



## Asian American Studies Program Affiliated Faculty – May 2016

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  
Connie Chan, Professor, Public Policy and Public Affairs, and Associate Dean, McCormack Graduate School  
Elora Chowdhury, Associate Professor and Chair, Women's and Gender Studies  
Patrick Clarkin, Associate Professor, Anthropology  
Loan Dao, Assistant 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, College of Public & Community Service  
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  
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  
Fanny Ng, Instructor, Asian American Studies and Psychology  
Rajini Srikanth, Professor, English; Founding Dean, Honors College  
Lakshmi Srinivas, Associate Professor, Sociology  
Karen Suyemoto, Professor, Psychology and Asian American Studies  
Shirley Tang, Associate Professor, Asian American Studies, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development  
John Tawa, Instructor, Asian American Studies and Psychology  
Leslie Kim Wang, Assistant Professor, Sociology  
Paul Watanabe, Associate 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  
Wenfan Yan, Professor, Department of Leadership in Education  
Mai See Yang, Instructor, Asian American Studies and Gerontology

### The Program

UMass Boston's Asian American Studies Program offers 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. High school students in UMass Boston's pre-collegiate programs such as Urban Scholars and those involved with 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. UMass Boston is 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 2015-2016 Graduates in Asian American Studies

Alexander Davis Woo (胡天龍) becomes our eighteenth student to complete an individual major in Asian American Studies. Alex came to UMB as a #myfirstchoice freshman specifically because of his interest in the Asian American Studies Program. Together with Alex, we recognize Ivy Bui, Thomas Chan, Sharon Cheng, Kim Hazeltine, Alyssa Moir, and Mónica Elías Orellana who have each completed the six-course AsAmSt program-of-study in 2015-2016.

Graduate students being recognized for their AsAmSt connections and contributions include Shruti Mukkamala, Liza Talusan, Ling Chou, Linda Thiem, Julie Tran, and Fanny Ng. We also congratulate all graduating students who have taken Asian American Studies courses with us, but who are not formally acknowledged here.

*Much appreciation always to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners and to the AANAPISI Asian American Student Success Program for generous AASSP support!*



AsAmSt meme generation challenge #1 with the Ty sisters ... credit: Linda Thiem, April 2016.



# Individual Major in Asian American Studies

Alexander Davis Woo (胡天龍)



I am a 23-year old, fourth-generation Chinese American from Natick. I graduated *Magna Cum Laude* in Fall 2015, double majoring in Sociology and Asian American Studies. I currently work as a public safety officer for Tufts Medical Center. While at UMB, I was able to intern or volunteer with the US Department of Homeland Security, the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center, Chinatown Main Street, Benevolent Asian Jade Society of New England, and the National Asian Peace Officers Association. I founded UMB's Martial Arts and Lion Dance Club, and am a Sifu (Kung Fu teacher) at Calvin Chin's Martial Arts Academy, instructing the performance, lion dance, and fight teams.

During my freshman year, I really enjoyed taking the Intro to Asian American Studies and the Asians in the US courses. This gave me a good idea about the Asian American Studies Program and what I can learn, not just academically, but personally as well. I really appreciate the fact that courses in the Program give students opportunities to learn from each other through stories, some of which are very personal that we hold near and dear. After declaring Asian American Studies as my independent major, I fell more in love with the Program as I saw the many ways that students are able to learn about the history of Asian Americans through past and current stories, and by actually going out to look and learn instead of just staying in a classroom environment. When I took the Boston's Asian American Communities course with Professor Kiang, I was able to learn more about my grandfather [Davis Woo] who made a great contribution to the Chinatown community and Mount Hope Cemetery. Through the AsAmSt/Psychology Internship with Professor Suyemoto, I was able to intern at the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center and work with some of the Chinatown youth. This really tested my teaching skills and more importantly my patience. Given my goal of some day having my own Kung Fu school, teaching martial arts to some of the youth gave me experience to teach on my own, and I learned how to handle some difficult situations with the youth by taking a step back and looking at the whole picture before coming up with solutions.

For a culminating course, I took Teaching & Learning in Asian American Studies which encapsulated everything I had learned from all of the previous courses and made it possible, with AANAPISI support, for our entire class to participate in the 2015 Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) conference in San Francisco. At APAHE, we were able to make great connections with amazing people who inspired us while sharing our own stories and reflections based on what we have learned from the Asian American Studies Program. Going to this national conference helped us better understand how our education and community knowledge can be a resource for other students and communities. It was very powerful for all of us to come to this conference together and connect in ways for us to teach and learn from each other, especially with the Asian American and Pacific Islander students from the West Coast. It was more meaningful than just one-time networking because our work together continued after the conference when some of those students came to our campus to work on their digital stories for the national digital storytelling in Asian American Studies summit a few weeks later in June. It was very memorable for me to be part of the AsAmSt co-production team so that I could assist Anuanu Pole'o, a Tongan student born in Hawai'i and raised in Alaska, to put together his digital video and create a project that honors his family's story in depth. Although Anu's origins and pathways ahead are very different from mine, the goal of honoring our families through our education is a connection and commitment that we both share. Having this unique experience would not have been possible without the Asian American Studies Program and the AANAPISI resources of UMass Boston.

A year has already gone by since I attended the APAHE conference and a lot has happened to me since then, including graduation, working-full-time, and learning more about life. I will always be ready and willing to share my experiences with new students in the Asian American Studies Program, and to help with other activities like future conference preparations and project co-productions. Experiences like these are ones that I still hope to gain for myself and share again with others in the near future.

# Program-of-Study in Asian American Studies

Ivy Bui



I am a second-generation Vietnamese-Chinese American, originally from North Carolina, but have lived in Boston for approximately 13 years. I transferred from Bridgewater State University after my freshman year, and am in the College of Management, concentrating in Leadership and Organizational Change. After transferring to UMass Boston, I stumbled upon my first Asian American Studies, Southeast Asians in the U.S. (AsAmSt 225L) with Professor Shirley Tang. Originally, I took the class in order to fulfill my requirement, but after that semester I decided to continue my interest in Asian American Studies because I was learning more about my historical background. I was eager to learn more and realized that AsAmSt courses were more than just another class; it was actually a reality check for me to understand my identity. My next semester in Spring 2013, I took Asian American Studies Media Literary (AsAmSt 370) and it was an experience that I will never forget. As an older student leader on campus [past president of the Vietnamese Student Association], I vocally advise younger leaders as well as all student club members to take an Asian American Studies course in order to really learn about their roots.

Taking Asian American Studies has made me more aware of my role as a student leader and it has shown me what is also lacking. By continuing my AsAmSt program-of-study, I was able to gain more insights about the historical backgrounds of Asian American communities and the current issues that Asian Americans face. Through AsAmSt, I was able to reflect and see the growth in my own personal experience. I was given opportunities to voice my opinion as well as to address real issues that aren't talked about in the college environment and community.

My future plans are to continue with documentation and storytelling. From previous classes, I have projects that are still left unedited, untouched. Although I know I need to focus on my management concentration, I will still make time to edit these unfinished videos, hopefully to have them added to the AsAmSt archives and used for educational purposes. After learning so much from this program, I want to do more, like going out to high schools to really share the history of Southeast Asian Americans and talk about taboo topics such as domestic violence, mental illness, and more. I want to teach others what I have learned and advocate further for Asian American Studies here at UMass Boston.

## Thomas Chan (陳志強)

I am a 2.5 generation Chinese American son born to an immigrant father, who works tirelessly as a cook in a Chinese restaurant and a 2nd generation mother working in the admitting department at Tufts Medical Center for 43 years. I graduated high school at Boston Latin Academy in 2010. My college journey began at Johnson & Wales with aspirations of becoming a chef with dreams of opening my own restaurant. After two years, I realized that this was no longer the dream I wanted to pursue and I found myself transferring to UMass Boston. Here, I majored in Psychology to further my knowledge of the profession to help understand my own mental health issues and to help ease the mental health issues many of my friends faced. I was introduced to the multiple Asian American student-led clubs and the Asian American Studies Program office. This was where I found my community on campus. I pride myself in having deep, impactful relationships with people I have gotten the pleasure to know throughout my life.

My interest in Asian American Studies sparked after taking my first course, Asian American Psychology. In this class I first encountered terms that I did not know existed for what I had experienced throughout my life, such as filial piety, intergenerational gap, collectivistic culture, mental health stigma, and the model minority myth. I was relieved to find that I was not the only one facing these issues. I wanted to learn more about my racial identity as an Asian American as well as prevalent issues facing the Asian American community, so I continued to take more AsAmSt courses such as Introduction to Asian American Studies, Asian American Community Internship, and Boston's Asian American Communities. Lastly, I was accepted to complete a year-long interdisciplinary Psychology and Asian American Studies Senior Honors Thesis project under the mentorship and guidance of Dr. Karen Suyemoto. My thesis looked at the influence of demographic factors such as neighborhood diversity, generational status and socioeconomic status on the relation of racism-related stress and mental health symptomology among Asian Americans.





Following my undergraduate career, I plan on applying to a doctoral program in either Clinical or Counseling Psychology to continue my research interest in the Asian American community. My research interests are vast and include topics such as social justice, race relations, allyship, racism, internalized racism, intergenerational gaps, environmental factors, depression, anxiety, social anxiety, trauma, multicultural counseling, cultural competency, and the disaggregating of Asian American ethnicities. I aim to assist in getting rid of the stigma associated with mental health in the Asian American community so that Asian Americans struggling with mental health can get the help they need. Entering academia is within the realm of possibility to follow the footsteps of my mentor, Dr. Karen Suyemoto. I hope to continue in teaching the importance of culturally competent therapy and mental health services so that we may serve and respect each and every community. Dr. Suyemoto's ultimate goal has been to change the world. If I am able to impact just a portion of the lives changed by the teachings of Dr. Suyemoto, I will have lived a successful and meaningful life.



## Sharon Cheng (鄭以欣)



I identify myself as a second-generation Chinese American woman born in Boston and raised in Quincy, MA. My parents were born in Hong Kong before immigrating to the United States in the 1980s for better educational and occupational opportunities. In December 2015, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Management with a concentration in Leadership and Organizational Change and a program-of-study in Asian American Studies.

The Asian American Studies Program did so much more than just fulfill my graduation requirements. I first took an AsAmSt course because of a friend's recommendation. It intrigued me to learn about a topic that I didn't even know existed because it had never been taught or brought up during my prior educational career. Through the Asian American Studies Program, I was able to understand the importance of identity, the historical background of Asian Americans, the still very present struggles of racial injustice,

the significance of advocacy and political issues, etc. As a transfer student from a university with a prominent college dorm life, it was difficult for me to adjust to a commuter school like UMass Boston; so I indulged myself in this particular program-of-study because it provided me with a significant sense of belonging. I began building a deeper foundation for my own identity while making stronger connections with other students in my Asian American Studies courses.

After I graduated, I was given the opportunity to start an internship as an Events and Fundraising coordinator at a local Asian American non-profit organization which enabled me to apply my studies not only to advance my own future, but also to play an active role in my Asian American community. The Asian American Studies Program has deeply influenced my life choices, decisions, and experiences. I hope to continue to support our community's connections to a strong identity, background, and culture.

## Kim Ashley Chong Hazeltine (张雪莲)

It is customary in China for one's grandparents to select a name for their grandchild that they feel will embody the spirit and path of the person to be. My name, 雪莲 or xuě lián, translates roughly to snow lotus. I have always been told that the name lotus was intended to conjure the image of a beautiful flower defiantly stretching through the depths of the watery darkness so that it may enlighten and inspire the world above by its sheer insistence on existence. The power of such imagery was purposely magnified by my maternal grandparents, who named me not simply lotus, but *snow* lotus—one who perseveres not simply in difficult but rather in seemingly intolerable conditions.

As the granddaughter of a man who escaped slavery in China to forge a better life for his family, I have always been keenly aware of not only my indebtedness to my beloved Goong Goong and my ancestors, but also to the name they chose to honor me with. Fortuitously for me, it has been an ideological wellspring of strength and courage throughout a life that has thus far been complicated by hardships and loss. Growing up as a lower class, multiracial, second generation Chinese American woman in a predominantly upper class, White American community was trying on many levels. Ours was one of the first Asian families to settle in my community. Racism (via micro and macro aggressions) was ubiquitous and unabashedly disseminated not only interpersonally, but also intra- and inter-systemically—and sadly and more painfully, intrafamilially. Despite such troubles, my mother and Goong Goong were always there to help me navigate through; that is, until they weren't. After the unanticipated and sudden deaths of my two most trusted beacons, I came to UMass Boston looking for ways to heal my spirit, reconnect to my roots, and honor their memories.

With great joy, pride, and gratitude, I am happy to say that the Asian American Studies Program helped me to accomplish my goals and more. This is frankly in large part due to the unwavering support and guidance of Dr. Karen Suyemoto, whose very first lectures became the springboard of my deepest academic and social justice passions. Despite her many, many responsibilities and commitments, she has been indefatigable in her efforts to educate and inspire students like myself to not only learn but also,

and more importantly, to truly embody the interconnected ethos of both the Asian American Studies Program and the UMass Boston community—to become an informed, compassionate, and engaged member of our ever diversifying global community. I am indebted to Dr. Suyemoto and the many professors and staff who have been instrumental advisors, sounding boards, and friends throughout my circuitous journey at UMass Boston. I would not be the person I am today without them or the many interconnected ecological systems and people who serendipitously came together to enable such an unprecedented intellectual space. Taking part in this program and community has been one of the greatest honors of my life.



My experience here has impacted me so greatly that I am in the process of planning graduate level work that incorporates social justice and giving back to my Asian American community. How it will unfold exactly is yet to be seen. My biggest issue now is trying to find a graduate program that is even remotely comparable! Many thanks to Dr. Suyemoto, members of her Graduate Clinical Psychology Asian American Research Teams (Stephanie Day, Phuong Nguyen, Julie AhnAllen, John Tawa, Shruti Mukkamala, Fanny Ng, Charles Liu, Danielle Godon, Meardey Kong, Alissa Gross), Dr. Tahira Abdullah, Dr. Paul Watanabe, Dr. Rajini Srikanth, Dr. Loan Dao, Dr. Jin Ho Park, Esther Iwanaga, Giles Li, Amy Cheng Yee Au, Pratna Kem, Son Ca Lam, Janet Hong Vo, Reaksa Chhum, Soramy Le, Songkhla Thi Nguyen, Edson Bueno, Richard Truong, Tri Quach, and *of course*, Director, Dr. Peter Kiang.



## Alyssa Jasmine Moir



Both of my parents are first generation who immigrated to America by choice. My mom is Thai, and started her life in the U.S. as a graduate student. My dad is English and was invited to help his British boss with the same business he was doing in England. They met, married, gave birth to me, and then moved from Boston to North Andover where they bought a home and where I went to school from pre-K through high school. Being bi-racial by birth, more white by appearance, growing up in a town that was predominantly white, and being raised by immigrant parents who have different sets of values led to some major confusion for me. My mom is quite traditional and strict; my dad was more laid back. My identity and heritage were different from others. While I had fun doing team sport such as soccer and track, I found myself not quite fitting in. I learned basic Thai language at a Buddhist Thai temple on weekends, but felt caught between Euro-American and Thai values. By the end of high school, I was completely lost not knowing who I was and what I wanted to do. I took time off and went to Middlesex Community College (MCC) in January 2012. At MCC, I joined the International Students club, and began to feel a sense of belonging. My peers were very diverse, including Cambodian, Vietnamese, and those from various countries in Africa. I learned about refugees' lives first-hand, and volunteered to help with local refugee children from Burma through my mother's connections as a case-worker.

I met Peter Kiang in May 2012 at a one-day conference in Lowell on Voices of Refugees where Peter was a keynote speaker and shared examples of refugee students' experiences at UMass Boston. My mom was one of the organizers of this conference and introduced me to Peter who gave me a copy of the AsAmSt course schedule to look over. Initially I was hesitant, but after visiting UMB to sit in on a class taught by Peter, I felt more enthusiastic to try Asian American Studies. The environment was welcoming and it felt like I belonged in the class. Peter and the AsAmSt students engaged and encouraged me to participate in class discussion in a natural way that was not intimidating and different from how I usually felt excluded. I also had an opportunity to sit in a class with Karen Suyemoto which I really enjoyed as well. After these two classes, and having information about the resources that would support me if I transferred, I decided that UMass Boston could be a place for me. If not for the Asian American Studies Program, I am 100% sure I would be elsewhere. Asian American Studies has truly helped me to embrace my identity and my heritage. I also learned to embrace others who were searching themselves. I learned more about Southeast Asian refugees who surrounded me when I was at MCC in Lowell. My limited knowledge about what they were going through before coming to America and their continuing struggle only became clear to me after participating in the Asian American Studies Program.

UMB's Asian American community provided me with a strong sense of belonging, confidence, and desire to connect to my Thai heritage, so I decided to study abroad in Thailand to reconnect back to my roots and to speak Thai more fluently. I wanted to understand my mother's background better and to enjoy my family and Thai people my age. Three months with peers at Mahidol in Bangkok and three months with my Thai family and friends gave me a clearer view. There were some frustrations and struggles in the process of learning in and out of classroom, so Peter suggested that I stay connected with him by sharing weekly reflections by email. While feeling alone at times, I continued to learn so much about myself each day. I have a better understanding of how people act, speak, and think. My Thai speaking improved really fast, and I can communicate bilingually with my mom and some of my Thai relatives now.

I have so many ideas for what I want to do after I graduate and before returning to grad school in a couple of years. I plan to become ESL-certified this summer so I can teach English to children in Thailand or other Asian countries. I also want to play and coach soccer there because soccer was where I felt most myself growing up. I am hoping to learn to listen and be patient while teaching or coaching, and bring this unique experience and knowledge for future work with adolescents and young adults with mixed race/culture backgrounds in a school or clinical or community setting. Having difficult experiences growing up mixed and feeling no sense of belonging, I know I can connect with others in the same position I was as an adolescent. Before becoming part of the Asian American Studies Program, I was in shame to represent who I was. Now that I have gained more confidence and a clearer point of view, I want to be that support system for others who are struggling with their identity no matter what their background might be. I understand from experience that some of these struggles are not always easy. I have built my resilience from being part of AsAmSt along with Psychology and the Asian American Student Success Program, and I want to continue to grow stronger as a Thai, British American woman who works toward ensuring that there will be fewer adolescents and young adults who suffer exclusion in the future.

## Mónica Elías Orellana



I am a Latina, a daughter of two Salvadoran immigrant parents. Both my parents came to the US in search of that American dream while escaping the Civil War that their country endured. I was born in Los Angeles, California and later moved to Chelsea, Massachusetts where I have called Home ever since. I will be the second person in the first generation of my family to graduate college, making *me* feel very prideful!.

I decided to focus on Asian American Studies after taking my first AsAmSt course in my sophomore year. Ever since that initial class, I remember feeling that connection and interest towards this pathway. As a Latina with a strong awareness of her culture, I found myself relating to a lot of the curriculum and topics that my Asian American Studies courses covered -- from delicate topics of being a refugee to the diaspora of Southeast Asians in the US and the impacts of these populations on our local region.

I had the honor to do an independent study with Dr. Shirley Tang focusing on the City of Revere and the Cambodian Community there. I appreciate everything I've learned and am very grateful for the opportunity I had at UMass Boston, to be part of such an amazing program.



In my last year of college, I was the Vice President of KCA – the Khmer Culture Association at UMB. Without my program-of-study experience, I think I would have not been a good leader for KCA, but because of my involvement in Asian American Studies, I have become more aware, more open-minded, and more knowledgeable in working effectively with different cultures, ethnicities and races.

In my near future, I plan to use all I've learned from the Asian American Studies Program to work with nonprofit organizations/institutes to further expand my understanding about community issues. I think I have become more diverse and can represent outside groups besides my Latino community and, for that, I am grateful. I know that in whichever path I take after graduation, I will seek to help the unrepresented, those silent voices that need to be heard.

Lastly, I thank all my professors and the AsAmSt Program as a whole for showing me how to be compassionate.



# Recognizing Graduate Student Contributions

Shruti Mukkamala, Ph.D., Clinical Psychology



I came to the U.S. as an international student from India ten years ago. I am passionate about working with Asian Americans and people of color to provide mental health services that recognize the unique strengths of individuals and their racial and ethnic backgrounds, to reduce the stigma around seeking mental health services, and to be an advocate for my students, mentees and clients. I am also excited about my research focused on intersectional experiences of discrimination for Asian American women.

As someone who did not grow up in the U.S., I was completely unaware of the structural oppression faced by people of color when I came here as a graduate student. Asian American Studies helped me contextualize the varied experiences of Asian Americans in the U.S. and to understand better the historical as well as current realities of Asian Americans. In the AsAmSt Program, I found a diverse community that is passionate about advancing the role of Asian Americans in the Northeast and other parts of the U.S. I also understood different ways in which I, as an individual, can continue to advocate for the increased visibility of Asian Americans within the U.S. sociopolitical system.

My research goals, professional interests and identity are tied to being an Asian/Asian American immigrant in the U.S. I will continue to research intersectionality to challenge the Model Minority Stereotype, and I hope to teach and conduct research focused on reducing the invisibility of Asian American women's voices within the larger Asian American population. Through my counseling career, I hope to reduce the stigma against seeking mental health services faced by Asian Americans as well as to work with other providers to reduce structural and cultural barriers to care for this under-served group.

## Liza Talusan, Ph.D., Higher Education Administration

I am a second-generation Filipina American born and raised in the Boston area -- the daughter of immigrants from the Philippines; a wife; mother to three multiracial children; and a sister. I identify as a tempered radical, drawing on experiences with identity, difference, and justice to influence social change. Currently, I serve as the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at The Park School (Brookline, MA), an environmental shift made after working for nearly two decades in higher education. In this fresh role, I now have the opportunity to work with children ages 4-14, and see myself shaping a new generation of identity-conscious future leaders, scholars, activists and change agents who are committed, at an early age, to actionable equity and inclusion.

Writing about and researching the experiences of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders began as a personal journey, one that I needed to take in order to better understand my own socialization to education. I had the great fortune of meeting Dr. Kiang, Dr. Neilson, and other Asian American faculty at UMass Boston, who truly guided me along this difficult and personal journey. I needed to uncover why I felt such a deep sense of internalized oppression as an Asian American. That journey took me all the way back to my own childhood, my own early education and my educational experiences through my doctorate. I grew angry at the ways in which my educational experiences made my community invisible and, therefore, made me feel invisible. In my doctoral program, I realized that the same absence of Asian American voice existed. It was at this point that I decided "enough was enough" and that I needed to influence change in our educational system to be more inclusive of Asian American and Pacific Islander identities and experiences. I attended the AANAPISI conference sponsored by UMB in 2013, where our faculty and students shared their research, class projects, and narratives. That conference was my first real introduction to the power of our community, the strength of our people, and the pride of our work.





I am so grateful for the leadership, research, scholarship and community engagement of our AsAmSt Program faculty and students who continue to amplify the voices of our community. At the start of my doctoral journey, I could not have imagined this outcome. I could not have imagined how much I have changed personally and professionally, and how much I now connect with my people. I had spent so much time in environments that ignored the experiences and voices of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and immersing myself in Asian American Studies helped me build my identity and perspective. But, most of all, Asian American Studies gave me a voice. Asian American Studies gave me a sense of self. Asian American Studies gave me the responsibility to be a part of that journey for someone else.

## Líng Chou, M.A., Global Inclusion & Social Development

I am a Taiwanese immigrant raised in the South. My experiences have led me to a six-year search for my role in social development, inclusive of all of the entangled intersections of multiculturalism, impactful human interactions and resulting points of awareness. In a startling turn, I've found a place in academia.



I was fortunate enough to hear the leadership of Asian American Studies speak in a class in GISD. I was afraid to engage too much, or I had become such a ghost in academia that I didn't follow up then. In the short time that followed, my personal and academic journey came to a head when I landed in Shirley Tang's TCCS 622 Transdisciplinary Research in Practice (TRIP II) course. In all of the six years I have spent here in graduate programs at UMB, I had never felt so engaged, so human and so hopeful. Both AsAmSt and TCCS gave me the safety of reflective leadership to step out of my accumulated traumas involving cultural dissonance with institutions and academia. Without support from Peter, Shirley and my GISD family, I would have walked away with an empty piece of paper and a disengaged mind. I would have assumed all of my experiences and my desperate search for how to apply value to these stories would have been for naught, I would have assumed unfortunate events to be dead-end traumas that didn't extend past my own life. There is no doubt that the program(s) *validated* what had otherwise been a

fruitless journey where I felt I was just a troubled individual, unable to let go of silently passing injustices and suffering from our communities and my own life. Our interactions were emancipating for me, and all of what I have been able to let go is indescribable. Simply put, the people from AsAmSt and TCCS had the experiential knowledge to identify, relate, foster and actualize my practice, as devastated and hopeless as I felt walking into my graduate classrooms this year. I don't have words for the gratitude I feel, that I know my family feels. I just have to say that the impact of this leadership, these relationships... it's just bigger than words and generationally felt.

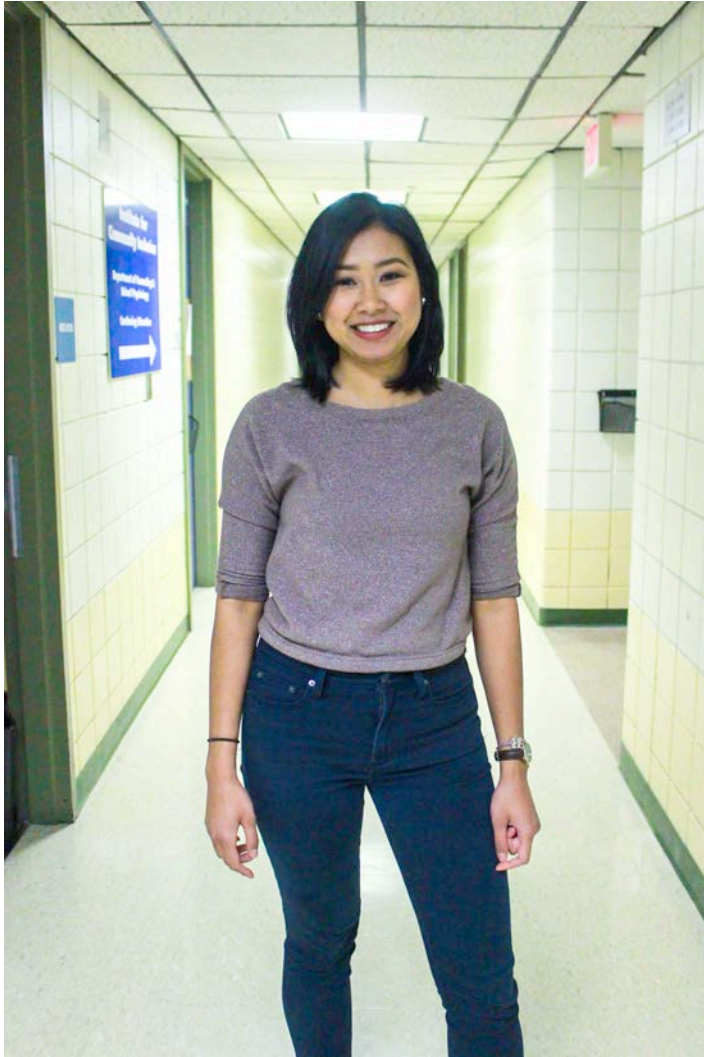
I came to graduate school wanting minimal relationships, just trying to give a piece of paper to my family for their sacrifices in bringing us to America. A tiny thank you despite its derailing my faith in institutions during the too long years I have been here. Yet, I am leaving reluctantly, having experienced something so incredible in the last stretch of this academic journey. The relationships in AsAmSt have given me back what I couldn't see or find anymore... they have re-introduced me to inspiration and hope. Because of this, I will never leave entirely, and everything I do in the future will be connected in one way or another to the heart of these programs. More immediately, the next stages in my journey will be tied to the program in some way. This is the education I have searched for, and I am a living example of the undeniable *NEED* for these programs and their leadership. The world of social development and cultural preservation/advocacy would be nothing without human-centric programs such as AsAmSt, *deeply rooted* in grassroots and experiential value. We as a global society will have no option but to further move toward *this*, and away from *that*, with conviction and self-determination in our *own* truth and honest history.

## Linda Thiem, M.Ed., Learning, Teaching & Educational Transformation (LTET)

This is so surreal because it is my second graduation with Asian American Studies at UMB. I didn't think I would be able to finish my undergraduate degree and now I am completing a Master's degree! According to the statistics about Khmer American educational attainment, it would not be expected of me to succeed this far. My identity has definitely transformed over time, and I am more critical and intentional about this as I am becoming more educated. I have been identifying myself as a daughter of refugee parents for the past couple of years, and I think this is partly due to my struggles in higher education. I think I wanted the world of academia to know that my parents have been through trauma and that the way I was loved and raised was premised on fear. I wanted the world to know that I do not fit your ideals of an American woman who is educated and that I am not your traditional Graduate student.

A large part of my success is due to the Asian American Studies Program at UMB. The staff, faculty, and my peers have become a huge part of my life and support system in reacting and surviving in a system that is sometimes oppressive. Through the mentorship from all of these amazing people, I was able to build on my strengths, overcome many of my weaknesses, become more confident to do more for society, and to think beyond just the self. The U.S. praises individualistic qualities, but coming from a collectivistic background, it was important that Asian American Studies understands my negotiation with these two

values. I think my graduation this year is really not about me. It is about all of the people that helped me to get here -- my family, my professors, my friends, my mentors, and even those who challenged me and may have not supported me. I don't think I would be able to develop such self-advocacy skills and realize my sense of agency without you all. Thank you!!



Asian American Studies at UMB has helped me to become much more clear about myself and how I want to contribute to society. I'm not quite sure of my future plans, but I know that whatever I end up doing, I will have the skills and capacity to be flexible and intentional about what I can bring to the table. Education should be empowering like this, even though the system is actually so disempowering. However, because I am seeing that education is capable of being holistic through Asian American Studies, I am very aware that it is possible to bring this everywhere. Although it may not be realistic to change things all at once, I think the smallest act of advocacy is helpful. I learned through a fellow Khmer American young woman that a lot of our work is about the process. We may have a vision and an end goal of what that can look like, but I learned that focusing on what it takes to get there is equally as important.



## Julie Tran, M.Ed., Learning, Teaching & Educational Transformation (LTET)



I remember when I was in one of Shirley Tang's Asian American Studies classes where Shirley states that we must "by any means necessary" get the resources that we need. By the end of my undergraduate career, I was nervous because I did not have a real direction in life. I knew that during the summer of 2014, I wanted to attend the UNAVSA-II Conference in Dallas, Texas. UNAVSA is the Union of North American Vietnamese Students Association, a 501(c)3 organization that focuses on building leadership for the North American Vietnamese community. At the conference, leaders of different VSAs (Vietnamese Student Associations) from across the United States and Canada come together for a weekend to network and share ideas. The investment I made in attending that conference completely changed my life.

The UNAVSA-II Conference impacted me to want to do more with my own community at home. It also motivated me to come back to UMass Boston and get my Master's degree as well. I had graduated in 2014 with a B.S. in Biochemistry and a program-of-study in Asian American Studies. But I realized that I loved teaching people how to become leaders, especially given my VSA background, so I decided to follow the education route because nothing makes me more happy than seeing people growing as leaders for the future. Throughout my graduate career, I was notorious for traveling around different parts of the U.S. to join with others who have the same goals: to better the Vietnamese community across the continent.

I chose to be part of the Learning, Teaching, and Educational Transformation (LTET) program at UMass Boston because I wanted to create educational resources to serve my community in a more holistic way outside of a classroom setting. I always tried to connect my own projects to the classes that I was

taking. For one of my papers in a graduate course, I talked about the importance of having student organizations on college campuses. In a way, student organizations build more of a community that will cater to the needs of their targeted demographics. This was a risk academically for me because my topic lacked published research or resources related to Vietnamese student organizations. Therefore, I had to rely on creating connections between the texts that I read throughout the semester and my own experiences with student leadership and student organizations. This led to my first solo workshop where I incorporated critiques of orientalism from TCCS 610 and voice-space-rights themes from AsAmSt 423L in order to explain why ethnic specific student organizations such as VSAs are important.

Although I enjoy being active with the North American Vietnamese community, I am often questioned about my involvement. My peers always ask whether or not I get paid for all my volunteer engagement projects. Knowing the circumstances of the North American Vietnamese community in lacking resources, I am willing “by any means necessary” to invest in these projects so that the community can grow. Boston was actually the first site where UNAVSA started for in 2004, and, on July 21-24, UNAVSA-13 is coming back to Boston as the first-repeat city. I am proud to be one of thirteen directors (as the Logistics Director) and also the sole New Englander leading this conference. Seeing all of the blood, sweat, tears, and money that I have placed in making sure that my own community will get the resources that they need is coming back full circle. Words cannot describe how ecstatic I am to see the future of the North American Vietnamese community come together in my own home field.

## Fanny Ng (吳麗婷), M.A., Clinical Psychology

I'm a second generation Asian American woman of Chinese ancestry from a working class and immigrant family background, who was born and raised in New York City. I'm the eldest daughter of my parents who immigrated to the U.S. separately in the early 1980s from southern China. They met and married in the U.S. and had my brother and me. This year, I am a clinical psychology doctoral candidate and will be moving from Boston for a year-long pre-doctoral psychology internship in the Integrated Health Psychology Internship Training Program at the Wright Institute in Berkeley, CA which starts this fall.

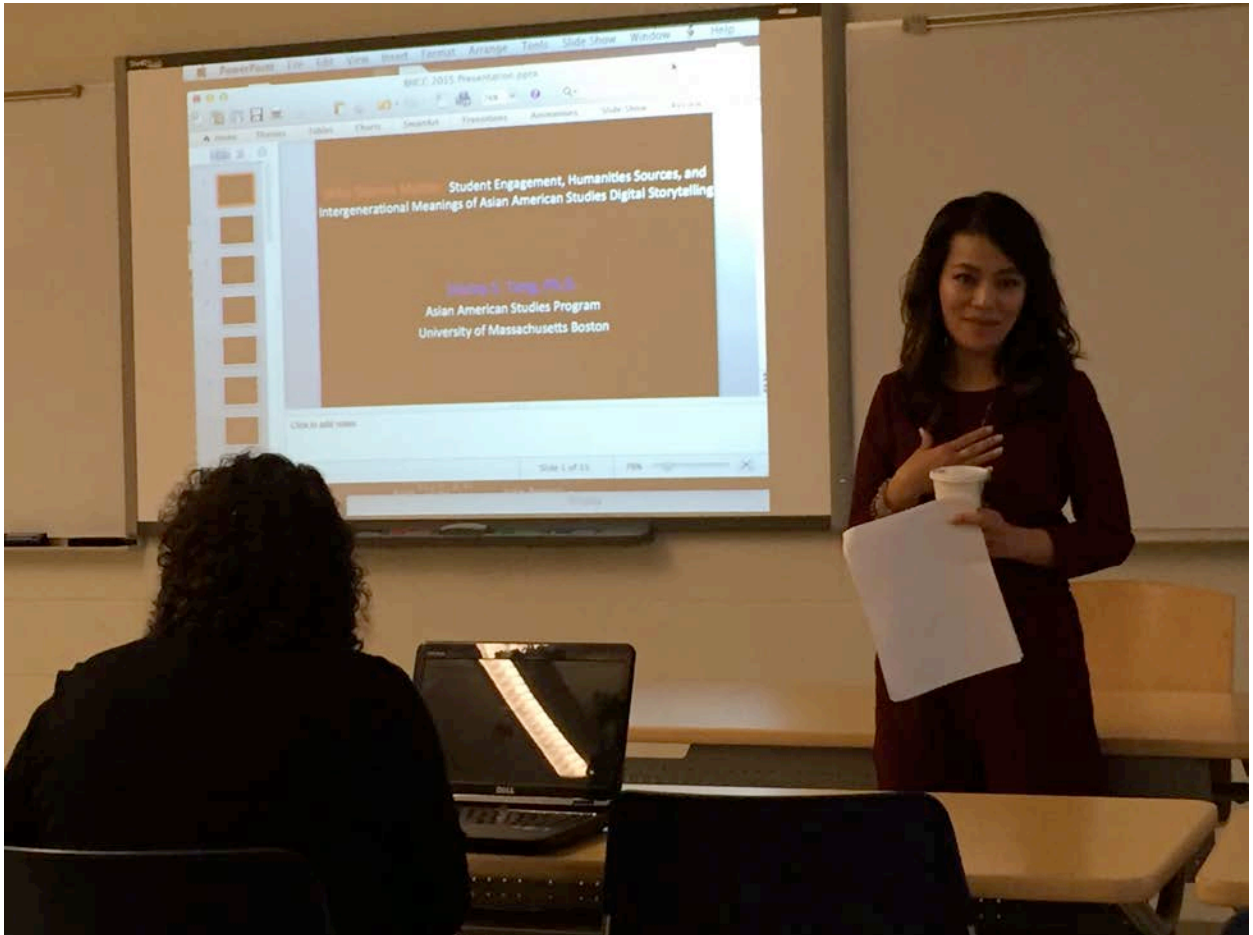
I initially decided to pursue a graduate degree in clinical psychology because I saw that there was a huge need and a gap in the awareness, research, and accessible services in mental health for Asian American communities. The Asian American Studies Program provided a second home for me to gain greater familiarity with current and historical Asian American issues and to develop a deeper contextual understanding of the mental health needs within Asian American communities that informs my evolving skills in research, practice, and teaching in psychology. Moreover, my AsAmSt involvement has been critical in shaping my personal and professional identities. I am better able to explore and reflect on the impact and relevance of my identity as Asian American *and* as a developing clinical psychologist through the many discussions and relationships that I have had over the years with the truly exceptional faculty, staff, colleagues, and students within the program.



As I move forward into and beyond my final chapter as a graduate student at UMB, I'd like to embrace the spirit of transformative teaching and learning from Asian American Studies and integrate it into my future work in psychology. Asian American Studies has consistently shown me how innovative teaching can support a unique kind of experiential learning for both faculty and students which is deeply personal, relational, and dynamic. I've been inspired by the stories of students who were transformed through AsAmSt courses and have used their experiences as a catalyst for re/connecting with their passions in new ways, enabling them to realize their ability to make a significant and meaningful difference for themselves and others in their communities. I'd like to similarly bring the energy, passion, and courage that embodies the Asian American Studies Program into my future career that aims to address inequities in mental health for underserved and minority communities, particularly for Asian Americans.

I am deeply grateful to my mentor, Dr. Karen L. Suyemoto, for being my bridge to the Asian American Studies Program and to Dr. Peter Kiang, other faculty members, staff, fellow graduate and undergraduate students, colleagues and friends for creating such a rich and warm community and second home for me at UMB. I will carry these experiences and connections from Asian American Studies wherever my journey takes me next!

## The 2016 Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching at UMB Dr. Shirley Suet-ling Tang (鄧雪齡)



At UMass Boston's 2016 Commencement ceremonies, Professor Shirley Tang is being honored with the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching, in recognition of her fifteen years of transformative teaching at every level from first-year general education courses to graduate-level seminars on transdisciplinary research in practice. Shirley's AsAmSt teaching priorities and contributions have included: 1) developing interdisciplinary models of collaborative student/community-centered research, teaching, and advocacy; 2) integrating new media documentation/production, service-learning/civic-engagement, and holistic pedagogical practices within the undergraduate curriculum; and 3) developing long-term community capacities through recruiting and mentoring under-served, under-resourced students with Asian American Studies commitments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Shirley's signature leadership of the digital storytelling in Asian American Studies initiatives, in particular, has received national acclaim.

*Of 30 such honorees in the university's history, Shirley is the first woman of color to receive the Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Teaching at UMass Boston.*



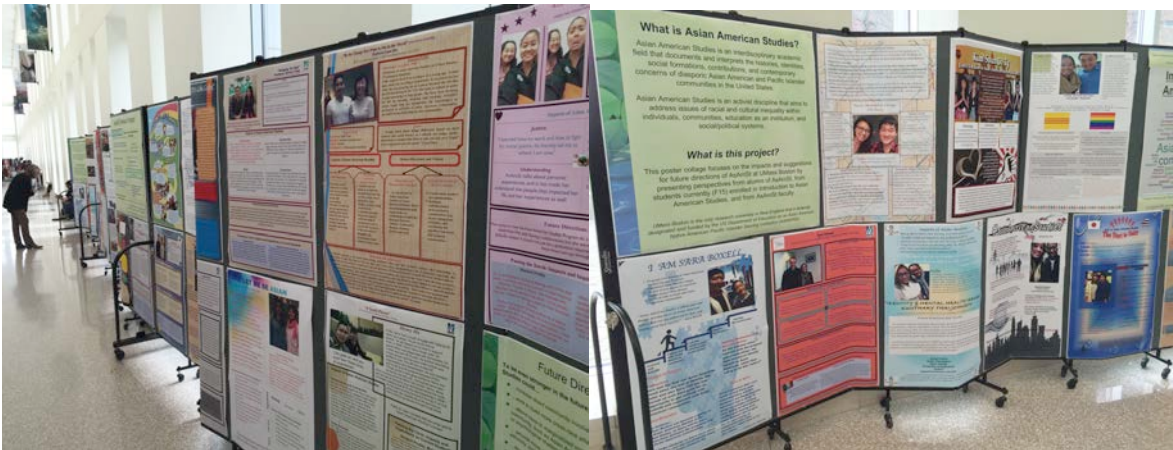
## AsAmSt Program Sampling from 2015-2016



UMB's US Department of Education-funded AANAPISI project collaboration with Mission College and Mount San Antonio College in California culminated with a first-ever national summit on Digital Storytelling in Asian American Studies in June 2015.



Through the Honors College, Prof. Paul Watanabe returned with UMB students in October to visit the Manzanar National Historic Site and other CA places rich in Japanese American history.



AsAmSt 200 students working with Prof. Karen Suyemoto conducted extensive research, including original interviews with local AsAmSt alumni, faculty, staff, and community leaders to assess the past and present impact of Asian American Studies at UMB and to suggest possible directions for future curriculum development. Their research was summarized in a series of poster designs that were exhibited publicly in the Campus Center during December 2015.





AsAmSt alumna and current TCCS graduate student, Thary Sun Lim, shared her educational pathways and priorities at UMB's Faculty and Staff Donor Appreciation gala in September, much to the appreciation of Chancellor Motley, her AsAmSt/TCCS faculty advisor Prof. Loan Dao, and UMass Boston Fund Annual Giving Officer, Steve Ward, who was the very first UMB undergraduate to complete an AsAmSt individual major in in 1993. Thary was the 17th in 2015.





Emmi Tran [on left with her mother, AsAmSt alumna Kim-Dung Nguyen] graduated in December 2015 with a B.S. in Nursing. During her first year at UMB in 2011, Emmi served as one of the original student staff hired by the Asian American Student Success Program. Kim-Dung [on right] was herself a student leader in the late 1980s, conducting oral histories with Southeast Asian refugee peers, presenting at the 1989 national Association for Asian American Studies conference, challenging the WPE, and protesting public higher education budget cuts at the State House. Emmi is the first child of an AsAmSt alumna to also graduate from UMB.



As a UMB international student from Japan in the early 1990s, Motoko Kainose [on left] participated in numerous educational projects in her undergraduate AsAmSt courses, including one of the first visits to the Mather Elementary School Vietnamese bilingual program in 1993. Motoko graduated summa cum laude in 1994 and received her MA in American Studies with an Asian American Studies focus in 2000. Motoko's son, Justin Shunta Budrow [on right], completed his first AsAmSt course as a UMB freshman in Spring 2016.

In addition, three other Southeast Asian refugee-background UMB alumna mothers and former AsAmSt classmates, including Ngoc Lan Nguyen and Sophia Nun who appear with Motoko in the 1993 AsAmSt 423L Mather School classroom photo above, along with Kathy Phuong Lam, also have children now attending UMass Boston with their own direct access to AsAmSt (Paul Vu, Jasmín Chhim, Vinson Yiep) – literally representing a unique second generation of connection, trust, legacy, and continuing educational opportunity.





AsAmSt students and alumni continued to benefit in 2015-16 from the generous support of Stanley Chen and family in relation to their education, work, family, and community involvement. The Chens' commitment to local immigrant education was further honored in 2015 by the Asian American Civic Association (AACA) where several AsAmSt alumni also work or volunteer.



Prof. Shirley Tang's AsAmSt 498 students led a faculty/student training workshop at Bunker Hill Community College in May to culminate the second year of a highly successful collaboration focusing on Asian American Studies humanities curriculum development, with funding from a three year NEH Bridging Cultures grant. BHCC President Pam Eddinger is seated at the left.



AsAmSt undergraduate students, Helen Ngo and Phi Tran, each received campus funding to support their travel to present at national conferences in 2016: Phi shared his Fields Corner Vietnamese community leader stories in manga form at the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) conference in Oakland. Helen presented on a panel about undergraduate student organizing at the Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) conference in Miami.



Individual doctoral dissertation and senior thesis presentations on Asian American topics by graduating students Liza Talusan and Thomas Chan were among many highlights of 2015-2016, along with exhibitions/demonstrations of student-produced work in courses ranging from intro-level AsAmSt 200 to highest level AsAmSt 498, and several other courses in between.







AsAmSt's homeplace location in the School for Global Inclusion & Social Development (SGISD) continued to nurture critical program support and meaningful project collaborations in 2015-16.



With strong AsAmSt involvement, the Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP) concluded its 2010-2015 \$2M grant from the US Department of Education's Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI) Program. UMB was also awarded a new \$1.5M AANAPISI grant for programs that will operate for five fresh years from 2015 to 2020. UMB's AANAPISI projects and programs continue to have significant impact on campus while modeling innovative institutional praxis locally and nationally.



During the past 25+ years, no individual in the national Asian American Studies field has had greater impact/influence or cared more in concrete, consistent ways regarding the campus-wide vision, development, and student/community-centered values of our AsAmSt program at UMB than Dr. Don Nakanishi through both his direct personal engagement and his sustained leadership of the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA. Don's most recent major contribution at UMB was in providing clarity and wisdom as an expert external reviewer for our ethnic studies-centered MS/PhD program in Transnational, Cultural and Community Studies (TCCS) during the final stages of its approval by the MA Board of Higher Education in 2013-14. In March, at age 66, Don passed away in his home of Los Angeles.



The Asian American Studies Program recognizes with appreciation:

- Suzanne Lee, whose expansive bilingual educational vision and relentless grass-roots community leadership in Boston Chinatown over four decades are being celebrated at UMass Boston's 2016 Commencement as she receives the Doctor of Laws degree, *Honoris Causa*.
- graduating students Mónica Elias Orellana who received the 2016 Chelsea Member of the Year Award from The Neighborhood Developers and Linda Thiem who received the UMB Beacons 2016 Graduate Student Leadership Award; and AsAmSt student applicants and recipients of 2016 scholarship awards from the Asian Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF), including Sokpagna Chuon.
- Outstanding doctoral students and AsAmSt instructors who gained highly competitive grant funding for their doctoral research projects: MinJin Kim (Nursing) received a two-year award from the American Cancer Society for her project, "I Want to Know More about the HPV Vaccine: Stories by Korean Young Women" and Mai See Yang (Gerontology), whose project, "The Impacts of Life Events on Depression in Later Life in Older Hmong Immigrants," received a two-year NIH R36 Aging Research Dissertation Award to Increase Diversity.
- AsAmSt faculty Loan Dao, who was appointed to serve on the MA Governor's Advisory Committee on Refugees and Immigrants in 2015-2016; Shirley Tang, who received a prestigious research fellowship from the Penn Center for Minority-Serving Institutions for 2015-2016; and Karen Suyemoto who was appointed as director of the Transnational Cultural Community Studies (TCCS) graduate program in the College of Liberal Arts, beginning in AY 2017.
- AsAmSt alumni -- Thary Sun Lim, Tri Quach, and Kim Soun Ty -- who each completed their first year of the TCCS graduate program at UMB and Rich Truong who has applied to TCCS for the coming year; and alumni Ray Chiu and Van (Bia) Vu who were admitted to UMB's Rehabilitation Counseling master's program in the School for Global Inclusion & Social Development with full funding provided through a US Department of Education - Rehabilitation Services Administration training grant.
- all of the AsAmSt teaching faculty for 2015-16, and everyone who participated in the proposal development and transition of UMB's Asian American Student Success Program (AASSP) to enable a new year of AANAPISI activities, services, and institution-building initiatives led by Dr. Patricia Neilson and funded by the US Department of Education - with special appreciation to AASSP core staff: Sara Boxell, Frances, Chow, Pratna Kem, Alane Shanks, and to Vice Provost Joan Becker as project PI and co-PIs, Peter Kiang and Paul Watanabe.

For more information, visit UMB's Asian American Studies Program at [www.umb.edu/asamst](http://www.umb.edu/asamst) and the Asian American Student Success Program at <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/aassp>.