ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES AT
DUKE UNIVERSITY

In April 2002, undergraduate students at Duke collaborated with graduate students, faculty members, and administrators to engage the larger Duke community in the discussion for Asian American Studies (AAS). The effort started from the students in the Asian American Studies Undergraduate Working Group and ultimately stemmed out to a range of people in the Durham community as well as the national community:

- April 8, 2002: Asian American Studies Teach-In – Students in Visiting Professor Seung Hye Suh’s “Asian American Literature and Culture” class organize a teach-in. Around 100 people attend.
- April 10, 2002: Students and supporting faculty meet with the Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Trinity College, and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences to submit a proposal for an AAS department.
- A national call for letters of support is made, and over 1,000 petition signatures in support of Asian American Studies at Duke are collected.
- April 25, 2002: “Rally for our Education” for AAS and other ethnic studies initiatives is held in front of the Allen building. Students, faculty, and administrators from both Duke and UNC participate.
- April 26, 2002: Students meet with the Deans and Provost to hear that they will be granted course development grants for existing faculty members, funding for an Asian American Studies symposium, and an official task force.
- Visiting Professor Seung Hye Suh, Duke’s only Asian Americanist, leaves for a position at Scripps College.
- July 22, 2002: Students receive a list of potential instructors for AAS from the Dean’s office, however, many Duke faculty listed are of Asian descent and do not specialize in AAS.
- October 1, 2002: First AAS Task Force meeting. Faculty and students on the task force request for two faculty lines and an advisory committee composed of senior scholars in AAS to visit Duke.
- The Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences respond with no support for the two faculty lines citing a budget issue but expresses support for the advisory committee.
- There are still no faculty members who specialize in Asian American Studies at Duke.

For more information, contact: Nancy Lee (n.lee@duke.edu) or Stephanie Liu at (skl@duke.edu)

Administrators You Should Know:

- Peter Lange, Provost of Duke University
- William Chafe, Dean of the faculty of Arts & Sciences and vice provost for undergraduate education
- Robert Thompson, Dean of Trinity College
- Karla Holloway, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences

Support AAS at Duke By...

- Subscribing to the (1) AAS Undergraduate Working Group list [n.lee@duke.edu], (2) Talk ASA list [talk-as@duke.edu], (3) ASA list [duke-as@duke.edu]
- Meeting your Asian American student community through the ASA (Asian Students Assoc.), DIYA (South Asian American Assoc.), MSA (Muslim Student Org.), ASO (Arab Students Org.), and more!
- Talking to the deans to voice your support for curriculum change through programs such as AAS.
- Telling us your interests & ideas!
"The history of Asian Americans offers all of us an opportunity to carry into the coming century a larger memory of America's past." - Ronald Takaki

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The relevance of Asian American Studies is not limited to South Asian Americans, East Asian Americans, or Middle Eastern Americans. Instead, the study of this microcosm of America -- Asian America -- deepens our understanding of complexities within all communities. It addresses issues that are pertinent to everyone.

Since the Asian American community historically includes members from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, the study of Asian America recognizes, bridges, and integrates the vast economic and social disparities within local, national, and international communities. George Lipsitz, director of the Thurgood Marshall Institute, calls Asian American Studies the "quintessential model for interethnic antiracism in both activism and scholarship," for it challenges traditional models of thought, invokes discussion across ethnic and racial boundaries, and encourages the exploration of differences that define any one group.

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- April 8, 2002: Asian American Studies Teach-In -- Students in Visiting Professor Alexandra Suh's "Asian American Literature and Culture" class organize a teach-in. Around 100 people attend.
- April 10, 2002: Students and supporting faculty meet with the Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Dean of Trinity College, and Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences to submit a proposal for an Asian American Studies department.
- A national call for letters of support is made, and over 1,000 petition signatures in support of Asian American Studies at Duke are garnered.
- April 25, 2002: A "Rally for our Education" is held for Asian American Studies and other ethnic studies initiatives in front of the Allen building -- the main administrative building. Students, faculty, and administrators from both Duke and UNC participate.
- April 26, 2002: Students meet with the Deans and Provost to hear that they will be granted course development grants for existing faculty members, funding for an Asian American Studies symposium, and an official task force.
- Visiting Professor Alexandra Suh, Duke's only Asian Americanist, leaves for a position at Scripps College.
- July 22, 2002: Students receive a list of potential instructors for Asian American Studies from the Dean's office, however, the Duke faculty listed are of Asian descent and do not specialize in Asian American Studies.

December 1, 2002: First Asian American Studies task force meeting. Faculty and students on the task force request for two faculty lines and an external advisory committee composed of senior scholars in Asian American Studies to visit Duke.
- The Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences respond with no support for the two faculty lines citing a budget issue and with no support for an external advisory committee.
- There are still no faculty members who specialize in Asian American Studies at Duke.

For more information, contact
Christina J. Hsu at chh5@duke.edu and Namita Koppa at nmk@duke.edu
Stephanie Liu at skl@duke.edu and Nancy Lee at n.lee@duke.edu

"As long as we don't know our history and other's history, there will be no positive interactions or understanding." - Yuri Kochiyama

Duke students seek more Native American, Latino, Asian studies