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# Aletter from the

shalini shankar



### Dear Northwestern Alumni and Friends,

We also hosted a lovely cocktail reception for Happy summer! This has been a momenfriends of AASP at the Association for Asian tous year for our program, building on and American Studies meetings in Miami, FL. In addition to honoring our graduating minors this June, we also bid farewell our two visiting faculty, Laura Fujikawa and Jennifer Hyunh, who have both contributed tremendously to AASP. Next year we welcome two new visiting faculty, Douglas Ishii and Justin The major headline: **WE HAVE A MAJOR!** Tse. Additionally, we are excited to collaborate with the Middle East/ North African Studies (MENA) program to welcome our Arab American Studies postdoc Umayyah Cable. They join our core faculty—Ji-Yeon Yuh, Nitasha Sharma, and me—and our affiliates in other departments. Along with our wonderful administrator Cheryl Jue, we welcome 2016-2017 and will continue to build Asian American Studies.

extending the enthusiasm with which we ended 2014-2015. Thank you for staying invested in the Northwestern Asian American Studies community. As director, it is my pleasure to reconnect with you and bring you up to date about our events and happenings. Since its inception in 1999, the Asian American Studies program has only been allowed to offer a minor, despite ongoing student interest in a major. With the support garnered from our 20th anniversary celebration in spring 2015 and dedicated student petitioning and organizing in Fall 2015, the Weinberg Arts and Science faculty passed the major this winter, with no opposition. This victory has received significant local and national This wraps up my second action-packed media coverage, as well as shows of support year as director. I am fortunate to lead one of the most dynamic and engaged academic from Asian American Studies units at other universities. Students will be able to officially units at Northwestern, and look forward to declare their intent to major in Asian Amerithe final year of my three-year term. can Studies in September 2016! We are so glad you are part of the North-

This year AASP sponsored a number of western Asian American Studies communiwell-attended, provocative events. In the fall ty. Please send us your alumni perspectives, we invited two guest speakers to campus to news, and updates on your life and career. present their research about Asian American We would love to showcase them in our next Sporting Cultures, as well as a hold a book edition of this newsletter. As always, we hope launch for my newly released book. In winter to see you at events and look forward to staywe had a number of guest speakers and as al- ing in touch. ways, celebrated Lunar New Year with faculty colleagues and our minors by sharing a pan-Have a wonderful summer! Asian feast. Spring was similarly eventful, with mystery writer Steph Cha's campus visit *Yours truly*, and our inaugural karaoke with minors and Shalini Shankar faculty-definitely an event to remember! Director

# 20 Years In The Making

A quarter century of protests, petitions, and a 23-day hunger strike finally came to fruition with the approval of a full-fledged major. The program, established after eight years of campaigning beginning in 1991, has only been permitted to offer a minor. With recent petitioning and activism, along with several ad hoc majors underscoring student investment and interest, the major passed with the support of the Weinberg faculty and dean in February 2016. Students will be able to declare their intent to major beginning this September.

### The Daily Northwestern



for 12 days in 1995 during a hunger strike protesting the lack of a major. Students (right) rally at The Rock in 1998 in favor of the major's creation

### **By FATHMA RAHMAN** THE DAILY NORTHW @fathma\_rahman

The proposal for an Asian-American studies major was approved at the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences faculty meeting Wednesday afternoon, officially making the major an option for all students at the start of the 2016-17 academic

Presented by three core faculty members from the Asian American Studies Program, Professors Ji-Yeon Yuh, Nitasha Sharma and Shalini Shankar, the proposal came in light of recent student demand for the major as well as 20 years of campus activism pushing for its addition.

The proposal for the Asian-American studies major was voted on and passed with an overwhelming majority in the span of five minutes, Sharma said.

"After we voted it in, I started to clap and the room followed," Sharma said. "But then when the legal studies major was passed right after,

people clapped again. People didn't understand that I was thinking of the hunger strike, I was thinking of student activism - I was thinking that this is momentous."

Weinberg's major proposal guidelines include a two-part process to officially add a major to the school. The first part requires a reading of the proposal at a faculty meeting, which took place Jan. 13. Sharma told The Daily last month that there was no negative sentiment toward the proposal at the January meeting and surmised it was likely to be passed at the next meeting.

The second part of the major proposal requires a vote at the next faculty meeting, which took place Wednesday afternoon, at which time the major was officially added to the list of Weinberg majors. The proposal included the official contents of the major, providing the general overview of the major's necessity, as well as the specific courses that students will take and the list of re-

In 1998, Vishal Vaid (Weinberg '01) participated in a large-scale rally that included a petition of students ready to declare the minor if it were offered. He continued to engage in quirements they will have to meet. the ensuing conversations until the On April 12, 1995, students minor was finally created, and was

### **MAJOR APPROVED**

MORE THAN 20 YEARS IN THE MAKING Protesters (left) demonstrate in front of Rebecca Crown Center in 1995 demanding an Asian-American studies major. Charles Chun (center) faster

camped at The Rock for 23 days as part of a hunger strike to push for the establishment of an Asian-American studies program. The University established a program four years later, which only included a minor - until Wednesday.

Sumun Pendakur (Weinberg '98) participated in the hunger strike during the spring of her freshman year alongside other students pushing to establish an Asian-American studies program.

"I don't think I have enough words - I'm overjoyed, I'm speechless, I'm incredibly proud of the stewardship that the Asian American Studies faculty has demonstrated, and the passion of the current students is amazing — not just the passion, but their dedication," Pendakur said. "I am beyond thrilled."

one of the two students to first graduate with the minor in 2001.

"The school didn't think this was something important for a very long time," Vaid said. "There was a lot of unfairness and injustice to that, so to see the minor develop into a major shows that the school has matured and makes it an even more rewarding place for people to go and gain these experiences and knowledge."

Before the program is able to teach the major, Sharma said it plans to make three new hires a tenure-track hire, an assistant professor of instruction and a postdoctoral fellow. She said she hopes that, in the future, further recognition of the major will allow for more hires.

"We're going to pause and celebrate this victory now and then later we can talk about the next pressing issue," Sharma said. "Programs like ours need to have the ability to hire and tenure our own people without having to pair with the department that grants tenure - and that has to be the next step."



### Still Hungry

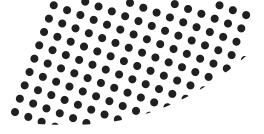
### why i decided to major in asian american studies

Ironically, majoring in Asian American Studies feels like the most non-Asian American thing I could have done. Even at the dawn of my senior year, I feel pressured to squeeze in some lastminute technical skills, because somehow I still feel guilty for letting two years go by without a math course—a personal record.



Nonetheless, Asian American Studies has taught me so much about myself through a community of intelligent and passionate professors, mentors, and students in and outside of the classroom setting. I've never felt so involved with my own immigration narrative, let alone with the rights of people of color domestically and internationally. For instance, my freshman seminar professor taught me how to critically engage our shared Asian American identities in dialogues around race, ethnicity, gender, discrimination, violence, and borders. Ever since, I've only been encouraged to bridge my studies and politics together as a legal advocacy intern for Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago, a research assistant and oral historian for Korean American Activism, an intern and scholar for two AAPI scholarships in Washington, D.C., and immigrant justice rights activist on campus. I feel blessed to be part of a program that has provided so many academic, work, and life experiences. Declaring this major is inherently political, because I'm engaging in a scholarship that empowers me to challenge systems of power and dominance. These past few years, I've been nourished through academic work, conversations, discussions, celebrations, and mentorships. While the program was started by a hunger strike, I feel privileged with second helpings. However, I know the program has not reached its full potential yet. We're still hungry and ready to empower more students with knowledge.





A CAR

Hayeon Kim, '16











asianamerican.northwestern.edu 💽 🤋









### karaoke with the minors



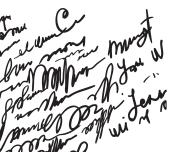
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### Being Asian in America

On May 17, 2016, Asian American Studies faculty speak to a packed house of over 150 students on "Being Asian in America." This event was hosted by a dozen Asian/Asian American student groups. Before the program, students were asked to write answers to questions posed on a chalkboard.









## AAAS Annual <u>Conference</u> in Miami

AASP continues its tradition, started under the leadership of Carolyn Chen, of hosting a reception at the annual Association for Asian American Studies Conference. This April we were excited to hold this party in Miami. We were pleased to see current and former members of the AASP community, including former postdoctoral fellow Simeon Man (Assistant Professor of History at the University of California, San Diego), Jinah Kim (Assistant Professor of Communications, California State University at Northridge), and Colleen Daniher (Postdoctoral Fellow, Brown University). The entire AASP faculty attended the conference where Nitasha Sharma finished her three-year term on the Executive Board.



AASP Reception at the Assocation for Asian American Studies national conference held in Miami



Simeon Man, Jinah Kim, and Colleen Daniher enjoying a reunion at the NU AASP hosted reception.



AASP Director Shalini Shankar, host of this year's reception, catches up with former AASP Graduate Assistant Ethan Caldwell.



### End-ofyear Celebration

At the end of each year, the Asian American Studies community gets together to celebrate the accomplishments of our students, send off our graduating minors and enjoy some good food, friends and music. Check out the photos from our endof-the-year reception on the next few pages.

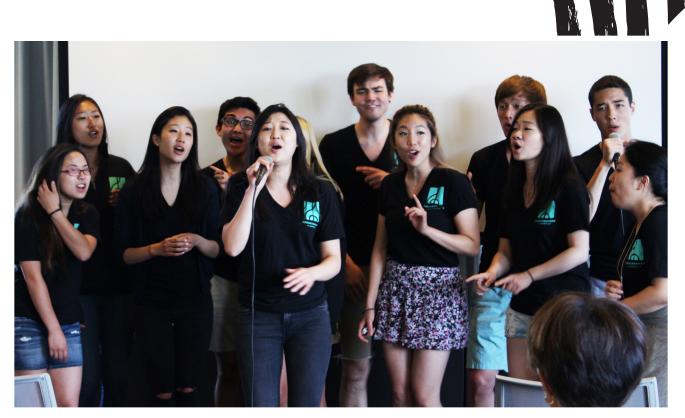


Asian American Studies students celebrate graduation and end of the 2015-16 school year.

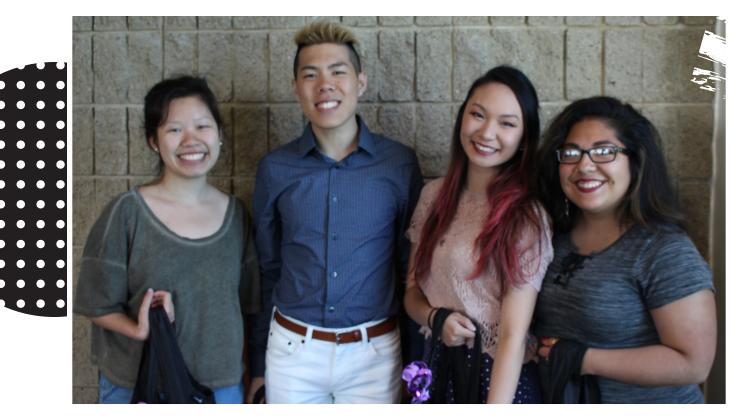


Cheryl Jue, AASP Coordinator and Phan Le (Class 2017) get a taste of purple.





East Asian interest acapella group, The Treblemakers, performs



Our graduating AASP minors: (from left to right) Qian Kun Tan, Johan Qin, Theanne Liu, Cinthya Rodriguez

# Advertising

The Asian American Studies Program collaborated with the Department of Anthropology to celebrate the publication of Shalini Shankar's new book Advertising Diversity: Ad Agencies and the Creation of Asian American Consumers (Duke University Press). Based on ethnographic fieldwork in agencies that advertise and market to Chinese, Filipino, Korean, South Asian, and Vietnamese populations in the US, the book explores how language and culture are used to reach these consumers, as well as how Asian Americans are represented in mainstream advertising. The event included remarks by core AASP faculty member Ji-Yeon Yuh, and Anthropology's Jessica Winegar and Ana Aparicio, as well as a reception.

**ADVERTISING** DIVERSITY

### <u>Student</u> Awards

These awards honor and recognize outstanding students in Asian American Studies. Undergraduate students are formally nominated by faculty in the spring quarter and then approved by the Committee on Asian American Awards.

**Outstanding Achievement in Asian American Studies** is

presented to graduating seniors who excel in AAS coursework and foster initiatives and demonstrate leadership, both within the classroom and in co-curricular activities sponsored by the Asian American Studies Program.

Distinguished Essay in Asian American Studies is presented to students who have written the best essays on any topic related to Asian American studies.

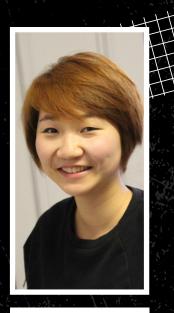
**Good Citizenship in Asian American Studies** is presented to students who actively and regularly participate in activities sponsored by the Asian American studies program and honors their meaningful contribution towards community building.

Asian American Community Summer Fellowship awards one Asian American Studies Minor a \$3,000 grant to pursue an internship at a non-profit community organization that serves the Asian American community.



### **KEVIN LUONG OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT**

DISTINGUISHED ESSAY Houston Chinatown as a Second Home: Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation in Chinese and







### **THEANNE LIU**

Southeast Asian American Young Adults, Final Paper for Ethnic Economies and Neighborhoods





Chinese-American Attitudes Toward Mental Illness: How Culture, Family, and Experience Influence Perceptions of Stigma, Senior Thesis in Sociology



**PHAN LE** ASIAN AMERICAN SUMMER COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP Equality Illinois



**MIA ZANZUCCHI** WINNER OF NEWSLETTER TITLE CONTEST AASPire

### Colloquim on Ethnicity & Diaspora

Coordinated by graduate students with the assistance of faculty, the Colloquium on Ethnicity and Diaspora (CED) provides an interdisciplinary intellectual space for faculty, students, and interested parties to interrogate issues in transnational history, comparative race and ethnic studies, critical race theory, community formations, and citizenship. This year's coordinators were Mohammad Bilal Nasir (Anthropology '18) and Kelly In Chung (Performance Studies '18).

CED showcases ethnic studies opportunities and scholarship on campus for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as, faculty, and fosters a cross-discipline dialogue encouraging collaboration between various departments and programs. This year's schedule comprised two speakers and one panel discussion, and 3 book discussions, one per quarter. Each speaker and each book has been chosen to address ethnicity in America, and/or comparative studies in race, ethnicity, migration, and diaspora.

Contact: northwesternced@gmail.com









THE COLLOQUIUM ON ETHNICITY AND DIASPORA PRESENTS

PROPESSOR LISA LOWE TUPTS UNIVERSITY



### "ARCHIVES, PORTS, MUSCUMS"

OPENING REMARKS BY PROFESSOR JOSHUA CHAMBERS-LETSON

### MAY 19, 2016 AT 5PM TGS COMMONS 2122 SHERIDAN RD

ALICE KAPLAN INSTITU W, ASIAN-AM STUDIES PROGRAM, BUFFETT INSTITUTE OF GL IATIVE FOR COMPARATIVE RACE & lish, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program, Init

**JI-YEON YUH** Associate professor, History

(Tom

### Core faculty

SHALINI SHANKAR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ANTHROPOLOGY

### NITASHA SHARMA

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES, ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

### Transitions

Our two departing visiting faculty have been a wonderful addition to AASP. Laura Fugikawa joined us from University of Chicago at Illinois and taught courses on gender, sexuality, history, and settler colonialism. Jennifer Hyunh, who is finishing her doctorate in Sociology at Princeton offered courses on Southeast Asian Americans and ethnic neighborhoods. On behalf of students and colleagues, I extend our collective gratitude for their service and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

We welcome three new faculty members: Visiting Assistant Professor Douglas Ishii from the University of Colorado, who will offer courses in Asian American literature, popular culture, and gender and sexuality; Visiting Assistant Professor Justin Tse from the University of Washington, who will offer courses on religion, politics, and social movements; and Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow Umayyah Cable from the University of Southern California, who will offer courses in Arab American Studies and Palestinian American visual culture, in collaboration with the Middle East/ North African Studies (MENA) program.

### WELCOME TO OUR NEW FACULTY MEMBERS!

### JUSTIN TSE, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Justin Tse earned his PhD in Geography from the University of British Columbia and was Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Postdoctoral Fellow at the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington. He tends to publish on the range of ideologies and theologies that make up Asia and Asian America and is lead editor of a forthcoming volume Theological Reflections on the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement (Palgrave). He is working on a book manuscript titled Religious Politics in Pacific Space: Grounding Cantonese Protestant Theologies in Secular Civil Societies.

### **DOUGLAS ISHII, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

Douglas S. Ishii received his PhD with a Certificate in Critical Theory from the Department of American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. His research and teaching interests include Comparative Ethnic Studies, Queer of Color Critique, and U.S. Multiethnic Literature, Film, and Media. His research has been included in Techno-Orientalism (Rutgers UP, 2015) and Global Asian American Popular Cultures (NYU, 2016). He was previously the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and a Visiting Assistant Professor of Asian American History and Media at the University of Maryland, College Park.

### UMAYYAH CABLE, MELLON POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW (WITH MENA) ‡

Umayyah Cable earned a PhD in American Studies & Ethnicity and a certificate in Visual Studies from the University of Southern California. Her research and teaching interests span the fields of ethnic studies, film and media studies, and queer theory, with a particular focus on how marginalized or underrepresented identity-based and cause-based groups leverage film culture in order to foment social, cultural, or political change. She is currently conducting new research for a manuscript based on her dissertation: Cinematic Activism: Film Festivals and the Exhibition of Palestinian Cultural Politics in the United States.







### FAREWELL TO: SOO RYON YOON, AASP'S 2015–2016 GRADUATE ASSISTANT

My name is Soo Ryon Yoon. I am a Fubright scholar trained in performance studies at Northwestern University. I joined the Asian American Studies Program (AASP) in 2015-2016 as the graduate assistant. During my GA tenure, I worked with Professor Laura Fugikawa as her TA in "Asian Americans and Pop Culture," and worked as the assistant to Cheryl Jue and Professor Shalini Shankar.



Two things led me to consider joining the program. First, the AASP provided me with funds that allowed me to continue writing my PhD dissertation Dancing Africa, (Un)Doing Koreanness: Circulation of African Culture in Contemporary South Korea, that focuses on performance of global and diasporic blackness and contemporary racial politics in South Korea. As a scholar, I am ultimately interested in finding out why and how performance acts as an important component in building, practicing, and transforming racial thoughts. Second, while my dissertation was shaped as a performance studies and transnational Asian studies project, Asian American Studies and studies of the global Afro-Asia connections were also crucial to my research. Therefore, I am indebted to Asian American Studies scholarship for its critical analyses of global comparative race and ethnicity and its investment in social justice. My year spent as the AASP GA was a wonderful journey that had to end too soon. I met so many dedicated individuals (especially the AASP minors!) whose commitment to social justice have revitalized my scholarly rigor and interest. Witnessing a series of events that ultimately led to the endorsement of Asian American Studies major was one of the most cherished moments of my GAship.

I recently defended my dissertation and I will be joining Yale University's MacMillan Center as a postdoctoral associate and lecturer in 2016-2017. I will be teaching an advanced undergraduate seminar, "Race, Gender, and Performance in East Asia" where my students and I will watch and listen to contemporary dance, theatre, and music (including K-pop) and discuss representations of race and gender in transnational Korea, Japan, PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. While I am sad to be leaving Northwestern, I hope I can continue to carry on what I learned from my experiences at AASP.



-Soo Ryon Yoon





### <u>Words From</u> <u>Our Alumni</u>

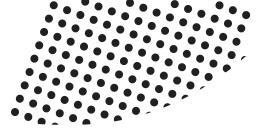
Our commitment to fostering student leaders has made us a dynamic center for student life at Northwestern University. Students from the Program have regularly gone on to graduate school, medical school and law school, worked for national publications and brands, started non-profits, produced documentaries and more. Check out what our alumni are up to now and see how their education in Asian American Studies has influenced their lives and careers beyond Northwestern.

### **KEVIN LUONG, POLITICAL SCIENCE '16**

The Asian American Studies Program will always be a home for me. I took my first class in my second year at Northwestern, and I remember the excitement at learning about histories and narratives similar to mine. During the rest of my time here, ethnic studies has provided perspectives and frameworks that continue to drive my work in and outside of academia today. I will never forget how my activist path began in part here. I will be forever grateful to our community. The faculty, staff, and students have always been inspirational, teaching me that everyone has the will and ability to change and create change.

Finally, the establishment of the Asian American studies major is something I am proud to be a part of. I know the twenty plus years of activism will continue to become stronger alongside the continued growth of our community. As I graduate, It gives me hope and pride to see the activism and change that is already being enacted on campus by younger undergraduates. I am confident that they will be able to inspire an even younger generation of students to shape their world for the better.









### **ZOE BROCKMAN, CREATIVE WRITING '15**

It's rare that a college course is able to radically change the way you see the world, or how you live your life. But every single class I took in the Asian American Studies Program did just that. After my very first class in Asian American Studies ended, I remember sitting in my seat, whirl-winded, feeling as if my universe had suddenly expanded. It was mind-blowing to know that people who looked like me had their own long histories of struggle in America, just as it was empowering to see a woman of color standing tall and strong in front of the classroom, critiquing our country and talking frankly about racism. In that class I learned to think for myself, and to use my new knowledge to think critically about news stories and pop culture— and I never looked at the world the same again.

Later, when I took a course on Mixed Race Studies, I was so inspired by the literature I was reading and the discussions we were having in class that my own identity transformed. My mother is Japanese, and my father white, and I'd become frustrated with the reality that in America, people saw me as Japanese, and in Japan, people saw me as a white American. As a "mixed" person, I thought I had no real home, no place of acceptance. But taking the mixed race class made me realize that my ambiguous looks can be used as a powerful political statement, and that by refusing to identify with any "race" or nationality, I can disrupt ideas about the fixity of race.

Not only were Asian American Studies classes life-changing, but outside of the classroom, the program had a huge impact on me as well. During the summer after my freshman year, a



professor who taught in the program invited me to be her research assistant, and allowed me to spend three weeks in Hawai'i, where we conducted ethnographic interviews and did participant observation. In those three weeks, I fell in love with the process of interviewing and researching, and I am infinitely thankful for that life-altering experience!

Though a year has already passed since I've graduated, the knowledge I gained in my Asian American Studies courses continues to influence how I think, and how I live my life. Recognizing that the current structure of our capitalist society causes us to waste food, resources, and energy-and knowing what effect this has on marginalized peoples throughout the world—I've made it my goal to learn how to grow my own food sustainably, buy less and create more, and use up less (or no) energy in my everyday life. I hope to share what I am learning as well-I am currently writing a memoir with my organic farmer father about life on our farm, and in the near future, I hope to volunteer in self-sufficient communities across the globeespecially in communities where peoples' ways of living are threatened by climate change or by corporate greed—and share their stories and wisdom.

I am endlessly grateful for the Asian American Studies Program for giving me the knowledge and the courage to live my life meaningfully and purposefully—and for changing my life, one course at a time!





### EMILY SRISARAJIVAKUL, EDUCATION & SOCIAL POLICY '11

Emily Srisarajivakul is a doctoral candidate in Georgia State University's School Psychology program. She received an M.Ed in Human Development and Psychology from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2014 and a BS in Education and Social Policy from Northwestern University in 2011.

In 2012, she became a language arts teacher at Ekamai International School in Bangkok, Thailand, where she worked with an ethnically and culturally diverse



population of elementary and high schoolers. As an Asian American studies minor at NU, Emily was exposed to ideas about colonization, social justice, and systems of oppression, which led her to instill values of equality and open-mindedness in her students, shaping them to become responsible global citizens. After proudly implementing a multicultural curriculum in her classroom, she became interested in socioemotional issues, bullying, and identity formation, especially among her transnational students. This led her back to the States, where she did attachment theory research at Cambridge Health Alliance and served as a mental health counselor at McLean Hospital's Gunderson Residence after getting her M.Ed at Harvard.

In 2016, Emily accepted an admission offer from the College of Education and Human Development at Georgia State and received the Dean's Research Doctoral Fellowship, which granted her funding to pursue research on school- and family-based interventions to disrupt the development of personality disorders in childhood and adolescence. Because of the great influence AASP still has on her, she is also working on a project aimed at increasing access to mental health services for local Asian American students and their families.



## <u>Support Asian</u> <u>American Studies</u>

We need you! Your donations allow us to create community-based learning and enrichment opportunities for our students and host events that enlighten the broader Northwestern Community. Please give what you can, your contribution matters! Click here to support the Program with a donation or visit our website at asianamerican.northwestern.edu.



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### Northwestern



Asian American Studies Program

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