

**Dear Fellow Alumni:**

By now you have probably seen the January 13, 2010 issue of the PAW. If you have not had a chance to read it yet, I would urge you to do so as it is a special issue entitled "Reflecting On Race in the Obama era". Among the interesting articles is one written by Shirley Leung '94, who highlights many of the issues that Asian-American students have dealt with as a minority group on campus over the past several decades. As noted in the article, probably the biggest issue is the advocacy of a certificate program in Asian-American Studies that was started by students more than 30 years ago. The University today still does not offer such a program and is woefully behind other major universities in this area of study.

The A4P Board of Governors felt that this was a good opportunity to add its voice to the discussion of diversity and minority recognition at Princeton. We wanted to commend the PAW for its unique look at racial matters across the University community and we also wanted to bring light to the fact that progress towards establishing a certificate program in Asian-American Studies has been too slow. In 2008, A4P organized a petition with over 700 signatories calling for the University to create the program. A4P has also formed a committee of notable Asian-American alumni to work with faculty, students and the administration to do whatever is necessary to make this a reality.

In affirming our commitment to this effort, we have submitted a letter in response to the January issue of PAW and are sharing it with you in this email. After reading the PAW article and our letter, we hope you will also be moved to add your thoughts to the ongoing discussion. While there was a January 22nd deadline for letters to be considered for the next PAW issue, the number of letters received will still make an impact. You can also make comments online at: <http://paw.princeton.edu/issues/2010/01/13/pages/9134/index.xml>

Sue-Jean Lee Suettinger '70
Chair, Asian American Alumni Association of Princeton (A4P)

Letter to the PAW Editors:

Bravo PAW, for Reflections on Race and enabling a welcomed community-wide conversation about the topic. "As the university moves to assert itself as a national thought leader on race", we believe that dialogue needs to include a diversity of voices, and that its academic foundation must include Asian American Studies, alongside its counterpart programs in African American Studies and Latino Studies.

It has been three decades since the first student-initiated seminars in Asian American Studies were taught at Princeton by visiting scholars, and we have not made significant progress since then. While student demand is a relevant consideration, that rationale on its own effectively dismisses this important academic field to the realm of identity politics. We are therefore fortunate to have tenured faculty who are playing a leadership role in helping the University to move forward on this front.

We Asian American alumni recognize the University's fiscal challenges and have offered to fundraise for these important academic endeavors, but we have been stymied by lack of interest from the administration. In contrast, Harvard this year announced an endowed professorship and two lectureships

that are supported by their Asian American alumni. Princeton lags woefully behind other universities in its attention to this burgeoning field of scholarship.

So many of the questions raised in this issue were centered on an understanding of the interplay between our nation's (and Princeton's) complex history and relationship with race. We believe that an Asian American Studies certificate program, under the framework of comparative American Studies, will enable a deeper intellectual discourse on these issues and further strengthen the University's leadership in the study of race and ethnicity. We invite you to join us in seeing through the promise of broadening our collective understanding of these issues and enabling a richer conversation about them.

Sue-Jean Lee Suettinger '70
Board Chair of the Asian American Alumni Association of Princeton (A4P)

To learn more about A4P or join as a member, please visit us at <http://www.a4princeton.org/>. To sign up for our tignernet list, join asian-alumni-forum at <https://tigernet.princeton.edu/discussions/grouppage.asp?group=asian-alumni-forum>

Removal Instructions

This message is being sent to you because of your affiliation with the Princeton University On-Line Community at URL <http://tigernet.princeton.edu>. To stop receiving emails from the Asian American Alumni Association of Princeton, please [click here](#) to remove yourself from future mailings. Thank you.

If this email was forwarded to you and you would like to register for our mailings, please [click here](#).

.

[open count]