

ISSUE 12.4 hardboiled

THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN NEWSMAGAZINE MARCH 2009



IN THIS ISSUE
E09066 AND 9/11
WHITE WASHING FILMS
NEW UC ADMISSIONS POLICY
...AND MORE!

12.4 hardboiled

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ABOUT THIS COVER
“University Bleaching”

The new UC Admissions Policy promoting “diversity” on all UC campuses is implemented unquestioningly by the UC Regents Board. Their attempts to increase the white population, while doing nothing for people of color and even **harming** the Asian population percentages is another form of white supremacist authoritarian action, silencing the voices that get injured in this vicious admissions process. See p6 for more information.

editor's notes

Competitive. Career-focused. Sleep deprived. These were just some of the words and phrases that my friends and family members used to describe students at Cal to me before I even started my first semester as a college student. These descriptions relayed message to my brain, amplifying the perceived threats of cutthroat competition, stressing me out before I even took my first midterm. This is the single method of survival for my major of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Berkeley -- the library and computer lab were going to be my best friends, and the need for sleep, my worst enemy.

While bits and pieces of what's mentioned above are true (to an extent), it soon became clear to me that my parents' depictions and advice were exaggerated in degree and yet limited in their perception. In particular, their rigid blueprint for how to be a successful EECS major left me wishing for more; instead of taking advantage of my 12 unit course load to “study more,” I took the extra time to explore different organizations and opportunities that were available on campus. While I didn't know what I was looking for, my curiosity brought me to experiences that were more than worthwhile.

In fact, many of the organizations I have been involved with—including hardboiled—are unrelated to my major or career path. While this is a seemingly harmless concept, I quickly realized that many of my classmates were joining engineering societies, polishing their resumes, attending

company info-sessions, or developing their own software—all while I was off writing for hardboiled, or planning a community service event. I have to admit, such deviation from the EECS mold made me at times feel guilty that I was not spending as much time finding internships or advancing my career aspirations. Nevertheless, by participating in a progressive organization such as hardboiled, I feel as if I have been enlightened to the other side of the academic spectrum; instead of being confined to the professional-oriented mindset of the engineer, I have begun to see and understand the activist approach to social topics.

I stuck with hardboiled because of the contrast between the organization's community and the engineering environment. It is not simply the APA subject matter that attracts me (although the articles are always enticing), but the fact that I am consciously investing myself in a community that seeks to inform and educate that keeps me coming back for more. Sure, being in hardboiled may require some time sacrifices, but in my opinion the things you learn are well worth it.

James Yeh
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Liked what you read? Feel like joining our staff? Want to send us angry letters? Then contact us!
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The Chilling Ghost of April's Past

by montague hung

This photo of young Vietnamese woman sitting next to a bust of Ho Chi Minh sparked controversy and was defaced with red paint.



photo courtesy of OC Register

Controversial art stirs up painful memories in Vietnamese American community

For those unfamiliar with the history of Vietnamese Americans, imagine how the Jewish community would react to the promotion of a photo portraying a young Jewish woman standing next to a statue of Hitler and wearing a shirt with a swastika symbol.

On January 8, 2009, an art exhibit called "F.O.B. II: Art Speaks" was put on by the Vietnamese American Arts and Letters Association (VAALA) and invoked a critical reaction from the Vietnamese American community. The specific piece of art that sparked the controversy was a photo by Brian Doan depicting a young Vietnamese woman sitting next to a bust of Ho Chi Minh. Further symbolism of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) was clear with the woman's attire of a red tank top with a yellow star in the middle, which is practically the Communist Party's flag with shoulder straps. After the Vietnamese American community's display of protest via picket signs and bullhorns, the Santa Ana city officials decided to close the exhibit for being displayed in improper areas. However, before the exhibit was closed, a local protestor named Ly Tong smeared red paint over the photo.

The photographer and curators of the exhibit defended the photograph, saying that it was never meant to offend anyone. Doan and the exhibit curators instead claimed that their intention was only to promote discussion and debate in a uniformly anti-communist community. Tram Le, one of the curators of the exhibit, said in an LA Times article, "I felt the community was on this slippery slope, that we were not progressing toward having open dialogue and being more tolerant of different political viewpoints." In the same article, Lan Duong, a co-curator, offers: "This piece uses the communist flag but isn't celebratory of communism. The communist flag isn't used just as a political symbol, but of what is going on in Vietnam and the kinds of modes of consumption that marks youth culture."

The photographer has also repeatedly denied accusations of being a communist. In an article by the OC Register, Doan interpreted his photo with the following description: "She lives in the communist country, but look at her. She's looking away,

dreaming. She wants to escape Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh is next to her, but communism is not longer in her. She wants to dream of other things." In the article, Doan also defends himself by citing his patriotic freedom of speech. He points out that he is entitled to his right of expression, and that the Vietnamese community's efforts to silence him were not only Un-American, but almost of an oppressive Communist nature.

The large majority of the Vietnamese American community interprets Doan's artwork not as a commentary of youth culture, but instead as communist propaganda. Knowing that most youths in Vietnam are actually not wearing such shirts and that such busts of Ho Chi Minh are rare, the artwork is interpreted as a promotion of communist symbolism. Many Vietnamese Americans find it hard to see how the girl in the photo wants to escape Vietnam when she is wearing a shirt promoting the party. What the artwork does instead is it integrates communist symbols into the American community. Charles Nguyen, who fled communist Vietnam three decades ago, has been quoted in the Orange County Register to say, "They want to (provide) propaganda for the cruel regime, so we want to stop them."

What many Americans outside of the Vietnamese community must try to understand is that the Vietnamese American's intense opposition to the photo is justified. The artwork, whether intentionally or not, is insensitive to the traumatic historical experiences of the community. Most Vietnamese Americans fled Vietnam to escape the iron fist of the VCP. The Party was violently oppressive and ruthlessly eliminated individual freedoms such as the right to free expression. During the war, in addition to the deaths of more than 400,000 South Vietnamese military personnel, the VCP executed as many as 3,000,000 civilians on their way to Saigon, according to the Center For Vietnam Studies. After the fall of Saigon, many first generation Vietnamese Americans became prisoners of war who were tortured and witnesses to the deaths of fellow comrades in the VCP's reeducation camps. Although there are no official records published by the party, several U.S. and European agencies estimate that there were about 1 million South Vietnamese imprisoned without trial or charge, and at least 165,000 died in the reeducation camps. In South Vietnam, the two out of three families that did not have a relative in the reeducation camps were still subjected to the Communist's authoritarian rule. Freedom of expression was eliminated and to this very day, Amnesty International still reports on the widespread human rights abuses.



Protesters denounce Ho Chi Minh, former leader of communist Vietnam.

just mysteriously disappearing.

To refugees, the photo depicting the VCP's flag and Ho Chi Minh is agonizing for portraying the symbolic images of a regime that has committed so many countless atrocities. April 30, the anniversary of the Fall of Saigon, is often referred to by Vietnamese Americans as Black April or Ngày mất nước, which translates into "the day the nation was lost." The scars run deep and Vietnamese Americans are clearly still haunted by the painful memories of their old homeland. A picture of the red flag and Ho Chi Minh brings back remembrance of lost loved ones and past torment. To many, the war still hasn't ended. Kim Vo, a protester, said, "That girl in the photo was wearing a T-shirt with what we here call the 'bloody flag.' We fled Vietnam because of that flag, because of that murderer Ho Chi Minh" (OC Register). When Vietnamese Americans protest against VCP symbols, the rest of the community has to understand that there is a lot of suffering behind those protests.

While I am a full advocate of protesting such pieces of art that promote a murderous regime, the one reservation I do have is for the defacement of the photograph. It is our full American right to express ourselves freely, and we do this with marches and speeches. However, Vietnamese Americans must also respect Brian Doan's right to free expression. Indeed, his form of speech does hurt the community. But that doesn't mean that the community can't rise above it and respond in a dignified manner.

When Vietnamese Americans are making threats and damaging his property, it sheds the community in a really negative light. Jim Nichols, a co-owner of the building at 1600 N. Broadway that displayed the exhibit, said, "They have factions in their community that go after anyone who in any way seems to put a positive light on communism" (LA Times). Kieu Linh Valverde, a professor of Asian American studies at UC Davis, also said, "Right now, we live in fear because these people threaten our families and destroy our work and take away our freedoms" (LA Times). By physically ruining the art, some now view Vietnamese Americans as thuggish and radically intolerant.

When confronted with such controversial artwork, the Vietnamese American community can become stronger by unifying within legal means. When San Jose Councilmember Madison Nguyen spat in the face of Vietnamese Americans by falsely accusing them of forging signatures on their petition for the community's naming of Little Saigon, the community unified behind the cause and is now holding a recall election. By recalling Madison, the Vietnamese American community is showing their influence in politics through the democratic process and is becoming stronger while respecting American values.

In the end, the photograph is an unfortunate part of the Vietnamese American story. As offensive as the art was, it doesn't justify desecrating the photo with red paint. If the creators of the exhibit really did intend to spark a dialogue, why not humor them by banding together and talk about it? By joining hands to explain the hurt of the past, the Vietnamese American community can transcend differences and help everyone else understand their background. If we can successfully and peacefully communicate our history, Vietnamese Americans will begin to build bridges with others and unite to become even stronger than before.

FLORIDA AND THE BIG, BAD RACIST LAW:

Here's a scary thought: the electorate doesn't take institutionalized racism seriously anymore.

The truth of this statement was likely a major contributing factor to the defeat of Florida's Amendment 1 during the November 4 election, a ballot measure that would have repealed an alien land law barring "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from owning property.

The racist origins of this 83 year-old law are indubitable. The original alien land law passed in California in 1913 in an effort to protect nativist economic interests from Asian immigrant farmers. According to the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA),

by denise wong

WHY THE ALIEN LAND LAWS WON'T DIE

a myriad of other states soon followed, believing that property restrictions on the West Coast would prompt Asian farmers to go eastward. Florida amended its constitution to include its own alien land law in 1926.

Presently, Florida is the only state in the country that has yet to repeal its alien land law. Efforts to finally get voters to rid the constitution of this legislation finally succeeded in 2007, after a disturbing three years of failed attempts to get the measure put on the Florida state ballot. The law, which directly violates equal protection laws and the Fourteenth Amendment, is obviously not enforced, so its repeal would be nothing more than a cost-free symbolic gesture. It needed 60% of the electorate's approval to pass, yet ultimately failed by a measure of 52%-48%.

The 1790 Naturalization Act in the U.S. limited naturalized citizenship to "free, white persons," which makes the phrase "aliens ineligible to citizenship" racially charged. This law's pieces of legislation included the 1924 Immigration Act, which served to exclude most Asian populations, and the Supreme Court decision

of Takao Ozawa v. US. The number of times the term "aliens ineligible to citizenship" has been used in US history to restrict the rights of Asian Americans makes it patently evident that this is a racist law.

The amendment's outcome would most likely have been different if everybody knew this, and post-election, many people that lamented the ballot measure's defeat pointed their fingers at state Senator Steven Geller's and OCA Florida chapter's failure to do enough outreach and clarify the law's confusing language. In fact, Geller and OCA-South Florida president Winnie Tang have been repeatedly quoted that the measure was unlikely to

immigration restrictions, some believe that the highly confusing law has probably prevailed for so long for a good reason, and some make superficial and blatantly incorrect claims as, "Do you not understand the 'ineligible (sic) for citizenship' means either you entered this country illegally or that you have committed (sic) a crime once you got here. Either way you are an alien criminal and need to be sent back to your home country. There is absolutely nothing racist about that."

Such comments are far too similar and pervasive to be considered part of some massive internet trolling project. Given the backlash against the P.C.-movement of the last decade

succeed, as many voters would think the law targets illegal aliens instead of Asian Americans.

Whatever the cause, proponents of the measure did enough to gain 48% of voters' support. It should be noted that the history and original intent of the act were covered in every news article to have featured the amendment, both pre- and post-election.

Once the voting public is given a chance to speak, however, the culprit becomes clearer: Amendment 1 failed because the electorate disconcertingly refuses to take institutionalized racism seriously.

Online articles that brought attention to the proposal are riddled with comments from users who deliberately misinterpret the amendment and refuse to even entertain the notion that the term "aliens ineligible to citizenship" is grounded in legislative racism: some claim that there is no explicit reference to race and the controversy surrounding Florida's law is a result of over-analysis, some maintain that this is a detrimental measure to relax

and the triumph of having elected the first black president, it is tempting to believe that racism is over and those who cry racism are oversensitive.

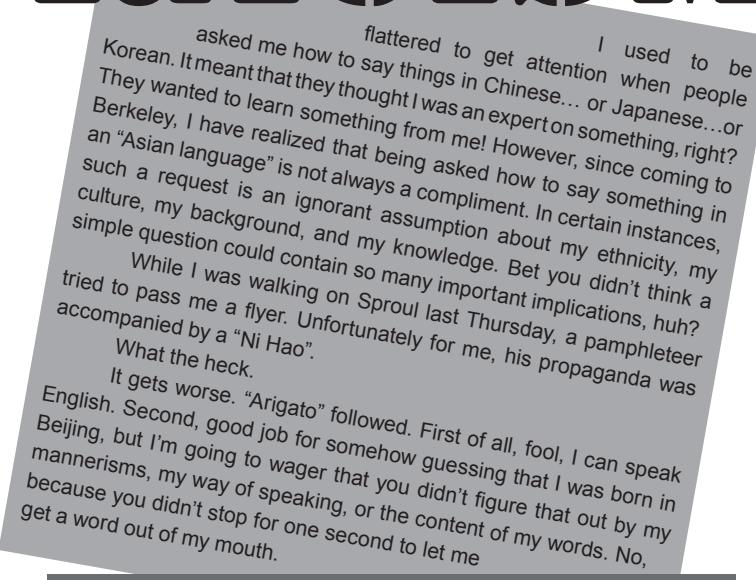
Additionally, illegal immigration is a huge issue in Florida, and, as Pacific Citizen assistant editor Lynda Lin states, it is very easy to misinterpret the law due to its use of such controversial keywords as "property rights" and "aliens." In the midst of all this, however, it is utterly disgraceful and incredulous that the majority of a state's electorate, denying the reality of legislative racism in history, actually voted a textbook example of institutional racism into state legislation.

In spite of this, community leaders and former proponents of the amendment have expressed optimism, saying that now the measure has received greater attention, they will work harder to put together a similar bill for the 2010 election.

In doing so, it is ostensibly important that they focus their efforts in trying to educate a populace that consciously refuses to learn.

RACISM: An Amateur's Perspective

by kathy wang



FOB: Fresh Off the Boat. Sorry to break it to you, but the preferred means of transportation overseas nowadays is an airplane.

Is this term a point of Asian pride? Or is it a derogatory label that perpetuates the "Asians as outsiders" view? Until I was asked to consider this issue, I had never given the acronym "FOB" much thought.

It's common for Asian Americans to refer to themselves as "fobby-looking." This descriptor basically means that they are sporting hairstyles or clothing or accessories that are more commonly seen on Asian idols than on teenage kids from California. But what about those students who do come from Asian countries? Hey, I'm one of them. Isn't it okay for us to use that term? I mean, we're legit, right?

After quite a bit of pondering, I can honestly say that I have no idea what my stance is on the word "FOB". I guess it's a matter of interpretation. On the one hand, you can argue that reinforcing the idea that someone is "Fresh Off the Boat" means that we're also reinforcing the belief that he or she can never assimilate into American society. On the other hand, why shouldn't we of Asian descent and heritage reclaim a word that has been used to segregate and exoticize us? Pick your poison.

Let's consider the fraternal twin of fobbing—being whitewashed. I've never been accused of being too "Americanized", but I'm pretty sure that it's always been on the back of people's minds. Although I was born in Beijing, I moved to the States when I was five and haven't really looked back since. I can probably rattle off People Magazine's top five Hollywood scandals faster than I can name ONE Chinese celebrity. I've eaten more fries in my lifetime than pot stickers.

Here's the question that we've all been waiting for: Does being assimilated into one culture mean that one has to give up another culture? I don't know. I'd like to say no. But recently, I've been noticing how much longer it takes for me to find the right words when speaking in Mandarin with my parents. Those Chinese characters that used to be roll right off the pages into my brain have acquired a more unnatural tone. In my mind, it's not about choosing sides. Life is about balance. Sure, I might fall in my great balancing act, but I'm trying.... okay?

Work with me here.

Angry Asian Man, the moniker for the writer of a blog that goes by the same name, concludes certain news items with the exclamation: "That's racist!"...I can't do that. I'm not angry enough. I get it though, I really do. Racism still exists. It sucks majorly to be defined by the color of your skin and sometimes (if they care enough to look past the yellow), your physical features. The problem is, it happens too often and too subtly for a stray eye or comment to faze me anymore. Numbled by the avalanche of little, ignorant comments that threaten to bury me, I have begun to adopt a stoic stance towards cultural assumptions or ethnic biases expressed through looks, words, and actions.

And hey, here's a question for those of you who've ever cracked an Asian joke involving the phrase "me love you long time": What makes you think that you have the right to sexualize me based on the color of my hair or alienate me because my eyes aren't the same shape as yours? In their Def Poetry Jam performance, the lovely ladies of Yellow Rage conclude: "Don't talk to me anymore, don't fuck with me anymore, because I am done talking to you."

But is blocking out the problem really the cure?

No.
We can bash racists all we want, but dialogue is necessary if we want to bring about change. Okay, I know that sounds idealistic and unfeasible. But hey, I'm not asking for some kind of world summit on racism here. I don't expect everyone to agree with me on an issue of this gravity. But let's talk it out. If we don't try to promote education about the pervasive problem of racism, we're screwed.

Recently, in my Asian American Studies class, we were posed the question: Does racism still exist?

That's a difficult question to answer. I am already overwhelmed by the deluge of criticism and disagreement that I can see looming in the minds of the readers.

My initial reaction is to say "yes". Maybe it's not overt, as some people may argue. No, it's more insidious. It's in the way that a school administrator treats me, giving me the benefit of the doubt because I am a good little Asian girl. It's in the way that strangers approach me, hesitating to speak English because they are afraid that I will open my mouth and blare out unrefined Chinglish back at them despite the fact that I have no Chinese accent. And that's even worse. Because people whom I don't know, and whom I will probably never get to know, assume that there is something that inherently makes me the unapproachable "other".

Racism is not skin deep anymore. It has penetrated us to the core.

So listen up. Look around. Stop assuming. We're all unique. Really, we are. And I'm sure you'd love me, or at least understand me, if you gave me a chance. Talk to me.

Whitewashing film adaptations of Asian franchises

by katherine bai

Is Hollywood starting a trend by casting
Caucasian actors in Asian roles?

With all the excitement of the Academy Awards that has come and gone, I began thinking about just how much money I have spent on films in my 19 years alive. I've seen my fair share of the good, the bad, and the downright ridiculous. I usually don't take these ridiculous movies that seriously; in fact, my reaction is quite simple: I laugh and forget. However, a couple of movies coming out soon have me particularly perplexed.

Remember that one popular show on Nickelodeon, "Avatar: The Last Airbender"? Well somehow the producers felt that casting Asian roles to Caucasian actors would go either unnoticed or unaddressed.

"The core ideas [of the show] are drawn from Hindu, Taoist and Buddhist philosophy; its character names - Aang, Katara, Toph Bei Fong - incorporate Chinese, Japanese and Southeast Asian phonemes; and its visual identity is modeled on traditional Asian iconography," writes Jeff Yang of the San Francisco Chronicle.

So what gives? With such disregard for the show's Asian roots, the director must surely be racist.

Oh hold on, the director is M. Night Shyamalan, the Indian-born American filmmaker. That doesn't make sense ... how could a member of the Asian American community allow such an obviously regressive step in the portrayal of Asian Americans in Hollywood? The show has already won numerous awards and experienced both commercial and critical success, all while sticking to its quintessential Asian influences and anime-style cinematography. It seems only logical to continue this theme when investing in an actual

feature film. Why mess with a good thing?

Derek Kim, an award-winning Korean-American comic book writer argues, "This could have broken down every barrier in the business, proving you can have an all-Asian cast and score three blockbuster successes. Instead, we just get three more chances to cringe."

Clearly, Hollywood doesn't feel that the American public is ready to see Asian Americans cast in serious lead roles outside of the typical slapstick and stereotype-heavy, action films. One very important difference to note is that the television show features animated Asian characters, while the film would be the first live-action portrayal of the show. Basically the public can handle cartoon Asians, but not real ones?

The movie producers must realize that it is not considered progress to make a film adaptation of an Asian show if they are only going to recast all the characters as Caucasian. Someone must have had an ounce of common sense because after a few months, they recast Prince Zuko, who was supposed to be played by, get ready ...teen pop sensation Jesse McCartney. However, Dev Patel is now taking his place, which is still reminiscent of the "Memoirs of a Geisha" controversy, in which Zhang Ziyi, a popular Chinese actress, was cast as the Japanese lead. It is pretty obvious that Patel was cast to quell growing controversy, especially since starring in the critically acclaimed "Slumdog Millionaire." Prince Zuko, however, is an East Asian character, not an Indian-Asian one. When will Hollywood understand that we are not so easily interchangeable?

Another film adaptation, this time of the Japanese video game "Street Fighter 2," fails to recognize the importance of incorporating Asian actors into a successful Asian franchise. The film focuses on the character Chun-Li, a Chinese woman who seeks to avenge her father's death. It seems like the perfect time for a Chinese actress to take the lead role, yet the producers still ended up choosing Kristin Kreuk. While Kreuk is half Chinese, her appearance only hints at her Chinese heritage. This casting decision implies that society is not ready for a full Asian actress to lead a film. On top of that, the entire film seems laughable while perpetuating typical Asian stereotypes. The trailer features a voiceover with an inaccurate Chinese accent and montages of cheesy martial arts sequences.

"Avatar" and "Chun-Li" have such huge potential to promote positive Asian portrayals on the big screen because of the blockbuster popularity of the respective television show and video game franchises. So why are Hollywood producers still following this disrespectful casting trend?

It looks like Hollywood is only allowing Asians to continue portraying token secondary characters rather than giving them the chance to take lead roles in films that should be about them. The fact that an Asian American director can practice such discriminating casting procedures hints at the deep-rooted problems in the mainstream media's views and expectations. Society has reached a point in which audiences will always expect Caucasian actors to dominate films, even if it means having Jesse McCartney donned in traditional Japanese robes. What a shame.

Indian-American actor Dev Patel is said to be cast as Prince Zuko, an East Asian character in the upcoming film "Avatar: the Last Airbender." Jesse McCartney was originally attached to the role. Nickelodeon Screen Capture and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>



Kristen Kreuk, a half-Chinese and half-Dutch actress, is portraying Chun-Li in the new film "Street Fighter: the Legend of Chun-Li." In the original video game, Chun-Li is a native Chinese martial artist. <http://www.thebps.com/> and <http://www.imbd.com/>

The University of California new admissions policy promises to “diversify” UC campuses with less Asians and more white students. by elaine chen



Photo courtesy of <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu>

“they’ll be fine”

The new UC admissions policy, aimed towards the freshmen of 2012, promises to diversify our campus. Some of the proposed changes for hopeful high school seniors include:

(1) “End the requirement that applicants submit two SAT Subject Test scores.

(2) Narrow from the top 12.5 to the top 9 percent of high school graduates the percentage who will be guaranteed admission to the university system (although

not necessarily to the campus of their choice). The eligibility pool will also be expanded from the top 4% to 9% of each high school graduating class in California.

(3) Expand the definition of applicants eligible for a full admission review to include all who complete 11 of 15 required high school courses by the end of their junior year, and achieve a grade-point average of at least 3.0.”¹

1 Jaschik, Scott. “Unintentional Whiteness of U. of California?” *Inside Higher Ed.* 5 February 2009, <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/02/05/uc>.

A recent *LA Times* article¹ notes that though the applicant pool is expanded, fewer students will be accepted. “Supporters said the changes will make more students eligible for UC, particularly low-income, rural, black and Latino students who have good grades and test scores but have often been shut out by the subject test requirement” (Gordon). Less waves of incoming freshmen to clog up Sather Gate but more diversity? Sweet! But upon closer observation, it seems like the UC Regents’ definition of “diversity” is different than you’d expect. Looking at the statistics that the UC Regents provide themselves, the new plan reveals that it will actually *reduce* the number of Asian Americans on campus and *increase* the white population, while doing **nothing** for the numbers of blacks and Latinos. I guess diversity to the UC System means more white students.

Here are the projections that the University of California itself shamelessly puts forward to illustrate the surprising impact of admission changes on different racial and ethnic groups:

Groups	% of 2007-8 Admits Under Current Policy	Estimates of % of 2007-8 Class Admitted Under New Rules
Black	4%	4-5%
Latino	19%	19-22%
Asian	36%	29-32%
White	34%	41-44%

Source: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/02/05/uc>

What do the numbers show? Numbers of blacks and Latinos admits staying the same, while numbers of Asian students dropping. The white population is the only real population to benefit from this, jumping nearly 10%. When UC Regent’s President Mark Yudof was confronted with these statistics, he merely responded that these numbers weren’t entirely accurate (Gordon). Given the lack of Asian Americans in top management levels as well as in Yudof’s own administration, it is not very comforting to know that not more research is being done in light of these not so accurate numbers.

Here is why I’m angry.

1. It tells people that there are *too many* Asians in higher education, and that our numbers are unfair. We are still the “model minority.”

I’m annoyingly reminded of the *New York Times* article “Little Asia on a Hill”² back in 2007, which made the sweeping claim that Asian Americans were taking spots away from more other candidates. Of course, this is problematic in many ways. Because despite people throwing around that “45%” number around to blame Asian Americans for overpopulation here on the Berkeley campus, many forget about the lack of Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander representation on campus which, yes, fall under the Asian American umbrella term too.

In Fall 2007, the student-run campaign “Count Me In” led the movement to disaggregate categories for Asian Americans on the UC admissions application to accumulate more accurate data and research for the numerous ethnic groups that fall within the broad term of “Asian American.” The motivation for this movement was the stereotype of the Asian American community to be the, “model minority.” They were the racial group that was “making it” in America, proving that the system works and is not racist in any way. What fails to be mentioned with this stereotype are all the Asian groups that disappear and whose stories are not told. The fact remains that the number of Pacific Islanders in California that hold a bachelor’s degree is less than half of the numbers of Asian Americans.³

1 Gordon, Larry. “UC Regents ease admissions rules to expand applicant pool.” *Los Angeles Times*. 6 February 2009. <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-uc6-2009feb06,0,7835405.story>.

2 Egan, Timothy. “Little Asia on the Hill.” *The New York Times*. 7 January 2007.

In an interview with Vincent Pan, Executive Director of civil rights organization Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA), Pan notes, “There’s still an unspoken embarrassment or discomfort that many colleges and universities have with high numbers of Asian Americans. It’s not something people discuss openly. We don’t hear UC promoting the size of their Asian American student populations. In general you are more likely to hear jokes about it. That’s what I’m most concerned about: we are somehow not able or supposed to be proud of the successes of Asian Americans. When some see large concentrations of Asians or other minority groups, it doesn’t sit right with them, and that’s what we need to change.”

So before we start shooting off our mouths about Asian Americans flooding our campuses, what about the lack of representation for those communities which are rendered invisible by the generalization of the Asian American community?

2. It is a reminder to me that Asian American interests are not prioritized among the Universities of California.

We have not forgotten having to fight against the system in order to keep our Asian language programs intact (see page 7 by Eunice Kwon). We have not forgotten how blatantly our protests were ignored. We have not forgotten how easily it was decided that Asians languages were not as important, despite the huge numbers of those enrolled and interested in taking these classes.

Although Asian Americans make up a large percentage of the UC student population, how often are Asian American interests served? A recent survey focusing on AAPI Student Life on campus (carried out by our very own **hardboiled** alumni) reported that UC Berkeley, the center of student-initiated progressive racial reform, still struggles with providing and promoting adequate resources for the AAPI student population. One point that is emphasized is the noticeable lack of Asian American faculty. Within the entire UC system, only 13% of that faculty is Asian American, while white faculty remains a high 78.4%. How often do Asian American students feel like their voices and perspectives are being understood and respected?⁴

Professor Ling-Chi Wang also notes how the UC Regents blatantly ignored the concerns of California Asian American legislators, who collaborated on a letter that urged the UC Regents to postpone implementing the policy until more research on the impact on the various communities will be. However, the UC Regents seemed too eager to push forward the policy.

As if the new UC Admissions FAQ Video⁵ didn’t blatantly erase our presence on this campus enough, this new admissions policy chooses to painfully bleach us out of existence. The huge number of Asian Americans who are alumni, who are students, and who are high school students eager to apply don’t seem to really matter to UC policy making. Our presence is too easily ignored.

3. The University of California continues to ignore the protests of Asian Americans, choosing instead to make the decision without us.

What is more aggravating about the policy is UC President Mark G. Yudof’s dismissive reply to Asian American concerns in the *LA Times* article: “They’ll be fine.”

What’s **that** mean? The only way that response can be justified is if (1) he understands the experiences, history, and values of the Asian American community in

California OR (2) Asian American perspectives and voices were fully represented within the decision-making process. I don’t think either or those things occurred here, so that reply is just a reflection upon Yudof’s ignorance and disinterest of the concerns of the Asian American community.

Please don’t try pitting Asian Americans against other groups of color in order to place the blame of racial inequality into our hands. We are **not** the problem. I can’t emphasize that enough. Don’t

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3 Vázquez, Ricardo. “Asian American, Pacific Islander data collection launches.” *UC Newsroom*. University of California. 16 November 2007. <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/16826>

4 “University of California: All Ladder Rank Faculty by Field and Ethnicity/Race.” *University of California Office of the President, Academic Advancement*. October 2006.

5 Watch the UC Admissions Video here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAH5M0nsSDc>. Where are the Asians? For a university that boasts a 45% Asian American population, our campus seems utterly devoid of their presence in this video.

MEMO

Subject: API Education and Language NOW!

To: U.C. Berkeley
From: Eunice Kwon

With the present state of the economy, everyone seems to be feeling the crunch. Personally, I had been fortunate enough to not be directly effected by this crisis until recently.

I was exploring my options for a second major or a minor, when I heard that the Korean language minor was in danger of being cut altogether. Whether this is factual or not, it is definitely true that the East Asian Language and Cultures Department and the South and Southeast Asian Language

languages not protected by endowments and tenure-track professors, will also have trouble maintaining the already insufficient number of language courses offered.

I sat down with Christine Hong, a post-doctoral fellow and a leader of Asian Pacific Islander Education and Languages Now! to hear her perspective on the budget cuts taking place in the EALC and SSEAS department. What I walked away with was a greater understanding that these budget cuts are about so much more than a lack of funds.

From my discussion with Hong, from my attendance at the forum held by APIEL Now!, from talking to my friends with Asian language majors, it is evident that untenured professors, fewer courses offered, and lack of funding are not separate problems in themselves, but the manifestation of a bigger problem – the attitude internalized by the UC Berkeley administration towards API language and education. The demographics of the Berkeley campus have shifted dramatically in the last 50 years, but the legacy of a Euro-centric mindset still remains.

On a campus that is 45% ethnically Asian, API language and education courses do not merely serve the purpose of teaching a skill, but facilitate the development of people's identities. Heritage students and non-heritage students alike are able to learn about different cultures and societies through language education.

Still, API language classes at Berkeley are often considered as "service courses" by the administration, meaning that learning another language is seen as a supplement, or an extra skill to develop alongside a more "scholarly" subject. Language programs that are well-established and have a long history at Cal are typically given priority in times of budget cuts, and newer programs are the first to go. This trend appears

fairly unbiased at first-glance, but times have changed in the last century, and the world of academia has progressed and become more diverse. This tendency to keep the old and cut the new directly contradicts the progressive spirit that UC Berkeley so proudly claims to embody.

"It's basically a Euro-centric curriculum that gets preserved first," commented Hong, "and then all of these other sorts of fields which have been historically neglected and often times only arose or emerged within this institution because of grass-roots struggles – those get slashed."

While the Scandinavian program has more professors than students majoring in Scandinavian, the turn away rate for enrollment in many API languages is more than substantial.

For the administration to automatically cling to what has already been established without considering the present state of the campus and the needs of the student population at hand is short-sighted. For the administration to be unresponsive to the high demands for API language and education courses

"While the Scandinavian program has more professors than students majoring in Scandinavian, the turn away rate for enrollment in many API languages is more than substantial."

at Cal is irresponsible. And for the administration to offer temporary relief instead of recognizing its need to progress with the rest of the campus is just plain inadequate.

Department are facing major cuts once again. As predicted, last year's efforts by students to fight the huge slashes to the EALC and SSELC budget managed to delay the cuts for a year, but another plan to make substantial cuts to these departments are already underway. Though cuts are happening all across the board, certain API language and education courses are facing a disproportionately severe cut in their funds.

Korean is the only East Asian Language Course at Berkeley that does not offer a major. With one professor (not tenured) the Korean program in Berkeley lacks the resources to build a full major, and the courses offered now have little security in the light of the budget cuts at hand.

In the South and Southeast Asian Language Department,



Student's protest the EALC budget cuts in front of Sather Gate (above left) and lower Sproul.



<http://supportealang.blogspot.com>

Executive Order 9066 to 9/11:

by annie kim noguchi

Do You Remember?

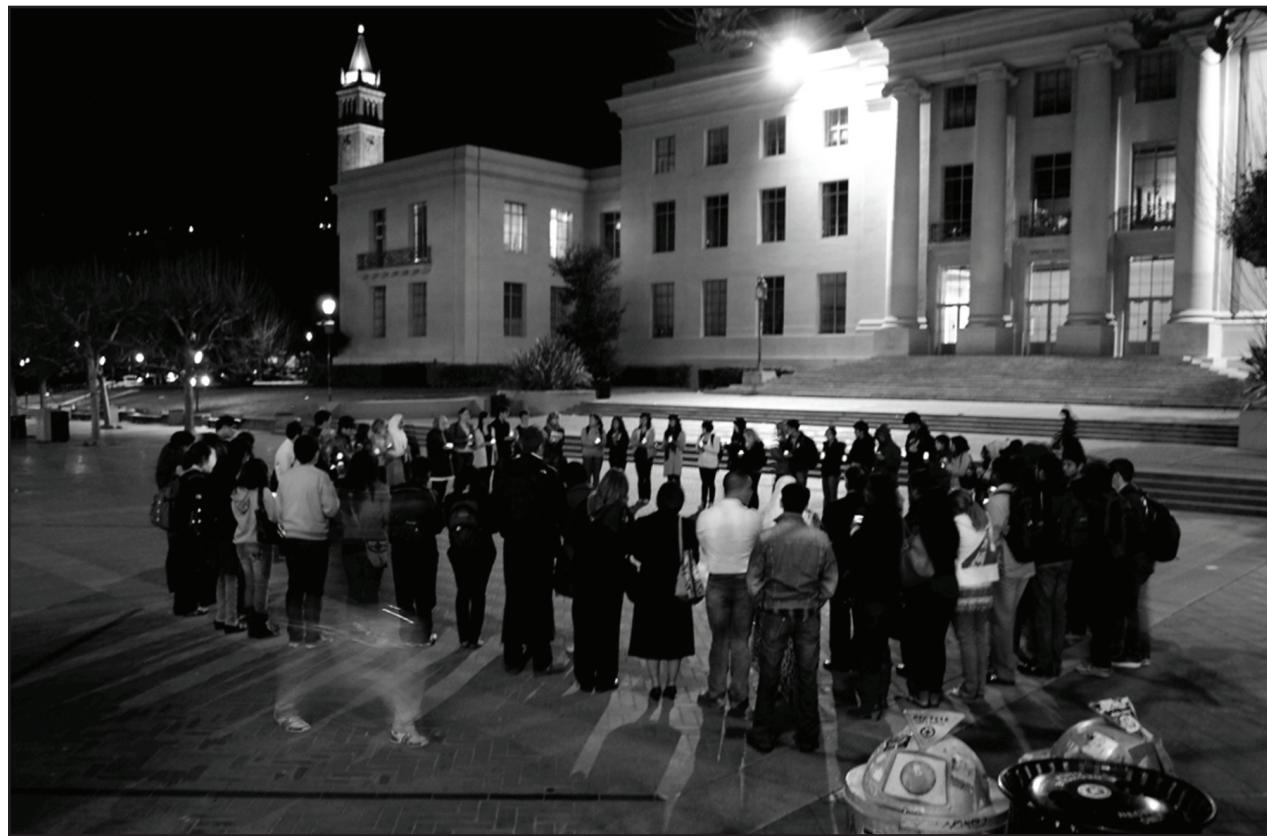


photo courtesy of Adrian Bonifacio

Participants of Day of Remembrance gather in a candlelight ceremony to reflect, remember, and build solidarity for Japanese Americans.

HOW NSU AND THE MSA'S DAY OF REMEMBRANCE HELP ME NOT TO FORGET

As I walk down Sproul, someone shoves a flyer under my nose, exclaiming, "Wanna fight for justice? Wanna build community?"

And my response is a polite albeit brisk, "No, thank you." ...No, thank you?

A speaker on the steps of Sproul Hall advocates for solidarity for some cause or another—"Let's stand in solidarity!"—and I walk by, in a hurry to get to my **hardboiled** editor meeting.

Community. Solidarity.

Call me cynical, call me jaded, call me pessimistic, but recently I've heard those words so many, many, many times that they've almost lost meaning to me.

Yes, I do believe in community building and solidarity with other people of color. I believe in social justice, and activism, and progression. I believe in fighting against racism, too, and dispelling stereotypes, and working to break down the white power structure and the institutionalized racism that governs our nation. I believe in all that, and more.

To be honest, though, sometimes I forget what "community" and "solidarity" actually mean. Sometimes I get caught in deadlines and agendas and rough drafts and budgets and I forget to slow down for a moment, and remember why I believe in the values, ideals, causes, and issues that I do. Sometimes I forget that these causes and issues are real people, my friends and my neighbors and my brothers and sisters, actually, and their struggles and their wisdom.

I realized this with beautiful clarity last Thursday, as I sat in Heller Lounge at the Nikkei Student Union (NSU) and the Muslim Students Association's (MSA) Day of Remembrance program. Suddenly, "community" and "solidarity" made a lot more sense to me as I began to see that NSU and the MSA were actually building a community together and standing in solidarity with one another.

One week ago, the NSU and the MSA, for the first time ever, collaborated to put on this Day of Remembrance. This annual event for Japanese Americans is not only to remember and pay homage to the pain of the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII, but also for the community to renew its vow to remain vigilant in the defense of the civil rights and civil liberties of all

communities and individuals.

Now, I know you are all educated readers and do not need me to explain to you why JA interment was such a big ideal. That those incarcerated were *citizens*, with homes and businesses and communities and their own thriving ethnic economy.

In the end, those interned spent an average of 900 days in camps in the most awful, desolate parts of the country. There was no due process, no compensation, and no explanation and the psychological and emotional damage done to the entire JA community still resounds strongly today. Families were fragmented, people committed suicide, some died of heartbreak. There are hundreds of thousands of stories and each one of them makes me cry in anger and in sadness. Each one reminds me how fragile civil liberties and even citizenship are in this country if you are a person of color.

And so, as soon as 9/11 happened and America looked to find scapegoats, Japanese Americans across the country got into their cars and picked up their phones and offered the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian **PERSONS OF MUSLIM ANCESTRY** communities their support.

Many Japanese Americans know all too well what it is like to be racially profiled, scapegoated, and victims of backlash because we suddenly looked like the enemy. We know all too well what it's like to be the target of laws and policies that require us to register, surrender our cameras and other "subversive" possessions, and stay indoors after the 6 p.m. curfew. We know what it's like for the FBI to come knocking at our door, taking our leaders away under the pretense of "questioning." And we know what it's like to never hear from those leaders again—our ministers, our teachers, our business leaders. Our fathers, our grandfathers, our uncles.

The Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities know what it is like as well. Immediately after 9/11, community leaders were rounded up and taken for question by the FBI, not to be heard from for months. Muslim, Arab, and South Asian Americans have endured a wave of hate crimes, vilification by the media, and

discriminatory treatment under new "homeland security" policies. They've been taken from their homes in the middle of the night as well, to be held and questioned without due process for months at a time.

They know what it's like. We know what it's like.

And thus, a friendship was born between the UC Berkeley Muslim community and the Japanese American community.

This year, NSU and the MSA organized this year's DOR together, held in Heller Lounge on Thursday, February 19. The evening started dramatically, with twenty six students of Muslim and Japanese American students marching into Heller Lounge.

"Instructions to all persons of Japanese ancestry."

"Instructions to all persons of Hmong ancestry."

"Instructions to all persons of Muslim ancestry."

Each person tacked a poster

to the walls of Heller Lounge, shouting out "Instructions..." one by one. There were twenty-six, ranging from Christian faith to Pacific Islander ancestry to queer identity.

The posters were photoshopped versions of Executive Order 9066, the key government document that ordered the incarceration of Japanese Americans. While DOR this year focused on the experiences of Muslims and Japanese Americans, the opening performance highlighted the reality that any groups' civil liberties can be challenged.

The DOR program continued with a screening of the documentary *9066 to 9/11*, followed by a panel of speakers including WWII activist and writer Hiroshi Kashiwagi, UC Berkeley's Dr. Hatem Bazian, Japanese American community leader Andy Noguchi, Muslim American activist Dina El-Nakhal, and student leader Sakeena Ahsan.

The evening came to a close with a candlelight ceremony on Upper Sproul. MC Lyell Sakae and student speaker Sakeen Ahsan spoke: "We are here to reaffirm why we cannot forget the past... We are here tonight to move towards a more unified

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Elected ASUC Officials Impacting the API Community

by layla abdul-khabir

Our student representatives speak up on campus issues and the API identity



Last April, many student officials were elected in part with the support of the Asian Pacific Islander community on campus. With their terms almost up, and the next election coming up within a few months, what have our officials done to represent the API community well? Have they spoken up on issues that affect API identity on campus, and have they advocated on our behalf? What results have they brought to show our community? I sat down with two senior officials and one senator to talk about being spokespersons on API issues, and the API identity on campus.

I first interviewed Krystle Pasco, Executive Vice President (EVP) of the Senate, a forthcoming, passionate person who spoke about her experience growing up as a minority Filipino in an underprivileged community. She believes that the API community can look to her with some pride for becoming the first Filipino woman at Berkeley to chair the Senate. One of the key issues that Pasco campaigned on is the need for a permanent Multicultural Center (MCC) on campus, to stand as a hallmark of our university's cultural diversity and a place for minority group

under the Model Minority myth, actually have higher rates of lacking access to higher education, among them the Hmong, Lao and Cambodian communities. Yang is an active advocate for the Count Me In Campaign, a student-started campaign to desegregate the "Asian American" term on the UC admissions application to give recognition to the smaller ethnic groups that are usually grouped under the "Asian Pacific Islander" heading.

Yang makes sure that she is the go-to senator for smaller, less visible groups within the ASUC, creating a safe space where they can bring up their concerns and get the resources they need. Yang helps to raise awareness for underrepresented causes within the Asian American community, such as the campaign last Fall to lower prevalent rates of Hepatitis B and liver cancer in the Asian and AA population, by educating other senators about the cause and reaching out to student group leaders who sponsor the event. Yang works with groups large and small to diversify the Asian American identity and let more voices in. In line with her efforts, Yang is disheartened about the idea of bringing

"Whose interest are we looking out for? The students or the companies that fund the school?" *Carlo De La Cruz*

expression. Pasco is passionate about this mission, stating, "The political history of our campus has brought us to the point where we need a space that exclusively represents and speaks to the needs of students from different cultural backgrounds." Pasco began advocating for a MCC as a member of the Third World Liberation Front organization, and since she was elected EVP, she has become a forefront spokesperson to campus administrators in pushing the issue forward. Progress on establishing a MCC

has been slow, but Pasco continues to negotiate with the University administration, saying, "The time is long overdue. We are only one of the few UCs that does not have a permanent Multicultural Center as a place for student expression."

Another issue that Pasco is outspoken on is the idea of bringing Panda Express to Lower Sproul. Panda Express, Pasco believes, perpetuates a monolithic Asian-American identity, and is definitely not the best option for Lower Sproul redevelopment. Pasco feels that businesses currently in the Bear's Lair sell "ethnic-specific" food, food that many API students may be familiar with eating from home, whereas Panda Express promotes a generic brand of food that has stereotyped the API identity. "Our campus," Pasco says, "is finally in a climate of desegregating the Asian American identity." In addition, Pasco argues, Panda Express has a long way to go in upholding environmentally sustainable business practices, and is offering students a choice of food that is not healthy.

Bringing the restaurant in will certainly boost ASUC revenue, but the question, Pasco says, is at what cost? She believes that our university is "...finally moving toward recognizing race and ethnicity as multi-faceted," and adds, "Panda Express would contradict all the work we've been doing [in that direction]." Pasco has a vote on the ASUC Auxiliary Store Operations Board which she uses to exercise her opinion on the issue and to ensure that should Panda Express come to campus, it at least adheres to a high standard of environmental and food quality practices.

Working to diversify the "Asian American" term is something that Senator Stephanie Yang is very familiar with. Last spring, Yang campaigned on breaking stereotypes about the Asian American community, with an emphasis on working to repeal the 'Model Minority' myth. "It's problematic," Yang says of the myth, "because students shouldn't be grouped under an 'umbrella term.'" Yang is especially troubled that some minority groups categorized within the Asian American term, and grouped

Panda Express to campus, believing that it works against what she stands for by "commodifying" the Asian American identity. Panda Express, Yang feels, helps maintain the current notion that the Asian American community is, "All about 'Chinese food' and 'Chinatown'.... [this] perpetuates the Asian American stereotype."

The Panda Express proposal does not sit well with Carlo De La Cruz, Academic Affairs Vice President, either. "It doesn't bring diversity to our campus," he states, and mentions that the API community has experienced lots of disadvantages before from corporations coming in and taking over. De La Cruz speaks about the impact of corporations coming to communities in the past and pushing out locally-owned businesses, such as those in a Chinatown or a Manilatown, saying "The mistrust of corporations [in our community] is not misplaced." He is pro-small businesses coming to campus, and mentions that in this case, locally-owned Heavenly Healthy foods in the Bear's Lair would be disadvantaged by the Panda Express move-in. De La Cruz believes that Panda Express would contribute to the trend of increasing corporatization of our university. "Our chancellor," De La Cruz says, "when speaking about UC Berkeley, has come to replace the term 'public university' with 'public-supported university,' a reference to the substantial corporate contributions that sustain the University, thus removing it from the hands of the public. In accepting large donations from corporations, although sometimes necessary, De La Cruz fears the university is becoming over-corporatized, asking, "Whose interest are we looking out for? The students, or the companies that fund the school?" De La Cruz says that he acts as a constant reminder to University officials that students don't want their school to run like a business, with revenue as the primary motive in mind.

Pasco, Yang and De La Cruz were elected partly on the support of the API community on campus, earning the endorsements of various API student groups and campus organizations. In the past year, numerous issues were raised that impacts API students and the API identity, among them the Multicultural Center plans, the Panda Express move-in, and the Count Me In campaign. These elected officials had a voice in each of these issues, and it is up to us to examine what they have said and how they have used the power of their positions to advocate on our behalf. As our campus prepares for another round of electing ASUC officials for the coming year, we must look to electing students who can serve as spokespersons for API students, in a way that shows a deep commitment to API issues and reflects the needs and values of our community.

Obama's Napolitano: Appeasing Conservative Sugardaddies?

by melani sutedja

New head of homeland security might mean new measures towards immigrant deportation and reform



<http://minnesota.publicradio.org>

Et tu, Janet?

President Obama's pick to head the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Janet Napolitano, signaled some hope to the issue of immigration reform. The former Arizona governor, who opposed government attempts to curb illegal immigration via building a border fence or using state crackdowns, marked a new political climate away from the post-9/11 politics of the Bush administration.

Yet, her recent policies are proving otherwise.

Despite earning initial support from pro-immigrant organizations for her willingness towards comprehensive reform (and originally, allowing to give driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants), Napolitano has recently backtracked into a more conservative swing towards tougher employer sanctions and border security.

In her recent border immigration and security directive, Napolitano aims to shift focus from deporting undocumented immigrants, to targeting the employers who hire these workers.

"I expect to increase the focus on ensuring that employers of unlawful workers are prosecuted," Napolitano said.

She will pursue it through the Electronic Employment Verification system, which according to the government website, allows employers to verify the "employment eligibility of new hires and the validity of their Social Security numbers."

Napolitano also aims to oust "criminal aliens" out of the country by improving computer systems in which police would automatically know the immigrant status of criminals after they have been detained. Once the sentence has been served, the police can deport them if necessary.

As I sit here researching her politics, I'm wondering whatever happened to her push for immigration reform through earned citizenship programs or legality systems. I call bull.

True, she isn't outright deporting undocumented workers, but going after employers and villainizing youth who commit petty crimes is just as futile; we can't use sad band-aid solutions to alleviate a much broader issue.

Graciously, Napolitano is also doing her fair share of political flip flopping by shifting her stance on fence construction accordingly to appease her sugardaddies on the political right, while lending a somewhat discerning ear to the left.

"Napolitano wants to get moving on completing the security

fence along the southern border," FOX news reports. "Most of the 670-mile fence has been completed, but more than 60 miles--mostly in Texas -- remain unfinished... The secretary is a huge supporter of the right mix at the right places."

This is the same woman who earlier opposed construction due to its high expenses and ineffectiveness.

"You build a 50-foot wall, somebody will find a 51-foot ladder," she said back in November of last year. So much for that.

Maybe she's doing her fair share of conservative brown-nosing--that's cool, we all need to get off on some bipartisan lovin' every now and then.

But I wonder how Napolitano really differs from Michael Chertoff, the former OHS Secretary who oversaw Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, attempting to crackdown "illegals" through draconian militancy. Maybe Napolitano won't be separating nursing mothers from their children, as with the Massachusetts workers raid in 2007, but both Napolitano and Chertoff essentially subscribe to the same "rule of law, against foreign terrorists" rhetoric.

Maybe it's no surprise that Napolitano is planning to beef up border security. Nevertheless, many in the Berkeley community react to Napolitano's new policies with skepticism.

Francisca Hernández, a postdoctorate fellow in the humanities at the University of California Berkeley, finds them reflective of the various political contingents pressuring Napolitano. She suggests more pathways to naturalize those already here or wanting to come here, while taking into account factors such as the demands of the US economy, refugee status, and family reunification.

"This would help reduce the competition among the labor force and stabilize as well as raise wages for everyone, not to mention improve the horrific conditions under which undocumented workers often labor," Hernandez said. "It would also reduce, if not eliminate, the underground economies of human smuggling, the violence associated with them, and a host of social problems caused by the current policies."

And of course, there are probably some out there who'll still look at me with glazed eyes to say this is a Latino issue. In these Chertoff-esque times, ICE raids don't discriminate between different shades of brown, honey. The Asian Pacific Islander

community is equally susceptible to losing loved ones over a few missing papers.

Early February of this month left an especially bitter scar, when Chinese immigrant Hiu Lui Ng died from liver cancer in an ICE detention center in Rhode Island. The detainee was reported to have been denied medical care and wheelchair access, with jailers "treat(ing) him like an animal, dragging him into a truck like dragging a piece of furniture," according to his attorney. Ng, who had been staying on an overstayed visa, was swept into a detention center during the process of applying for his green card.

Institutionalized barriers that contribute to the long naturalization process create perpetual foreigners out of those waiting to become naturalized. New policies have even threatened to make the citizenship of legal residents retroactive if they committed "aggravated felonies."

Fong Tran, a UC Berkeley senior, reflects on the recent deportations within the API community.

"Sending people to a country they don't belong to," Tran said. "That's not right. These 1.5 generation folks are more American than they are their ethnicity because they've lived more of their life here. Being deported when you're that young is being in a whole new world. Like the many in Phnom Penh- their swagger is American."

In the meantime, some say there are compromises that can be made. Monica Hernandez, a UC Berkeley junior transfer, says lawmakers can start by helping those already situated within the educational institution- the students.

"It's a start because it allows students to get their education, pursue a career, and contribute to the country with whatever degree they have," said Hernandez. "Efforts like the DREAM Act always seem to be associated as a Mexican issue. In reality, it's an issue that people of all immigrant communities deal with."

Time will tell whether an issue like immigration reform--amidst the backdrop of domestic economic turmoil and Iraq pullout--will even be a priority within the first few months of the Obama administration. I'm pretty much hoping the fate of those waiting to be naturalized don't sit in the hands of career politicians and petty partisan brown-nosing. Then again, maybe that's just me being cynical.



Barack Obama appears with Janet Napolitano during a town hall meeting at Del Sol High School January 11, 2008 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

www.daylife.com

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"They'll be fine," President Yudof says in response to the startling statistics which reveal a lower percentage of Asian American being admitted to the UC system.

pretend like the problem is not due to the system that has historically, politically, socially favored whites and still favors whites. Like this new policy. How did this policy even originate? No doubt from the misconstrued ideas of Asian deluging the UC campus and butting out people of other races. For too long, people whispered that if it weren't for so many Asians, maybe more spots would be open for black and Latino students, and that Asians are the group that are keeping those groups down (Egan).

As this policy indicates, as history has indicated, as facts and statistics continuously indicate,

it's not *Asians* that prevent "diversity" on campus. In fact, from this very policy, *Asians* are the ones who are getting the short end of the stick! Who is to blame then?

I know there has been talk of "racism being over" and America approaching some sort of post-modernism where race just doesn't mean squat anymore because hey man, we've got a mixed race president! How much more progressive can we get? But it's things like this that becomes a cold reminder that we may have eliminated racial barriers to higher political positions, and we may have overcome segregation in schools, *and* we may have even overcome media underrepresentation, except... oh wait, we really **haven't**. Prejudiced attitudes about different racial groups remain, and it manifests itself harshly in education policy such as these, affecting you, me and everyone else on this campus. Pans notes, "The promise of 'color-blindness' has always been a farce. We live in a race-conscious society where race matters. The sooner we acknowledge that, the sooner we can address head on problems related to race and justice." We can't just pretend that the system is fair and that race doesn't matter when consequences like this occur.

"If we are race-conscious, we are much more likely to define and create a UC that works for everyone," Pan said. I totally agree: because as of now, it is **not** working for me, and it is definitely not working for my community. Diversity is not just about representation, but fairness, equality, and inclusion. We need to make sure that this is included in the definitions set by the UC Admissions Policy, because anything else would just be half-assed.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Christine Hong for her emails and commentary on this new policy.

Professor Ling-chi Wang for his time to share in depth his insights and comments.

Vincent Pan for his time and thoughts.

***NOTE TO READERS:** Since this is an ongoing issue, please check our blog (hardboiled.berkeley.edu/blog) for more updates on this. Keep fighting!!

Recalling Irresponsible Political Action

Why District 7 should not recall Councilwoman Madison Nguyen by cecilia tran

Thousands of Vietnamese residents from San Jose's District 7 have been rallying for political change via petitions, grassroots campaigning, and even protests for almost a year now. The height of the ordeal was when prominent, anti-communist activist Ly Tong decided to stage one of his notorious hunger strikes to capture international attention. If this is activism, then why does it resemble something of a circus show?

The reason for all this hoopla is due to Councilwoman Madison Nguyen's controversial decision to name the shopping district on Story Road the "Vietnamese Business District" instead of "Little Saigon" as a considerable portion of her Vietnamese constituents wanted. While all sorts of recall-proponents have dug deeply for countless grievances to discredit Nguyen, it is undeniable that it always comes back to the shopping district title. For many Vietnamese, the name "Little Saigon" represents hope and reverences the pre-Communist era of their homeland. Instead of listening to the people, Nguyen favored the businesses. Tieng Dan Weekly quoted Nguyen as saying, "The people who are doing business on Story Road right now, the merchants, and the people who live within one thousand feet of this area, will have the biggest input, in regards to what the name will be." Thus, when the majority voted for the title "Vietnam Business District" it was passed. Nguyen's pro-business choice marred her reputation as a voice for the Vietnamese community and caused more than 5,000 people to petition for her removal from the council.

Clearly Nguyen made a stupid move, but the community's reaction was nothing short of melodramatic. According to San Jose Mercury News, after it was released that businesses had voted for the Vietnamese Business District title, sales dropped 20 to 30 percent due to consumer boycotts. The irony is that non-Vietnamese members of District 7 are also boycotting

Vietnamese businesses... because they are against the recall election. Joel Ruiz Herrera wrote to the Mercury News saying, "Since the recall proponents have qualified for the recall election, I have not shopped in the Little Saigon area and I don't know if I will ever return. It's wrong to misuse our city's funds this way and it bothers me greatly." Is it not ridiculous that a battle over titles cause a development project to divide

\$500,000 on a recall election? Proponents of a recall election combat this statement by saying that they would agree to simply appointing a replacement without an election. Let's review: the community wants to boot out Nguyen because she named a shopping district through an undemocratic process but does not mind putting an unelected official into power? That, my friends, is slightly problematic.

Fiscal reasons aside, it's incredible to me that of all things, this has been the cause of unprecedented Vietnamese activism. How is it that the same group of people who did not create nearly as much commotion over the Vietnamese deportation laws be up in arms about a title? We cannot have our politicians walking on eggshells when it comes to titles while letting incredibly detrimental public policies escape us.

Furthermore, Nguyen is the first Vietnamese councilwoman to be elected in the district. With so few Vietnamese representatives in the political sphere, it deeply saddens me that a community that I identify with would be so quick to recall one of their own over reasons that I quite honestly do not think are legitimate enough. It is understandable that a Vietnamese politician should be held to a higher standard when it comes to representing their Vietnamese constituency. However, does the district really think that a non-Vietnamese councilperson would have ever been as active as Nguyen was about creating a Vietnamese shopping district to begin with? The message that this sends to any Vietnamese person who aspires towards a career in politics is that the community that is quick to celebrate your success will be even quicker to shun you with any misstep.

We these points in mind, I urge District 7 to say yes to responsible and sensible political activism and no to recalling Councilwoman Madison Nguyen.

"With so few Vietnamese representatives in the political sphere, it deeply saddens me that a community that I identify with would be so quick to recall one of their own over reasons that I quite honestly do not think are legitimate enough"



Councilwoman Madison Nguyen

the community and cause actually hurt the businesses we are trying to stimulate?

We simply can't afford this recall process. The Silicon Valley is being devastated by the recession with a 7.7% unemployment rate. San Jose's budget deficit is over \$60 million. How could it make sense then to spend upwards of

