

For more information about TAS, please visit their website at www.yale.edu/tas. To subscribe to TAS's weekly newsletter, please contact richard.shieh@yale.edu.



taiwanese american society

Timeline of Events

September

- Freshman BBQ
- General Meeting
- Freshman Liaison Elections
- Family Pairing Event
- CASA/TAS Food Night
- TSA-TAS Collaboration Event

October

- Nightmarket
- Political Event
- Family Event
- Movie Night
- Happy Hour

November

- CASPY
- Food Event
- Board Nominations Night
- Harvard-Yale Mixer

December

- Gingerbread House Night
- Board Elections
- Princeton-Yale Mixer

January

- Board Changeover Banquet
- TAS/CASA Happy Hour

February

- ITASA
- Lunar New Year Festival
- Karaoke Night

March

- Political Event (Master's Tea)

April

- Cultural Dinner
- CASPY
- Super Smash Bros Melee Tournament

May

- Senior Banquet

tas now



visa then



Quyen Vuong, DC '89, a founding member of the Vietnamese Students Association, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in Economics.

We formed ViSA because we needed a source of emotional and cultural support – to feel that we are Vietnamese and to get in touch with our culture and traditional values.

There were very few Vietnamese American students at the time, on average three per class. The number of Vietnamese students increased somewhat after that, on average about six to eight per year. When I got accepted to Yale, I had just completed my fourth year living in the US as a refugee. I was still struggling to adapt to the new life, struggling to help my younger siblings grow up in the absence of our mother, so the cultural support base was critical to my emotional and mental well-being. Going away to college across the country to a completely new place was quite a scary thought. I wanted to go, but I

We formed ViSA because we needed a source of emotional and cultural support.

also wanted to make sure that I had access to a Vietnamese community and network of Vietnamese friends. MIT, with its strong network of Vietnamese American students and the neighboring networks of Harvard and other schools in the greater

Boston area, sounded so much more attractive. Yale was in New Haven, and there was literally no connection between Yale and the Vietnamese community in New Haven. Upon hearing my concern, Loc Vo '88 laughed and told me, "Well, why don't you come to Yale and start a Vietnamese student club then?"

The majority of Vietnamese students at Yale at the time came to the US in 1975 at a very young age, some of them even grew up with adopted American families. They were much more Americanized and hardly spoke Vietnamese. But I could feel that

I could feel that deep down, they too were yearning to find their cultural roots.

deep down, they too were yearning to find their cultural roots. As for me, I remembered sharing a lot of memories about life in Vietnam, the boat escape, and the experience of living in the refugee camp with Linh Nguyen '87, the only other Vietnamese student who was fluent in Vietnamese. Linh lent me the much needed emotional support to get through my first year at Yale.

Before ViSA was formally founded, an informal social network seemed to suffice. So we just hung out with each other, had dinners and picnics together. As we got to know a few friends from New Haven and neighboring towns, our connection

with the Vietnamese community grew stronger. We were also 'adopted' by Prof. Huynh Sanh Thong (the Vietnamese scholar in Yale's Southeast Asian Department) and his lovely wife Bac Yen, who cooked for us occasionally. Those gatherings at their house provided the glue that brought us together. After a delicious bowl of pho (it was somewhat

Those were precious moments that helped us nurture the desire to learn more about our Vietnamese cultural heritage and to shape us as Vietnamese Americans.

Americanized, but it was still heaven to us), we listened to Bac Yen's stories of how they met, how they survived as students in America back in the '50s, and the challenge of instilling Vietnamese roots in their children. We were mesmerized by Bac Thong's discussion of Vietnamese culture and tradition as reflected in Vietnamese literature. It was like coming home to our own family with loving parents and a rich cultural heritage. In retrospect, those were precious moments that helped us nurture the desire to learn more about our Vietnamese cultural heritage and to shape us as Vietnamese Americans. The bonding grew stronger over time, and by my senior year at Yale (1988-1989) the time was ripe to found a Vietnamese student association.

The first big activity that officially brought campus-wide recognition to ViSA was the exhibition of the plight of Vietnamese refugees in the camps. The pictures and stories I brought back from Vietnam were so powerful and moving that everyone banded together and wanted to generate more awareness to help the refugees. We also went to share the stories and pictures with students at Harvard, MIT, and Princeton and worked with various groups to create a region-wide movement to help the refugees.

I am happy to hear that the group has grown in size and is doing a number of things to help support its members.

ViSA 2007 ViSA Executive Board

President
Cecilia Ong, DC '09

Treasurer
Adrian Latortue, SM '10

Political Chair
Chau Nguyen, BK '10

Vice President
Yen Duong, DC '10

Social Chair
Alyssa Nguyen-Phuc, CC '10

Publications Chair
Carrie Nguyen, ES '09

Secretary
Mai-Anh Vu, DC '09

Cultural Chair
Kimberly Ton, ES '10

Historian/Webmaster
Kathy May Tran, TD '09

For more information about ViSA, please visit their website at www.yale.edu/visa. To subscribe to ViSA's weekly newsletter, please contact cecilia.ong@yale.edu.



Timeline of Events

September

- ViSA mixer
- First Dinner Meeting
- Freshman picnic
- Moon Festival

October

- Pho Night
- Movie screening
- Cultural Show

November

- Study Break
- Harvard-Yale Mixer

December

- Master's Tea and Workshop
- Elections & White Elephant
- Study Break

January

- General Meeting
- Iron Chef Competition

February

- World Fellow Discussion
- Southeast Asian Studies Show
- Lunar New Year Festival

March

- Social Event
- Movie Screening

April

- Political Event
- Cultural Dinner
- Bulldog Days Social Event

May

- Senior Banquet



visa now

jasu then



Thomas Nakanishi, SY '05, was a co-founder/president of JASU, chair of AASA PAEC, a co-founder of the Freestyle Expressions Crew and member of Jook Songs. He served on ECAASU National Board and helped organize the first National Asian American Student Conference. Currently, Thomas attends Harvard's JFK School of Government and works for Our Education and Liberty in North Korea (LiNK).

The Japanese American Student Union (JASU) was founded in the fall of 2001 by a small group of Japanese American students that included Rich Ting '02, Daisuke Nonaka '02, Zoe Tanaka '03, Doug Shimokawa '04, Nathan Kitada '05, Mia Arakaki '05 and Thomas Nakanishi '05.

The founders of JASU recognized a clear absence in Yale's APA community of Japanese American experiences.

While Yale had a large number of student organizations devoted to Asian American students, the founders of JASU recognized a clear

absence in Yale's APA community of Japanese American experiences, histories and more importantly organizational spaces.

As a result, JASU began organizing weekly meetings in Spring 2002 and joined AASA as an affiliate organization, contributing to the political action and cultural

JASU began organizing weekly meetings in Spring 2002 and joined AASA as an affiliate organization, contributing to the political action and cultural celebrations of Yale's APA community.

celebrations of Yale's APA community. JASU's students began by organizing a dialogue correlating the Japanese American internment with post-9/11 treatment of South Asian and Arab Americans and continued this dialogue with a Day of Remembrance in February 2002 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066. Additionally, JASU worked with

other Asian American and ethnic organizations on such events as the Dr. King Celebration and Indigenous Peoples' Day, recognizing the importance of interethnic unity and collaboration.

Founded primarily as a social/political organization for Japanese Americans at Yale to meet and for other members of the Yale community to understand the multigenerational experiences of Japanese in America, JASU also engaged the Yale community

JASU students sought not only to better understand their Japanese cultures but also to see how their families' multiple generations in America had transformed their "culture" into something purely Japanese American.

in Japanese cultural activities in coordination with the Japan Association at Yale. While many fourth and fifth generation Japanese Americans did not grow up with the immigrant-Asian American experiences that many APAs at Yale personally know, JASU students sought not only to better understand their Japanese cultures but also to see how their families' multiple generations in America had transformed their "culture" into something purely Japanese American.

In Fall 2004, Takeo Toyoshima '08 and Justin Hayase '08 sought out the remaining JASU founders and began re-organizing JASU for a new generation of Japanese American and APA students. In February 2006, JASU organized a Day of Remembrance to continue educating the Yale student body about the WWII Japanese American internment and brought JASU back into AASA and the Asian American Cultural Center. JASU has regular dinner meetings where it plans the various events and fundraisers it hosts as an organization.



2007 JASU Executive Board

President
Aaron Otani, PC '08

Treasurer
Garrett Wong, TD '09

Political Chairs
Alexandra Welch, PC '09
Emma Kurose, PC '09

Social Chair
Wilma Bainbridge, ES '09

Freshman Liason
Adam Young-Valdovinos, BR '10

Past Presidents and Founders
Takeo Toyoshima, BK '08
Justin Hayase, SM '08

For more information about JASU, please visit their website at www.yale.edu/jasu. To subscribe to JASU's weekly newsletter, please contact aaron.otani@yale.edu.



Timeline of Events

September
- First General Meeting

October
- Picnic Study Break

November
- Study Break

December
- Cultural Dinner

January
- Study Break

February
- Day of Remembrance
Master's Tea

March
- Movie night

April
- Cultural Dinner
- Trip to New York City

jasu now



japanese american students union

InSight

The Yale University Chapter of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

(an AASA affiliated group)

Michelle Wong, MC '08, served as president of InSight from 2006-2007.

Have you ever been to a party where some random, sketchy guy has gone up to talk to every Asian girl in the room? Then have you wondered why he suddenly comes up to you and starts feeding you compliments like "wow, you're so cute"? How many times has he used that pick up line before?

I spent Martin Luther King Jr. weekend in Oakland, CA attending NAPAWF's Face 2 Face gathering, where leaders of each chapter, including Yale's chapter, InSight, could meet with both the national board and with each other, sharing ideas and learning from each other. As I sat in that room with 40 other accomplished young Asian Pacific American women, I wondered to myself, "What am I doing here?" As the youngest person there, I was initially more than slightly intimidated, surrounded by social justice workers, lawyers, activists and others.

As the day progressed, we shared our stories, and I realized that we weren't so different. While I was new to social justice work, the women offered nothing but encouragement, with one sister telling me, "at one time, we all started somewhere."

During those two days, we discussed how to further NAPAWF's visions and goals through the national agenda of reproductive and sexual justice, ways to end violence against

Over discussions about our contributions to NAPAWF's work of both social justice and empowerment, we began to make more than just networking connections, we were forging friendships.

women and human trafficking, and how each of our individual chapters could take on these goals as well. We brainstormed ideas about how to advance the national campaign of



2007-08 InSight Executive Board

Co-Presidents

Emma Kurose, PC '09
Mihan Lee, SY '10

Internal Relations Chair

Vina Pulido, SY '10

Finance Chair

Diana Wang, PC '10

Social Chair

Minghao Liu, JE '09

Issues and Advocacy Chairs

Megnaa Mehtta, ES '10
Quingan Zhou, CC '10

AASA/AACC-liason

Shejuti Sarwar, SY '10

For more information about InSight visit www.yale.edu/insight.



working with nail saloworkers, the majority of which are Asian immigrant workers, who, through the nail products, are exposed daily to many toxic chemicals. We shared ideas on how to improve our chapters and learned more about social justice work. However, by the end of the weekend, over discussions about our contributions to NAPAWF's work of both social justice and empowerment, we began to make more than just networking connections, we were forging friendships.

Now, here's a call to all those strong, independent, bright, socially conscious, motivated and insightful women (and men, too!), who have wondered about these things. InSight, an Asian American women's interest group at Yale, is one of the first collegiate chapters of NAPAWF: National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum. We meet weekly for dinner meetings where members have a chance to discuss many of the issues affecting the lives of young Asian American

college women. Some of our past topics have included the "Asian Fetish," the stereotype of the "model minority," and the portrayal of Asian women in the media through movies such as *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Through doing so, we hope to empower women by gaining insight on these issues as well as building a network of motivated women (and men) willing to spread awareness of them—putting them in sight.

InSight is also dedicated to being a social justice advocate for other Asian Pacific American women. Currently, InSight is working on an initiative with the nail salon workers in the New Haven area, many of whom are female immigrants from Asian countries, such as Vietnam, helping to educate them about the harmful effects of the products they work with and trying to introduce to the owners of these salons safer products.

other groups

While there are presently eight groups under the umbrella of the Asian American Students Alliance, the Asian American community at Yale encompasses many more student organizations representing a wide range of interests.

Cultural Groups

Builders of a Brighter Cambodian Community (BBCC)

www.yale.edu/bbcc
A student organization committed to spreading cultural awareness and to raising funds for charities targeted at alleviating some of Cambodia's or Cambodian-Americans' many problems.

Malaysian and Singaporean Association (MASA)

www.yale.edu/masa
Yale University's association of Malaysian, Singaporean, and other Southeast Asian students. MASA organizes social and cultural events throughout the year.

Student Association of Thais at Yale (SATAY)

www.yale.edu/satay
Yale's association of Thai students. SATAY holds frequent social meetings, and organizes social and cultural events throughout the year.

Japanese Association of Yale (JAY)

www.yale.edu/japan
JAY is a cultural group open to all students who are interested in Japan and its culture.

Hong Kong Club at Yale

<http://www.yale.edu/hkclub>
Informal organization of undergraduate students affiliated with Hong Kong.

Tamil Sangam

Tamil Sangam is a group that meets to practice Tamil as well as promote awareness of the culture and literature of the region.

Chinese Calligraphy Association

www.yale.edu/calligraphy
The calligraphy club meets every weekend for informal practice sessions. Chinese painting and Japanese calligraphy are also practiced.

Dance Troupes

International Silat Federation

www.yale.edu/silat
Meets on a weekly basis to train in the systems of Silat, the martial arts and dance of West Sumatra. "Seni Silat Haqq" has its roots in the traditional Indonesian and Malaysian culture, "Seni" arts and dance.

Yale Jashan Bhangra Team

www.yale.edu/bhangra
Jashan Bhangra is Yale's premier South Asian dance group that performs at events and competitions throughout the year.

Lion Dance Group

www.yale.edu/lion
Dance group that learns and practices the art of lion dancing.

Phoenix Dance Troupe

www.yale.edu/phoenix
An undergraduate Chinese dance troupe (incorporates the use of ribbons and fans) that performs at various events throughout the year.

Unity Korean Cultural Music Troupe

www.yale.edu/unity
Mondays and Wednesdays (9-11) weekly practices with occasional Saturdays. Unity is an undergraduate Korean traditional drum troupe that performs at various events throughout the year.

Publications

Revelasians

www.yale.edu/aacc/publications.htm
A publication of the AACC representing current campus topics, issues, and student submissions of articles, short stories, essays, poetry, interviews, and drawings.

Yellow Pages

A literary and arts magazine that addresses Asian issues.

Korean American Journal

www.yale.edu/kaj
An undergraduate literary publication of Korean-American interests.

Yale Chinese American Journal

www.yale.edu/ycaj
An undergraduate literary publication of Chinese-American interests.

ViSA Vibe

<http://www.yale.edu/visa/vibe.html>
A collection of memoirs, poetry, art, and other cultural pieces created by the members of the Vietnamese Students' Association.

Political Groups

PRISM: Queer Students of Color

www.yale.edu/prism
PRISM is a support/discussion/social group for queer students of color and their friends.

Students of Mixed Heritage And Culture (SMHAC)

www.yale.edu/smhac
SMHAC is designed to create a comfortable setting where students can relate on issues of mixed heritage, interracial dating, transracial adoptions, and exposure to multiple cultures.

Other

Jook Songs

An undergraduate Asian-American theatre group delivering an introspective and revealing style of theatre that tackles issues of "Asianness" head-on. All skits are crafted individually in a collective workshop.

Bridges

www.yale.edu/bridges
Bridges provides free English language lessons to individuals who want or need to improve their communication skills, bridging their language gap.

ASIAN AMERICAN ACTIVISM AT YALE

A timeline of recent issues and events that the Asian American community has rallied around, empowering the voice of Asian Americans at Yale and beyond.



SPRING 2001

APRIL

On April Fool's Day, the Yale Daily News published "Confessions of a Jewish Asian Worshipper" in its annual spoof issue. The article drew inspiration from Justin Fong's attack on his fellow Asian Americans, entitled "The Invasion," in Harvard's FM Magazine. According to Chiraag Bains, '03, who served as co-moderator of AASA at the time of the article's publication, "The author, Michael Horn, may have intended to satirize the FM piece, but in the process he reified racialized conceptions of Asian Americans and invoked additional stereotypes omitted by Fong." In response, AASA took on the leadership role of raising awareness by circulating information, meeting with the editor of the YDN, and collaboratively sponsoring a forum to generate dialogue among students.

SPRING 2003

MARCH

Three men, one carrying a 2x4, tried to break into the dorm room of Katherine Lo, CC '05. While the intruders did not succeed in entering the room they left a note on the door that read: "I love kicking the Muslims ass bitches ass! They should all die with Mohammad. We as Americans should destroy them and launch so many missiles their mothers don't produce healthy offspring. Fuck Iraqi Saddam following fucks. I hate you, GO AMERICA." The harassment was presumably in response to the U.S. flag Lo had hung upside down out of her window to protest the U.S. war in Iraq.

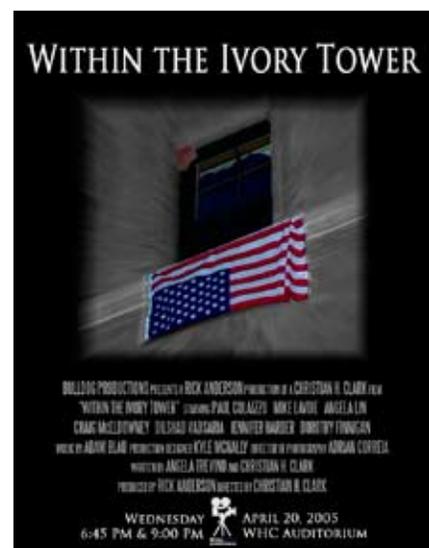
After a series of similar hate crimes on campus surrounding student response to the war in Iraq, Richard Brodhead, then dean of Yale College, sent an email briefly touching on the University's commitment to combating intolerance. However, students were concerned about the tone of this email, which was decidedly lukewarm. The next day, a sit-in was organized at Woodbridge Hall, where students from a number of different campus groups from different racial and religious backgrounds gathered to express their demands that the University disclose all of the events that had taken place, issue an apology for their failure to do so earlier, and to pursue the strictest punishment for the culprits of these crimes. In response, President Levin sent an email outlining the incidents and the University's disapproval of what had transpired.

APRIL

Minority Advisory Committee members listen to student suggestions. *Photo courtesy of Alexis Krumme/YH*



In the wake of the Woodbridge Hall sit-in, President Levin announced plans to reinstate the Minority Advisory Committee (MAC), which had been disbanded in 1995. The committee's return was deemed necessary to address concerns about minority issues and investigate bias crimes such as the Kat Lo incident. Consisting of faculty, administrators, graduate and professional students, and undergraduates, the group serves as a gauge of community attitudes about race and ethnicity at Yale, a forum for discussion, and a venue for making recommendations to the president on policy decisions.



The Kat Lo story was adapted into the feature-length movie "Within the Ivory Tower" by the undergraduate group Bulldog Productions and the play "Face-Off" by Giovanni Adams '05. *Photo courtesy of Christian Clark*

SPRING 2005

JANUARY



The NY Hip-Hop station Hot 97 broadcasted a racist and derogatory song “Tsunami Song” mocking the victims of December’s South Asian and African Tsunami with lyrics such as “All at once you could hear the screaming ch*nks and no one was safe from the wave there were africans drowning, little chinamen swept away you could hear god laughing, ‘swim you b*tches swim.” Just prior to broadcasting this song on the popular “Miss Jones in the Morning” radio show, co-host Miss Info openly voiced that she found the views expressed in the song offensive. The show’s other two co-hosts, Miss Jones and Todd Lynn, then launched into an abusive tirade against Miss Info. At one point, Todd Lynn stated that he was going to start shooting Asians while Miss Jones told Info she’s only complaining because “you feel superior, probably because you’re Asian.”

The incident sparked national outrage, leading to anti-racism petitions and NYC protest rallies. In New Haven, the AASA community united behind a letter-writing campaign. Fliers with the Tsunami Song lyrics were posted around campus asking people to stop in Commons where they could sign letters drafted by AASA addressed to Hot 97, Clear Channel, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Over 700 signatures were collected in the effort.

SPRING 2006

APRIL

The Rumpus’s pre-frosh survival guide featured a photograph of a man wearing nothing but a Chinese pigtail hat and a take-out box on his penis under the headline, “ME LOVE YOU LONG TIME: Yale’s case of Yellow Fever.” In the body of the article, Asian women were likened to SARS (“they take my breath away”) and New Orleans Levees (“they only stay tight for so long”).

That same week, the Yale Herald also printed a cartoon in the Comics section in which its first character debates which YCC presidential candidate to vote for in last week’s run-off and concludes that it doesn’t matter, to which the second one interjects, “And plus, isn’t Emery [Choi, BR ’07,] Asian?” A past issue of the Herald also included a Calendar section blurb about the Asian American Film Festival that started: “If you have Yellow Fever, where can you find the largest gatherings of Lees, Wangs and Kims on campus this weekend? For once, the answer isn’t ‘at the library.’”

In response, AASA first spoke with the respective editors of the publications and then released a petition letter. They photocopied and circulated the articles in question, and solicited official statements from the Dean’s office speaking out against the articles in question. Alumni were notified and encouraged to write to the Deans of Yale College, including the Dean of Admissions, since two of the items in question had been released for Bulldog Days. A group of students also formed the “Students Against Flagrance” group on Facebook to provide a digital forum for students to discuss the articles. Within the first two days, the group had more than 300 members. A “Day of Silence” was also observed in which participating students dressed in black and/or wore cloth gags to make visible to the student body our offense. Peter Salovey, the Dean of Yale College, Saveena Dhall, Assistant Dean of Yale College, and Betty Trachtenberg, the Dean of Student Affairs, met with students to discuss ways in which respect for ethnicity could be fostered on a long-term, institutional level. AASA also collaborated with Realizing Race to organize a forum moderated by Professor of History and Master of Calhoun College,

Jonathan Holloway. The forum drew over 200 people from all walks of Yale life, from the writers and editors of the Rumpus and the Herald to the Deans of the various cultural centers. Students respectfully discussed various aspects of the issue and brainstormed ways to set a positive precedence for the future.



Students gather in LC for the Realizing Race forum following the Day of Silence. *Photos courtesy of AASA*



FALL 2006

SEPTEMBER

The Yale Record Bluebook parody incites anger and frustration among students. Some of the offending entries included "The Difference Between Black People and White People: Black Stand-Up Comics," "Introductory Terrorist Arabic," Blah Blah Blah Genocide Blah Blah Blah," "Stereotyping Yourself," and "Practical Applications of Spanish for WASPs." Students met in Dwight Hall on September 22nd for a moderated discussion. Some suggestions to address issues of free speech and cultural sensitivity of campus publications included "requesting that Yale organize a mandatory discussion on race relations during freshmen orientation, arranging journalism workshops for Yale publications, increasing communication among different cultural groups on campus, and compiling a list of past offensive articles from campus publications to send to the national media" (Macbeth YDN 9/25/2006).

OCTOBER

The Political Action and Education Committee (PAEC) of AASA hosted the first Asian American Leadership Conference at Yale, inviting high school students to discuss issues Asian Americans face today and how to effectively address those issues. Student leaders and faculty members of Yale led the workshops and moderated the discussions in both lectures and smaller seminar styled discussion sections. The conference also included ice breakers and a debriefing session to further encourage discussion and networking among the students. Designed to give participants a taste of what activism means and how to be an effective leader, AALCY will continue to be held annually in hopes of fostering the next generation of student activists.



Yale students and AALCY participants gather in front of LC. Photo courtesy of PAEC

NOVEMBER

An unnamed party posted cartoons depicting a caricatured picture of the prophet Muhammad with a sword in one hand and a decapitated head in the other, underneath a speech bubble which included the phrase: "Don't mess with Ahmadinejad's nukes." Although an investigation began, no one has been charged for putting up the posters. "Our freedom of expression policies allow individuals and groups to post in appropriate places material that may be offensive," [Dean] Salovey said in an e-mail. "However, as I understand these policies, we have no obligation to allow anonymously posted material, repulsive or otherwise, to remain on display" (Torbati YDN 11/16/2006).

DECEMBER

The Muslim Students Association organizes an open forum on hate speech as part of a proactive approach to addressing the issues raised by the Herald/Rumpus articles, the Record's Blue Book parody, and the anonymous mass-postering of Islamophobic posters. Moderated by Reverend Streets and Master Holloway, the forum allowed students from a variety of backgrounds to gather and voice their opinions about race relations at Yale, anonymity, definitions of humor and free speech, personal sentiments and frustrations, and ideas for what can be done in the future to prevent similar misunderstandings.

DO SUPPORT MARRIAGE

Tuesday, Dec 5 | 7-8pm | LC 102

HATE SPEECH
[open forum]

How do you feel about the recent trend of hate speech on campus?

**CARTOONS
EMAILS
ARTICLES
SATIRE**

share your opinions
learn from others

sponsors:
Muslim Student Association
Yale College Council
Coalition for Campus Unity
Chaplain's Office
LGBT co-op
Queer Political Action Committee
International Students Organization
South Asian Society
with support from Yale College Dean's Office

SPRING 2007

JANUARY

The Coalition for Campus Unity was created with the mission of serving as “a collective of member groups and concerned students working together to build a socially conscious and responsible community at Yale University. Diverse experiences and opinions are important contributions that should be respected and considered. However, acquiring open-mindedness and respect for others is a difficult and continuous process. CCU hopes to facilitate this process by supporting member groups’ efforts to address bigotry and intolerance on campus, spearheading projects that result in a greater inclusion of marginalized groups, and fostering continuous interpersonal and intergroup conversations. We believe that campus unity does not come from homogeneity, marginalization, or silence, but can only be achieved through active participation in understanding and cooperative efforts.”

FEBRUARY

Yale hosted the 30th anniversary of the East Coast Asian American Students Union (ECAASU) conference, which is one of the premier Asian American collegiate conferences in the United States. Founded in the 70’s at Yale, the conference brings together students from across the nation to facilitate political activism and encourage educational dialogue. From February 8th to February 10th, over 1,000 students from over 100 major universities gathered in New Haven to improve intercollegiate communication and reach out to the greater Asian American community. The conference featured speakers like Nusrat Durrani, the General Manager of MTV World; performers like Jin, one of the only established Chinese American rappers in mainstream society; and workshops and panels discussing subjects ranging from affirmative action to Asian American studies to inter-racial dating.



The 2007 ECAASU Yale Bid team await their turn to present at the 2006 conference held at GWU. *Photo courtesy of AASA*

FEBRUARY

Tommy Woon, Dean of Multicultural Life at Macalester College, is invited to Yale to present some of the work he has done to promote a culture of mutual respect and inter-cultural understanding on college campuses. Dean Woon, who worked in student affairs and multicultural education for over twenty-five years at Oberlin, Brown, Stanford, and Dartmouth before joining the Dean’s Office at Macalester, is seen as a national leader in multicultural education. In his first presentation, Dean Woon discussed some of the ways in which orientation programs can be used to set the tone for inclusive dialogue and community building. In the second, he led a workshop on the integration of leadership development, residential life, and multicultural education.

APRIL

“Mosaic: a Multicultural Experience” is introduced at Bulldog Days. Featuring performances from student groups in the cultural community (such as Steppin’ Out, Bhangra team, Ballet Folklorico, Shades and several others) and student speakers who shared some of their personal experiences at Yale, Mosaic put a spin on the traditional multicultural showcase that occurs during Bulldog Days. The program was inspired by a Freshman Orientation program Dean Woon had implemented at Stanford called “Faces of Community,” which featured student performances as well as speeches from students that brought up issues regarding all sorts of aspects of the community. In an effort to begin implementing a similar program during Yale’s Freshman Orientation, a Yale version of “Faces” was created for Bulldog Days and came to be called “Mosaic: A Multicultural Experience.” Although Mosaic was based on the same format, it sought to deliver a more positive representation of campus diversity. Whereas Faces of Community had students speaking about controversial problems they’d experienced on campus, students in Mosaic talked about how Yale was welcoming to them and highlighted their positive experiences. Instead of an MC, students from all backgrounds addressed the audience in between each performance. According to Robert Sanchez, SY’08, one of the leading students in the project: “Members of the Yale Administration such as Dean Levesque, Jeremiah Quinlan of the Admissions Office, and all of the Deans from the cultural centers were present at the event and had many good things to say about it. We’ll continue to work on offering Mosaic in the years to come and hope to model a new program for Freshman Orientation after it.”

ethnic counselors

for the class of 2011

Established in 1973, the Ethnic Counselor Program has been an important part of the Freshmen Counseling system to help ease the transition of students of color to Yale. Ethnic Counselors serve as an additional resource for their counselees and the freshmen of their residential college community on areas such as academics, extracurriculars, the cultural centers, and student organizations.

QUESTIONS FOR THE ECS:

1. Where are you from?
2. What is your major?
3. What do you see yourself doing post-Yale?
4. What did you do this summer?
5. What kinds of activities are/were you involved in outside of class?
6. What is your favorite place to eat in New Haven?
7. Where is your favorite place to study?
8. What are your favorite ways to waste time?
9. Do you have any hobbies?
10. Interests?
11. Tell us one random fact about yourself.
12. What is one thing you have to do before you graduate?
13. Any last words of advice?

Carol Yu TC'08



1. Currently Virginia (but grew up in Hong Kong)
2. East Asian Studies (concentration in China)
3. Catching up on all past 4 years of lost sleep
4. Intern at the State Department
5. Previously/currently involved with Freshman Class Council, LiNK, KASY, couple of college orchestras, Yale admissions, Yale Students for Christ, United Church of Westville. Also love New Haven food, a good game of Settlers, Friday night basketball at BK or air hockey challenge in Morse common room. Come join me if you do too!

6. TANDOOR (it's even under my Facebook interests)

7. Secret halls of AKW
8. <http://www.albinoblacksheep.com/flash/badgers.php>
9. Graphic design, music, outdoorsy stuff, musicals (as a part of the audience, that is), birthday parties, reading children's books (just finished Ender's Game)
10. Tony Parker (I know, he's getting married), exploring restaurants, Sharpies, Israel, China, legal aid, religion, travel, human thought, youtube.com

11. I love Canada but I've never been there
12. My greatest dream has always been to be on the cover of the blue book
13. Get the fried donut with ice cream at Yankee Doodle.

Jerry Nguyen TD'08



the Mulago Hospital under the Hospice Africa Uganda program. In addition to providing palliative care to children, I examined the efficacy of current policies and practices to see if any proposed streamlining could improve the delivery of care.

5. Jook Songs (Writing/performance group), ViSA (The Vietnamese Students Association), FXC (Freestyle Expressions Crew), SRC (Student Recruitment Coordinator for the Admissions Office), Leeway AIDS Hospice
6. Tandoor
7. Music Library
8. Being on time (because we all know ev-

9. Watching movies, trying out new eateries, morning walks outside "the Yale box"
10. Motorcycles, rugby, 9-ball, Vietnamese-American Diaspora, tissue engineering
11. I don't use umbrellas
12. Find a way to get up on Harkness Tower
13. The amount and quality of sleep you get sets the tone for your Yale experience.

Amit Mahadevia SY'08



1. Naperville, Illinois
2. Psychology - Behavioral Neuroscience
3. Dream jobs: Racecar/motorcycle driver or National Geographic photographer. Realistically, anything relating to healthcare, public service, or human/immigrant rights. I also want to work abroad for a few years.
4. I worked in New Delhi, India at a startup NGO dedicated to building homes for the poor and researched HIV/AIDS stigma in the Indian healthcare system for my senior thesis.

5. AACC, AASA, Jook Songs, America Reads, Yale Admissions Office, Leeway AIDS Hospice, South Asian Tsunami Relief
6. Zaroka
7. On my bed...(also favorite place to fall asleep on my books)
8. Mario Kart, YouTube, chillin' with my suities (suitemates)
9. Black & white photography & basketball
10. Motorcycles, Barcelona, driving in reverse
11. I love getting emails without subjects; then you know the email isn't all business and it's more personal.
12. Go to the top of Harkness...and skydive. Well, not from the top of Harkness, that probably wouldn't work...but you know what I mean.
13. There's so much tradition and history in every single inch of this place, definitely experience all of it. Yale is such an incredible place, I wish I could stay for another four years!

Justin Hayase
SM'08



1. Los Angeles, CA
2. Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology
3. Hopefully, I'll be attending medical school, and even more hopefully, I'll be back home in California.
4. I participated in a 10 week research fellowship at the Mayo Clinic, and worked on med school applications.

5. Aside from class, I'm involved in Jook Songs (an Asian American writing and performance group), the Japanese American Students Union, Rhythmic Blue (hip hop choreography dance group), Freestyle Expressions Crew (breakin, poppin, and lockin dance group), Yale Club Basketball, Yale Students for Christ, and working in a research lab.
6. Ivy Noodle!
7. My room
8. Being a dancer, I can easily waste an hour or more on YouTube watching dance videos.
9. Dancing, reading, writing, video games, eating, sleeping, guitar, basketball, volleyball

10. Sports, dance, medicine, traveling, beaches, skiing, television, fishing, camping, YouTube
11. I spent a summer in Argentina doing a medical volunteer project last year.
12. Eat at every pizza restaurant in New Haven... Pepe's, Sally's, Yorkside, Naples, Yalie's Pizza, Alpha Delta Pizza, Est. Est. Est., Domino's, Modern, Bar, Brick Oven, Papa John's, A-1, Alladin, etc.
13. Yale is an awesome place filled with very talented people. Get involved in lots of different things to take advantage of your time here, but be careful not to overload yourself.

Altaf Saadi
MC'08



1. Cali (Irvine anyone?), by way of Canada eh.
2. Psychology (Behavioral Neuroscience) and International Studies.
3. Humanitarian medicine/Doctor activist by day, super model by night.
4. Supported the good cause in DC - Physicians

for Social Responsibility public service internship... and, for a month, played (read: brain slicing) with mice in a Neuroscience lab.

5. Asian American Students Alliance, Muslim Students' Association, Social Justice Network, Coalition for Campus Unity, Jews and Muslims (JAM)/other interfaith stuff, Journal of Human Rights, CT Hospice volunteering, and kicking butt in general.
6. I like to eat. Period. I'm not too picky unless I have horrible, midnight cravings for Indian food.
7. My room -- in front of a TV, with Cheez-its, and listening to songs on loop.
8. Reading people's blogs and leaving unsubstantial comments, checking and re-checking my email while youtube-ing, and making to-do lists that make me feel better about wasting time.
9. Writing, arts and crafts (less crafts, actually), bibliophilism, music, and walking without a destination. I also collected stamps for a summer in 5th grade.
10. Action, mobilizing, honesty, DISNEY, joy and laughter, childlike awe, appreciating good photography, sappy chick flicks, Grey's Anatomy and Ugly Betty, my family, being sassy, (post-colonial) literature, and my favorite color red.
11. I like to watch Deal or No Deal with Howie Mandel and scream "NO DEAL" really loudly. And I think Captain Crunch is the best cereal ever.
12. Go up Harkness Tower and run around through the sprinklers on Old Campus in the middle of the night, but not at the same time or necessarily in that order.
13. Shower.

so how do i find my ethnic counselor?



Timothy Dwight and Calhoun

Jerry
gerald.nguyen@yale.edu

Jonathan Edwards, Silliman, and Ezra Stiles

Justin
justin.hayase@yale.edu

Trumbull, Davenport, and Ezra Stiles

Carol
carol.yu@yale.edu

Berkley, Saybrook, and Pierson

Amit
amit.mahadevia@yale.edu

Branford, Morse, and Pierson

Altaf
altaf.saadi@yale.edu



senior reflections

Christopher Lapinig, CC '07, graduated from Yale with a B.A. in Linguistics and Ethnicity, Race, and Migration. During his time at Yale, Chris served as Moderator for the Asian American Students Alliance, head of the Asian American Cultural Center, and president of the Filipino Club at Yale. He was also an active member of Jook Songs.

I just wanted to eat Filipino food.

Or at least, in the beginning, that's all I wanted to do. I came to Yale, and I quickly realized how much I had taken for granted all of the things that had meant home for me. I missed hearing the familiar rhythms of Tagalog, exchanging corny Filipino jokes with my brothers, and, most of all, I missed rice. Platefuls and platefuls of rice, all of it waiting for me after a long day at school. In their place, I was left with trays of uninspired dining hall fare: half-hearted basmati rice, watery jasmine rice, and sticky rice that wasn't so sticky.

My first baby steps into the Asian American community constituted my search to reconstruct home at Yale. One chilly November afternoon, I made my way out of Old Campus. Upon passing Welch, a colorful, hand-drawn advertisement for "KASAMA: The Filipino Club at Yale" caught my eye. My heart leapt for joy. I envisioned going to that first meeting at Commons and being greeted by a roomful of friendly faces. And, of course, delicious plates of rice.

I waited anxiously for that Wednesday evening to come, and I arrived at Commons, scanning the tables for a lively group of Filipinos. Instead, I found TJ and Christina, a scant two upperclassmen. They had been scanning the crowd for Filipinos, too. Soon Carissa and John, two other freshmen, joined us. Conversing with them, I felt welcomed and at ease. Yet I was admittedly underwhelmed and disappointed. Were we the only four Filipinos at Yale? I had come from a community in Queens, comprised of immigrant families from the Philippines and the West Indies. Sitting next to the four members of KASAMA, I

was reminded all too well of my minority status in the United States.

In KASAMA, I found home during my freshman year. I found it in our movie nights, our trips to the mall, our dinnertime conversations. And by my sophomore year, also in KASAMA, I found my purpose at Yale. My second September at Yale, I was "elected" as KASAMA president, in a no-contest race that I hadn't even volunteered for. But I decided that there was a lot that we could do as a group. A lot that needed to be done. In my semester as KASAMA

Long after I leave Yale, I plan to dedicate myself to pursuing precisely the goals for which AASA was founded: the relentless pursuit for social justice, not just for Asian Americans but for every American.

president, we grew in membership to a healthy group of twenty, mobilized a campaign to recruit more Filipinos to Yale, and we began holding campus-wide events to share tidbits of Filipino culture with the rest of Yale. And after several years on hiatus, KASAMA finally rejoined the Asian American Students Alliance as a full-fledged member group.

Through KASAMA's membership in AASA, I learned more about the Asian American community on campus, and I saw the tremendous potential that a pan-Asian identity could have in enacting meaningful change, both at Yale and in America. I decided to run to become one

of AASA's two co-moderators. In the end, I was thankful to be elected, but daunted that no one ran to be my partner.

Over the course of my year as moderator, however, I realized that I didn't necessarily need one, with the incredible support of a thriving Asian American community. That year, we achieved more than I could have expected: we brought inspiring speakers like Def Jam Poet Beau Sia to Yale, won the bid for the East Coast Asian American Students Union conference in 2007, and published the inaugural edition of Foundations. Through AASA, I found a community of activists, but I also found a community of friends.

Since stepping down as AASA moderator, I have been fortunate enough to experience many other facets of the Asian American community: as a member of the AACC staff, as a member of Jook Songs, and as "that upperclassman" that, for whatever reason, continues to show up at AASA meetings.

In KASAMA, I found home. In AASA, I found a community. And through all of my experiences in the Asian American community, I have found a purpose. Not just during my time at Yale, but in life. Long after I leave Yale, I plan to dedicate myself to pursuing precisely the goals for which AASA was founded: the relentless pursuit for social justice, not just for Asian Americans but for every American.

These days, whenever I get pangs for home-style Filipino cuisine, I have to trek my way over to Hong Kong Grocery and cook my longaniza and garlic rice myself. But I'm okay with that: I've found something much more important than a good plate of rice.



senior reflections

James Yin, BR '07, graduated with a B.A. in History. During his time at Yale, he served as Social Chair and Vice President for the Chinese American Students Alliance and was an active member of the Taiwanese Students Alliance. James was also an Ethnic Counselor for Branford and enjoyed fencing and eating in his spare time.

The first question I asked myself upon moving into the castle-that-is-Vanderbilt was "Why me?", and surely, there are many of you who may be asking yourselves the same thing. With my initial response, I am going to say "I have no idea why Yale chose you." Now before you dismiss me as some burnt out senior who has lost one too many marbles during an endless string of all-nighters and liquor runs, let me tell you why I say this. Yale is full of surprises, many of which are directly influenced by the students she selects. Without such a varied group of students, Yale cannot exist. You have been selected because you have something to contribute to the greater community. At this point in time, this "special-ness" may only be tiptoeing on the fringes of your subconscious, but Yale knows that it's there.

Yale, then, is the next logical step in this piece, because after all, it is the one thing that binds us students like no other single feature. Yale, in all its majesty, isn't perfect, and I feel that most students take for granted its opportunities. No other place on Earth can provide the same level of extracurricular activities, sports, and academics. But as I've often told my friends, Yale is more than the sum of its collective parts and there is much to be learned here that neither class nor any one club can teach. Yale is many things to many people and one of the most exhilarating challenges – which also carries the greatest reward – is determining what the University means to you.

I've covered the individual and the institution; I think it's about time to cover the collective and the best place to

start is the Asian American community. The Asian American community is one aspect of Yale that has meant a lot to me. During my four years here, I've tried many things, but joining the community was one of the best decisions I could have made. Instead of diving into my own hardly-cultured childhood and boring you with my story, I'm just going to lightly touch on the main themes. Yes, I'm from a white town. Yes I grew up speaking only English, and yes, I was not introduced to the complexities of Chinese or Chinese-American Culture.

Yale is many things to many people and one of the most exhilarating challenges – which also carries the greatest reward – is determining what the University means to you.

For me, joining the community was one step towards discovering what I wanted out of life and Yale. I joined the Chinese American Students' Association (CASA) early freshman year and initially I wasn't so taken with the group. I couldn't see what we had in common and I couldn't see how they could help me find what I was looking for. But after some time, I had learned a lot and I had found a place in a community and among friends. Everyone needs to spend some time deciding what is right for them, and the community is a great place to do so.

Beyond helping my forge great lasting friendships the community helped me

discover what it means to be a person and what it means to be a Yalie. This brings me to my final point. If nothing else – and I mean if you absolutely, positively cannot find other redeeming qualities – Yale is a great place to try something new. Maybe you'll find the unbridled creativity of architecture and photography fascinating, or maybe you'll get lost in volunteering. Either way, try new things. Whether this curiosity extends to the Asian American community, academics, club sports, or a political union, is up to you, but don't limit yourself. Sticking with the safe and the comfortable is reassuring when braving this new world, but don't for a second believe that there isn't much else to be had. At Yale, I found the Asian American Community and Varsity Fencing, I became a Freshman Counselor, and through the course of all these activities, I found that I never regretted participating in any of them.

So after four years at Yale, I've come to the conclusion that college is like a first ride on a roller coaster. They both share the anxious anticipation prior to the ride, the thrill and excitement during, and desire for more afterwards. And for old fogies like me, remembering those experiences brings back fond memories. You, you'll be creating your own experiences at Yale. Maybe the details aren't the same, but the endless stories and constant spectacle will remain with you long after Commencement has past. Between now and then, my best advice is to put yourself out there, go beyond what you think is possible, and never settle for the ordinary. Yale is not an ordinary university and neither are you an ordinary student.

freshman reflections

thoughts from the class of 2010

Ria Harracksingh ES'10



Ria is a member of the South Asian Society and currently serves as the marketing director for the Asian American Students Alliance.

As an incoming freshman, I was simultaneously

pulled in more directions at Yale than I ever could have imagined possible. I thought that I had everything figured out when I started in September; I had picked a major, I had picked my classes (with relative ease), I had organized my room with the kiwi and aqua themed sheets/towels/everything,

I knew who I was, where I came from and where I was going to. Then the second week of school happened.

Over the first few months, in addition to trying out the clubs/organizations that I had a rooted interest in already, I also went to the most random events (in my opinion) that I would never have thought to attend... unless coerced by a roommate/friend/new study buddy. I found myself joining the South Asian Society, a big step for me, seeing as I am from Trinidad and Tobago and the closest link to India or anything South Asian can be found four generations behind me. That was my first interaction with the Asian American community at Yale. Before I knew it, I was attending VISA Pho night and dancing in the South Asian Cultural Show, Roshni. Before I knew it, I had made an entire support system of friends and confidants

who would help me in various ways through my inevitable tough times at Yale.

More than anything else at Yale (except maybe the Jamaican restaurant on Chapel), these people who I began to work with, planning events, attending dances and dinners with, made me feel at home and comfortable in a place that can sometimes get a little overwhelming and lonely. Many members of the AASA community became my best friends, my shoulders to cry on, my stress relief and therapy when I just needed to scream. Without any inhibitions, they welcomed me into their community with open arms and provided me with a home and a support base for one of the most crucial years of my life. I can only hope that I can give the incoming freshmen associated with AASA and AASA groups half of what I have gotten out of this year.

Carl Kubler TC'10



Carl is a member of the Chinese American Students Association and Taiwanese American Society. He also currently serves as a Community Outreach Co-Chair for the Asian American Students Alliance.

In the beginning, I felt lost. Awkward. Overwhelmed.

Orientation week and then shopping period sped by in a disjointed blur of half-hearted smiles and soon-forgotten faces as I found myself waving enthusiastically to strangers I thought I recognized, blatantly ignoring people I'd already forgotten I'd met, and discreetly avoiding the creepy Facebook stalkers who followed me around rattling off my name, hometown, and favorite kind of ice cream every time we crossed paths. This, I supposed, was life at Yale.

But as the weeks progressed and the leaves began to fall, I fortunately realized that life at Yale consisted of far more than just a jumble of haphazard social exchanges with

people I didn't know in places I didn't want to be. It was and would be whatever I would choose to make of it. So, lured like the rest of my classmates by the smell of free food and a profound desire to meet more people whose names I would soon forget, I attended meetings for clubs I'd never actually join and signed up for IMs I'd never actually play. Drifting from group to group with a free T-shirt in one hand and Bar's mashed-potato pizza in the other, I had a grand but aimless time. Then, somewhere along the line, I discovered AASA.

It's difficult for me to explain "in 500 words or less" what AASA has really meant to me. Perhaps the best way to put it would be to say that my involvement with AASA represents a sort of personal search for identity as a half-Asian college student in America. I know it sounds broad and corny and perhaps even slightly ridiculous, but it's true. From filling up at ViSA's Pho Night with my CASA family to finding myself a TAS wife (who, incidentally, happened to ask me to write this article), from hunting friends down in CASAssins with a neon-orange squirt gun to exploring new foods at SAS's cultural dinner, I can safely say that my involvement with AASA and its constituent organizations

has been one of the defining experiences of my freshman year at Yale. Writing this article now, I'm by no means guaranteeing that AASA will be the thing for you—it very well might not, and I encourage you to try all sorts of other things in your freshman year as well—but I am hoping that you will give AASA a chance and take advantage of the wonderful cultural, social, and extracurricular opportunities that it offers here on campus.

Now, when I glance back on my freshman year nine months later, I see many things. I see happiness; I see sadness. I see success; I see failure. I see resolve; I see regret. Truly, one might say that it was both the best of times and the worst of times. But throughout it all—through my struggles to adjust, throughout my search for identity, throughout my ongoing growth and maturation—I could always count on the Asian American community for support. I knew where to voice my issues about Asian American issues on campus, I knew where to find my new friends and family, and I even knew where to turn for a late-night game of Starcraft. I knew and still know these things, and I look forward to three more years to come of active involvement in AASA and the Asian American community at Yale.

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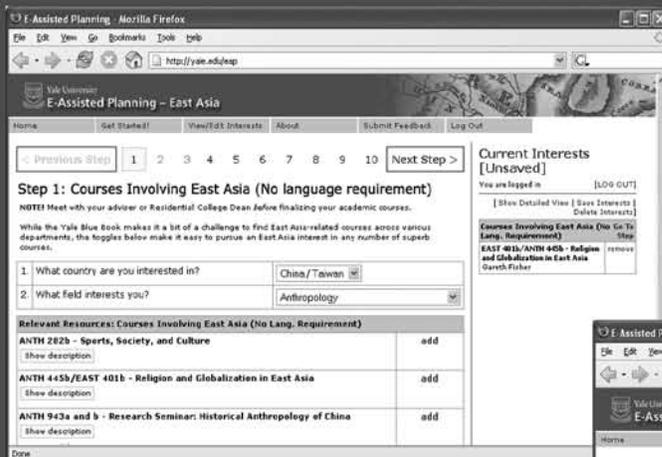
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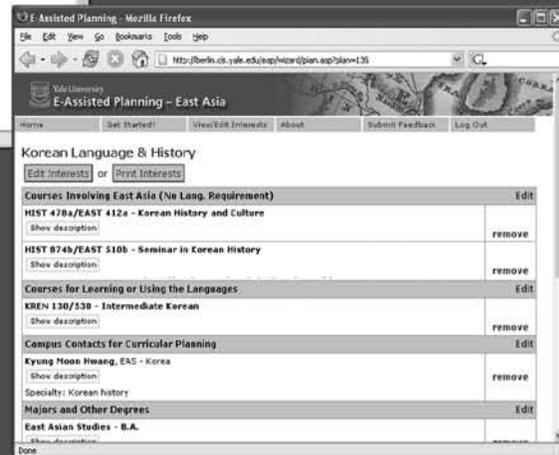
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