

AAS  
report

**To:** Carol Folt, Dean of the faculty  
**From:** Special Advisory Committee  
**Re:** Curricular Options for ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES AT DARTMOUTH  
**Date:** May 31, 2006

As part of the assessment of the potential for Asian American Studies at Dartmouth, you and COP charged us with the following:

- (1) to prepare an inventory of relevant courses already in the curriculum and faculty members with substantive interests in Asian American Studies;
- (2) to determine the desirability and feasibility of additional courses, including the possibility of a minor;
- (3) to determine the resources required, if any, to meet student demand and pedagogical need;
- (4) to consider administrative structures (e.g., connections to existing Departments or Programs) that might help to facilitate Asian American Studies for students and faculty.

Our committee convened in the winter and spring terms of this year. Along with our own deliberations, we consulted key faculty and administrators. Richard Wright also met several times with student leaders (Marie Choi '06 and Timothy Mok '08). Many members of the committee attended the rich discussion generated by the Asian American Studies conference on campus ("Crossings and Crossroads") on May 5-6, 2006. What follows is our report, which we divide into three sections. First, Asian American Studies at Dartmouth and in the US academy; second, new hires, additional courses, and a minor in AAS; and third, new structures and administrative support.

## 1. Asian American Studies

### a. AAS at Dartmouth

Asian American Studies has been taught at Dartmouth for some time; until 2005 Vernon Takeshita probably offered the largest suite of courses. In 2005, Jean Kim, History, and Jeff Santa Ana, English, joined our faculty on tenure-track appointments as Assistant Professors. Jean Kim occupies the position that Vern Takeshita held for several years. In addition, Woon-Ping Chin, Visiting Professor of English, has taught Asian American courses for 6 years on our campus. These colleagues currently teach several AAS-related courses; the ORC currently lists eight.

#### *Asian American Studies Courses (last two years)*

- History 32: Asian American History Through World War II (Takeshita W05, Kim W06)
- History 33: The Asian American Movement: From "Model Minority" to National Political Coalition (Takeshita W05, Kim W06)
- English 60: Asian American Performance (Chin S04)
- English 60.5: Gender and Sexuality in Asian American Literature (Chin S05)
- English 67.4: A History of Asian America in Novels and Prose (Santa Ana F05)
- English 72.5: Transnationalism in Asian American Literature and Cultural Criticism (Santa Ana W06)

- English 72.6: The Autobiographical Impulse in Asian American Literature (Chin W05)
- English 72.6: Asian American Poetry (Chin S06)

About another two dozen courses, such as Sociology 42--Constructing Race and Ethnicity in the U.S. and Sociology 45--Educational Issues Among Immigrant Children or Geography 28 Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the US or specialized seminars in several departments offer significant content on Asian American cultures and identities.

#### b. AAS in the US Academy

##### i) The Association of Asian American Studies

Jeff Santa Ana and Jean Kim were hired with the explicit goal of helping institutionalize AAS on campus. The courses they offer are relatively new to Dartmouth but AAS has had a professional academic profile for over 25 years. The Association for Asian American Studies was formed in 1979 to 1) promote teaching and research in the field of Asian American Studies; (2) foster better understanding and closer ties between among various sub-components within Asian American Studies: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Hawaiian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, Pacific Islander, and other groups; (3) sponsor professional activities including conferences and symposia, special projects and events; (4) facilitate increased communication and scholarly exchange among teachers, researchers, and students in the field of Asian American Studies; (5) advocate the interests and welfare of Asian Americana Studies and Asian Americans; and (6) educate American society about the history and aspirations of Asian American ethnic minorities. The Association has sponsored national conferences since 1980. The Association publishes a quarterly Newsletter containing information about the latest research and publications in the field, job announcements, reviews, and opinions. The Association also publishes a thematic book based upon the proceedings of the previous year's conference and, since 1998, the Journal of Asian American Studies (Johns Hopkins University Press).

##### ii) Departments and Programs at other institutions

At least 60 colleges and universities offer Asian American Studies as an undergraduate major, minor, "concentration", "certificate", special major, a track in an Ethnic Studies major, etc. (see Appendix 1 for the full list, compiled by Marie Choi '06). Colleges and universities in California are significantly overrepresented in this group. Some UC schools have relatively large AAS departments with tenure lines. This is a changing geography, however, and California schools do not dominate the landscape of Asian American Studies as they once did.

In the Ivies, Brown's Department of American Civilization offers an AAS "concentration"; Columbia's American Studies Program provides for an Asian American "concentration", Cornell also offers a "concentration" in Asian American Studies with 4.5 FTE in Asian American Studies in joint appointments with academic departments; and undergraduates can minor in Asian American Studies in a program of that name at the University of Pennsylvania. (Please see Appendix 2 for details.)

Other private Colleges offer courses in Asian American Studies. For example, students at Colby cannot major or minor specifically in Asian American Studies but may concentrate in Asian American Studies as part of the major in American Studies. Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts pool resources to provide a Certificate Program in Asian/Pacific/American Studies (see Appendix 3 for details).

## 2. New hires, additional courses, and a minor in AAS.

The time has come for Dartmouth to move from an ad hoc collection of Asian American-related courses to offer a formal and coherent program in Asian American Studies. Our argument has nothing to do with the number of Asian American students on campus or attending elite colleges and universities. It does respond in part to the fact that after several years of lobbying, the undergraduate Pan Asian Council shared with the President, the Provost, the Dean of Faculty, and other senior officers a petition in May 2004 listing 1115 signatures calling for the establishment of a minor in Asian American Studies (Appendix 4). Our main argument, however, is intellectual.

Asian American Studies focuses on race and racialization primarily in the context of the United States. Hand in hand with Latino Studies but also Jewish Studies and Native American Studies, Asian American Studies tends to disrupt the common black-white definition of race still prevalent today. In this and many other ways, Asian American Studies illuminates the whole of American History and contemporary American experience. Such a program would thus complement and overlap with existing programs at Dartmouth such as African and African American Studies and LALACS. Asian American Studies, however, not only draws from but also challenges existing bodies of knowledge to develop new approaches that help explain the positions of Asians within the U.S. social formation. Of course, Asian American Studies also accounts for other positions and subjectivities, including those of gender, class and sexuality. A formal program in Asian American studies thus fills an important void in Dartmouth's intellectual offerings by advancing an education better reflective of and relevant to the historical and contemporary realities of all US residents. As one faculty colleague we interviewed put it: "it's a matter of how [we do this], not when".

### a. Two New Appointments

Like other interdisciplinary programs concerned with identity and culture, we recommend a program that requires students to study Asian Americans comparatively across disciplines. Dartmouth should begin searching immediately for a senior colleague with a specialty in Asian American Studies. To complement the faculty already among us, especially our two new tenure-track colleagues in English and History, we recommend that the search be conducted broadly in the Social Sciences.

This new colleague would offer Asian American courses from her/his home department that would complement and augment our current offerings. This would move Dartmouth

toward the critical threshold of faculty and courses necessary to sustain an intellectual environment centered around Asian American Studies as well as an associated formal minor. Jean Kim and Jeff Santa Ana offer Asian American courses; there is no guarantee, however, that their home departments in any given year may require them to teach courses that do not fall under the heading of Asian American. In addition, with so few colleagues with this expertise, faculty colleagues taking sabbaticals and other leaves may significantly diminish curricula offerings in Asian American Studies because the home departments may hire visitors who have a different expertise from those faculty on leave.

AAS at Dartmouth is a fledgling collection of courses built primarily around the intellectual interests of two young colleagues with newly minted PhDs. Their professional development depends on us providing them with an intellectual environment that will nurture their full potential. This involves mentoring in AAS that complements the support they receive in their home departments as well as helping alleviate the burden of advising that, in an institution where the diversity of the faculty nowhere near matches the racial pluralism of the undergraduate student body, always falls disproportionately on nonwhite (junior) faculty.

Other benefits associated with this hire include adding to the diversity of the faculty. Just as a search for a new colleague to occupy the E. E. Just professorship yielded a plural pool of applicants, the chances are high that search for a colleague with an expertise in Asian American studies will yield an especially diverse pool.

A further benefit of a search in Social Sciences is that placing an additional faculty line in this division helps address some of the enrollment problems faced by many Social Science departments.

We think it unlikely that this search for a senior colleague would be successful without a guarantee of a further tenure track appointment, within the next few years, associated with another faculty whose intellectual interests center on AAS. Again, this appointment may be made in a department or program where enrollment pressures are unusually high. Such an appointment would guarantee the Arts and Sciences with sufficient courses to staff a minor, signal the institution's commitment to AAS, and help establish the critical mass of faculty on campus with AAS interests.

b. A new Minor in AAS

Among other duties, the new senior colleague would work with the newly appointed Associate Dean Whaley to plan and implement the new minor in AAS. We leave the details to be worked out later. AAS, however, will never be very large given Dartmouth's scale, so we recommend that the curriculum be built with few "core" members--but lots of allies in other programs and departments.

A typical 7 course model, however, takes the following form:

1. A foundational course
2. Five courses, at least one from each of three areas:

- a. Expression (art, drama, literature)
  - b. US Intersections (course content should have 25% plus AAS content but could on US politics, race ethnicity)
  - c. Global Intersections--connections with area studies
3. Capstone course--independent study

Building the faculty and the curriculum in a stepwise fashion leaves open the possibility for a AAS major should student interest and enrollments warrant such a development.

### 3. Staff support and new administrative structures

In spring term 2006, you pre-empted one of our key recommendations by appointing Lindsay Whaley as the new Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences, whose duties includes The Programs. We sought such an appointment because, like you, this committee believes the time had come for a Dean to have primary responsibility for programs and thus to work with faculty colleagues to rethink program structure and program support in the Arts and Sciences.

We have a loose set of recommendations about what form this new structure should take. Dean Whaley will play a key role along with program faculty to broker a conversation necessary for restructuring. Whatever new structure results, it must involve faculty consensus. AAS can be a catalyst to this restructuring because the new "program" has no obvious home. The program we sketch needs physical space and staff support. It is also built on new connections with other programs and departments. We want this building to stimulate a broad conversation about the future structure of programs at Dartmouth, especially those devoted in part or in whole to the theorization and analysis of race and identity. We want to see AAS as part of a loose federation of faculty and programs who explore racial formation and its implications in the US in the contexts of increased transnational activities and proliferating diasporic populations. (Other colleges and universities have begun to rethink programs in this way; we have been particularly drawn, for example, to the restructuring that NYU is achieving. Their new "Department of Social and Cultural Analysis" offers such a model.) Students could select specific courses of study from among the several majors and minors currently offered. These include majors and minors in AAAS, LALACS, and Women's and Gender Studies; and minors in American Studies, Asian American Studies, and Latino Studies.

This committee suspects that any new structure must navigate a new course by respecting program autonomy while identifying new alliances and connections.

Personal Comment from RW. I think, in the long run, faculty lines are key. Programs will always play second fiddle to Departments if they continue to have few FTE devoted to them. Currently WGST has .5 FTE; LALACS .5 FTE. Compare with NAS and ENVS who have 5 or 6 each. Do we want to go here?

Richard Wright, Geography/LALACS (Chair)  
James Dorsey, AMELL  
Kirk Endicott, Anthropology/AMES  
Steve Ericson, AMES/History  
Marty Favor, AAAS/English  
Veronica Fuechtner, German/  
Jean Kim, History  
Jeffrey Santa Ana, English  
Lindsay Whaley, Linguistics/Classics