Report prompts Asian program

Plan to integrate students

By KIMBERLY FISHER
Lantern staff writer

A report prepared by an associate professor of social work has prompted the university to establish an Asian American Student Program.

Dale Lee was given an affirmative action grant to study the Asian American population at Ohio State in 1984.

"In 1980, when I came to OSU, I was dismayed that there was no anchoring point for Asian American students and staff," he said.

When Lee arrived, he found many small ethnic groups on campus - Chinese, Japanese, Korean - but none of them had the political power to unify the voices and organize programs.

"Even small Ohio colleges had an Asian program, as do Michigan and Michigan State. But here was a very large university with a large Asian population and no services," Lee said.

He said there are about 3,000 Asian students at Ohio State, including those with U.S. citizenship and visiting international students.

The new program will be housed in the Office of Minority Affairs as part of the Office of Student Life.

Rich Hollingsworth, acting dean of student life said, "Lee's report was the first time the institution began asking, 'Who are Asian Americans?'

Hollingsworth said a proposal was introduced last year to establish the program.

Last summer, the provost approved the request and gave permission to hire a full-time coordinator. Hollingsworth said a coordinator should be hired by the end of January.

"Asian Americans are in a relatively unique circumstance of being perceived as a successful minority that is fully integrated into American society and having homogenous backgrounds," Hollingsworth said.

"This is absolutely not true. They come from many different cultures," he said. "Chinese views are different than Japanese.

"Right now we are being very cautious to set things up in the right sequence," Hollingsworth said.

The sequence is a four-step plan. First, the needs and issues of the Asian American community will be assessed, he said.

Second, the group will begin to advocate to inform the university community about the needs and perspectives.

Third, specific programs will be developed and the group will begin to work with other units in the campus community to increase sensitivity and to instill responsibility.

Fourth, the inter-cultural dimension will be looked at to help non-Asian Americans develop an appreciation of the Asian culture and their contributions to the university.

Hollingsworth believes that the Asian-American community will accept the service positively.

"We have met with Professors Lee and (Daniel) Chow (of the College of Law), and the president of the Asian American student organization, and haven't made a step without them," Hollingsworth said.

Hollingsworth said it is important to remember that the program needs to be a grass-roots effort, not something imposed.

Lee said, "This is a great beginning. I am glad to see the university paying attention to the quality of student life."

Lee said the program can be used as a recruiting tool for prospective Asian American students: "They would have an anchoring point and their parents would know that their interests would not be neglected."

"I believe that the coordinator will be viewed by the Asian students as the coordinating catalyst," he said.
Asian-American program created

By Michelle L. Weber
Lantern staff writer

In an effort to meet the needs of the fastest-growing minority group on campus, Asian-Americans, Minority Student Services has funded creation of a new office — Asian-American Student Programs.

Sheila Kapur, coordinator for the program, said the office will offer Asian-Americans counseling and support, act as their liaison with the administration and work to educate the campus about Asian-Americans.

Kapur said the new office is for Asian-American students, rather than students from Asia. An Asian-American is a person with at least one parent of Asian descent who is either a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident, she said.

Kapur, an Asian-American herself, has an Indian father and an American mother. She earned a master’s degree in English from Miami University and a juris doctorate from Ohio State.

A recent study titled “An Epidemiological Appraisal of Asian Students, Staff and Faculty at the Ohio State University” by Daniel Booduck Lee, associate professor of social work and chair of the clinical social work teaching unit, showed that Asian-Americans suffer from problems unique to other campus minorities. The study was important in formation of the new office.

According to Lee’s study, Asian-American students are often alienated from other students and expected to live up to unjust stereotypes.

One of the most common myths, Kapur said, is that Asian-Americans are foreigners. As a result, she said they are often discriminated against in the job market.

Another myth, she said, is that all Asian-Americans look alike. Kapur said often the only nationalities associated with Asian-Americans are Chinese or Japanese. In reality Asian-Americans consist of 12 different groups: Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, Filipino, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, Indian, Indonesian, Malaysian and Singaporean.

Kapur also said people tend to stereotype Asian-Americans as model students and excellent workers and therefore place high demands upon them.

Kapur hopes to dispel these myths through programs and workshops that offer information about Asian-American culture.

Currently, Kapur’s efforts to increase involvement include working closely with the Asian-American Association, a student organization.

Peter Lee, a junior from Columbus, majoring in aerospace engineering, is the association’s president. Lee said the purpose of the organization is to offer Asian-American students a chance to socialize with other Asian-Americans.
Week promotes culture of Asians

By Nadine Collins
Lantern staff writer

Sharing and promoting Asian culture with the Ohio State community is the idea behind Asian Awareness Week, the coordinator of Asian-American Student Programs said.

“We felt a need for Asians, Asian-Americans, as well as other students on campus to get to know each other,” Sheila Kapur said.

Asian Awareness Week begins April 29 with a conference at the Ohio Union. The conference is called “Asian-Americans at OSU: Dispelling the Myths and Stereotypes.”

The conference will consist of two panels of Asian-American faculty, staff and students. The faculty and staff will discuss their work with Ohio State and with the students.

The students will discuss stereotypes of Asians in the media and how this has an impact on their relationships.

Peter Lee, a junior from Columbus majoring in aerospace engineering, is the chairman of Asian Awareness Week.

“It’s a time to let people know who we are, because there’s a small portion of Asian-Americans on campus and we’re often looked aside,” Lee said.

There are more than 1300 Asian-American students on campus.

“I think Asian Awareness Week is important because it gives mainstream America an idea of what Asian International people and Asian-Americans are because people tend to confuse the two,” Lee said.

Asian-Americans are people who have at least one parent of Asian decent and have permanent residence or citizenship in the United States.

Asian International people are those who come to the United States for specific purposes, but don’t have permanent residency.

Another highlight of the week is the Cultural Exhibition on May 3. Different Asian clubs will have booths in the Ohio Union presenting artifacts and souvenirs from their country.

Food will be donated by Asian commercial vendors in Columbus during the exhibition.

Yoon Jeong Kim, a graduate student in education from Korea, said the awareness week preserves Asian culture and boosts pride.

“Most Asian-Americans on campus are a second generation of immigrant families,” Kim said. “Most don’t speak the native tongue, and it’s easy for them to lose their culture living in the United States.”

Asian Awareness Week provides an opportunity to identify with one’s own culture, Kim said.

“I hope this week will give the OSU community the opportunity to be more positive about Asian culture and reduce prejudice and stereotypes,” Kim said.
Group assists Asian students

By Whay Khuan Teo
Lantern staff writer

The Asian Women Support Group lends a helping hand to on-campus Asian female students in need of guidance on topics such as career decision, assertiveness, interpersonal skills, academic development, the transcultural family and cross-cultural dating.

Chikako Inoue Cox, Ph.D., of the Counseling and Consultation Service and founder of the support group, said most group discussion focuses on issues relating to Asian-American and international Asian women facing hard choices pertaining to the above topics.

The Asian Women Support Group started last Spring quarter and includes women who have one Asian parent, Cox said. The targeted group is women who are in need of help.

There is a need to provide a place for these groups of female students to share and discuss their common experiences here in the United States, Cox said.

From 1985 to 1986, Cox was the first Asian teaching assistant in the Women’s Studies Center, and is the first Asian psychologist with specialization in cross-cultural counseling training in the Counseling and Consultation Service.

Cox said there is a need to affirm Asian women’s identity as Asian women living in the United States.

Cox said the Asian women’s issue is closely related to the global feminism issue in which the search for identity is gaining importance and recognition.

The Asian Women Support Group is operated on a voluntary basis and failed to receive any funding from the university, Cox said.

President Jennings is interested in causes like this, but because he will be leaving office soon there is nothing much he can do, she said.

Cox said the only help they have is an intern from the College of Social Work, Grace Chan, a graduate student from Hong Kong.
Asian Americans seek recognition

By Chris DeVito
Lantern staff writer

The Asian Americans are trying to become a more recognized part of the OSU campus so their diverse culture can be understood and accepted. Sheila Kapur, director of the Office of Asian American Student Services, said in a meeting Tuesday that the office of Minority Affairs is discussing issues of concern to them.

Asian-American students are defined as those persons with at least one parent of Asian descent and who are either citizens or permanent residents of the United States.

Some of the nationalities included in this group are: Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, Filipino, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, Indian, Indonesian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Cambodian and Singaporean.

Asian Internationals are considered a different grouping and are usually students on a temporary visa to study and are not permanent residents.

Asian-American Studies: Services is concerned with the current policy which determines whether they are qualified for scholarships from the Minority Scholars Program and the Freshman Foundation Program. The Minority Scholars Program is directed toward under-represented groups at the university.

The Asian Americans were excluded from the Minority Scholars Program for a few months at the end of last year, but that decision was reversed earlier this year.

They were excluded because they were not considered under-represented. The administration at Ohio State compares the proportional number of Asians in Ohio and compares it to the proportional number enrolled at OSU, Sheila Kapur said.

This is not a good criterion because the numbers are based on the 1980 census and the numbers have probably changed substantially since then, Kapur said.

Also there are many different ethnic nationalities of Asian Americans. For example, out of 1,600 to 2,000 Cambodians in Columbus there are only 14, or 0.7 percent at Ohio State, according to a report by Bunmarith Theam, regional coordinator and member of the National Board of Directors for the United Cambodian Students of America, Inc.

Another issue the Asian Americans discussed is how to become more of a part of the Office of Minority Affairs. In the report submitted to Russell, they said they would like to see a full-time statistician hired to gather and study data on the diversity within the Asian American community.

After the data is studied, the necessary services and programs could be created to serve their needs. Yeon Kim, an Asian American graduate student, is the only Asian American a part of Minority Affairs and he is graduating this spring.

The Asian Americans said they also want to be included in the planning and activities in Minority Affairs. They want to increase the funds in Minority Affairs without taking away from current programs to help the Asian American population.

They want the current staff in the office of Minority Affairs to be more educated about Asian Americans and to understand the issues of their community.

"Joseph Russell was very receptive and very open to students and their issue," Kapur said. She said he seemed very willing to work with all minority groups and to understand and address their issues.

There is the myth that Asian students don't have academic problems like the other minority groups do, Kapur said. There is also the myth that the faculty members are retained by the university and all Asians come from wealthy families, Kapur said.

Kapur said the reality is that statistically they perform at an equal level with white students. They are discriminated against in the job market.

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and they do not come from wealthy families, she said. Some of them are very poor, she added.

In the 1980 census, 33 percent of the Vietnamese families lived below the poverty line, Kapur said. Of the Laotian families, 60 percent lived below the poverty line, Kapur said.

Asian Americans continue to face racism and discrimination and there is a lack of respect for their Asian heritage, Kapur said. Asian Americans are considered foreigners because they are Asian, she said.

Kapur said the university is to be more open and receptive in understanding issues and to set under the commitments that are made. She said the university promotes diversity, but the funding is not always in places that could really make a difference.

Christine Chen, a sophomore from Westerville and the upcoming president of the Asian American Association, attended the meeting Tuesday and said her main concern was to gain some Asian staff in the office of Minority Affairs. There needs to be somebody in the office who would understand their issues and concerns, she said.

In September, a council of African-American, Hispanic and Asian students is going to be formed to exchange ideas and information, Chen said.

Erika Sio, a senior from Bolivia, said the Office of Minority Affairs needs to be aware of minorities other than just blacks. They do not know much about Hispanics or Asians, she said.

Sio said there needs to be a full-time Asian staff position for a graduate student or administrator.

Sio is now a member of a multi-cultural committee under Student Life that includes African-American, Hispanic and Asian students. She said next year they would like to have a cross-cultural event that would involve all minorities.

Rebecca Nelson, a past president of the Asian-American Graduate and Professional Organization, said the Asian Americans need to be educated about other Asian groups and to learn about their own diversity. The Asian Americans need to know how to deal with issues of their identity, she said.

Daniel Lee, associate professor of Social Work, is concerned that incoming students are not being processed for applications of scholarships. He said that although the Asian Americans were re-instated for scholarships, the applications are now not being properly processed.

Russell said the applications will not be processed until after the May 31 deadline given to high school students. Russell said they won't hear anything until then.

Lee said the media needs to continuously promote positive aspects of students and Asian faculty. There are many excellent faculty who just have quietly been at the university and not been recognized, Lee said. There needs to be a balanced approach to minority issues, he said.

There needs to be active involvement from the Asian faculty, Lee said. He said Asians are not well promoted for administrative positions compared to other minorities.

There is a sense of being unwelcome, he said.

Lee said integration is important at Ohio State. Ohio State is full of many people of all kinds of races and ethnic groups, so a community group connecting all students and faculty needs to be developed, he said. He added this group should not promote separate identity but a holistic sharing approach.
Loans difficult for Asians

By Ranjini Anantharaman
Lantern staff writer

This fall, Asian-American students on college campuses nationwide will find it easier to apply for federal loans through CampusCredit. The program was jointly developed by the Student Loan Marketing Association, referred to as “Sallie Mae,” and Mid-America Federal Savings & Loan Association.

According to Raymond V. Androne, executive vice-president of retail banking at Mid-America, the CampusCredit program is a program which makes it easier for parents and students of Asian descent. They can apply for three types of federal loans through the use of specially prepared program literature and documentation in the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese languages.

“It is simply a communication process to allow students whose parents don’t speak English or read English to be able to take advantage of the existing federal programs, which would include the Stafford loan, the PLUS loan and the SLS loan,” Androne said.

According to Androne, the program was developed and initiated by Sallie Mae, a federally chartered, stockholder-owned corporation, after reviewing the results of a study they conducted a few years ago. The study revealed that participation of Asian-American students in applying for loans was much lower than any other group.

“Sallie Mae determined that in evaluating the demographics of the students who participate in the student loan program, that students of Asian descent were not participating at the same rates as others,” Androne said.

While this was due in part to a cultural aversion to borrowing, it was also a result of the fact that many of the students’ parents could not read or speak English, and, as all of the loan information was printed in English, many of them never attempted to apply.

Androne said the CampusCredit program was developed in conjunction with several Asian-American student organizations to help simplify the procedure for Asian-American students and parents to access financial aid.

“Students can go back to their parents with all the loan information in their native tongue and the parents can make a much better informed decision as to whether or not they want to apply for student loans,” he said.

The program is available to Asian students at any school, Androne said. The student applies directly to Sallie Mae which then reviews the application.

If the application is approved, the student will receive a check, which will be drawn on Mid-America. Mid-America is the source of funding for the program.

According to Androne, no special funding has been allocated to the program.

“The Stafford loan (formerly Guaranteed Student Loan) is a need-based loan, and Asian students would have to meet all the same requirements as anyone else,” he said. “The PLUS and SLS don’t have a need-base; these loans are available to every group.”

All approved loans will be guaranteed by the Great Lakes Higher Education Corp. of Madison, Wis.

“It’s really too early to tell how the program is working with the OSU community,” Androne said.

According to Androne, Ohio State is not one of the four Ohio schools that have a student body composed by or more than five percent of Asian students.

Those schools are the Medical College of Ohio at Toledo, Northeastern Ohio University’s College of Medicine, Oberlin College and the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus.
Progress check

An Asian-American Oversight Committee was formed Nov. 23 to monitor progress in meeting goals set in Spring 1991 by the Provost's Task Force on Asian-American Students.

The committee, chaired by Moon Chen, professor of preventive medicine, consists of four faculty, two staff and two students, Chen said.

Don Dell, vice provost of Academic Affairs, will facilitate the committee meetings.

The committee will meet Dec. 10 to discuss a written statement of the mission and the scope of the committee.
Progress made

The Advisory Committee of Asian-American Student Services met Monday with members of the Asian-American community to discuss reaction to a forum with OSU President E. Gordon Gee and Vice Provost David Williams on Jan. 6.

Ping Serafica, former chair for the Task Force on Asian-American Affairs and special guest, spoke about her reaction to Gee's and Williams' discussion with concerned minority students Jan. 6, saying she is satisfied the avenues of communication have been opened between the Office for Minority Affairs and the Asian-American, Hispanic-American and Native-American communities.

Serafica also discussed some of the recommendations made by the task force, including the need to improve the campus climate for Asian-Americans and the need to increase the number of Asian-American staff in university offices, especially the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Financial Aid.

The task force also made a recommendation that the provost appoint a qualified team of faculty and staff to review the status and future of Asian-American studies in the academic curriculum, Serafica said.

Asian-American students should talk to Williams if they have any concerns or problems because he is willing to help, said Sheila Kapur, director of Asian-American Student Services, who coordinated the meeting.

—Nanda Tewari
Conference

About 300 students from 25 colleges and universities in the Midwest are coming to Ohio State for the Midwest Asian-American Students Union spring conference this weekend.

The conference, presented by the Asian-American Association, begins Friday afternoon and runs through Sunday. All of the events will be held in the Ohio Union.

The theme of this year's conference is "Discover Our Past and Create Our Future," Conference Coordinator Christine Chen said.

Helen Zia, one of three speakers at the conference, is a former writer for Ms. Magazine in New York City. She will talk about building community support through an anti-Asian violence movement, Chen said.

— Viviane Mao
Asian Americans tire of myths

By Donnica Burrage
Lantern staff writer

A number of Asian-American students voiced their frustrations with the misunderstandings of other Americans about the Asian culture at Ohio State during a welcome back reception Thursday at the Ohio Union.

Sirin Holst, a graduate assistant for Asian-American Student Services, said she is often upset by people assuming she is an international student just because she is Asian.

"I am learning about my culture just as other minorities learn about their cultures," said Holst, an Asian born in the United States. She hopes through learning about the Asian-American culture, people will begin to understand and eliminate some of their ignorance.

Asian-American Student Services provides support services for Asian-Americans at Ohio State, including services such as Asian Awareness Week, leadership development, a resource directory, student organization advising and the Asian American Voice magazine.

There are 15 Asian-American organizations at Ohio State, ranging from professional student organizations to social groups, said Sheila Kapur, director of A.A.S.S.

Richard Siason, OSU provost and David Williams II, OSU vice president of student affairs, were among the keynote speakers for the welcome back fair.

"The issue of diversity is one that has been going on for a long time," Williams told the audience. "Your existence on this campus is a right and not a privilege."

He encouraged students to take advantage of the services A.A.S.S. offers and to unify and come together.

Chin-Su Kim, vice president of the Asian-American Association at Ohio State, said being involved in this group has been a great experience for him because he has learned more about the Asian-American culture.

Several OSU students gave their reasons for becoming involved in one of the Asian-American services.

"I am looking for more support in my culture," said Doris Lee, a freshman from Cincinnati, who is interested in becoming a member of A.A.A.

"It is a good, because in my hometown, people didn't understand why my culture celebrated different holidays," Lee said. "Here there are other Asians that understand."

Ann Scott, who is not Asian American, said she joined A.A.A. was because her best friend from high school is an Asian-American.

"It helps me learn more about the Asian culture and Asian traditions," Scott said.

Scott, who has been a member for three years, said she now understands more about how it feels to be a minority.

"It's different for minorities and you see how they live," Scott said. "They have to deal with being a minority everyday, where I can walk away from it."

Jeannie Chun, president of A.A.A., said the group focuses on promoting Asian Americans and their social organizations.

"It provides a base for Asian Americans where they can meet other Asians," Chun said.

In the past, A.A.A. mainly was a social group for Asian Americans, but it is now trying to educate Asian Americans about social issues concerning them, Chun said.

The A.A.A. will sponsor a dance to welcome back OSU students on Oct. 8 and 9 at Royer Commons from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Professional mentors needed for Asian American students

The Ohio State University Office of Minority Affairs/Retention Services is seeking professionals to serve as mentors in the Asian American Professional Mentoring Program.

The program provides an opportunity for professionals to share personal insights about their career, company and job site.

In the 1991 "Report of the Provost's Task Force on Asian American Students," OSU Asian American students identified needing the most assistance in career planning, job search, interviews and training for leadership skills. Asian Americans are the fastest growing group at OSU with an increase in enrollment of 542 percent since 1977.

The mentoring program includes a mentoring bank listing Asian American professionals, roundtable receptions, professional shadowing and internships.

The next roundtable will be held from 6-8 p.m. Feb. 7 in the Stecker Lounge, Third Floor, Ohio Union, 1739 N. High St.

For more information, call Rebecca Nelson or Christine Chen at 292-8732.
Retention rates for Asian students high

By Robbin Bowman
Lantern staff writer

Retaining some minority populations at Ohio State has been a point of concern, but statistics show retention rates for Asian students are the highest on campus.

"Somewhere in the neighborhood of 65 to 67 percent successfully matriculate and that, based on figures I've seen, is substantially higher than all students, including our majority students," said Pat Royster, director of the Minority Affairs Program for University College.

Royster said approximately 55 percent of non-minority freshmen graduate within six years.

Over the years, Asian students' success has gained very positive attention, but it has also prompted speculation and rumor based on inaccurate observations.

One rumor stereotypically lumps all Asian students together, attributing their success to a centralized, extracurricular network among the students themselves.

Students interviewed stressed the diversity among OSU's Asian students, including the fact some students are international while others were born here.

These students said networking exists, but there is no common network that crosses cultural lines between all Asian students.

Hidenori Osuka, a senior in professional education, grew up in the United States. Osuka said misconceptions might stem from a lack of understanding about other cultures.

"For some Asians part of their culture is to network with friends. In Japan and Korea, you exchange gifts, spend a lot more time together than people do here, get to know each other like family. This is done in business as well," Osuka said.

Osuka said his experiences are probably different from those of international students because he has lived here most of his life.

A Malaysian student said he did not think Asians pooled resources any more than other students.

Another Japanese student said Taiwanese international students were the strongest supporters of one another.

Vivian Mao, a graduating senior in journalism, is from Taiwan. She attributed the success of Taiwanese students to the circumstances surrounding the difficulty of being an international student. Mao said this situation demands they dedicate themselves to staying in school and graduating.

Mao said these circumstances might create a totally different mind-set among international students, compared to others.

"Because of the difficulty, we as international students know that we must strive to meet the challenge, no matter how hard it is," she said.

"Coming here involves a lot of work, documentation and legal restraints, such as getting a student visa," Mao said. "First, I had to take an exam in which I had to get at least 600 points. The exam was all in English."

"To obtain a visa you have to show the government that your parents have the money to support you while you are here, and that you are not coming here to work," Mao said. "To retain a visa, international students must remain in school three quarters of the year."

International students are under tighter social restrictions, according to Mao. They don't have the option to take a quarter off and get a job, drop a class that isn't working out, or visit home, Mao said.

Costs can add up as well. Tuition is nearly three times more for international students. Travel and living expenses, added to this, can become a burden for parents who must, by law, support these students.

"There is a lot of pressure on us to stay in school because it costs so much for us to come here, and a lot of pressure from our parents," Mao said. "For this reason, people try to take as many classes as they can, and graduate as soon as possible."

She said all these factors explain why many international students support one another so strongly.

"Before they come, some people write the Office of International Education to obtain names of people from their country who are already here, so they can write them, introduce themselves, say 'this is when I am coming,'" Mao said.

"It is easier to make contacts ahead of time and learn what to expect, so that when you come here you will know people who will help you, and you can use all the help you can get," she said.
Lecture to discuss
Asians in history

Gary Y. Okihiro, associate professor of history and director of the
Asian American Studies Program at Cornell University, will give a lecture on "Margins as Mainstream: Asians in American History" on May 4.

The lecture, sponsored by the Office of Asian American Student Services, the Department of History and the Asian-American Research Interest Group, will be held 3:30-5 p.m. in Steckler Lounge of the Ohio Union.

For more information, call 292-0625.
Asian cultures celebrated at resource fair

By Karen Adler
Lantern staff writer

The Asian American Resource Fair held last week gave more than 200 students a chance to discover the many Asian cultural origins within OSU's environment.

The fair, sponsored by the Office of Asian American Student Services, included booths set up by community members, students, and OSU departmental organizations.

Sheila Kapur, director of Asian American Student Services, said the purpose of the fair was to familiarize students with her office.

"With 500 new Asian American students it's an opportunity to introduce them to available resources," said Sirin Holst, coordinator of the event.

"We get to meet other types of Asians and get a feeling of what other cultures are about," said Rajan Mehta, a junior majoring in biology.

There was also live entertainment from student performers, said Kapur.

Fair participation and attendance has increased this year. Kapur attributes this to the growing Asian American community at Ohio State.

"Asian American issues are becoming more visible as the United States is becoming more of a global environment," Kapur said. "People are becoming more receptive and open to learning about other groups."

Kane Khammanh, a representative for the Laotian American Organization of Students said the number of people interested in their organization has almost doubled since last year.

Khammanh said the fair helps organizations become familiar with each other.

"When our group first started, we felt left out, but now we have communication with other groups," Khammanh said.

Faculty members who teach Asian courses were also in attendance.

"(The fair) gets strangers who are scattered everywhere at a big school to meet each other to share problems, ideas and concerns," said Robert Jiobu, associate professor of sociology of Asian American life.
OSU Asian-Americans challenge stereotypes in ‘South Pacific’

By Karen Adler
Lantern staff writer

The School of Music’s presentation of the musical “South Pacific” has some Asian-American students concerned that stereotypes of their culture and race will become even more ingrained in society.

The musical is set during World War II and revolves around two romantic relationships, one between an American naval officer and a Tonkinese woman.

After learning about the production, the OSU Office of Asian-American Student Services held an open forum Oct. 20 titled, “Asian-American (Mis)representation in American Theater (Can Whites Accurately Portray Us?).”

“It was important to see that even though this campus is trying to be progressive and diverse, the School of Music chose a play with characters that are rather dehumanizing to Asian-Americans,” said Sheila Kapur, director of Asian-American Student Services.

Patrick Woliver, director of Opera/Musical Theater, said he encourages Asian-Americans, as well as the entire community, to see the play before voicing an opinion.

“One of the major themes is interracial acceptance,” Woliver said. “Joshua Logan and Oscar Hammerstein (the authors of the play) wanted to underline how different races and nationalities need to come together.”

Some Asian-Americans expressed concern over the portrayal of Asian characters by white actors.

“No one but Asian-Americans can accurately tell our stories; we’re the only ones who live our stories,” said Elayne Chou, president of the Asian American Graduate and Professional Student Organization.

Chou’s problem is European Americans can cast to play Asian characters, but Asian-Americans are not cast to play European parts.

“The assumption here is that facial features of European Americans and white people are those of the prototypical human being,” Chou said.

The school advertised for Asian and Asian-American actors and at least six are in the play, Woliver said.

One of the female leads, Liat, was to be played by a Korean woman, but left for unrelated reasons, Woliver said.

The part of Liat’s mother, Bloody Mary, was chosen solely on singing and acting ability, and no actors of Asian descent were found that could sing her pieces, Woliver said.

Chou questioned if it makes sense to fight for the right to play Asian roles that are stereotypical to Asians and Asian-Americans.

“It’s ridiculous for us to argue to play a demeaning role,” Chou said. “I think we need to get better roles and better plays for Asian-Americans.”

“South Pacific” was chosen for its creative merits and box office appeal, Woliver said.

“We try to be as balanced as possible to keep the budget afloat so that we can stage pieces that don’t have as large of a box office draw,” Woliver said.

The issue of Asian representation goes beyond the production for Chou.

“It is futile to waste my energy protesting this musical,” Chou said.

“I reserve my energy for my fellow Asian-Americans to heal and help ourselves face the daily endurance test of being an ethnic minority in this country.”

“South Pacific” runs through Saturday at the Mershon Auditorium.
Students taught to manage test stress

By Ming-Iuan Wang
Lantern staff writer

Midterm stress can be relieved by meditation, proper breathing and deep muscle relaxation, members of the Asian American Association learned recently.

Dr. Chikako Cox, a psychologist and adjunct professor of Counseling & Consultation Services, and Kastern Look, a Ph.D. student interning in the counseling office, demonstrated stress management skills during the association's weekly meeting held in the Ohio Union.

The most common signs or symptoms of stress are fatigue, anxiety and overeating fast food or junk food when feeling depressed, Cox said.

There are three types of stress symptoms: Mental, physical, and psychological. Different strategies have been developed to deal with each of them, Cox said.

Many people will exercise, talk to someone, read or adopt a pet for therapy when feeling depressed. However, not every method used is the best way to deal with stress, Cox said.

Look said some functional methods of managing stress include meditation or deep muscle relaxation.

Participants were invited to learn about basic breathing techniques to help aid relaxation demonstrated by Cox and Look.

Cox said when people face stress, breathing becomes very shallow. This makes it hard to calm down, he said.

However, stress management is not meant to put people to sleep. It is more likely to increase efficiency, productivity and alertness in the person's daily life, Cox said.

Cox said some of the causes of stress are universal, such as earthquakes, but some stressful situations can be unique to the individual's cultural or racial background.

One of the most common forms of stress Asian Americans face is pressure to get good grades because of stereotypes about Asians having excellent math or computer skills, Cox said.

According to Cox many people think Asian-American students have higher IQs than other students, so they are expected to have better classroom performance.

Another pressure placed on Asian-American students in the classroom is feeling like they have to speak for all Asians, Cox said.

Look said he is always being asked about Asian customs by his teachers. With there being many different customs and countries in Asia, he said he cannot speak for everyone.

Sam Lo, president of the Asian American Association, said a big source of stress for him is that his parents expect him to support them after he graduates.

This is a very common situation facing many Asians because in some Asian countries parents believe children have an obligation to support them when the children begin working at a full-time job, Lo said.

Asian parents think this is the way their children show obedience and respect to them, Lo said.

Counseling & Consultation Services also provides specific services for campus minority groups such as Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, international students, women students and homosexual or bisexual students.
May events celebrate Asian community at University

The Office of Asian American Student Services will celebrate Asian Awareness Month May 1-31. This year’s theme, “Manifesting a New GenerAsian,” is symbolic of Ohio State’s dynamic and increasingly visible Asian and Asian American community. Programs are free unless noted. For more information, call 292-0625.

Asian Awareness Month will begin with the Asian Food and Cultural Fair 5-7 p.m. May 2 in the Ohio Union Ballrooms.

The annual event celebrates the broad spectrum of Asian cultures by providing native foods, entertainment and information booths.

Admission to the Food and Cultural Fair is $5. Tickets may be purchased in advance at 340 Ohio Union.

The Talent Showcase from 7-9 p.m. May 2 in the East Ballroom will provide a noncompetitive forum for Asian American and International Asian students to display their talents.

Other highlights include:
- “The Asian-American Movement: An Update,” with William Wei at 4:30 p.m. May 6 in the Ohio Union Memorial Room. Wei is professor of history and director of the Sewall American Studies Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A reception will follow.
- “Body Image and Color Politics,” a panel discussion from 7:30-10:30 p.m. May 9 in the Ohio Union Faller Lounge. Panelists will discuss how mainstream standards of beauty affect conceptions of bodies and self image.
- A reading and reception with poet and translator Agha Shahid Ali starting at 7:30 p.m. May 16 at the Wexner Center Performance Space. Originally from Kashmir, Ali directs the M.F.A. Creative Writing Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- A 24-hour fast starting at 6:30 p.m. May 17 in the Ohio Union Conference Theater with guests from CARE and Ohio State who will speak about hunger and advocacy. A vegetarian dinner will break the fast at 6 p.m. May 18 at Royer Activities Center.

The keynote speaker is Dyann Affonso, dean and professor, Emory University School of Nursing. Call Moon Chen at 293-3908.

- The Films of Satyajit Ray at 7 p.m. May 4, 8, 11, 15 and 18 in the Wexner Center Film and Video Theater. Admission is $4 for students, $5 for the general public. Call Dave Filipi at 688-3307.
Culture fair gives taste of Asia

By LeShawn Smith
Lantern staff writer

Food, folks, fashion and fun filled the atmosphere at the 9th annual Asian Food and Cultural Fair Thursday at the Ohio Union Ballrooms.

The program, sponsored by the Office of Asian American Student Services along with 25 participating Asian American and International Asian student groups, gave fair-goers the opportunity to experience Asian culture.

"We hope to illuminate the diversity within the Asian community," said Sheila Kapur, director of Asian American Student Services.

"One of our goals is to familiarize people within the Asian community as well as the campus community and to break some of the stereotypes that Asians on campus only study," Kapur said.

Highlights of the fair included a fashion show, featuring Ohio State students as the models, with a cultural segment which allowed Asian Americans to present their talents in song, dance, artwork and food.

"The fashion show brought the Asian and American sides together and allowed us to show our American side through American clothing," said Nisha Kuttathara, co-chair of the fashion show. "The cultural walk at the end gave Asian models the opportunity to wear clothing representative of their various cultures and ethnicities," she said.

"This particular event fit perfectly with our theme: 'Unity Through Diversity: Progress Through Tradition,'" Kuttathara said.

"We hope to illuminate the diversity within the Asian community."

— Sheila Kapur, director

Of the more than 1,000 who attended, not many found themselves idle.

"The event was nicely set up," said Jane Li, a sophomore majoring in political science. "All of the food from the different cultures gave me the opportunity to experience the various cuisines and to get to know people of all races and ethnicities as well as talk to people working behind the booths."

Following the fair was a talent showcase, which provided a non-competitive forum for students to display their talents in a variety of genres.

Kapur said this particular event always has the highest level of student participation, which is why it always kicks off the month-long festivities.

"We like to create a form of celebration at the fair and increase awareness by distributing our calendar of other events taking place throughout the month," she said.

Asian Awareness Month will be celebrated through May 31.