



Asian/American Center News

QUEENS COLLEGE

The Newsletter of the Asian/American Center

Spring 2000

MISSION OF A/AC

The Asian/American Center is dedicated to community-oriented research that analyzes the multicultural diaspora experience of Asians in global and local communities. The A/AC's mission is to foster scholarship, disseminate information and create awareness about Asian American issues, and serve as a liaison between the communities and university, press, and other city and national agencies. The Center reaches out to the Asian community and sponsors various programs and events while raising funds from the community.



At the polling site in Flushing, Ms. Hong Wu (center), Associate Director of the A/AC, meets with Board of Elections interpreters Mr. Solamen Zhang (left) and Mr. Yizhu Fan (right).

CENSUS 2000

On Census Day, April 1, Ms. Hong Wu, the Associate Director of the A/AC, broadcast in Chinese "Census 2000: Stand Up and Be Counted," a one-hour special on WB11. Hosted by Julian Phillips, the program focused on the important role of the census in government decision-making, and the vital role each person plays in making sure their community gets its fair share of government funds.

How Asian Americans Voted in the Presidential Primary

In collaboration with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the A/AC recruited Queens College students to conduct the Asian American Voter Survey and Exit Poll on the day of the New York presidential primary, held March 7.

Over 300 Asian American voters were surveyed on that day at seven polling sites in Manhattan and Queens. The survey results will help increase the awareness of Asian American issues and political needs. The information will also be used to track voter preferences in the November presidential election, for which a high voter turnout is anticipated in Asian American communities.

According to preliminary survey results released by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, Asian American Democrats in New York City outnumbered Republican voters by more than 2 to 1. Among Democrats, who comprised 67% of those surveyed, 84% favored Vice President Al Gore over former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley, who received only 16% of the Asian American vote. In a rare statewide Republican primary, 70% of Asian Americans chose Texas Governor George W. Bush over Arizona Senator John McCain, who received 26% of the vote.

Chinese American voters were the largest ethnic group to participate in the poll (74%), followed by South Asians (Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi – 14%), Filipino Americans (5%), Korean Americans (4%), and others (Japanese Americans, Viet-

namese Americans – 3%). According to a 1994 New York City Voter Assistance Commission report, over 76,000 Asian Americans are registered to vote in New York City, with 44% registered as Democrats, 17% as Republicans, and 37% not enrolled in any party.

The A/AC is pleased to continue its contribution to the project. We would like to thank all our students, including Urban Studies Professor Tarry Hum's class, for assisting in the survey.

Organizing Asian American Communities for Census 2000

The A/AC has joined the Asian American Task Force for Census 2000, a coalition of community organizations and leaders, in its efforts to accurately represent the growing population of Asian Americans, historically undercounted in the census. The Task Force members represent the various Asian American communities, including Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, and Vietnamese. As a nonpartisan and independent voice of the community, the Task Force provides the Census Bureau with an important bridge to the Asian American population in New York City and offers advice, access, and support to help facilitate the Bureau's implementation of Census 2000.

Mr. Tony Farthing, the New York Regional Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, emphasized the vital role the Task Force is playing. He noted that only through innovative partnerships between the Bureau and community-based coalitions like the Asian American Task Force will all the diverse communities in New York City be reached.

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Census 2000

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Though Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing minority groups in the nation – estimated to number more than 10 million – they are routinely undercounted in many cities and states. In New York City, where the second largest Asian American population resides, Asians were undercounted at a much higher rate than the national average (3.2% in the 1990 census).

The Task Force has focused on alerting the Asian community to the impact the census has on their quality of life. The A/AC has distributed written materials and educational videotapes in a number of Asian languages on how the data gathered from Census 2000 will be used to allocate federal funds to state and local governments for schools,

housing, roads, and social services, in addition to determining the number of representatives each state sends to Congress and the state and local legislatures. We have made special efforts to reach out to new immigrants, assuring them of the confidentiality of census information.

The Task Force also has made a special effort to reach the children of immigrant families, who often act as “ambassadors” to the outside world – especially when parents are not proficient in English. In collaboration with the Asian American Federation of New York, the A/AC co-sponsored a contest for students to design a poster that would increase awareness and participation in Census 2000. The theme of the contest, held throughout the city, was “Census 2000 and the Asian American Community.” The A/AC contacted 79

public schools in Queens and discussed the project with school principals and superintendents.

A panel of judges – ranging from professional artists and educators to community leaders – evaluated students’ posters based on creativity, effective expression of the theme, and artistic merit. The first, second, and third place winners received savings bonds in the amount of \$500, \$250, and \$100, respectively. We are proud to announce that, due to our efforts, Queens had the most active participation. We congratulate the winners from Queens: 1st Prize: Amy Chong (IS 237) and Emily Shek (JHS 194); 2nd Prize: Kenny Kim (PS 130) and Manisha Ramjassingh (Far Rockaway High School); and 3rd Prize: Kuo Chih Hung (High School for Arts & Business).

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Please mention where you saw a copy of our newsletter. Thank you!

Asian Food Festival

To promote the diverse Asian cultures on campus and to facilitate collaborations among student clubs, the Asian/American Center and the Student Life Office held an Asian Food Festival on December 7, 1999.

There was food from Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Taiwan, and other countries. The two-hour event attracted over 160 faculty, staff, and students from such departments as Accounting, Alumni Affairs, Art, Buildings & Grounds, Bursar, Career Development, Computer Science, European Languages & Literatures, Graduate Studies, Health Services, the Law School, LEAP, Math, Media Studies, Music, Information Technology, Psychology, the *Quad*, Education, and Student Life.



A/AC staff with student club members at the Asian Food Festival.

Many expressed how much they enjoyed this opportunity to sample Asian cuisine. The Barkada Filipino Club, Chinese Christian Fellowship, Chinese Student Association, Hindu Students Council, and Taiwanese Student Association greatly contributed to the festival’s success. The A/AC is delighted that this cultural event was not only educational but also added color to our campus life. Even more gratifying was that the event offered a superb opportunity for faculty, staff, and student clubs to work and celebrate together. We all had fun!

Complexity of Race Relations

On March 2 the A/AC cosponsored a New York City Roundtable on *The State of Asian Pacific America – Transforming Race Relations*, the fourth major public research report produced by the Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP) and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. In the report, the authors show how racial identity is created and embodied in individual attitudes and institutional practices and argue for policies that go beyond the black-white paradigm.

The report points out that as America enters a new millennium, it is still struggling with how to achieve racial justice. Solving the “race problem” must come from an understanding of new realities as Asian Pacific Americans emerge as a driving force behind the transformation.

Researchers who presented their findings at the roundtable included Professor Paul Ong, editor of the report; Professor J.D. Hokoyama, president of LEAP; Professor Don Nakanishi, director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center; Professor Tarry Hum, Queens College; Professor Taeku Lee, Harvard University; and Professor Leland Saito, UC San Diego.

The State of Asian Pacific America – Transforming Race Relations is available in our research library. If you are interested in finding out more about it, please call 718-997-3050.

Update on the Taiwan Relief Fund

We are all painfully aware of the suffering being endured by hundreds of thousands of people in Taiwan as a result of the recent calamitous earthquake. With the assistance of the Queens College Foundation, A/AC established a Taiwan Relief Fund to collect donations from faculty, staff, and students at the College. The contributions received, totaling \$780, prove that Queens College is a caring com-

WARM WELCOME FOR NEW CONSUL GENERAL AMBASSADOR HONGXI ZHANG

In January the A/AC joined the US-China People’s Friendship Association (USCPA) in a welcoming ceremony for the newly appointed Consul General Ambassador Hongxi Zhang of the Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China.

In his address, Ambassador Zhang said that while he often speaks with “tycoons” in the corporate world of New York, he was pleased to be able to speak to a grass-roots organization like the USCPA. His well-received speech focused on China’s international relations and concerns, including respect for its dignity and sovereignty; the anger Chinese citizens felt after NATO’s bombing of their embassy in Yugoslavia last year; and the positive and negative consequences for China’s economy resulting from its entry into the World Trade Organization. Ambassador Zhang was then presented with a framed needlepoint gift with a central motif of the Chinese character “you,” symbolizing friendship.

Ambassador Zhang expressed his appreciation for the A/AC’s ongoing work to promote educational exchanges between the two countries. Dunhuang Xu, the Chief Education Counsel of the Consulate General, also noted that because the A/AC and Queens College had demonstrated a strong commitment to such exchanges that he chose the College as the first U.S. higher education institution to visit upon his appointment in 1997, and the cordial relationship has continued ever since.



Ambassador Hongxi Zhang (center), the recently appointed Consulate General of the People’s Republic of China, was welcomed by Ms. Hong Wu, Associate Director of the A/AC, and Mr. Isidore Chevat, President of the New York Chapter of US-China People’s Friendship Association.

munity that helps suffering people regardless of their nationality. In addition, members and supporters of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) – Long Island Chapter contributed \$510 to the fund. A total of

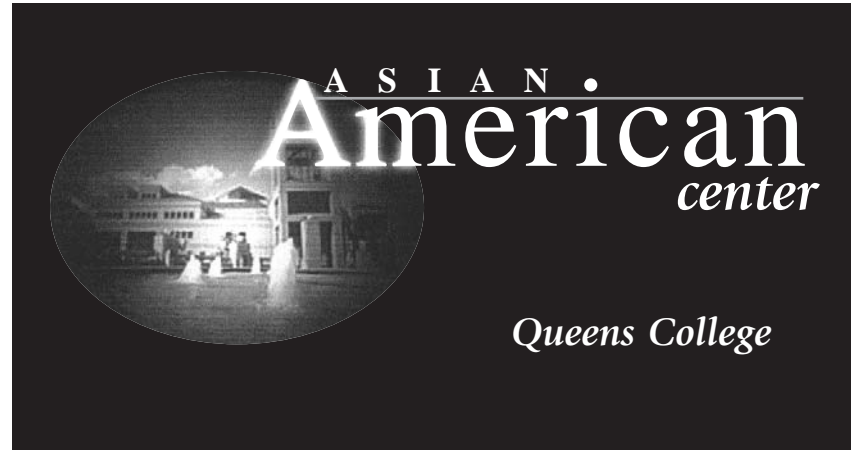
\$1290 was forwarded to the American Red Cross International Response Fund in December. Once again, A/AC would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the College community and the OCA-LI.

The A/AC's New Website

It is with great pleasure that the Asian/American Center announces the launch of its reconstructed and updated website: <http://www.qc.edu/AsianAmericanCenter>.

The update includes the addition of many sections to the Activities category. Our new Announcements section has all the latest jobs and scholarships being offered at CUNY, and all Queens College events are regularly updated. Our Social Services section gives students a guide to local Asian services. Be sure to visit our online newsletters section, which features community-oriented research and analysis, as well as a list of recent newsletters published by the Asian American Center.

The Library section of our Research & Resources category offers direct ac-



Opening page of the A/AC's website

cess to the CUNY Online Library Catalog. Our Staff and Faculty section lists all Queens College Asian faculty by departments.

Besides these new features, the website also carries information on books

and exhibitions, special courses, and demographics. You will also find useful information on our very popular Translation Program.

Be sure to visit the Center via our website soon!