

University of Massachusetts Boston
Asian American Studies Program



Graduation Celebration
2017-2018

22 May 2018

Asian American Studies Program Affiliated Faculty – May 2018

Ping-Ann Addo, Associate Professor, Anthropology
Michael Ahn, Assistant Professor, Public Policy & Public Affairs
Pratyush Bharati, Associate Professor, Management Science and Information Systems, College of Management
Sara Boxell, Instructor, Asian American Studies and Program Coordinator, Asian American Student Success Program
Elora Chowdhury, Associate Professor and Chair, Women's and Gender Studies
Patrick Clarkin, Associate Professor, Anthropology
Loan Dao, Associate Professor, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development
Xiaogang Deng, Associate Professor, Sociology
Christopher S. Fung, Instructor, Anthropology and Director, Native American & Indigenous Studies minor
Richard Hung, Associate Professor, Human Services
Sari Kawana, Associate Professor, Modern Languages
Denise Khor, Assistant Professor, American Studies
Peter Kiang, Professor and Director, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development
Marlene Kim, Professor, Economics
Minjin Kim, Instructor, Asian American Studies
Son Ca Lâm, Instructor, Asian American Studies
Haeok Lee, Professor, College of Nursing & Health Sciences
Andrew Leong, Associate Professor, Philosophy and Law
Raymond Liu, Professor and Chair, Marketing, College of Management
Lusa Lo, Associate Professor, Special Education Program, Curriculum & Instruction
Patricia Nakamoto Neilson, Director, AANAPISI Asian American Student Success Program
Rajini Srikanth, Professor, English; Founding Dean, Honors College
Lakshmi Srinivas, Associate Professor, Sociology
Karen Suyemoto, Professor, Psychology & Asian American Studies; Director, Transnational, Cultural and Community Studies
Shirley Tang, Associate Professor, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development
Linda Thiem, Instructor, Asian American Studies
Kim Soun Ty, Instructor, Asian American Studies
Leslie Kim Wang, Assistant Professor, Sociology
Paul Watanabe, Professor, Political Science and Director, Institute for Asian American Studies
Zong-guo Xia, Professor, Environmental, Earth & Ocean Sciences; Vice Provost for Research; and Dean, Graduate Studies
Wenfán Yan, Professor, Department of Leadership in Education

The Program

For over thirty years, UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program has offered intellectually-challenging, emotionally-engaging, culturally-responsive instruction in the classroom with holistic practices of mentoring, community-building, service-learning, and advocacy to address the social and academic needs of students as well as the critical capacity-building needs of local Asian American communities. The program offers the most Asian American Studies courses, faculty, and community linkages of any university in New England. The program's alumni include teachers, social workers, health care providers, business entrepreneurs, and leaders of local Asian American community organizations. By grounding our curriculum, teaching, and applied research in the realities of local Asian American communities and by respecting the knowledge and bilingual/bicultural skills that many UMass Boston students bring to the classroom, the AsAmSt Program creates powerful learning environments for all students to gain critical understanding about the historical experiences, voices, contemporary issues, and contributions of diverse Asian populations in the U.S. Graduate students from any area who have Asian American Studies interests can serve as teaching/research assistants, mentors to undergraduates, and special project developers for the program. AANAPISI students from Bunker Hill Community College and high school students in UMass Boston's pre-collegiate programs or those from partnering community youth programs are encouraged to take advantage of AsAmSt's learning opportunities. Community members and organizations as well as alumni participate in our activities in short- and long-term ways. Since 2010, UMass Boston has been the only research university in New England designated and funded by the U.S. Department of Education as an Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI).

Celebrating our 2017-2018 Graduates in Asian American Studies

We proudly recognize three students who have completed the requirements for an Individual Major in Asian American Studies: Helen Dang Ngo, Hung An Nguyen, and Tommy Nguyen. They join eighteen others who have done so since 1993. We also honor six undergraduates who have fully completed, and, in most cases, far exceeded the six-course requirements of our program-of-study in Asian American Studies: Darlene Dao, Nía Duong, Yeon-ho Kim, Hieu Le, Minh Phan, and Ammany Ty. They follow 103 previous AsAmSt concentrators since 2000. Doctoral and master's degree students being recognized for their extensive AsAmSt connections and contributions across teaching, research, service, and advocacy include: Danielle Godon-Decoteau (김애경) (Clinical Psychology), Ray Chiu and Van Vu (Rehabilitation Counseling) and Tri V. Quach – our second AsAmSt alumnus to complete the Master of Science degree in Transnational, Cultural and Community Studies (TCCS). Many congratulations to all of our other graduating students who have been part of AsAmSt courses and projects at UMB.

Thank you always to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners and to the AANAPISI Asian American Student Success Program for generous AASSP support! Special appreciation to alumni Phil Le and Phoumara Nuon for faithfully donating again to this year's graduation, and to alumnus Chris Ward and community entrepreneur leader/partner, Irene Li from Meí Meí Restaurant for their inspired, double happiness contribution. During a year of brutal budget cuts across the institution, the homeplace support from our School for Global Inclusion and Social Development is also gratefully acknowledged.



Ammany Ty was celebrated at the State House as UMass Boston's representative among the 29 *Who Shine* awardees from Massachusetts public universities, state colleges, and community colleges graduating in 2018. Higher Education doctoral student and UMass System Trustee, Imari Paris Jeffries, and former UMB Student Trustee, Pantea Fatemi Ardestani, a graduating Biology major and Chinese minor, each completed digital stories through AsAmSt in Spring 2018.

Individual Major in Asian American Studies

Helen Dang Ngo (Ngô Đặng Helen)

I am a second generation queer Vietnamese American womxn. I am a daughter of refugees, born and raised in Chelsea, MA, where I was the first child in my family to be born in the U.S.



I got introduced to Asian American Studies on my first day of orientation at UMB when the director of the Asian American Student Success Program, Patricia Neilson, spotted me in the sea of first years. I signed up for my first Asian American Studies (AsAmSt) courses not knowing what to expect. Since then, I made it a priority to take an AsAmSt course every semester. While constantly feeling lost everywhere else in my life, Asian American Studies centered me. It felt like each class led me to find pieces of myself. In 2015, when I was presenting at the national Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) conference through AsAmSt 497 Teaching and Learning in Asian American Studies, I was so moved by the presenters and the workshops. It made me reflect a lot about my educational journey. Then I came to a realization that my true passion was Asian American Studies. Not only was I drawn to the pedagogy and praxis of the Asian American Studies Program; it was the space for me to reclaim myself and all of my intersecting identities. It allowed me to connect the dots of the historical and social context and my family and communities' experiences. The fire I had burned brighter and motivated me to seek the change I wanted to see in the world.

AsAmSt inspired me to take agency to address these issues affecting my communities. While I was a student leader on campus, I used Asian American Studies as a framework to hold discussions within the Asian Student Center about different issues affecting Asian American communities, knowing that not everyone had the opportunity and the time to take these classes. Through the Asian American Student Success Program, I was able to take conversations deeper by taking lead at the Night Market event where we created interactive stations for the larger UMass Boston campus about these issues. Never feeling satisfied, I sought to create bigger change beyond the campus. Recognizing that college is a privilege and thinking about who “wasn’t in the room,” I refocused my energies into grassroots organizing. After taking AsAmSt 423 Boston’s Asian American Communities in 2015, I decided to take a leap into community organizing. I followed up on the work from the class around housing issues in Chinatown and participated in the “Right to Remain” campaign. Since then, I have grown and honed in on my skills as an organizer through my work in civic engagement, housing, and anti-deportation work within the Vietnamese community, locally and nationally.

With the knowledge I have gained and the impact the Asian American Studies Program has had on me, I hope to continue my work in community activism. The Program equipped me with the knowledge and context to have clarity and be very intentional about my work. Most importantly, it has allowed me to dream. One of my ultimate goals is to run a nonprofit that serves youths of color in providing the resources that they need, ranging from leadership building to college access. This goal is very personal to my own story. I wouldn’t be where I am today without the nonprofits and mentors helping me through my educational journey, especially in initially applying for college. So, I strive to be a part of or start up a nonprofit that supports young people and gives them access to these opportunities. I cannot see myself growing without my communities being there beside me along the way. I want to be that bridge that connects my communities to the opportunities that helped build me up. In aspiring to be a youth worker, I intend to do just that.

To be here, at this very moment, it all still feels like a dream to me. Even as I imagine walking across that stage, I am trying to process that after all of my six years at UMB -- the academic probation, the countless times I wanted to quit -- I’m finally here. The impostor syndrome (a collection of feelings of inadequacy that persist despite evident success) has been something that I’ve battled since I applied for college. No matter what successes or dreams I had, it always felt like I never belonged in higher education or that I could never make it. Growing up in a low-income household and in a community where there was an aura that people like us didn’t make it, I felt this guilt to stop my education and work to fully support my parents. I felt defeated before the fight started. It was through spaces like the Asian American Studies Program and the Asian American Student Success Program that I felt like I belonged here which gave me the strength to persist despite my barriers. Faculty and staff that became my family were my motivators and inspirations who believed in me and gave me the skills and opportunities to grow. As I walk forward on the road paved by inspiring activists and mentors before me, I hope to create a similar path for people after me, especially for those who never saw themselves making it this far and surviving through their own traumas and the traumas passed onto them.

With each step I take, I dedicate it to the people in my life who supported me to be here. I do this for my ancestors. Generations of resilience have led me to this point. I do this for my parents. Their sacrifice and unconditional love give me strength to persist. I do this for my communities, for those who can't be here at this moment with me and those who have yet to get to this point. They are my inspiration and the fuel to my fire for social justice. I do this for my mentors. They saw my light and helped me to not only see it, but to also hone it. I do this for my younger self in high school and for me in 2014. We made it. We're here. Now let's keep on going.

Hung An Nguyễn

My family comes from the war-torn country Vietnam. My Dad fought in the Vietnam war with the Southern Vietnamese side and when we lost the war, he was put into a re-education camp. He stayed there for about eight years. Once he was released, he was able to bring my family to the United States. They picked Boston because of the good education here. My family consists of my Dad, Mom, one sister and two brothers. They arrived in 1992 and I was born in 1993, making me the first and only one in my family to be born in the United States. Growing up wasn't easy. My parents ended up divorcing and I was bullied in school for being gay. I spent years trying to figure myself out while maintaining family values and expectations. I navigated through the school systems by not opening up to my family about the bullying I was experiencing because I felt like the consequences of them learning that I was gay were more harmful. For someone who identifies with both gay and Asian identities, coming out to their family can be a very stressful thing, and the situation goes the other way as well. For the family members, finding out that their child/sibling is gay can also be very stressful. His family has to go through the process of dealing with their internalized homophobia... Through all the heartache and struggles, I found a great support system on the way. I'm blessed for my family who relearned how to love me for who I am. Today, I stand in front of you as a PROUD GAYSIAN who is finally graduating with their degree in Asian American Studies.

Part of my support system were the friends I found at MAP for Health, a program in Chinatown that works to improve the Asian community's sexual health, including HIV/AIDS. They have a peer leaders youth program that I was involved in. At MAP, I listened and learned about many narratives in the Asian American community. I started to care more about my community and I wanted to contribute. My mentor Sarath Suong is a very known and well-respected figure in the Queer API community and I wanted to be just like him. Sarath would take the Peer Leaders to many different National Conferences to present our stories and issues. He believed so much in the power of young leaders' voices. MAP for Health definitely ignited a huge fire within myself. I was inspired and determined to be just as great like Sarath. Sarath invited the Peer Leaders to 8th annual AsAmSt 370 Digital Storytelling showcase in 2012. This was my first time experiencing student work from one of the courses that Asian American Studies has to offer. Earlier that semester, Professor Loan Dao had me present as a Guest Speaker on "How To Be An Ally" to the LGBTQ Community. During this semester, I was half way done with my one-year break from academia. I left the Digital Storytelling event, knowing that I wanted to go to UMass Boston.



My first Asian American Studies course was Southeast Asians in the US with Professor Shirley Tang. I have never taken any course like this before. I felt just as safe in this class like how I felt safe at MAP for Health. My classmates and I shared many personal stories and we bonded. I knew I wanted to continue to

take these classes. Spring 2013 was here and I knew that I wanted to take the Asian American Media Literacy 370 Course. I wanted to share my story. I like to think that my 370 video help launched my activism and my name being recognized. I shared my digital story at national conferences, community workshops, graduate-level classes, and many great speaking engagements at places such as Harvard. I was even the first recipient of the Agents of Change Award at the Largest National LGBTQ Creating Change Conference in 2014. This also helped me lift the burden that had kept me from being able to come out to my family about my bullying. I was falling in love with the work I was doing in the community and realized that a major in Education, Business or Math wouldn't make me happy.

Having an individualized major in Asian American Studies means that I took 10 different Asian American Studies courses. Each course was able to have such a great impact in my life. I found myself within these courses. Through the many exercises, circle groups, family and community oral histories, intensive writing and production projects, peer mentoring, professors, guest speakers... I found the missing pieces that I needed to link together my Queer identity and my Vietnamese identity. As I finish up my undergrad experience at UMass Boston, I know there will always be more to learn and I'm ready.

I was lucky enough to have found a great full-time job while wrapping up my final year at UMass Boston. I work at Fenway Health – the largest LGBTQ health center in Boston. My primary job is to provide proper health care to queer and trans folk of color. I achieve this by helping folks with applying to Health insurance, Routine STD/HIV testing, connecting them to medical providers, and other resources. I plan to use my degree and experiences in Asian American Studies at Fenway Health by dedicating my energy towards helping this community. Not only is it often hard to come out in Asian families, but queer APIs are often left out of the narratives in straight Asian American and Queer communities. I am working to find ways to provide the resources and support that my Gaysian community may need. Fenway Health has a majority of white workers and I want to be able to make use of my time there by being a visible API who isn't quiet and will speak up for our community. We are entitled to owning our own health. We need proper health care, including mental health. And our health is worth fighting for. Together we can end any stigma that hurts individuals and a community as a whole. We can put the emphasis on humanity of all people and not cast judgment because of who they are.

Once you are involved with the Asian American Studies Program, you become a part of this big family and network. I know that I met some pretty great allies during my time here at UMass Boston and I know that they will have my back. I hope to return to UMass Boston with even more experience under my belt and in hopes that there will be soon be a Queer Asian American Studies course offered in our curriculum. It's about standing up, speaking out and educating others. Follow your heart and concentrate on what you want to say to the world.

You run your world. And your voice is enough.

Slay always.

Tommy Nguyen



I am a second-generation Vietnamese American man of political refugee background. I am the first in my family to graduate with a four-year degree. My academic career has been a struggle growing up, beginning in kindergarten with my first suspension. Since then, each year was more challenging than the last, and the suspensions and detentions multiplied every year. I was kept back twice in ninth grade and never graduated high school. I pursued my GED, but I dropped out of college three times after that and started to believe that I am not cut out to be in higher education. I was known to be what is called “invisible”, a “statistic” that dwells in marginalized communities.

On my fourth attempt at college, I took a placement test and realized that I couldn't compute simple math without a calculator. I couldn't put two sentences together to form a structured paragraph, even though English is my first language. This time, I utilized the free tutoring service and dedicated all my time to education. At the end of two years, I managed to complete my transfer program, made the dean's list, and was invited to join the honors society.

My educational journey then continued at UMass Boston. Having already sacrificed two years to full-time school, I was in between a rock and a hard place. As a non-traditional student, I had to dedicate an enormous amount of time to learning, making up for lost time in K through 12. This left no time for me to work, yet I managed to find a part-time job at a gas station/auto repair shop duplex where I was administering the shop myself, filling gas, clerical work, and teaching myself how to service routine maintenance on a variety of motor vehicles. The work was underpaid, dirty, dangerous, and under extreme outdoor weather conditions varying by seasons. I was mistreated by my boss, but I couldn't afford to quit my job. During the winter, he would shut off the heating system on the days I work to save money and as a result, I was suffering from acute frostbites on my hands and toes. These are just some examples of what I had to experience and endure to complete my college education.

As an Asian American Studies major, I seek to help the Asian American communities across the nation, locally, and those abroad. I am passionate about helping people who have similar life experiences to mine while also supporting their families. During my time as a student, I have served on the executive board for UMass Boston's Asian Student Center where I co-hosted a fresh collaboration between the Asian student clubs in hopes of building bridges. I have served on the executive board for Dorchester's non-profit Networking Organization of Vietnamese Americans (NOVA), formerly known as Vietnamese American Community Network (VACN) or *Thang Long*. We have collaborated with local law enforcement and other community networks to support the youth of Vietnamese Americans from the inner city. I have served on the steering committee board for the community mural project produced in 2017 on the exterior of Pho Hoa restaurant along Dorchester Avenue that depicts Vietnamese American heritage, identity, and resilience. I have served on the executive board for IMAXX Beauty Supply, a distributor and wholesaler of nail supplies in New England, through which I have visited over 200 nail salons in New England, met with the owners and employees, listened to their problems and offered solutions.

During my time serving the Asian American communities through these organizations, I have learned that our communities have a lot of "invisible people" and that there is an urgent need for action to support our communities. Now, I am ready to graduate, do more with my new sets of skills, and help change the world to be a better place to live for all of us.

Program-of-Study in Asian American Studies

Darlene Nguyen Dao



I am a second-generation Vietnamese American born in Boston, majoring in Studio Art and concentrating in graphic design and illustration. Before attending UMass Boston, I was active in the youth program, Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth (CAPAY) that was part of the AsAmSt Program. During my CAPAY time, the coordinator, Tri Quach, taught me to strengthen my voice, leadership, and organization. When I always wondered as a child why Asian Americans are not often cast in Hollywood movies unless given stereotypical roles, CAPAY taught me the institutionalized inequality behind it. I spent my high school extracurricular activities time in CAPAY and I was given learning opportunities such as the four I's of oppression that I was never taught in the Boston Public Schools' educational system. I was very into Asian American Studies before college. When I decided to go to UMass Boston, the AsAmSt Program office was where I spent my break time in between classes to do homework, talk with other students, or find opportunities to do more creative works for Asian American Studies. After my first year of trying to be a biology major, I realized that it was not for me. With the support of Tri, I changed my major to Art which I had been passionate about since I was young, despite my parents' expectation and worries.

I was encouraged to take AsAmSt courses, but it never really fit into my schedule. I sat in Professor Shirley Tang's classes a few times before I took my first course, Cambodian American Culture and Community (AsAmSt 270) in Fall 2014. I learned so much about the unspoken history and experiences of my classmates' parents that I wanted to learn more. Since then, I have taken one Asian American Studies course every semester. As I took more AsAmSt courses, I learned about my historical background, parents' experiences as Vietnamese refugees, and my own cultural background. I was not always proud to be Vietnamese because of all the ridicule I got as a child where my language and my parents' English accents were being mocked. I praised Japanese and Korean culture because of how their English accents and culture were praised and desired. It wasn't until college that I realized my culture is a beautiful thing and that I should be proud of who I am and where I came from. I gained a lot from these courses, the historical backgrounds of Asian American communities and issues that Asian Americans faced and still are facing now. Showing up to the Asian American Studies office has given me creative opportunities such as making an art installation about resisting systemic oppression. This installation involved representing a wall built to divide us and a space for people to write ways how they have deconstructed the things that divided us or ways they have broken down similar barriers. I was impacted by this project because I did not expect many students to come by to write their stories and I realized many of us have a lot of say about the systemic oppression amongst us. Our voice matters.

I want to be able to do more for my community and for the AsAmSt Program because I was able to receive so much from my experiences here. I did not think that the projects I did for my AsAmSt courses would be part of the AsAmSt archives until my last semester before graduation when I saw my old works being used in our AsAmSt 30+ years exhibition gallery space. Never would I have thought that we will use them again after the projects were over. Then in Teaching & Learning in Asian American Studies (AsAmSt 497), I had to use my digital story from my AsAmSt 370 course to present at the national Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) conference in a panel focusing on issues of sexual harassment and violence/silence in the experiences of Asian American women students at UMB. I realized that my works did matter and can be used for educational purposes at any given point. Wherever I may go in the future, I want to use my creative works to inspire youths to learn more about their roots and have them experience what I have experienced through CAPAY. I want to continue doing more work, being creative and collaborating with youths, helping them to learn more, strengthening their voices and leadership skills, just like I did.

Nia Duong

I was born in 1988; I am the first daughter of an Amerasian woman from the southwestern province called An Giang, Vietnam. The name An Giang means *peaceful river*. An Giang is the most beautiful place in Vietnam. It is full of rich Khmer, Cham, and ethnic Chinese cultural history. Some would say it is a farmer's dream paradise but yet there are always troubles in paradise. My family lived in poverty and survived a war. Eventually we decided to leave our country. My family spent 6 months in the Philippines before our migration to the United States in 1992. Since then I grew up in an ethnic Vietnamese neighborhood of Dorchester, Massachusetts. My family spent 25 years reconstructing home in the U.S.



Reconstructing home in America is an ongoing reality for most Vietnamese families of refugee/immigrant background. The women in my family value education because it is the one thing that they never had the chance to achieve on their own terms. They sacrificed a lot to take care of my sister and I. I have never fully understood their struggles until now. I also never imagined how a college education can transform a person like me until I completed my undergraduate studies at UMass Boston in December 2017. I truly believe that my student experience at UMass Boston would be bland without Asian American Studies. Respectfully I use the word bland to describe my educational pathway because I struggled to learn class materials during my early years in Boston Public Schools. The act of finding joy in learning was very difficult, but I came to appreciate education now.

Asian American Studies at UMass Boston is very special. I can say with confidence that it has made a long lasting impact on my life. I found my sense of belonging after taking *Southeast Asians in the U.S.* AsAmSt 225L taught by Dr. Shirley Tang. Before this class, I struggled with understanding my family's history and migration experiences. I was ashamed of being Vietnamese and didn't accept to practice my Vietnamese culture. I felt detached from my Asian American identity. However, 225 became the grand mark of a new beginning. I learned about my mother's Amerasian background, war, displacement, trauma, refugee experiences, and more. My experiences growing up as a Vietnamese born American woman is significant knowledge. I am a better person because of my Asian American Studies experience.

Asian American Studies also informed my art education to become a better artist. I am not only an artist but I am a proud Vietnamese-born American woman artist. I often explore and represent Asian American themes of women issues, legacies of war, trauma, identity, and more. My art practice is meaningful because I draw from personal experiences as an Asian American. I couldn't do it without Asian American Studies. In the near future I want to pursue a master's degree to become an art educator and working artist based in Boston. I want to work with the Asian American population using art as a communicative tool for growth and healing. I want to be an active member of my own community. I want to give back like how Asian American Studies at UMass Boston has given purpose to my life.

Yeon-ho Kim

I am a Korean American. I was born in Korea, moved to Tennessee, and primarily grew up in California. I came to Boston five years ago to attend UMass Boston. I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Economics and a program-of-study in Asian American Studies. I currently work with tech startups.



I was first introduced to AsAmSt through the AASSP office. I needed an intermediate seminar course for graduation, and Pratna Kem introduced me to Dr. Loan Dao's *Rise Up! Asian American Leadership and Social Change* course. From there, a "switch was flipped" and I began to "see" things differently, paying more attention to the outcomes and intents of systems. AsAmSt gave me many opportunities and guidance to explore this new perspective that has left a lasting impact on my life. AsAmSt taught me the importance of identity, voice, space, and rights. By far the most important lesson I learned while here has been that there is no end to the work. I have learned through their pedagogy that this process will continue on post-graduation. The sense of community I felt in the AsAmSt office helped me shape a community elsewhere on campus as well.

My future plans are not clear, but what I will carry with me, critical lens, wider perspectives, greater appreciation for communal historical spaces, and agents of change, are things I cannot turn off. These are lessons that have already proven useful in my work, and I am excited to see where else I can make connections and how else I can help.

Hiếu Lê



I am a 1.5 Vietnamese American, born in Hong Kong where my parents met as refugees following the Vietnam War. Under the Resettlement Opportunity for Vietnamese Returnees (ROVR) program, we moved to the U.S. when I was four years old, and settled in Fall River, Massachusetts where I had grown up until coming to UMass Boston for college. I am the oldest of my parents' four children and the first to attend college. I excelled in school until I faced mental health issues during the time I entered college. Seeking a place that would be able to accommodate people like me, I came to UMass Boston. When I was close to failing out of school the Asian American Studies Program and Asian American Student Success Program helped and supported me to remain in school. Now I will be graduating with a degree in Exercise and Health Sciences.

I entered the health field due to my interest in medical science as well as having the urge to help others through a holistic health practice that I felt I never got. A challenge that I have had to face personally is my parents not understanding the concept of mental health or that they, too, have mental health issues. Higher education was important to me because it was a way to better my life. At first it was an escape from my family and a way to leave my problems behind. It was through taking one course that opened the discussion for me around mental health and issues within the Asian American community. This led me taking more courses which allowed me to view education as a way to help improve my family and community. These Asian American Studies classes allowed me to see the health disparities with my community as well as other communities of color. Thanks to this, I am not only aware of the issues but have been exposed to methods and tools that can equip me to improve such conditions in the future.

After I complete my next educational goal with a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy, my plan is to return to the field and provide care to my community while using the things I learned in Asian American Studies to create a program that empowers and equips individuals of color with the tools necessary to fill the gap in the health care system when it comes to cultural and language barriers and improve their overall care. Through better understanding myself and my family by working in an Asian American academic environment, I grew the urge to do something for others who don't have the cultural capital to do so. There are issues that I believe only someone who comes from it first-hand can understand, and help improve, and I'm one of those lucky and educated individuals. With my education I want to create a model that is transferable across different Asian American populations as well as other ethnic communities.

Minh Anh Phan

I immigrated to the U.S when I was only 2 years old with my parents and my two older brothers. I grew up in a small town outside of Oakland, CA called Alameda until my family moved to Massachusetts. We moved around a lot, starting in Worcester and then Boston, Quincy, and Weymouth respectively. My dad was sick a lot when we first started living in Boston and as a result I was raised mostly by my Mother and my brothers at the time. Growing up I was not very proud of my Vietnamese heritage because in public schools, I felt that not speaking English immediately made you an outcast. Now I'm grateful for being able to live and grow with a family that allowed me to see how important my Vietnamese heritage is.

Originally I was just looking at Asian American Studies classes in order to fulfill some requirements for my major but I was immediately drawn in by the comfort and support from the staff and the once-strangers, now friends in the classroom. Every other class that wasn't Asian American Studies was almost like a desert with very little interaction besides a question here and there. Asian American Studies gave me a second home where I can express my thoughts and feelings in a safe space. This safe space allowed me to regain my composure that all the rest of my classes stripped from me throughout the day. So as soon I took my first Asian American Studies course with Peter, I went out of my way to always include classes of some sort. The reason for this was that not only to learn the material from the course, but to gain new

ways to think and articulate myself that wasn't through just simply typing an essay or giving a group presentation. I really would not know the type of person I am today without being involved in AsAmSt.



As a math major, there is not a lot to see at first about how to use or apply such important ideas and lessons learned in Asian American Studies. The more courses I took, however, the more I found myself introduced to more people in the field and more possibilities to integrate my skills in so many ways. Whether it's the possibility of writing a research paper or going into the field and conducting a study, it is something I would want to revisit so I can integrate the mindset and classwork that I have done in Asian American Studies. I hope to work in the future and get my PhD in a statistics field and eventually teach and do research regarding material I have learned in Asian American Studies. The lessons and the friends I have made from Asian American Studies are something I will carry for life, because college only takes up a small portion of your existence while meaningful people, lessons and relationships can last a lifetime.

Ammany Ty

I am a second generation Cambodian American daughter of refugees. I am graduating with a bachelor degree in English and Honors with a program-of-study in Asian American Studies. I grew up in Dorchester, going to school in the BPS system. With the invitation of my older sister who was also going to UMass Boston at the time, I began sitting in on AsAmSt classes and in the program's spaces, interacting with staff, faculty, and students when I was 14 years old. During my senior year of high school, the program with AASSP support enabled me to attend that year's East Coast Asian American Student

Union (ECAASU) conference and I spent my summer in the program office working on a mural. Before I even matriculated at UMass Boston, the program was always welcoming to me. I never thought much of my interactions with the program while in high school, but it was a huge factor in my choice to go to UMass Boston. I wanted to learn more about myself and my history, and I knew I could do it here in this program.



In my first semester at UMass Boston, one of my first classes was with Professor Shirley Tang in AsAmSt 270: Cambodian American Culture and Community. As one of only three Cambodian American Studies courses offered nationally, I was lucky enough to have this as my first college class. From this course I learned about my family history, including important pieces of myself I hadn't known I had been missing. In my third year, I took AsAmSt 370: Asian American Media Literacy. I realized the power of my voice and the importance of my own story. That same year I took AsAmSt 397: Applied Research in Asian American Studies with Son Ca Lam. This course was grounded in the daily practices of my own mother. Growing up in an educational system that made my history invisible, that invalidated my real-life personal experiences, the Asian American Studies Program transformed the way I viewed my education and my position in shaping it.

A core of what I learned in this program has been about myself. However, in learning about myself I have built the capacity to see beyond myself. I have learned more about my community and the local communities in Boston through classes like AsAmSt 423: Boston's Asian American Communities and AsAmSt 497: Teaching and Learning in Asian American Studies, which have expanded my interest in working with and for the community. Using my art and writing, I hope to continue producing content that can advocate for marginalized communities.

Recognizing Graduate Student Contributions

Danielle Godon-Decoteau (김애경), Ph.D., Clinical Psychology



Most people know me as Danielle Godon-Decoteau, which is largely how I know myself. However, before I was Danielle, I was born 김애경. Adopted at 3 months old from South Korea, my loving (adoptive) family raised me in a small, predominantly White, suburb in Massachusetts. For most of my life, I simultaneously tried to gain distance from my Asian-ness while also not fully understanding what it meant to be Asian or Asian American. It was only when I started pursuing my M.A. in psychology at Mount Holyoke College that I began thinking about being a Korean adoptee. Subsequently, while working toward my Ph.D. in clinical psychology at UMass Boston, I had the space and tremendous support of my mentor, peers, and AsAmSt to explore, make sense of, and ultimately embrace my Asian American identity.

Since I began studying transracial adoption, I have felt a strong personal connection to my research. This connection naturally evolved into an exploration of my experiences with internalized racism. Learning about anti-Asian American racism prompted me to reflect upon parts of my life while growing up through a new lens and recognize the ways in which I had internalized it. I was eventually able to name the racism that was previously so normalized and hidden in plain sight. The liberation that came with recognizing and labeling anti-Asian American racism made me dedicated to teaching Asian American Psychology—I hoped to bring light to the ways in which racialization oppresses Asian Americans and empower other Asian Americans to recognize and reject racism. The bright and engaged students who I had the honor of teaching in PSYCH/AsAmSt 238L highlighted the transformational and interactive experience of education and inspired me to continue educating myself and others.

My academic and personal experiences at UMass Boston and with AsAmSt have made me deeply committed to social justice. One way that I will work toward dismantling oppressive systems is by continuing to research, teach, and raise awareness about racism and its effect on Asian Americans. I have also learned the importance of reflection upon my own experiences and biases and will continue to do so going forward in the academic and clinical work that I pursue. I know that this can be challenging, and I am forever grateful for the support I have had at UMass Boston and with AsAmSt, especially my mentor Dr. Karen Suyemoto, for cultivating the foundation for me to grow.

Raymond Chiu, M.S., Rehabilitation Counseling

As an undergrad at UMass Boston, I was very active in Asian American Studies and graduated in 2012 with a degree in Exercise Physiology. Since then, I was also working with the South Shore YMCA for six years utilizing my skills as an Exercise Physiologist to work with people with disabilities such as Spinal Cord Injury, Stroke, Amputee, Multiple Sclerosis and much more. I had planned to go back to school for Physical Therapy, but through AsAmSt, I found a great training opportunity in the School for Global Inclusion And Social Development, and am now completing my graduate studies in Rehabilitation Counseling. Switching careers was a big deal for me as I had never envisioned myself as a Counselor, but here I am! I am currently working as a Career Development Specialist/Counselor with people who have Intellectual Disabilities through an agency named Work Inc

During my graduate internship, I worked with many clients with disabilities. However, there were few Asian Americans in the group. I know for a fact that there are Asian Americans out there who need these special services. Even though I am bilingual/biliterate in Chinese, my counseling practice so far has had few Asian American Individuals whom I am in charge of assisting. I hope I with more experience and outreach, I can provide services to Asian American communities without them facing barriers of cost, language, culture, or stigma.



Ever since I had encountered AsAmSt, I felt like I had connected with a new family. I tried to stay interactive with the yearly Melon Challenge in the 423 class. I find joy in seeing the reaction in students using my Melons and competing in a cooking challenge with my product to see who has the best recipe! As long the weather works with me during the summer, I want to try and keep the tradition alive! But aside from that, I want to connect with the students who are disabled at UMass Boston. I had noticed there are a large number of Asian American students with disabilities at UMass Boston and I want to see if I can branch out to work on a side project on how to create services for them. There are so many resources out there, it's a matter of spreading the news out to the right people. I want to let these individuals know that reaching out for help is not looked down upon or stigmatized. This idea will potentially be my long-term project and maybe I could turn it into a doctoral project if I want to continue with my education.

Van Vu, M.S., Rehabilitation Counseling

I was born in Vietnam and came to the US in 2007 for school. I graduated from UMass Boston in 2012 with a BS in Biochemistry and also took Asian American Studies courses. After working in the community health field for a few years, I returned to UMB and am graduating with an MS in Rehabilitation Counseling from the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development.



I plan to continue working to improve health services in the Vietnamese community. I hope to leverage my bilingual and bicultural knowledge to bridge the gaps that currently exist for non-English speakers. Many in the Vietnamese community need disability and other services but do not have the language ability or knowledge to access those services. Many more people with multiple language abilities are needed in the field. I am one of them. In the future, I also hope to play a bigger role in administration and policy-making areas in order to have an even larger impact in improving health care for the Vietnamese community.

ví trí quach, M.S., Transnational Cultural and Community Studies (TCCS)

born in Vietnam. There was this war thing that had just happened but what I remember is playing in the dirt. I remember waiting at the break of dawn to get on a boat, coming across some Thai pirates. Then there was this refugee camp thing but I remember green apples, boats made out of soda cans, waiting for coconuts to fall from trees. playing with marbles and keeping the best marbles my brother won in a small jar filled with water. There was a being shipped to a church in the middle of nowhere America thing. Followed by the leaving for Boston because there was no other person of color in the town. But I

remember playing in my first snow, drawing my first Santa in school that led to drawing comics at home that led to making art with purpose. Somewhere in there, there was also finding community, struggling for justice and trying to live a life of purpose.

An unintended consequence of completing the MS program in TCCS has been a refocus on completing my personal art projects. A children's book, a short story, a comic, and a couple of documentaries that have been sitting at the end of my to-do list have now been moved to the front. This summer and the coming years will hopefully bring complete endings to these and many other ideas bouncing around in my head. I am excited about and look forward to these new challenges.



And I would not have gotten to this opportunity now if it were not for many people. Where others may be luckier in wealth and material, I feel a little guilty possessing more than my share of luck in friendships and family. I am proud to count my friendships by decades. Thanks to all who supported my journey and who I call friend.

Recognizing Career Contributions

Kunthary Mum Thai-Johnson

I am a Khmer American woman and refugee, daughter of Mrs. Loeng Yim and the late Mr. Thav Thai. My family and I escaped the Khmer genocide in 1979. We lived in refugee camps for five years before we relocated to the US--to a small town in Pennsylvania--in 1984, when I was 12 years old. At the age of 12, I had the privilege of entering a formal school setting for the first time and was placed in the fourth grade. My first experience with formal education was confusing. I felt uncertain and realized how much I didn't know. As a fourth grader, I didn't know how to speak, read, or write in English. I barely knew the alphabet. My will to survive in this new country didn't allow me to just be the typical teenager, not that anything in my life has ever been typical. Any free time I had after school I was consumed reading Curious George books, watching soap operas, and being the gate keeper for my family's affairs, from grocery shopping, paying bills, accompanying my parents to their doctors appointments and attempting to translate. Having a strong work ethic, determination and will to survive was not something I just had, I learned all of it from observing my parents. My parents were adamant about keeping my siblings and me alive during the Khmer Rouge and after the genocide never let us be separated again. The first time my family was given permission to come to the US, my dad refused to leave the refugee camp because it would have meant that we had to leave my oldest sister and her family behind. We waited three more years until all of us were able to migrate to the US together. My parents' strength and courage enabled me to become the vocal and strong Khmer woman I am today. To invoke an Ubuntu proverb, "I am what I am because of who we all are."



Once my family moved to Boston, I was connected with a UMass Boston pre-collegiate program called Urban Scholars which allowed me to be on the UMass Boston campus and interact with some of the first generation Khmer students who were in college at that time. While in the Urban Scholars Program, I would see several of the Khmer refugee students, such as Bong Mum, Bong Mara, Bong Navy, and Bong Vesna, studying in the Ryan Lounge. That was my first encounter with the Asian American Studies Program in the late 80's. After graduating from high school with a lot of help from my great mentors, including Joan Becker and Ronald Inniss, I was accepted on scholarship to a great liberal arts college in Boston. However, in being there, I started to feel left out and I began to question my identity as an Asian American woman and to question what that meant. I have always felt I didn't fit in among the Asian students, especially at that private, prestigious institution. I wanted to learn more about my heritage and just what it meant to be Asian. The college I was attending was trying to diversify their campus by accepting more students of color, but was unfortunately not offering courses to reflect those students' heritages. A friend of mine showed me the UMass Boston courses catalog and I became fixated on taking the "Southeast Asians in the US". In order to take a course from UMass Boston and have my credits transfer, I had to write an appeal letter and explain the reason why I needed to take a class at the less prestigious public university. I did, and in the petition letter, I asked them how they were expecting me to graduate from their fine institution and be ready to work in the Asian American community when they didn't even offer any courses that would allow me to gain any knowledge about the community.

That first AsAmSt course I took in my undergraduate years opened my eyes to my ignorance about my Southeast Asian brothers and sisters. I gained a better understanding of my roots and a clearer understanding of the different communities of Asians and their journeys to the US. That was when I fell in love with the Asian American Studies Program (I remain in love with it today). The Asian American Studies Program empowers Asian students who have been marginalized to realize that their voices matter and that different ethnic groups within Asian communities have different needs and struggles. After 30 years, the program continues to be excellent and continues to expand because of its amazing staff who genuinely care for their students' success and well-being--not just academic well-being, but their social and emotional needs as well. I am forever in debt to the support and guidance I received from Peter Kiang, Shirley Tang, and Patricia Neilson.

After many years of working at UMass Boston, I am moving on to work at an alternative high school in the Boston Public School system. I will continue to cherish my connection with the mentors, staff, and students I have met in AsAmSt. I plan to continue working in under-served, under-resourced, and marginalized communities. My passion is to provide young people with access to educational opportunities in the hope of "leveling the playing field." I plan to stay connected with the Asian American Studies Program and the Asian American Student Success Program and hope that I will continue to receive invitations to serve as a speaker or to mentor students. I wouldn't be where I am today without the support that I have received from my own mentors, including those in the Asian American Studies and AASSP departments. I am grateful for the many wonderful people in my village.

Honoring Dr. Patr c a Akemi Nakamoto Neilson, AASSP Director



(photo: Leland Simpliciano)

Dr. Pat Neilson, our founding director of UMass Boston's AANAPISI-funded Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP), retires officially from the university in June 2018. Prior to leading our AANAPISI initiatives, Pat directed UMB's Center for Collaborative Leadership from 2004 to 2011. A former Academic Dean at North Shore Community College, Pat completed her EdD in Higher Education Administration at UMB in 2002, focusing on the under-represented career trajectories of Asian American senior administrators at colleges across the U.S. In her 2002 thesis, Pat shared: "I have persisted in my career as an Asian American administrator, in part to honor the sacrifices of my own family's struggles."

We offer our own deepest honor to Pat for her perennial,  bako-like dedication and always-mindful modeling of ala, lokahi, oia'i'o, ha'aha'a, and ahonui. At the April 2018 Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education conference in Oakland, UMB students from AsAmSt 497 presented an original performance poem to highlight Women's Work/Words and pay tribute to Pat with her APAHE national constituency. The concluding section of their poem is excerpted here:

...

Ammany

...

This is for my sisters, rising up, to serve our schools as presidents
And also for my sisters, rising each day, serving in our cafeterias

Jenny

This is for the woman who listens
and leads

Hang

This is for Pat,
The woman who gives me strength
The woman who always smiles and is always positive
The one who always tells me "*I believe in you*"
The woman who only gives
and never takes

Hung

This is for Pat,
Who embraces us with her wonderful aura
An amazing woman who see us for who we are and welcomes us with open arms.
For the woman who can change the energy of the room when she walks in.
This is for Pat who believed in me when I didn't believe in myself.
For when my voice was shaking,
you were there in the front row looking at me as a proud mom
"Look at my son, I'm proud"
Pat, you are phenomenal!

Ammany

This is for the woman who in the North Shore Community
College, made space for the displaced,
helping my Khmer sisters,
my sisters fighting each and every day,
This is for Pat who directed the program,
and made a homeplace for them to stay.

Justin

This is for Pat,
a leader and a teacher, bringing forth more leaders in all of us.

Cindy

We stand here today because of the work you've done.
From Hawai'i and Okinawan homelands to your Ohana in Massachusetts

Darlene

Because of the torch you hold
lighting the way

Brittany

This is for the strongest woman we know,
Whose dedication to students has helped us all grow

Theresa

This is for Pat,
The woman that is a role model, friend, and motherly figure to all.
The one that has shown great gratitude with open arms,
To make us feel welcomed with love.
This is for her.

Parmita

This is for the woman who poured water
against the cement cracks that blocked our paths

Ammany

This is for the woman who helped yellow dandelions bloom

All

This is for Pat

Hang

This is for Pat

Theresa

This is for Pat

All

Thank you!



(photo: Sokpagna Chuon)

AsAmSt Program Sampling from 2017-2018



Among the year's notable teaching achievements, Linda Thiem and Kim Soun Ty taught AsAmSt 228L Asian Women in the US and AsAmSt 270 Cambodian American Culture and Community during Fall 2017. We believe this is the first time that two Khmer American women instructors have taught Asian American Studies courses in the same semester at any university in the US.



The Fall 2017 Melon Challenge in AsAmSt 423 Boston's Asian American Communities featured Pat Neilson, Linda Thiem, Sam Fadrigan and UMB-Sodexo Executive Chef Kareem Michael as judges while the Spring 2018 Diasporic Photo Challenge in AsAmSt 497 involved Sara Boxell, Sokpagna Chuon, Rich Truong, and UMB Associate Provost of Global Programs, Cheryl Nixon.



A combined 27 new digital stories were co-produced this year in AsAmSt 370 and GISD 697, highlighting themes of family migration, mental health, education, entrepreneurship, and more.



(photos: Hasnain Hafiz)

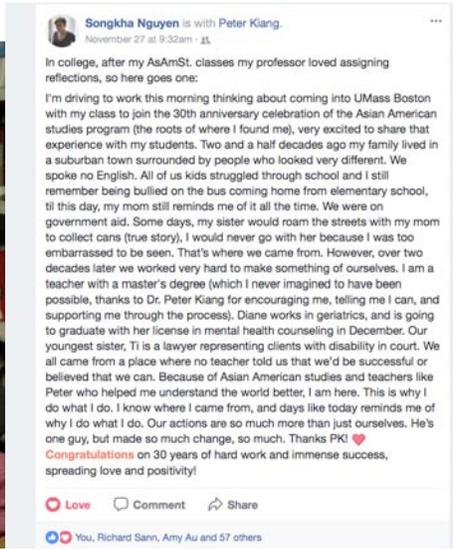


Throughout the spring, students raised awareness and demanded change regarding realities of sexual violence and harassment within school, family and community settings. As the Bangladeshi Student Association boldly asserted their vision at their Poela Boishakh 1425 celebration of Bengali New Year in April, AsAmSt students -- Darlene Dao, Parmita Gurung, and Ammany Ty -- co-led training workshops on sexual violence/silence for students and staff on campus while Christi Nguyen addressed the issue in both AsAmSt 223L and at the New England Vietnamese Student Association Empowerment Summit (VES-4) in March.



With heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Stanley Chen and family, the SCCS program has continued to provide precious scholarship support for community-minded AsAmSt students and enabled the SCCS alumni family to expand in number, reach, and potential.

Celebrating 30+ Years of AsAmSt



(some photos by: Zainab Salejwala and Parmita Gurung)

Through a one-day gathering in November and a month-long, interactive gallery exhibition in February, we marked 30+ Years of AsAmSt Impact through Student/Community Capacity-Building, Transformative Education, and AANAPISI Research & Development Praxis. Thank you to all!

Community Commitments



Among many community contributions by AsAmSt students, the 2017 Vietnamese Community in Action mural project led by local artist and CAPAY alumna, Ngoc-Tran Vu, assisted by Tony Vu and Tommy Nguyen, brought fresh cultural power to Dorchester with long-lasting, daily impact.



(photos: Sokpagna Chuon)

AsAmSt alumna Jenny Chiang was named in December 2017 as Interim Executive Director of the Massachusetts Asian American Commission. AsAmSt faculty Loan Dao is a Commission member and CAPAY alumnae, Vira Doungmany Cage and Dimple Rana, serve as Vice-Chair and Secretary, respectively. The AAC is a permanent body established under Massachusetts General Law.

Appreciating Our Institutes

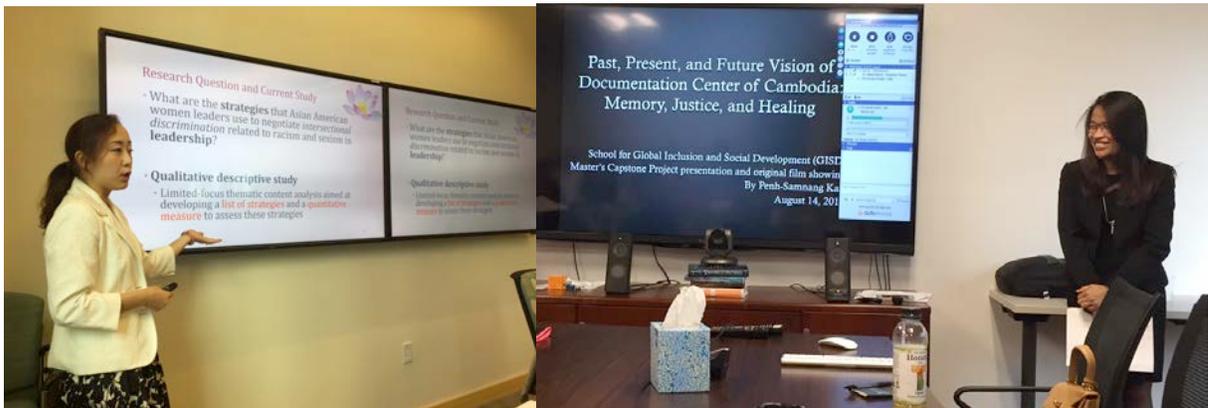


Paul Watanabe, director of the Institute for Asian American Studies since its founding, received a once-in-a-lifetime honor from the Emperor of Japan in January. The conferral of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon was presented by the Consul General of Japan in New England, Rokuichiro Michii and hosted with his wife, Ikuko. In March, Paul and the IAAS also received the Chinatown Progressive Association's 2018 Social Justice Award for their work with Asian American communities, including recent efforts related to data disaggregation. The original proposal to establish the IAAS in 1993 read, in part: *Within the university, the institute will contribute to the vitality of UMass Boston's urban public mission by focusing campus-wide resources, including faculty, staff, and students with common interests in Asian American teaching, research, and community service, and by working with departments, centers, and other institutes on joint ventures. The institute will also enable collaboration and mobilize resources throughout the statewide UMass system, particularly in Lowell and Amherst where significant Asian American communities are located.* Paul and the IAAS have clearly done so ever since.



Drastic cuts to the Joiner Institute, IAAS, and sister institutes compromise the very core of UMB's urban mission. AsAmSt simply would not exist without the Joiner Center and the unique convergence of refugees, veterans, and Asian American communities at UMB 30+ years ago, just as the 2017 CHSNE Sojourner Award for Chinatown Post 328, whose recent commanders, Amy Au and Matt Seto -- both Iraq generation veterans and AsAmSt alumni -- exemplified.

Student Research and Development



Academic accomplishments by AsAmSt-associated graduate students in the past year included Fanny Ng defending her Clinical Psychology PhD dissertation in September 2017 focusing on Asian American women leaders' experiences of discrimination, supervised by Karen Suyemoto.

In August, Penhsamrang Kan completed her MA capstone project in Global Inclusion and Social Development, producing both a film and an organizational research paper on models of documentation of the Cambodian genocide with Shirley Tang as advisor.



In May 2018, Rich Truong, an AsAmSt alumnus from 2009 and currently Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions at UMB, presented his MS capstone project in Transnational Cultural Community Studies, producing three digital stories and a research paper on the experiences and perspectives of gay Vietnamese American men in relation to various spaces of interaction in daily life, also advised by Shirley Tang.

APAHE 2018 and National Impact



Through generous AANAPISI funding support, students in AsAmSt 497 Teaching & Learning in Asian American Studies traveled with Kim Soun Ty and AASSP staff to Oakland to present two panels at the April 2018 national Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) conference. Following the conference, students participated in two days of community field trips led by AASSP staff to see the historic Angel Island immigration detention center and the International Hotel site maintained by the Manilatown Heritage Foundation in San Francisco.

AANAPISI Partnerships and BHCC-UMB Pathways



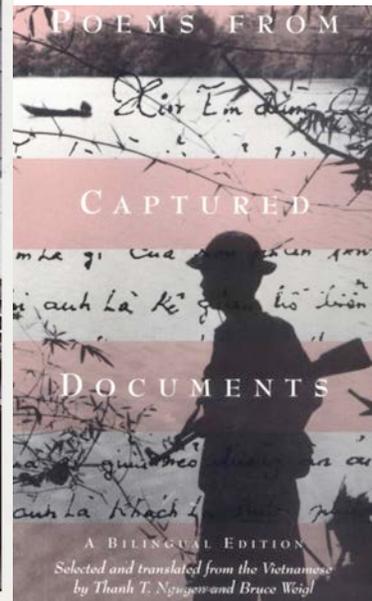
Progress continued with Bunker Hill Community College, UMB's sister AANAPISI in Boston, both in relation to pathway alignment via AASSP and AsAmSt curriculum/faculty/student development initiatives thanks to BHCC faculty leaders, Maria Puente and Aurora Bautista.

Mission-Driven in SGISD



Since becoming rooted within the School for Global Inclusion & Social Development (SGISD) in 2014, AsAmSt students, staff, faculty, and alumni have contributed in multiple ways to advance SGISD's mission, profile, and portfolio. Institute for Community Inclusion projects such as the 2017 Duskin and Tomodachi Disability Leadership Training Programs, co-led by Miwa Tanabe, continue to inspire with life-changing effects for participants. A modest community collaboration by AsAmSt students/alumni with ICI Advisory Committee member, Oanh Bui, and the Circle of Vietnamese Parents' Têt New Year Celebration opened new possibilities, as did Shirley Tang's successful spring graduate course piloting of GISSD 697 Digital Storytelling Praxis.

Remembering Dr. Thanh T. Nguyễn



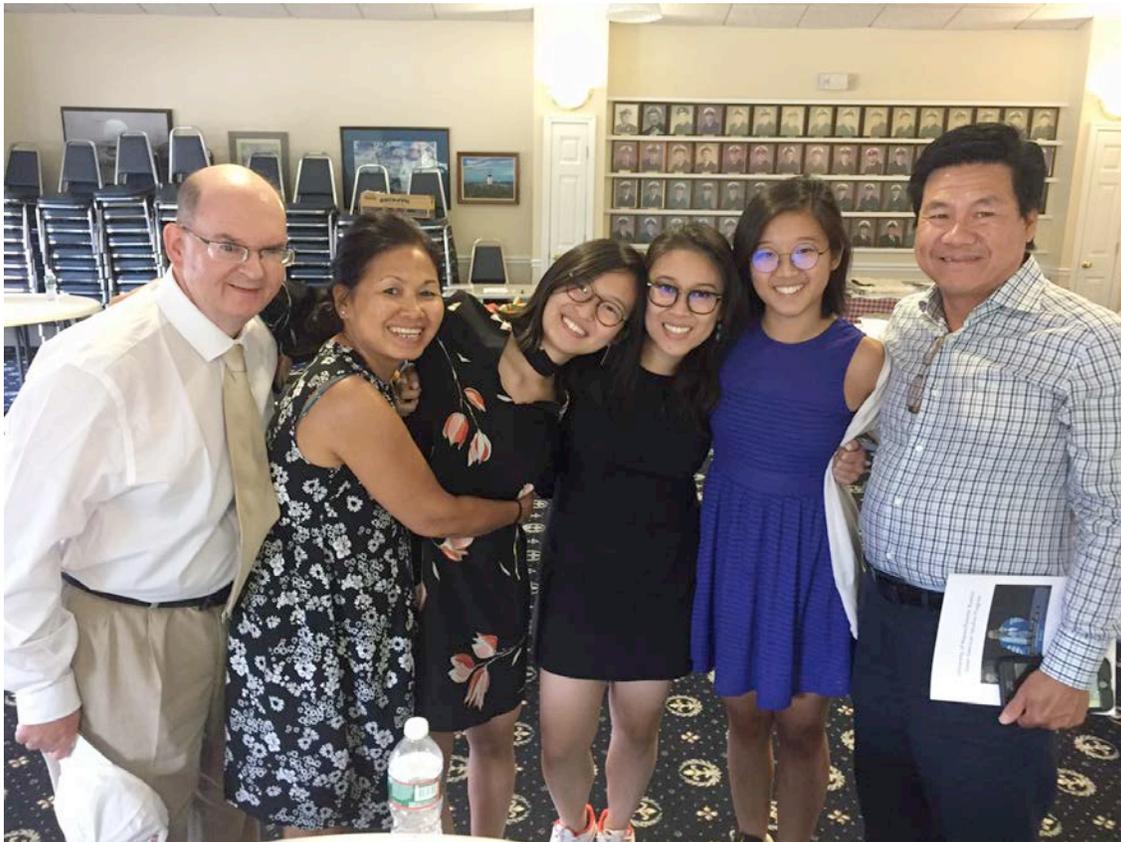
There is not enough space here to recall the accomplishments, contributions, and sacrifices made by Dr. Thanh T. Nguyễn who departed this world on 6 July 2017. We miss her.

Thanh was one of the original Vietnamese refugee students seeking higher education at UMB in the mid-1980s and one of the earliest coordinators of the Asian Student Center in 1988-89. During that time, she also co-lead the historic discrimination case filed with the US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights by students against the Writing Proficiency Exam graduation requirement. The resulting long-term federal investigation forced UMB to release damning data that showed the disparate impact of the WPE on students of color. This case led to reforms including the complete revision of exam readings and evaluation rubrics and an emphasis on the portfolio option as an alternative to fulfill the requirement. Nothing close to this remarkable example of lasting reform and institutional change at UMB through multi-racial student organizing for educational rights has occurred since then. Thanh was also a student research associate with the Joiner Center's Southeast Asian Oral History Project directed by Peter Kiang in 1986. This was the critical catalyst and initial incubator for the Asian American Studies Program

with its unique pedagogies of life/death/trauma/healing, grounded in the student/community realities of refugees and veterans who were side-by-side classmates in our late 1980s AsAmSt courses.

After completing her masters degree, Thanh was able to serve as an instructor for AsAmSt 225L - Southeast Asians in the US from 1993 to 1996. In this teaching role, she was one of the first Vietnamese refugees at any university in the US teaching Asian American Studies. In addition, Thanh's research activities continued at the Joiner Center, leading to her co-conception, compilation, and translation of *Poems from Captured Enemy Documents*, published bilingually by UMass Press in 1994.

Outside of UMB, Thanh was the first Vietnamese refugee to complete both master's and doctoral degrees in education at Harvard. With her EdD, Thanh returned to UMB to teach graduate courses in educational technology and she became the university's first full-time Vietnamese American faculty in any department. Soon after, however, she was recruited to take a tenure-track faculty position in educational technology at Bridgewater State University where she later gained tenure and continued to teach for the remainder of her life as a respected, innovative, and dedicated full professor.



Thanh's three beloved daughters, Tina, Tiffany, and Titania – shown here with Thanh's UMB AsAmSt 1980s classmates, Steve Ward, Kim-Dung Nguyen, and Hien Tran – have each continued to extend their mother's remarkable legacy in important and inspiring ways. Rest in peace, Thanh. Always.

30+ Years of Wanting to Go On



(some photos by: Zainab Salejwala and Parmita Gurung)

After 30+ years with hundreds of courses offered and many thousands of students reached, four photos from our anniversary events this year cannot convey or represent the richness of educational transformation, student/community capacity building, and AANAPISI knowledge production that we proudly claim. Still, these four fresh images, individually and in combination, offer glimpses of larger, long-term commitments and highly intentional impacts that connect K-12 pathways to higher education for immigrant/refugee families from local neighborhoods and communities with veterans' leadership from the foundational Vietnam generation to current active duty service and with constantly creating new resources and enabling children of refugees to teach as faculty and complete PhDs. Looking into the foreseeable future, our urban public AANAPISI research university faces severe disinvestment and systemic challenges of leadership as well as generational turnings and the erosion of critical mass. Yet, after 30+ years of AsAmSt at UMB, we *want to go on*, as those from the past can readily recall.

The Asian American Studies Program recognizes with appreciation:

- Nguyen Ba Chung, Research Associate of the William Joiner Institute, Michael Liu, Community Programs Coordinator for the Institute for Asian American Studies, and Wanli Hu of the China Program Center who each retire in 2018 after many years of critical contribution. A highly-respected writer/poet and translator, Chung taught AsAmSt 225L Southeast Asians in the US several times and coordinated the remarkable Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Fellowship awards totaling \$575,000 which seeded the emerging global field of Vietnamese Diaspora Studies between 1999-2007. Michael completed his PhD in Public Policy in 1999 focusing on Chinatown neighborhood organizing, and was one of the first doctoral students at UMB to devote his dissertation research to Asian American issues and populations. A community leader for four decades, Michael taught the AsAmSt course, Asian American Politics and Social Movements, in 2000; Wanli led many efforts to improve linguistic/cultural understanding of educators, students, and professionals at UMB with counterparts in China. Their budget cut-induced retirements are a great loss for all of us.
- Ammany Ty who received the 2018 Beacons Unsung Hero Award; Hieu Le and other recipients of 2018 scholarship awards through the Asian Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF); Julia Lee for completing her M.Ed.; Chuck Liu for his PhD dissertation in Clinical Psychology, "The Impact of Personal and Parental Confucian Values on Mental Illness Stigma and Attitudes Towards Service Utilization Among Asian Americans From Confucian Cultures" advised by Karen Suyemoto.
- Alumnae Rose Abido who was promoted to the rank of US Army Major from Captain in January 2018 and Elaine Ng who was named CEO of TSNE MissionWorks (Third Sector New England) in May 2018;
- Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Department chair, Elora Chowdhury, who has been recommended for promotion to full professor rank; Peter Kiang, who was recognized as one of Boston's 100 most influential leaders of color by GetKonnected!; Loan Dao, who was named as advisory board chair of UMB's Immigrant Student Program; English Department postdoctoral teaching fellow, Susan Tan, whose first children's book, *Cilla Lee-Jenkins: Future Author Extraordinaire*, received the American Library Association's 2018 Asian/Pacific American Honor Award in Children's Literature, and whose second book, *Cilla Lee-Jenkins: This Book is a Classic*, was recently published by Roaring Book Press.
- former Visiting Scholar, Tomoko Tokunaga, who joined the faculty at Gunma Prefectural Women's University in Japan and whose ethnographic study of Asian American girls, *Learning to Belong in the World*, was published by Springer in March 2018; Coalition for Asian Pacific American Youth (CAPAY) alumna – Nga-Wing Anjela Wong, Associate Professor of Education at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, whose locally-based book, *Opening Doors: Community Centers Connecting Working-Class Immigrant Families* was published by Peter Lang in November 2017.
- all faculty and invited speakers who taught and presented in AsAmSt courses during 2017-18, and everyone involved with our US Department of Education AANAPISI Program-funded Asian American Student Success Program led by Dr. Patricia Neilson with co-PIs Joan Becker, Peter Kiang, Paul Watanabe, and Shirley Tang and core staff Sara Boxell, Frances Chow, Pratna Kem, and Joyce Wang.

For more information, visit UMB's Asian American Studies Program at www.umb.edu/asamst and the Asian American Student Success Program at <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/aassp>. And in honor of our 30th anniversary, please give to the Asian American Studies Program Capacity Fund: <http://www.alumni.umb.edu/AsAmSt30>.