The Future of Asian/Pacific Americans at Duke:  
Recommended Agenda for ASA

drafted by  
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The following recommendations have been compiled in response to recent initiatives by the Asian Student Association. They reflect the insights and sentiments of undergraduates (both ASA members and non-members), graduate students, as well as faculty members. Since the 1980’s, Asian American students have made active, consistent, and significant contributions to Duke’s cultural life (ASA-sponsored events such as the Lunar New Year Celebration have become veritable fixtures in the campus social and cultural calendar.) Thus far, however, the University has not really accorded the APA community with a level of institutional recognition that is commensurate with these contributions. This document is intended to help the ASA overcome this “recognition gap” proactively, by establishing greater visibility in the campus political scene.

Key:
• things to request from administration (note: these items will be presented as policy recommendations in the Office of Intercultural Affairs’ official report)
• projects for ASA to undertake on own initiative

Student Support Initiatives
• Renew request for senior administrative advocate(s) in academic affairs and/or student affairs who are well-versed in issues specific to APAs in higher education (see attached for list of possible candidates)
• Request hiring of APA programmers/advisors throughout Student Affairs, but particularly in the Office of Intercultural Affairs
• Lobby for increased resource allocation to Asian American students, for use in co-curricular programming and development of resource library (to be housed in the ICA or future Multicultural Center)
• Work with Spectrum and other cultural groups for the expansion of ICA and establishment of multicultural student center

Recruitment and Admissions Initiatives
• Push for official Asian American recruitment event(s) during Blue Devil Days <<point for discussion: the Office of Admissions is unlikely to initiate an individual recruitment weekend apart from Blue Devil Days, a la the African American and Latino prospective events, unless there is a clear APA recruitment directive issued from above—would the ASA want to lobby for such a directive? What would be our goals—higher overall enrollment? Better matriculation yield rate (current yield is about 1/3)? Targeted recruitment of under-represented ethnicities, e.g. Filipino, Vietnamese?>>
• Volunteer to host informal event for APA prospects during Blue Devil Days

Asian American Studies (AAS) Initiatives
<<At present, there is already a small core group of faculty and students who are committed to pushing for AAS at Duke. But in order to generate wider faculty enthusiasm and secure their support for an Asian American Studies program, there needs to be a demonstrable and critical level of student interest. ASA can, and should, take an active role in educating APA as well as non-APA students about AAS (which, after all, is not typically featured in the American high school curriculum). A receptive intellectual environment will give the course cluster we’re proposing a much better chance for success. >>
• Call for institution of Asian American Studies course “cluster” (sequenced rotation), building on existing offerings in the History department
• Call for hiring of tenure-track Asian American/Asian Diaspora Studies faculty in the humanities (esp. English, Literature, or Cultural Anthropology) and social sciences (esp. sociology or public policy) <<generate list of possible candidates>>
• Invite administrators to attend the Dimensions Conference, esp. AAS workshop but also other events
Organize year-long lecture/film/discussion series on Asian American Studies, with 1 or 2 major speakers per semester and smaller monthly (possibly bi-weekly) events per month. Try to invite speakers who represent a range of research/teaching interests, from the humanities to the social sciences to law. Smaller events can range from film/video screenings to dinner with faculty. The workshop on AAS already planned for the Dimensions Conference would be a good inaugural event for the series. Amy Kim (ajk9@duke.edu), instructor of the “Asian American Cultural Production” house course last year, has already expressed interest in helping to organize such a series.

In conjunction with the lecture series, sponsor an Asian American Studies reading/working group for ASA members and other interested students. The group will be charged with the responsibility of organizing future AAS-related events and, possibly, a house course for Spring 2001. Contact Amy Kim and Julie Kim (jck9@duke.edu), Ph.D. student in Literature, Amy’s sister and guest lecturer.

Establish closer working relationship with Peripheral Vision: make the APA film festival a regular feature of the heritage month; co-sponsor monthly screenings with Q&A/discussion sessions.

Residential Life Initiatives

Given that housing (in)equity is a long-standing and campus-wide subject of controversy that has mobilized a range of student organizations over the years (e.g. women groups, cultural groups, “independents”), the best way for ASA to participate is through the existing activist network. We recommend solidifying inter-group relationships that are already in place (e.g. through Spectrum) and, at the same time, forging new collaborative arrangements.

Follow up on survey of general members conducted last Spring (try to get a larger sample, focus on residential issues, ask more open-ended question about what people like and don’t like about the current system); document results in presentation-ready form.

Raise issue at meeting of Spectrum representatives, establish network with other cultural groups involved with housing reform

Appoint officer to act as liaison these existing with student groups—cultural groups and beyond—and coordinate joint initiatives

Inter-Community Development

Organize “Pan-Asian Coalition” with other Asian/Asian American student organizations, to ensure better coordination of political activities among different sectors of the larger APA community.

More joint-programming with other cultural groups (BSA, Mi Gente, NASC, etc.) to promote closer working relationships, esp. in preparation for joint efforts to push through Multicultural Center project

[Addenda]

General Strategies to Increase Institutional Visibility

Invite administrators and faculty to attend major ASA political and cultural programs, particularly the Dimensions Conference in the Fall and the APA Heritage Month in the Spring．

Approach the Duke Chronicle about a possible feature article on Asian Americans at Duke, also try again to ensure more thorough coverage of large-scale ASA events like the Dimensions Conference and the New Year Celebration.

Alumni Development