MEMORANDUM

TO: President Nannerl Keohane
SUBJECT: ASA Presentation Meeting: New Partnership
FROM: Charles Choi, ASA President
DATE: March 6, 1995

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you on behalf of the Asian Students Association for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 1. I hope our discussion and meeting will signify the first of many such regular meetings with the ASA in the future. We would like to set up a follow-up meeting before the end of the semester to evaluate the progress on the three issues that we outlined at the meeting.

In furthering our partnership for growth and interaction among all groups on campus, we hope we can meet with you twice a semester in order to keep each other abreast of the different issues facing our communities and furthering the dialogue. We will, as you suggested, seek meetings with other administrators such as the Provost and the various Deans and Vice Presidents as well.

In summarizing our meeting, I would just like to re-emphasize the need for increased partnership since we are all seeking the same goal: improving the Duke community. By recognizing that a healthy and strong ASA and Asian American community only fosters greater interaction and programming on campus, we can make enormous strides towards achieving our mutually beneficial goal.

The following are the three major points that were discussed at our meeting:

1. Permanent Office Space. As ASA continues to grow in size and in programming, the need for adequate office space in the Bryan Center is a must. The campus demographics among the undergraduate student population indicate an increase of over 300% in Asian American students over the past 10 years, currently representing the largest (11%) and most rapidly growing minority group on campus. With recent large-scale events such as the Charity Ball, Lunar New Year Festival, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and the ECASU Conference, ASA's growth in programming has made us among the most prolific programming organizations on campus. In order to continue to grow both in programming and to meet the diverse needs of the Duke community, we will continue to work with the Duke University Union and the Office of Student Affairs to attain our goal of a permanent office space. In preparing our proposal for permanent office space, I hope we will have your unequivocal endorsement in this most important and fundamental of issues.

2. Administrative Advocate. As we presented in our proposal, we are willing to work with you in achieving your own goals of creating a diverse administration, reflective of the campus community. Although there is a dearth of high-level Asian American administrators, we urge you not to ignore these candidates during the search processes by assuming that none exist. A lower-level Asian American administrator, preferably in the Student Affairs Office, would be an ideal and tangible goal. However, we are not seeking an Asian American administrator to serve as a token diversity figure in the administration. We are seeking diversity itself. Our immediate goal is to follow the University of Virginia Model: an administrator who is directly linked to the Asian American student community and responsible for addressing and staying abreast of these issues. In other words we are seeking an advocate of the Asian American community in the administration with this role specified in his/her job description. The administrator does not need to be Asian or even a person of color, but we are seeking an individual who will be an advocate of the Asian American community at Duke and work with ASA and other
groups to address our specific concerns and issues. With the support of your office as well as Student Affairs, we can implement this model as a part of the restructuring process that is currently being pursued in the Office of Student Affairs.

3. Funding. We understand that fundraising is a difficult and delicate issue. In seeking larger financial resources in which we could draw upon, we have considered such options as an endowment and a private programming account. As the pool of financial resources are being squeezed from all levels, the need to raise funds outside the DSG allotted amount is imperative. Consequently, we applaud your efforts to assign a representative from the Development office to work with us in this important matter. We look forward to working with the Development office as well as Alumni Affairs to improve alumni and community relations. By focusing and collaborating our efforts, we can only achieve better alumni relations and greater financial support for the university and the Asian American community.

Through these areas of permanent office space, an administrative advocate, and increased funding, we hope to achieve significant strides towards achieving our goals before the end of this semester. We will be in contact your office in the near future to set up a follow-up meeting later in the semester to evaluate the progress on these issues. Furthermore, we will be contacting you as well as the Development Office to immediately embark on our partnership in targeting off-campus individuals and groups for financial support. On the issues of a permanent office space and an administrative advocate, we will be working closely with Vice President Dickerson and will keep you informed of any and all progress, and we seek your staunch support on all of these important issues.

With a united effort to attain our goals in each of these three essential areas, I hope we can take enormous strides in the following weeks towards improving ties with the administration and gaining increased access to office space and fundraising opportunities. Let us not be confined to a limited vision of progress and the sloth and lethargy of a few. Together, we can overcome these obstacles and pursue the necessary changes in all aspects of our community.

We thank you again for meeting with us this past Wednesday and look forward to our continued partnership towards the betterment of the entire Duke community.
Mr. Charles D. Choi  
President, Asian Students Association  
P. O. Box 96499  
Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina 27708

Dear Charles:

Thanks to you and other leaders of the Asian Students Association for inviting me to meet with you the other week at the Mary Lou Williams Center. I enjoyed the conversation and learned a good deal from the material that you so thoughtfully provided. It was good of you to have prepared informative presentations and provided also an opportunity for dialogue and even a field trip.

Thanks also for your memorandum of March 6 following up on our conversation. I would like to commit myself to meeting with the Association once a semester for an assessment of concerns and progress in dealing with them along with other administrators, and perhaps be with you another time during a semester for some more programmatic based activity where we can share in our joint commitment to multicultural understanding.

I enclose copies of letters that I have written to other members of the administration asking them to address the several concerns that you raised. As you will see, I have asked them to address each of your primary concerns. The ball is now in their court, and I believe it would be appropriate for you to deal with each of them separately. I want to be sure that you understand that my role in this is as a facilitator and the one who is finally responsible for the University, but that much of the actual work will need to be done by my colleagues, and it is with them primarily that you should follow up.

For this reason, I do not think it makes a lot of sense to have a follow up meeting with me later in the semester. The term is drawing to an end quite quickly, and I would prefer that you deal with each of the administrators whose attention I have drawn to these efforts. I shall look forward to meeting with your successor and other members of the Association at some convenient date early in the fall to take stock of where we are and what new priorities will have emerged.

Thanks again for bringing the group together and for a thought-provoking afternoon.

Yours sincerely,

Nannerl O. Keohane

Enclosures
MEMORANDUM

To: Janet S. Dickerson
From: Nannerl O. Keohane

March 8, 1995

I met recently with the leadership of the Asian Students Association. The conversation was stimulating and productive. It was also, for the most part, positive and upbeat, although there were a number of points of criticism for Duke's support of Asian students or lack thereof.

One of the points about which they felt most strongly was the importance of permanent office space suitable to their size and ambitions as an organization. They mentioned that this year, because of their needs in planning for the East Coast Conference of Asian students, they had been accorded significantly better space than they had had in the past; and their hope, at a minimum at least, was to retain this space in the future rather than to be relegated once again to a very small cubbyhole. They showed me the comparable space of the Black Student Association, and it is clear that they would like now as a minority of similar size to be able to claim equally appropriate space.

I know that space behind the information desk is at a premium, but I do believe they have made a good case for having space larger than the little cubbyhole they had until this year. I hope it would be possible for them, at the very least, to stay in their current office and build upon this strength and size of their organization for the future.

They also spoke about the desirability of having an "Asian American administrator." Here it was clear that they had in mind at once two different things. First of all, the desirability of having someone within your shop, who would not necessarily personally be Asian American, who would be responsible for attending to their concerns and advocating their interests. As you think about the reorganization of your staff and the various demands for support from the Greeks, the gays and the lesbians, and others, it is probably important to keep the needs of Asian students in mind as well. I am sure that you are already alert to this, but I wanted to mention it as one of the things that was most directly on their minds.
The second thing that they had in mind in asking for such an administrator was the desirability of having more Asian Americans represented in the university administration at higher levels. I accepted this as a valuable goal, but pointed out that there are very few Asian Americans in the pool for virtually any job that we have filled at Duke and asked their help in identifying potential candidates for searches now underway. They had asked for voting representation on search committees. I affirmed my own belief that the present DSG structure for choosing student representatives is wise and should not be altered to take special interests into account. However, I do think it would be well for the committees to consult with the Asian American students to see if they can provide suggestions for names of such potential candidates.

I also pointed out that very few Asian Americans have shown an interest in college or university administration compared to members of other ethnic groups, and urged them to encourage friends who might have the talent and ambition for such a post to choose this career path in order to swell the ranks of those available for such positions.

cc: Charles Putman
    Richard Siemer
MEMORANDUM

To: John J. Piva
From: Nannerl O. Keohane

At a recent meeting with the leaders of the Asian Students Association, Darren Jer brought up their desire to work with Asian American alumni to seek an endowment gift to support the permanent work of the Asian American student association. I questioned the wisdom of seeking endowment funds, noting how little income is available for actual use unless the endowment is very large. Darren Jer serves as a member of the Institutional Advancement Committee, as you know, and therefore he was aware of this difficulty. His main interest at the moment is finding someone within the development operation with whom he can work in order to identify potential donors and work to achieve their priorities.

I know that it is difficult to provide staff support for organizations of this kind. They have in the past worked with Jeff Yohn on an informal basis. They asked that you give them the name of someone they could consult so that they will have a mentor and a clearinghouse, and this would certainly seem wise. They are aggressively interested in reaching out to Asian American alumni. We would want to make sure that their efforts to do so are consonant with our own plans and strategies for such persons. It would probably be a good idea, therefore, if someone could be designated to work with them, with the understanding that it would be primarily to share information rather than to provide extensive staff support for their efforts.

I do not know how many other student organizations make similar requests, and I certainly do not want to overburden your staff which is already stretched quite thin. I do think, however, that we need to make sure that we do not have people going off the reservation with many different campaigns at once. I would appreciate your advice, therefore, on how this might be handled and how we might harness the energies of these dedicated young people.

cc: Toby Kahr
    Arthur McCombs
    Charles Putman
    Ralph Snyderman
    John Strohbehn
    Janet Dickerson
March 8, 1995

MEMORANDUM

To: Toby Y. Kahr
   Arthur McCombs
   Charles E. Putman
   Ralph Snyderman
   John W. Strohbehn

From: Nannerl O. Keohane

In a recent meeting with the Asian Students Association leadership, the issue of the use of the term "oriental" on some university forms came up again. This term is understandably distressing to our Asian American students, and they urged me to take whatever steps are necessary to make sure that people all up and down the line in our bureaucracy get the word about the unacceptability of this term.

I would appreciate your making sure that the forms which are in use now in the various branches of the university no longer perpetuate this outmoded stereotypical term, but instead use federally approved categories in terminology. Many thanks.