

**ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES: FACULTY AND CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**

This is a proposal to launch a curriculum development project for Asian American studies throughout the twenty campuses of the City University of New York (CUNY). Recognizing that the public schools in New York City is a major feeder of students for CUNY, this project will also provide opportunity for collaborative partnership with educators in the New York City public schools. Both CUNY and the New York City Public Schools are grappling with educational issues brought to focus by the rapidly growing Asian American presence in the system. These issues cannot be adequately addressed without a comprehensive curriculum and faculty initiative.

The focus of this project will be: a) to develop introductory core courses for Asian American studies, b) to introduce infusion models that would facilitate the integration of Asian American studies material into traditional academic disciplines, c) to establish institutional links with a broad range of Asian American organizations so as to keep Asian American studies abreast with the latest developments and to maintain the field as an informed and dynamic discipline.

RATIONALE

New York City has one of the largest and fastest growing Asian American populations in the nation. Presently, the City's public school enrollment for Asian Americans is 8%. The CUNY's enrollment stands at 11%. However, both systems are falling behind in keeping up with this phenomenon. Courses offered in the systems on Asian

American studies are few and random, without any programmatic design. In the general curriculum, there is even less attention paid to the subject.

Given the multicultural and global context in New York City, we have found the traditional paradigm of looking at Asian American Studies as an ethnic program designed exclusively for the targeted population to have outlived its usefulness as an educational construct. Asian American experience is an integral part of the American experience and therefore needs to be explored by all. It needs to be understood by students of Asian descent, but even more critically, as Asian societies and Asian peoples play a growing role in New York City and the world, education for all students would have been left partially unfulfilled without a strong grounding in crosscultural understanding including content and perspectives from the Asian American experience. At present, CUNY colleges and the public schools do not as yet have the capacity to embrace this objective.

One approach is to borrow from the experience of the Asian American Studies programs on the West Coast, which have a much longer history. But those programs were established in the early 1970's, when the political and social environment were quite different from the 1990's. Moreover, the Asian American community on the East Coast contains a much higher percentage of recent immigrants, whose experiences and growth patterns stand in sharp contrast to those of the West Coast. There is a need to develop Asian American studies more appropriate to local circumstances in New York City while at the same time to contribute to models of

studying new patterns of migration.

Located in the largest urban city in this country, CUNY has both the responsibility and the advantages of leading the effort in developing Asian American Studies. Other colleges on the East Coast about to launch such programs have turned consistently to CUNY for models and technical assistance. The task of initiating a comprehensive Asian American studies program is even more urgent, considering how misunderstanding and lack of understanding of the Asians have led to serious inter- and intra- racial conflicts.

CUNY and the New York Public Schools can help to alleviate this by embarking on a major effort to develop a quality Asian American studies educational curriculum from early years through college.

PROPOSED PROJECT

This is a three year program proposal, servicing faculty teams with about 30 in total. Each year focuses on a particular theme: first year concentrates on the development of basic Asian American studies core courses; second year focuses on the effort to integrate Asian American studies content into a wide variety of general course offerings; third year aims at building community links in order to keep up with the changes, thus enhancing the quality of the teaching material.

The two major components for each year are: a) a two-week intensive summer seminar and b) monthly curriculum and pedagogy

seminar during the academic year. Under the guidance of external consultants and project directors, the summer seminar will provide the opportunity for faculty teams from various CUNY campuses and the New York City Public Schools to immerse themselves in content, pedagogy, and curricular issues pertinent to the theme under discussion. The curriculum and pedagogy seminar during the year will support participating faculty teams to develop curriculum and teaching approaches specific to the needs of each campus and/or school.

At the end of the three years the project is to produce: a) monographs of curriculum guides, b) institutional plan for each campus and/or school for Asian American studies, including all aspects of collaboration, c) national conferences for other public, urban and commuter colleges, that can benefit from the result of this project, d) a bibliography on Asians in New York City, e) a coordinated plan for community fieldwork placements.

Effort will be directed towards the creation of Asian American studies task-forces on the administrative level to promote and standardize its advancement at both CUNY and the New York City Public Schools.

TIMETABLE

Spring 94	Writing proposal & seeking funding
Fall 94	Directors meet to establish applications for faculty, guidelines & procedures, recruitment, & selection.
Spring 95	Preparing materials for summer seminar, securing speakers, discussion leaders, etc.

EVALUATION

An outside evaluator, expert in Asian American studies and ethnic studies, will be identified to evaluate the entire project. The evaluation plan will include: a review of the program plan and all materials developed as a result of this effort, visitation of the summer seminars and curriculum/pedagogy seminars, and examination of the impact of program implementation on various campuses and schools.