

OCT
ISSUE 2

MAASU

MIDWEST ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS UNION

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ABOUT

The Midwest Asian American Students Union is a 501(c)(3) non-for profit organization that began in response to a need for political unity among Asian American students in the Midwest. By 1990, there were more than 20 universities in the Midwest that had formed Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) organizations.

OUR MISSION

The Midwest Asian American Students Union strives to recognize the needs of the Asian Pacific Islanders American (APIA) Community. The following list contains the objectives of MAASU:

- Assist schools with the establishment of APIA student organizations, APIA cultural center and/or an Asian American Studies Program
- Promote leadership among APIA students through programs including, but not limited to, the Leadership Retreat, Spring Conference and other various programming
- Address educational needs and rights of the APIA community and provide scholarship information for all APIA students
- Develop and maintain a channel of communication for APIA student organizations in the Midwest through e-mails, bi-weekly newsletter and networking
- Support and encourage all APIA students to work toward social change by providing a forum for social consciousness
- Unite and strengthen the APIA community's stance against all forms of oppression

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEADERSHIP RETREAT | UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI - COLUMBIA FRIDAY NOVEMBER 14 - SATURDAY NOVEMBER 15

Join MAA&U Fall Leadership Retreat (MAA&U LR) this year at the University of Missouri from November 14-15th. This is a wonderful opportunity to develop your leadership skills, network with students from across the Midwest and have fun! We have workshop speakers coming in from New York, Washington D.C., Chicago, a few alumni and more. The theme this year is Sail to New Horizons: Discover, Explore, Dream based on a quote from famous Missourian Mark Twain: "Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

REGISTER HERE:

<http://tinyurl.com/kpyiku5>

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: FRIDAY OCTOBER 31ST



SPRING CONFERENCE DATE CHANGE! UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - MADISON | APRIL 10-11

Opportunity for participation in a brief survey for students of Color who are currently
SOPHOMORES / 2nd YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS :

Dear student, my name is John McCullagh and I am a researcher at the University of North Dakota. I would like to invite you to participate in a brief survey. This survey should take about 10-20 minutes of your time. In order to participate in this study you must be a student of color, at least be 18 years old, and was a Freshman last academic year (2013-2014 school year). Participation in this study will give you a chance to win one of four \$25 dollar Visa gift cards.

Please click on the link below to participate in this study:
https://usd.qualtrics.com/SU/TSID=SV_8Ae0FgbbVJ0kId

Thank you!

MEMBER SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Stephanie Kong

Junior, Econ major, Northwestern University

New Jersey, joined APAC beginning of last year

Last year, Northwestern University's Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC) won the 2014 MAASU Board of Advisors award. As fall term just began in late September, we sat down with the president of Northwestern's APAC to discuss their goals and challenges for the upcoming school year.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE APAC AS IT EXISTS ON NORTHWESTERN'S CAMPUS?

APAC is a group designed to discuss pan-Asian issues. We differ from other groups on campus in that heritage-based or multicultural groups tend to focus on a specific culture and creating a space for them in the community, but we focus more on finding/exploring a Asian American voice in a socio-political context. We are focusing more on the educational aspect, which will hopefully broaden into more activism (but I don't think we can do that until the community is more unified).

HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE YOUR APAC COMMUNITY?

I consider the cons/exec members of APAC as "the APAC community". We haven't really had a lot of success in keeping APAC general members engaged in any meaningful capacity. They're mostly our friends that come out to support and don't really consider themselves "APAC". I think we're going to try to keep holding general meetings, but keep it smaller and use them more as a way for the APAC community to come together.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES YOU SEE FACING APAC?

I think a lot of people don't put APAC as a top priority, and when that happens things get really chaotic. Things still end up getting planned but they don't necessarily get executed as well. I want to have less events, but have them really, really well done.



WHAT ARE SOME GOALS YOU HAVE FOR APAC THIS YEAR?

I think that so far APAC has done a better job in getting better exposed on campus, and I think we have the financial resources and the experience to put on great events, but what I really want to do is to develop a stronger community in APAC. I don't even think this can be achieved with a huge APAC community—I think it would be better to have a tight-knit, passionate group of members. I think APAC attracts a very specific type of person, or someone who cares about very specific issues, so I think if we try to expand too quickly it would dilute our purpose. I think others in the organization want to broaden our reach to the general Chicago community, but I just don't think we're there yet.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC ISSUES THAT YOU PERSONALLY WANT TO FOCUS ON?

I really want to continue on discussions with intersectionality. We had a panel with Rainbow Alliance [the LGBTQ advocacy group] last year, and I would like to continue this thread of dialogue. I also want to talk more about South/Southeast Asian issues. Last year all the participants in Mt. Panasia, our annual male talent showcase, were East Asian, and I don't want this to just be an East Asian community.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE EVENT THAT APAC HAS DONE IN THE PAST?

I really liked the "Discussion on Colorism" event that we held in collaboration with ASA [African Students Association]. I was really afraid coming into it that it wouldn't be a very active discussion (people tend to shy away from educational discussions), but it was filled and packed with solely student-led conversations. People shared very interesting and informative insights, personal experiences, and even academic research. It was nice to see that the general student body doesn't necessarily need something "Tancy" to catch their eye.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU HOPE TO SEE OR GET FROM MAASU OR THE MAASU NETWORK?

I wish there were more avenues to meet with MAASU member schools. APAC has in general been to conferences within Chicago but they've often been with young professionals, or people a little older. It would be nice if we had more social things with MAASU just so we could meet up and see other groups in Chicago.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR - YOU SHOULD CARE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN HONG KONG

Abigail Watt

October 2, 2014

It didn't look much like a revolution. It was 9 p.m. in the heart of Hong Kong's financial district. People, not cars, occupied the roads. A truck delivering water bottles and juice, gas masks and cooling pads, rolled through the crowd. The people parted, creating a path for the truck while the drivers handed out supplies to the sound of sustained cheers from the onlookers. It didn't feel like a revolution either.

Yet this was the same group of protesters, the same "Umbrella Revolution" that faced unprecedented police force just the day before, on Sept. 28, when authorities unleashed pepper spray and dozens of canisters of tear gas on the crowd gathered in Central. With more than 50 people injured in scuffles with the police and 89 arrested, these protests blemished Hong Kong's usually spotless track record of peaceful demonstrations — but not because of the protesters. This time it's the authorities, who have been criticized by both demonstrators and the media for excessive use of force in a situation that did not need it.

So named for the countless umbrellas held aloft to shield protesters from both sun and tear gas, the "Umbrella Revolution" is the result of Hong Kong's growing discontent with both the local and central governments. At the core of the issue lies the city's demands for universal suffrage. The Basic Law that governs Hong Kong states that the Chief Executive should eventually be elected by the people: one person, one vote. Currently, an election committee elects Hong Kong's Chief Executive. The most recent proposal set forth by the Beijing government allows each person one vote, but only after a pro-Beijing election committee vets up to three candidates for the position. That, Hong Kongers contend, was not the deal. The action started on Wednesday, Sept. 24. Demonstrations began, sparked by students' efforts as they conducted peaceful marches and boycotted classes. Momentum increased Friday when the Occupy Central movement, which had planned a civil disobedience campaign for Oct. 1 against the proposed election policy, moved its campaign up to join the student movement. The police reacted with surprising force against protesters, emerging with militaristic guns. Thousands flooded the streets in indignant response. On Sunday, the police cloaked Central in tear gas and pepper spray. But the thousands remained on the streets, united against the violence.

Cory Nelson arrived in Central on Monday night. He called the atmosphere "peaceful, almost celebratory." By that time, the police had essentially disappeared from the major protest areas, realizing perhaps that force was not enough to drive the protesters from the streets.

With the disappearance of the police, the crowds have relaxed and the calm atmosphere that blankets most demonstrations in Hong Kong has returned. Protesters sit together on pedestrian bridges, on curbs, in the road, sitting in groups of two or three, chatting as if it's the most normal thing in the world. But they're far from finished. Near the government headquarters, people have set up microphones. They chant and they sing, chanting for Leung Chun-Ying, the current Chief Executive, to resign, and singing the Cantonese version of "Do You Hear the People Sing" from "Les Misérables."

The situation doesn't cease to amaze: the escalation of the demonstrations, from student-led boycotts to protests over 100,000 strong, the police reaction, the subsequent outpouring of support from the citizens of Hong Kong. Even now, the protesters display discipline and order — even while building a barricade with fences and plastic zip ties, protesters made a point of throwing used ties into trash bags.

On Tuesday evening, thousands still sat in the roads. Nelson returned to the protests and parked himself on one of the main roads in Central, eating biscuits, talking to people. He marveled at the way these protests brought people together: congregated them in spaces they could never ordinarily occupy. It was the magic of public space, he decided. These demonstrations drew people out and together in a way that no other protest in recent years has. Nelson said he saw more concern and passion from the gathered students than he had ever seen before.

But despite Hong Kong's awakened solidarity, there's no telling what will happen next, no telling whether the people's efforts will result in any changes. Some believe the protests will simply end whenever people grow tired.

The legacy of the protests may lie in more than just the results, though.

"Whatever the outcome, the fact that the people of Hong Kong are willing to express desires for freedom and representation, and willing to sacrifice some of that to express their needs as a people, is important and necessary," Nelson said.

For him, it's the less palpable changes that matter.

"Even if they don't get what they want, it's killed the image of Hong Kong as an apathetic people."