

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ETHNICITY AND RACE

November 13, 2001

President Jennifer J. Raab
Office of the President
Hunter College, CUNY
695 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Dear President Raab:

I'd like to herewith convey to you the importance I attach to your Asian American Studies Program at your excellent institution.

You might be surprised to know that the first Asian American studies program (of sorts) outside of California was instituted at City College by Professor Betty Lee Sung in the Asian studies department. Now, that program is gone, but new programs have sprung up at New York University, Hunter, and here at Columbia. The other program at Queens was active during the 1990s but has since declined.

NYU has a well endowed, active program, and Columbia's is also thriving. Here we have over forty undergraduate majors and concentrators in our Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race that houses both Asian American and Latina/o studies, and our faculty work with about a dozen doctoral students in traditional departments with fields in Asian American and Latina/o studies.

With your Professor Robert Ku at the helm of Hunter's Asian American Studies Program, we've forged a collective agenda among programs at Hunter, NYU, and Columbia. This has involved meetings around joint public events, such as our upcoming spring conference on Asian and Latina/o relations here at Columbia (co-sponsored by your Asian American and Caribbean studies programs at Hunter), and possibly joint classes where our students can take courses across the city at our respective institutions. Professor Ku has been instrumental in leading these discussions, and I anticipate more such joint endeavors will emanate from this work.

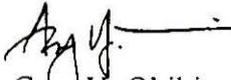
Next fall, the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, a national professional organization, will be holding its annual meeting here at Columbia University. I anticipate inviting, among others, you, along with the presidents of Columbia and NYU to speak to that gathering of

some 500 educators from across the country. Professor Ku sits on the board of that organization, and he, along with Hunter's Asian American Studies Program, will serve as hosts to the meeting.

Hunter has had a long and storied history with Asian American studies. When Professor Shirley Hune, now an associate dean at UCLA, was at your institution, she hosted the 1989 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian American Studies at Hunter. The meeting was the first outside of California and the West Coast, and set a precedent for subsequent meetings held at Cornell University and in Washington, D.C. In truth, one of your junior faculty recently hired in sociology and Asian American studies, Professor Margaret Chin, was a student assistant crucial to the success of the 1989 conference.

I now write to urge you to continue to build on Hunter's pioneering position in Asian American studies, both here in New York City and the East Coast broadly and nationally by ensuring its vitality with faculty and an effective director. Thanks so much for your kind attention.

Sincerely,



Gary Y. Okihiro

Director

Professor of International and Public Affairs

cc. Acting Provost Ann H. Cohen
Acting Dean Robert Marino
Chair, English Department, Richard Barickman