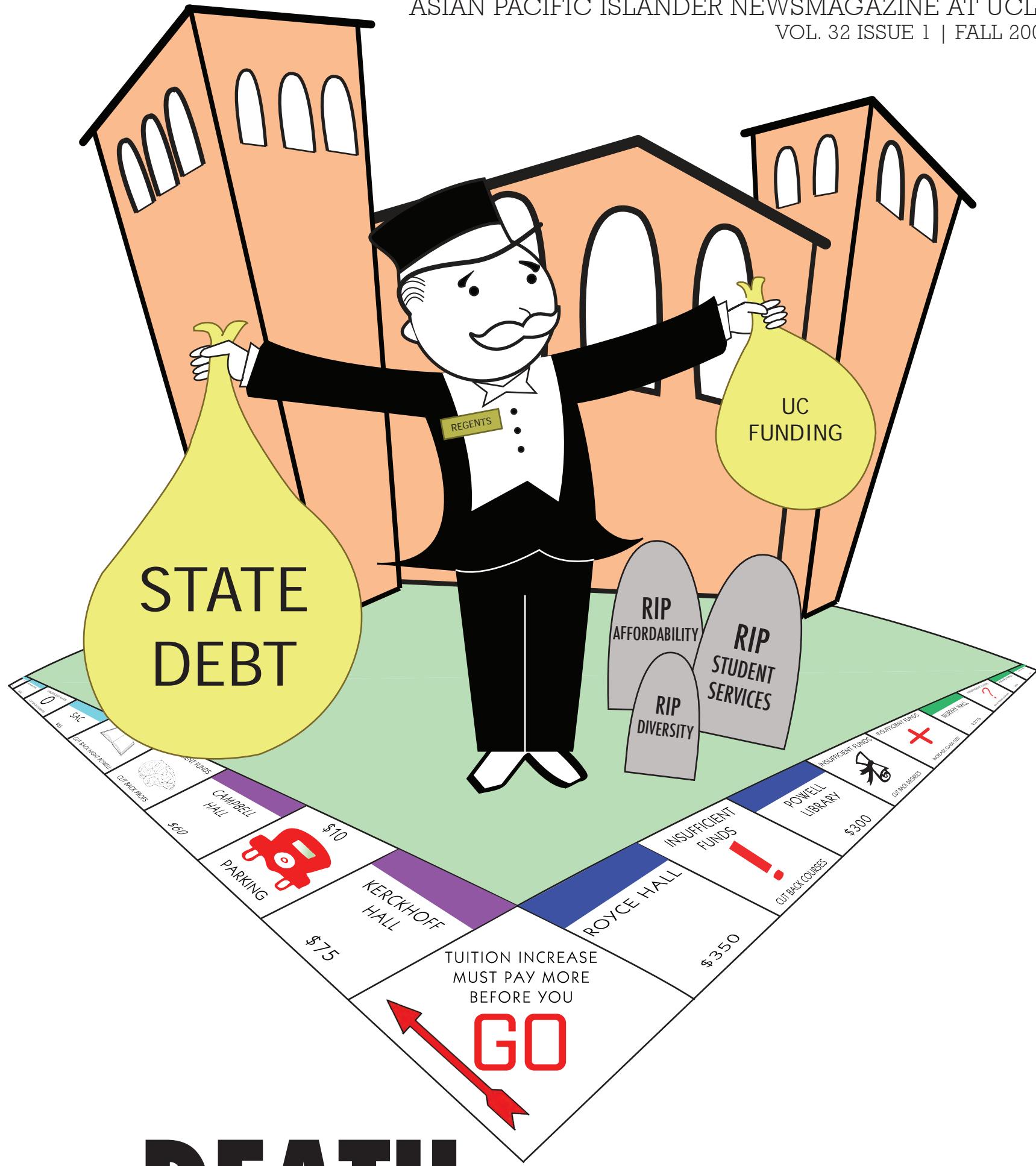


THE FISCAL CRISIS ISSUE

# PACIFICIES

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER NEWSMAGAZINE AT UCLA  
VOL. 32 ISSUE 1 | FALL 2009



**THE DEATH OF HIGHER EDUCATION**



# THE FISCAL CRISIS ISSUE

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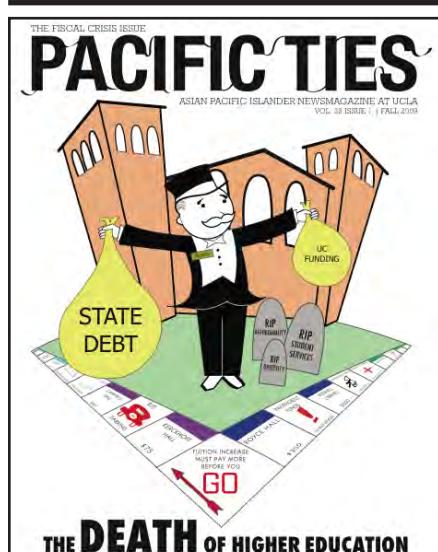
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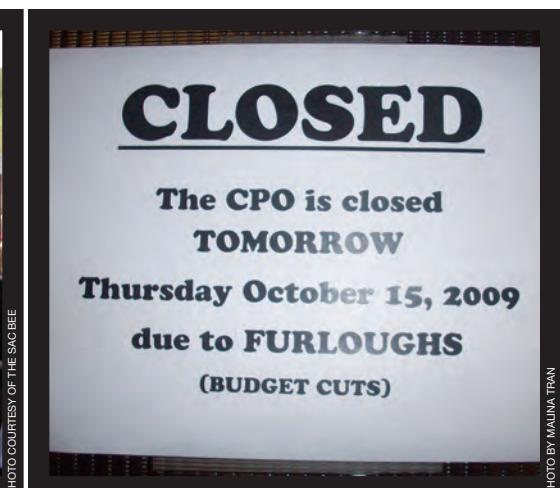


Cover designed by:  
**ALICE MONGKONGLITE**

Fourth-year Design | Media Arts major, Pacific Ties design editor, baby stroller name generator and marketing extraordinaire.

Reflecting the current state of our public education, the theme is a rendition of MONOPOLY. It is a social and artistic commentary on the educational cuts to our university--the downsizing of student services and financial aid, fee hikes, cuts in enrollment, privatizing our public institution.

How can we fight back for a world-class education? How can we change our campus and empower students?



LEFT: Students rally and protest the budget cuts to the UC system at Bruin Plaza during the UC Walkout on September 24. RIGHT: Signs of closed departments due to furloughs and budget cuts have been on the rise.

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# Letter from the editor

“ Education is the passport to tomorrow, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.”

- MALCOLM X

As the past couple of months have unfolded, we have found ourselves wedged in a tight spot.

The fiscal crisis has hit the lives of everyday people: our parents were laid off, loans became a greater chunk of our financial aid package, homes were being foreclosed and the word “furlough” became the catch phrase of the year. The trickling effect of cuts has forced the university to downsize on student services and academic programs (i.e. Covel tutorials). We can talk about these issues. Or we can talk about them, and find ways to make positive changes for our community. In the summer, I recall a friend saying to me, “We are student leaders at the turn of the decade. What are we going to do? What kinds of changes will we make that will be remembered down the line?” As I try to muster an answer, a protest chant in my head is resonating: “Ain’t no power like the power of the student ‘cause the power of the student don’t stop!”

Our investment in education today will see future benefits as students become leaders, great thinkers and great do-ers. But we cannot cut ourselves short of our education. Invest in our universities, our students, and our K-12 youth who will shape the world we live in. A youth organizer once corrected me in response to a statement saying: “The youth are the leaders of today--not tomorrow.” Educate yourself through any means possible. I have always viewed education as being beyond the scopes of classroom instruction and formal schooling. Last week, I attended a community advancement session to learn about the facts and figures of the budget crisis. Every time I rummage through the PacTies archive, I learn about API history at UCLA and in the local community. And every day, I try to learn from others and teach others because it is a two-way process to empowerment.

Furthermore, this issue is a commemoration of the three decades of Pacific Ties. Just as PacTies have developed through student activism and advocacy, our stories will continue to provoke dialogue and stir action. According to the original mission by Kendall B. Jue and his staff--dated February 22, 1978--“It is a publication for and about Asians; their culture, their interest, their concerns. It is a sounding board for issues and ideas, a catalyst for thought and discussion. It is the seed for the development of personal identity and cultural awareness. It is the answer of an audience too small to adequately be served by a majority media. And it will be what you, the Asian population of UCLA, want it to be. We do not exist to feed the audience what we think is important; we exist to be fed what is important by the audience and reproduce it for the benefit of the rest of the audience.”

This is for all of you--the staff, editors and readers of the past, present, future.

In solidarity,

**Malina Tran**  
Editor-in-Chief

## GLOSSARY

We cover so many topics and issues here at PacTies that language often gets technical. Here's a handy little glossary to help you out while reading through the issue.

Any way you want it, that's the way we spell it! Throughout out our publication, you will find various acronyms related to our the ways we identify ourselves.

AA: Asian American  
API: Asian Pacific Islander  
AAPI: Asian American Pacific Islander

APIA: Asian Pacific Islander American

APA: Asian Pacific American

AAP: Academic Advancement Program

LCC: Lapu the Coyote That Cares

IDEAS: Improving Dreams, Equality, and Success

RAIN: Retention of American Indians Now

SPEAR: Samahang Pilipino Education and Retention

SEA: Southeast Asian

SEA CLEAR: Southeast Asian Campus Learning and Education

VSU: Vietnamese Student Union

VietAct: Vietnamese Alliance to Combat Trafficking

USAC: Undergraduate Student Association Council

## PACIFIC TIES IS ONLINE!

In its 30 years of existence, Pacific Ties can surely attest to the changing times. Even though our website is up and running, we will continue to print for your liking. (After all, this issue was made available with 20 cups of coffee, long hours of production “parties,” and editing robots). Follow us at we provide coverage of the latest local, national, and international news concerning the API community. We have events, issues, interviews with cool folks, and a splash of witty humor.

You won't regret it.

[HTTP://PACIFIETIES.ORG](http://PACIFIETIES.ORG)

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# NEWSPRINT

FEEDING YOUR APPETITE WITH SHORT NEWS ITEMS THAT YOU CAN REALLY SINK YOUR TEETH INTO +  
IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF CAMPUS AND LOCAL NEWS FOR THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR MORE

## Time for Comprehensive Immigration Reform

HYUN CHEOL OH // STAFF WRITER // hoh@media.ucla.edu

*"The time has come for us to mobilize and let other Americans know how the broken immigration system is undermining Asian American and Pacific Islander families and communities."*

Stewart Kwoh's words reflected how immigration is, by and large, an Asian Pacific Islander issue. As executive director of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center and an Asian American law professor at UCLA, Kwoh knows this firsthand.

"Any reform of the immigration laws must fully incorporate our shared American values of family, human rights, civil liberties and due process," Kwoh said.

The current immigration law causes API families to suffer from family reunification. The statistics from Filipino American Service Group, Inc. show that Filipinos need to wait up to 22 years to legally meet their families in the U.S.

"This is totally unacceptable," said fourth-year international development studies major Steven Bae. "I know healthcare issues are urgent, but we can't forget about the immigration reform because too many people are suffering from it."

Families are trapped in detention and torn apart by deportation. In addition, U.S. government has imposed mandatory racial profiling for the sake of national security, thus eradicating many API communities.

"In the aftermath of 9/11, the South Asian community bore the brunt of repressive immigration enforcement tactics and policies," said Tamia Pevez, policy organizer for the South Asian Network. "We need to stop sweeping detentions and deportation where immigrants are often without access to fair hearings."

In response, 50 API organizations around the country have gathered to implement fair and humane immigration reform led by the Obama Administration and Congress. In early April 2009, the organizations sent a letter to the California Congressional Delegation in the hopes of securing an immigration reform package.

"It's going to be a rough ride but I know we will get there," said fifth-year biology major David Roh. "This reform is very important for improving the many lives in API communities."

## 12 Arrested, Connected to Garden Grove Brothel

Police arrested a 23-year-old Westminster man who is connected to a brothel in Garden Grove. 11 Vietnamese women who were suspected of prostitution were arrested at the business location, according to Westminster police Lt. Derek Marsh. They are being treated as victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The brothel is located in a chiropractor's office that offers massage services on the side. Police are still investigating whether the chiropractor is connected to the suspected brothel operation. Police are surprised that the brothel is relatively public, being next door to a dentist and a supermarket.

Last year, the Westminster Police Department and Salvation Army was granted \$1.2 million in federal funds to combat human trafficking in Orange County, particularly in the Asian American communities around Little Saigon. The task force is working with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to investigate these cases.

Formerly, victims of prostitution were arrested, charged with demeanor and released into the community. However, the role of the task force has recently been to rehabilitate the victims.

## North Korea Frees US Journalists Lee and Ling

Former president Bill Clinton brought home two freed U.S. journalists, Euna Lee and Laura Ling, from North Korea after a rare talk with leader Kim Jong Il. The North Korean dictator pardoned the women for entering the country illegally; they had been sentenced to 12 years of hard labor during the time of their arrest.

Lee and Ling returned to the U.S. with Clinton within 24 hours of his arrival to Seoul for a humanitarian trip. Clinton arrived in an effort to free the journalists, whose captivity has troubled and been protested by many Americans during the past five months. According to reports, Lee and Ling appeared healthy upon boarding the plane to their flight home and were reunited with their families in Burbank, Calif.

## President Obama Reinstates AAPI Federal Panel

EVELINA GIANG // ONLINE EDITOR // egiang@media.ucla.edu

President Barack Obama signed an executive order last Wednesday reestablishing a federal panel to address the concerns of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Acknowledging the health, educational and economic disparities that the AAPI community faces, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, which was first instated by President Clinton ten years ago, aims to address and resolve these disparities by working with 23 agencies and departments across the U.S. government.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.KCRA.COM

Vang Pao is greeted by supporters rallying outside the courthouse in Sacramento.

## Charges Dropped Against Hmong Community Leader

TRAN LE // STAFF WRITER // tle@media.ucla.edu

Federal prosecutors have dropped criminal charges against prominent Hmong community leader Vang Pao. The charges were originally from the summer of 2007, relating to a plot to violently overthrow the government of Laos.

Arrests were made when it was believed that many of the defendants had immediate plans to travel to Thailand to execute the plot against the communist regime. As charges against Vang Pao have been dropped, two new defendants have been charged in a new indictment. The 12 other defendants named in the new indictment are charged with violating the Neutrality Act and for scheming to overthrow a government at peace with the U.S.

In each court appearance that Pao made, supporters rallied outside the federal courthouse in Sacramento. There was protest from the Hmong community, Vietnam War veterans and some Congress members over Pao's indictment. An editorial in the New York Sun states, "It is hard to recall a prosecution as misguided as that which was brought against the general whose army, in league with the Central Intelligence Agency, played a heroic role in the fight against the communists during the long war in Indochina."

When Vang Pao was originally arrested, the Sun wrote, "He is a freedom fighter who will tower over any courtroom into which he is brought." There is substantial support for Vang Pao, as shown by the thousands of Hmong who came out across the country - from Sacramento to Minnesota. In an LA Times article Vang Pao's youngest son stated, "His supporters can't wait to see him to celebrate this momentous occasion."

## Oakland City Council considers moratorium on nail salons

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Oakland city council has decided to consider regulation on nail salons and possibly a moratorium on these businesses in the city. Most of the nail salons employ Vietnamese immigrants who will be severely affected economically by a moratorium. The city's business leaders have stated that a high concentration of one kind of business can be fatal for a neighborhood, and there are also worries about health and safety hazards at nail salons.

"Right now we have absolutely no controls or regulations over nail salons, which have proliferated and, I think, become a problem. I wouldn't be surprised if Oakland has 1,000 of them," Vice Mayor Ignacio De La Fuente stated.

Pamela Drake, director of the Lakeshore Business Improvement District, added that a neighborhood shopping district only works if it serves the neighborhood.

The city also wants to crack down on health and safety hazards, as workers often suffer from respiratory and reproductive problems because of the toxic chemicals found in nail polish, polish remover and cleaning supplies. Meanwhile, the nail salon owners want to assist with the writing of regulations that will be implemented. They hope that the new rules are not too burdensome and that Vietnamese immigrant workers are adequately informed.

Dana Paredes, organizing director of Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, reminds us that "Nail salons are the cornerstone of the Vietnamese community. People are already feeling pinched by the economy. Workers don't want to have to choose between their health and a paycheck."

A customer of the nail salons, Michelle Robinson, tells the San Francisco Chronicle, "It's tranquil. It's relaxing. And they work with integrity. There's so much competition, they've raised the bar. Why would you go anywhere else? It's not the same. You're wasting your money."

For now, the nail salons will continue their business as the issue has been referred to the Planning Commission and will return to the council in a few months.

# BONE MARROW DRIVIN' TO SAVE LIVES

MARISSA MINNA LEE // CONTRIBUTOR

**F**

Liang's case is not uncommon. As an undergraduate student at UCLA in the late 1990s, Matthew Nguyen volunteered for Asians for Miracle Marrow Matches (A3M). He spent his weekends registering potential donors to help patients in need. Years later, a bleeding nose incident that wouldn't stop led to a diagnosis of acute myelogenous leukemia. Engaged to be married and enrolled in pharmacy school, Nguyen was forced to put his life on hold. He later learned that he would need a marrow donor for himself.

Leukemia can strike anyone, at any time, but when an Asian American is diagnosed, the chances of finding a marrow/stem cell donor—the key to a lasting recovery—are especially dire.

"We really need help; there are so few minorities registered," said Gloria Chi, the Chinese Outreach Recruitment Coordinator for A3M. "When there is a patient, it is very difficult to find a match. Just by registering, you are doing something very, very important. Expanding the registry of donors is one of the more concrete ways we can help our community."

While a white patient may have an 80 percent chance of finding a match, the odds are significantly lower for a Chinese American such as Janet or a Vietnamese American such as Matthew. People with completely different backgrounds can be matches, but donors are much more likely to match recipients if they

**"What if someone you know or someone in your family needs help in the future? It's not just for me, it's for everybody."**

- Matthew Nguyen

Matthew's father holds up a bag containing the marrow that will save his life.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHEW NGUYEN

have similar ethnic ancestry. Less than 5 percent of the Asian American population is in the National Marrow Donor Program registry.

"I used to do this for people I didn't know," Nguyen said. "Now I'm the one in need. It could happen to anybody. What if someone you know or someone in your family needs help in the future? Wouldn't you want to know that there are people in the registry who can help save their lives? It's not just for me, it's for everybody."

### Correcting Misconceptions

Joining the registry is as easy as rubbing a few cotton swabs in the mouth. It's even possible to order a free kit online and to mail in a cheek cell sample from home.

"Even with the swab, people have a lot of misconceptions about the donation process," Nguyen said. "They think it will hurt, or poke their spine or they'll have less marrow than they had before. Technology has made things a lot easier and less painful for people who donate."

Nguyen says that Hollywood has dramatized marrow donation to make it look more complicated and painful than it actually is. According to A3M, 74 percent of modern marrow donations are no longer performed via surgical removal of marrow from the hip bone, but through Peripheral Blood Stem Cell (PBSC) donation, a process similar to donating blood platelets. No surgery is involved in this form of donation.

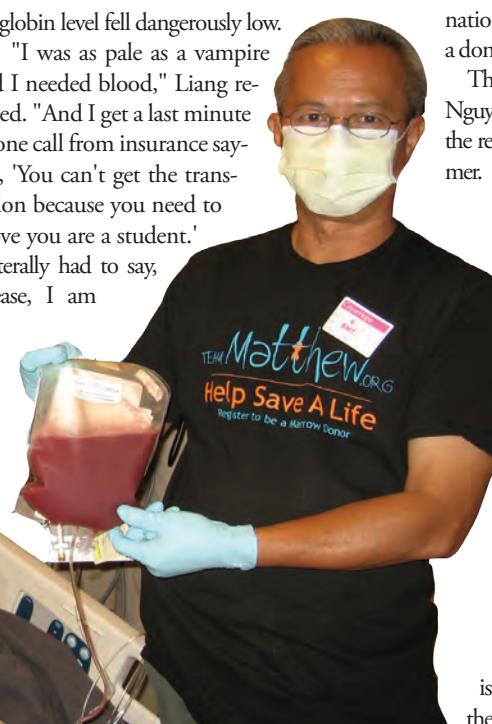
"The donation process is never going to be as hard as it is for the patient who is receiving the marrow," Liang said. "If you're ever scared, just know the patient will go through the pain for you. We will go through the thirty days post-transplant and the recovery."

### Red Tape, Red Blood

Liang is a fighter. In addition to fighting cancer, she also spent time and energy fighting her insurance company over policies that delayed her diagnosis and continue to delay her treatment.

Liang recalled an incident during summer session, prior to her diagnosis, when she was waiting to receive her first blood transfusion after her hemoglobin level fell dangerously low.

"I was as pale as a vampire and I needed blood," Liang recalled. "And I get a last minute phone call from insurance saying, 'You can't get the transfusion because you need to prove you are a student.' I literally had to say, 'Please, I am'



a student. I cannot hike up to Murphy Hall right now. I will faint. I can't express how much I need blood right now. I was literally begging them over the phone."

This incident was just one of many conflicts that Liang has had with her insurance company over the course of her care. She is even at risk of losing medical coverage because she is unable to meet the criteria of a full-time student, even though it is physically impossible for her to have a normal student schedule.

"Patients like Mathew and I cannot just sit idly by and say everything is taken care of for us," Liang said. "We have to aggressively fight for our lives—push for things, beg for things,

going to do it," Nguyen said.

Luckily, Nguyen was able to find another donor and go through the recipient process. Thanks to an anonymous 24-year-old woman from somewhere in the United States, he has received a new, healthy immune system.

"As soon as I can meet my donor I'm going to give her a big hug," Nguyen said. "I'm excited and happy that she went through the process to help save my life and there's nothing I can do to repay her—because that's the biggest thing you can do, to save someone."

Post-transplant, Nguyen was closely monitored by his

**"Patients like Mathew and I cannot just sit idly by and say everything is taken care for us. We have to aggressively fight for our lives."**

- Janet Liang

Janet Liang has big dreams ahead of her as she pursues a career in teaching.

say 'No, we're not going to take no for an answer.' Now I know I have the right to be forceful with insurance."

Liang finally convinced the insurance company to relent and grant her an emergency authorization. She received a blood transfusion from the UCLA Blood and Platelet Center blood bank. She would later witness countless blood transfusions for other patients during her hospital stays.

"People think donated blood is just sitting there in storage, but no, it's used," Liang said. "If you donate blood, they will use it. I bet I probably got some university student blood!"

### The Search for a Donor

After two years of searching and waiting, Matthew Nguyen finally received a marrow donation in September of 2009. But the search for a donor was daunting and at times, discouraging.

The registry contacted the first potential donor on Nguyen's behalf in June of 2009. Initially, she told the registry she was unavailable until later that summer. By August, she was no longer in the registry.

"Either she had a medical condition to disqualify her, or she withdrew from the registry," Nguyen said. "I will never know why she didn't donate. Was she just scared? Why wouldn't she do it? It's frustrating to know someone is out there, who you know can save your life, but they just won't do it."

Nguyen stressed that people who register to be a potential donor should understand that they are making a commitment.

"People say, 'If you get called, you can decide later,' but that's not a good thing to do. Then they won't be sure about it when they're called. I want to make sure [registrants] understand that this is a commitment they're making. It's better to know that they're

doctors for side effects, including several check-ups and a stint living in a patient apartment on the hospital grounds. While he is still in recovery, he is growing stronger every day and already reapplying for pharmacy school.

"Every day you get happier and happier," Nguyen said, "because you're gaining your life back, and able to tell people: 'I found a donor!'"

### Helping Janet

Along with friends and family members, Liang has kicked off a grassroots movement via the internet ([www.helpingjanet.com](http://www.helpingjanet.com)) to encourage minorities to register with the National Marrow Donor Program.

"I need to find someone out there in this whole world, who with some luck can match my HLA protein markers in just the right way," Liang said. "What kind of cancer is so unique in that sense—in that it makes the whole community so aware and somewhat responsible for saving someone else's life?"

During the first week of November, Asian American fraternity Lambda Phi Epsilon and A3M held a marrow donor registration drive in locations scattered across the UCLA campus. Third-year economics major James Vo, coordinator of the Lambda-A3M drive, said the registration process was pain-free and took only a few minutes, having registered 240 people.

Interested registrants who missed the Lambda-A3M drive in November can visit [www.helpingjanet.com](http://www.helpingjanet.com) for details on how to register from home with the mail-in kit. The entire process is free for ethnic minorities and also free to anyone with the code TEAMJANET.

"No one should ever feel that we're wasting our time by being so aggressive in widening our pool," Liang said. "No registered donor is a waste. This is a group effort. If not me, then it will help someone else."



PHOTO COURTESY OF JANET LIANG

# CALL TO ACTION, AWARENESS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

TRAN LE // STAFF WRITER // tle@media.ucla.edu



PHOTO COURTESY OF UCLA INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Cambodian activist Somaly Mam opens up her life and shares her experience in combating trafficking with the UCLA campus.

**A**t the age of nine, Shyima had already lost her childhood. She was sent away from Alexandria, Egypt to earn money for her family. With only a student visa and passport, Shyima was trafficked to Irvine, Calif. and locked in a dirty garage for sixteen months. If she ran away or threatened her hosts, she would not find help and instead endanger her family in Egypt. Shyima labored for 20 hours everyday, seven days a week.

Every year, between 14,500 and 50,000 people are trafficked into the United States, according to a report by the United States Department of Justice. The majority of trafficked people are women and children, who are often forced into labor or sexual exploitation. Victims of human trafficking and smuggling are sold as laborers or prostitutes.

In December 2007, Operation Red Light in Rosemead, Calif. cracked down on online sex advertisements. Ar-

rests were made in townhomes, apartments, massage parlors, and hotel rooms. In August 2009, a Vietnamese man was arrested in Westminster after a prostitution raid in a chiropractor's office that offered massage services. Eleven Vietnamese women were captives of the brothel operation.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, victims of trafficking have access to federally funded services including assistance with housing, food, income, healthcare, and employment. With Shyima's story brought to the public, Orange County had its first federal prosecution case of human trafficking in 2006.

To combat trafficking, the Vietnamese Alliance to Combat Trafficking (VietACT) intentionally places advertisements (seeking volunteers and including a hotline for victims) next to the ads of massage parlor employment in local Asian newspapers.

VietACT is currently producing monthly Action Calendars, which includes facts and action items to help combat trafficking. Since 2004, VietACT has been a volunteer-driven effort which sends interns to work at a shelter in Taiwan. The internship is open to undergraduate and graduate students.

On September 30, 2009, survivor and activist Somaly Mam hosted a forum on human trafficking in Cambodia. In a lecture room of the UCLA School of Law, Mam shared her experiences as a victim of human trafficking. Today, Mam is actively fighting police corruption and saving and sheltering women from sexual and physical abuse.

"I know how to save them, but you know how to end it. We have to work together," says Mam prompting the room of students to create policies and make changes in the field of international human rights.

Thousands of people are trafficked into the United States annually only to be forced into prostitution and physical labor; how can we combat a global issue on a local level?

But organizations and activists cannot do it alone. Polaris Project, VietACT, and the Somaly Mam Foundation depend on volunteers to effectively fight against human trafficking. The first step to action is education and awareness, although many on-campus students do not realize how local the issue truly is.

"I would be very interested in learning more about the problem as well as possible solutions," said fourth-year sociology major Helen Dung. "If I were a victim, I may feel compelled to keep quiet because of possible backlash. There could be many victims who currently do not have the opportunity to stand up for themselves and seek help!"

"I was not aware there are so many cases local to our community and surprised that this kind of problem hits so close to home [sic]," said fourth-year international development studies major Christina Nguyen. "I would have thought this was more of an overseas issue and I don't believe students are aware enough of the problem. It's extremely unfair for the victims and they need to be provided with adequate assistance. Everyone should join in on the fight against human trafficking because we all could be potential victims in a global problem."

- To report a tip, connect with anti-trafficking services, or request training services, contact National Human Trafficking Resource Center (hotline for victims operated by Polaris Project): 1-888-373-7888
- To take action and raise awareness, visit the website: <http://actioncenter.polarisproject.org>
- To order posters, stickers, and brochures, please visit: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/trafficking/about/form.htm>.
- Currently, VietACT intern Calix V. Bui of San Diego is completing her third month in Taiwan. You can follow Calix on her journey by reading her blog at: <http://vietactintern.blogspot.com/>

## EXPLORING THE MARGINS

RAY LUO // A&amp;E EDITOR // rluo@gmail.com

## A NEW WAVE OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

**R**emember the time in mainland China when everyone from the pre-school toddler to the aged matriarch wanted to come to the United States to live the American dream? While America is still a magnet for the college student and the recent graduate looking for work, other countries have become a draw by virtue of their economic and social appeals. Some of the most popular places have surprisingly been nations of the Middle East.

But who in their right minds, as a traditional Chinese person, would go to the Islamic Middle East?

Jacky Ng, a student at Hong Kong University, is studying for his masters at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) at Thuwal, which lies just north of Mecca, a holy center of Islamic pilgrimages at the core of Saudi Arabia.

"Saudi Arabia is a place full of opportunities," said Ng. "It has a lot of development projects [for which] engineers and technicians are highly in need."

Part of a new wave of Middle Eastern investment in education, KAUST is a unique graduate university that has been a leader in energy, biotechnology, and computing research. All classes are taught in English, and it attracts some of the best talents from around the world.

"The school provides very generous amount of scholarship covering tuition fees, books, laptops, and living stipends," said Ng. "[It] also provides strong support in research funding."

The emergence of top notch research universities in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Middle East has caused an influx of talent into the area, spearheaded by the top students in China. Many of Ng's friends, such as graduate students Desmond Lee and Eric Shiu, are already deep into their graduate research

careers in KAUST.

Although KAUST provides economic and intellectual advantages for students from China, it can be a challenge to live in a part of the world so wholly different from Asia. Those who enroll in KAUST have between three and four years of life in the hot desert area of Saudi Arabia to look forward to, but this does not concern Ng as much.

"It's [a way] to enrich personal experiences," said Ng. "Living in another country and experiencing another culture can promote personal growth."

What a completely different culture it is too. For example, people of Saudi Arabia are required to pray five times a day while facing the holy Kaaba in Mecca. This ritual, called the salat, follows a specific set of rules referenced in the Quran, such as a sequence of bowings (rakas) repeated up to four times during each salat.

Another example involves the wearing of the hijab, a black veil, by women of Islamic faith in order to prevent unwanted advances, a practice that made Chinese women in the Middle East stand out among the crowd.

One of the rare women who walk around the streets of Dubai without a hijab is Ms. Yao Wen, a recent graduate of the Xian University of Technology who now works in Dubai, a city facing the Persian Gulf to the West that serves as the commercial center of the United Arab Emirates.

"I miss staying with family, connecting with old friends, and the comfortable life," said Wen. "But there are more and more people going to the Middle East, because we have a lot of competition and pressure in China, so working [in Dubai] provides more opportunities."

When Wen graduated with a degree in power electronic

engineering in 2007, her first job was working for the China State Construction Engineering Corporation as quantity surveyor. She signed a contract that ended up shipping her to work in Dubai for 2-3 years.

"I just wanted to go abroad," said Wen. "[So I can] see some different cultures, ... and earn more than three or four times I would make if I stayed in Beijing."

Dubai is undergoing a construction craze that includes the underwater hotel Hydropolis, the conspicuous resort called Palm Islands, the 3 billion square feet theme park Dubailand, the so-called seven star fish-scale-shaped hotel Burj Al Arab, and of course, the world's tallest building the Burj Dubai. The craze has spurred companies like China State Construction, which has over 300 employees in Dubai.

Dubai is not short on culture either. It hosts the Dubai International Film Festival, UAE league football, an annual shopping festival good for buying luxury goods, as well as numerous clubs and bars. Still Wen finds it hard to adapt to life in the Middle East.

"The [hardest] thing is not having good public transport; it's not easy to go anywhere," said Wen. "But our company arranges everything for us, including food-- Chinese chef in mess hall, and accommodation."

Despite the economic advantages, living in Dubai can be frustrating, and Wen would not recommend it to all of her friends.

"We rarely have conversation with local people, because maybe they have too much money and [don't need] to work anymore, and we have a language barrier," said Wen. "When they see some Asians and Europeans, they will stare at [them] without pretending."

## OPINION

# CUTS, CUTS, CUTS! TYING IT BACK TOGETHER

In retrospect, 2009 has been a good year for the API community, locally as well as globally. This November, Pacific Ties will be celebrating 31 years in the making as well as their recent Best Overall Publication Award from Campus Progress, which beat out dozens of other college publications. API achievements range from political milestones, such as Judy Chu's recent election win, making her the first Chinese American woman to be elected to congress, to Charles K. Kao's 2009 Nobel Prize in Physics, as well as API events taking place at the very heart of California. Giant Robot Magazine's 2nd Biennale celebration took place in October and a bill proposed on July 17 served as an apology to the Chinese American community for racist laws enacted during the Gold Rush, while recognizing their work on the Transcontinental Railroad.

Yet even as we acknowledge and celebrate the various achievements of API artists, scholars, researchers and community members, we must not forget the equally important challenges that lay ahead, particularly those that are happening on our very own campus. There's no doubt that UCLA is a prestigious and diverse world-class research university. But with rising tuition, 165 courses being cut (an overall reduction of 10 percent) and slashes to Asian language and Asian American studies courses, we need to ask—are we paying more for less?

The intent of the UC system is to reflect the diverse magnitude of California. In the midst of the budget crisis, the role of UCLA as an accessible public university for the Los Angeles

population has greatly diminished. With UC President Yudof's proposed in-state student fees rising from \$7,788 to \$10,000 next year and the additional cuts being made in educational access programs, many working and middle-class APIs and immigrant groups are losing access to UCLA.

Granted, UCLA's demographics show that Asian Pacific Islanders make up nearly 40 percent of the undergraduate student population. But beneath this impressive number of APIs, how many of our students are actually local or non-international residents? How many represent the highly impoverished Southeast Asian and underrepresented Pacific Islander communities in the U.S.?

Accordingly, the Los Angeles County and its surrounding areas consist of a myriad of ethnic enclaves—Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Historic Filipinotown—and the highest concentration of these groups outside their own countries. The densest Thai population (outside of Thailand) resides in the Hollywood area, the highest concentration of Cambodians dwell in Long Beach (outside of Cambodia) and Orange County's Little Saigon reports approximately 30 percent of its population as Vietnamese Americans. Thus the question of whether or not UCLA is fulfilling its role as a public university to these communities is also a question about accessibility.

As college students already admitted to and enrolled at UCLA, our share of issues is manifold. Current students are faced with the reality that Cal Grants are provisionally, and not permanently, reinstated. This hurts

students from low-income and even middle-class backgrounds, students who are forced to take out additional loans and work jobs that detract them from academics and extracurricular involvements.

At the university level, many students develop a greater understanding of API identity via the vast multitude of API student organizations and courses offered, which provide them with studies on API literature, history and social issues, as well as greater cultural awareness and accessibility. To reduce funding for these academic and social outlets not only hurts all the individuals involved, but affects the public's perception of the university as a whole. We understand that in these harsh academic times, cuts must be made—but it is also important to keep in mind that some things are worth more than the dollars that fund them.

Communities of color are currently facing the most severe cuts. To address this problem, we need to critically assess the state's role rather than solely blame individuals such as the UC President, Regents and Chancellor. To put things into a global perspective, California's economy is ranked eighth in the world; the productivity and capital of this state are greater than those of entire countries. But where does this money go? To this day, California continues to prioritize the prison industrial complex over education. According to the Legislative Analyst Office, the state has built 21 prisons and only one university since 1984 and in 2008, it spent \$49,000 per prisoner compared to \$11,626 per K-12 student. If a student's successful early development

paves the path for a better future, less investment in our students means greater problems for our society in the future.

Yes, we can toast to community successes but we need to be constructive and solution-oriented in our critiques of the fiscal crisis. Pacific Ties' role as a newsmagazine is to provide a forum for the Asian Pacific Islanders here at UCLA. We are a voice not only interested in creating awareness for the issues most prevalent in our community—the milestones as well as the challenges—but also to join the existing conversation about the things that matter most to us. After 30 years of being a newsmagazine at one of the best public universities in the world, we can safely say that the quality of our education, as well as the cost, is certainly one of them.

This juxtaposition of API challenges and accomplishments is the guiding force in this fall quarter issue. Today, nearly 40 percent of all undergraduates identify as Asian Pacific Islanders, and we have witnessed our growing political representation on campus, locally and nationally. Our spotlight stories reveal a burgeoning community of YouTube stars, comedians and artists. But our community is still affected by misperceptions in the media, the violence of hate crimes and the reinforcement of the model minority myth in education.

Our community has made great strides, but has also been struck by setbacks. As we venture forth, let us remain rooted in our identities and branch towards a truly diverse community, one that is capable of being integral to the solution rather than the problem.

## NEWSPRINT

## QUAKES TO OUR FOUNDATIONS

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Water flooded the streets and infiltrated the second stories of buildings. Roads were scattered with overturned cars and collapsed buildings and homes. These scenes were a devastating reality for families living in the South Pacific. Last month, both Southeast Asian countries and the Pacific Islands were hit with four major earthquakes that triggered ensuing tsunamis, essentially wiping out the areas and killing thousands.

The first three quakes occurred within 70 minutes, followed by a fourth quake 22 hours aft. The first quake was a 7.8 magnitude near Samoa. It was followed by a 7.7 earthquake that hit western Indonesian. A 7.1 magnitude earthquake then hit Sumatra, followed by the fourth quake that rocked the island of Vanuatu shortly afterwards.

When fourth-year economics major Ivan Juliano of Cal Poly Pomona came across the stories and pictures, panic and anxiety immediately surfaced. Having family currently living in the areas of the Philippines where the disaster hit, Juliano was worried for their safety.

"The recent disasters had me worried for a

bit because I have family living there," Juliano said. "My family frantically tried to get in contact with them when they were informed of the disaster."

Fortunately, Juliano's family had sustained only minimal damage and lost property. Juliano expressed his sympathies for families who were greatly impacted by the quakes and tsunamis.

"My heart goes out to them, and I hope they find out their relatives are well and are able to get into contact with them," Juliano said.

The quakes triggered enormous waves that towered over buildings, which led to building-crushing tsunamis. Panic rose as families were separated. Following the massive earthquakes, Typhoon Ketsana devastated the area and destroyed infrastructure, making relief efforts difficult due to the large amounts of debris. Individuals are still struggling to remove rubble and to build shelter before the rainy season approaches.

Rustam Pakaya, the head of the Indonesian Health Ministry, worries that thousands might still be trapped under collapsed buildings and houses. Roads were destroyed, tele-

phone lines went down and electricity was cut in certain areas. Families are still scavenging the sites in the hopes of locating missing family members.

Taitasi Fitiao, a resident of one of the coastal villages in the American Samoas, watched helplessly as her six-year-old daughter was carried out of her arms by the flood and drifted away. Her body was later found. The death toll has surpassed thousands, with many individuals still missing or in critical condition.

President Barack Obama declared the series of events a natural disaster, ensuring that federal aid would be available to help support the rescue and create recovery efforts in the area. Approximately 300 responders from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the American Red Cross, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy are assisting in the recovery efforts.

If you would like to donate to the recovery efforts, please contact:  
Hands On Disaster Response  
[http://secure.gal.org/05/hodr\\_south\\_pacific](http://secure.gal.org/05/hodr_south_pacific)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Thousands watch helplessly as their homes, cars, and loved ones are washed away by the floods.

# THE DEATH *of* HIGHER EDUCATION

## How the UC system is hurting students and faculty with less for more

BY LAYHEARN TEP & SHIN-RONG KIM YAU

**A**new school year brought hopes to second-year undeclared student major Robin Kim. With her upbeat attitude and soft-spoken nature, Kim enrolled in three science courses for a pre-dentistry career pathway while being involved in her sorority, Chi Alpha Delta.

Little did she expect such a fiscal predicament—like not being able to finance her tuition. During fall quarter, Kim was at work in the evening and checked her e-mail on the computer. She received an e-mail from the Financial Aid Office regarding her financial aid package. As an out-of-state student, there were no more subsidized loans available to her. She would have to take out a hefty private loan, or risk leaving UCLA. In the cubicle of her workplace, Kim broke down.

All of her hard work and accomplishments, close relationships, boyfriend and sorority sisters, and her hope for the future—they all seemed ephemeral.

"The fact that it could be taken away any day is heartbreaking," Kim said. "You don't want to have to worry about paying for your education. You think that everything is going to be taken care of and everything changes. I'm glad to be here and I'm trying, but it's hard."

### The Fee Effect

But Kim may witness even more changes in tuition costs. On Nov. 17 - 19 in Covell Commons at UCLA, UC Regents will be voting and deliberating on the proposed mid-year fee increase. Whereas undergraduates are currently paying \$7,788 with referendum fees—and with the proposed mid-year increase being \$585—the total annualized fee would be \$8,958.

California's state budget is projected to fall into a seven to eight billion dollar deficit next year in 2010-2011. Current projections and proposals include student fee increase of \$1,344 for the next academic year, according to a proposal submission from the Office of the President, Mark Yudof.

If both fees are passed, this will mark the first time in the University of California's history with two consecutive fee increases in one academic year. The rises in fees of \$585 to tuition will undoubtedly, disproportionately affect lower class students, minorities, out-of-state students, and AB540 students.

"If \$100 for textbooks per class is too expensive, then what is a [tuition] increase going to look like?" said Steven Day, visiting East Asian Studies Professor and former UCLA graduate student.

"Honestly, we are still trying to get back on our feet from [last year's] increase. With another fee increase, with no financial aid, it could mean no AB540 students," said fourth-year political science major E. Ganoa. "AB540 students will have to withdraw from the University in record numbers in order to work enough to pay just one quarter off at UCLA." Ganoa is a member of Improving Dreams, Equality, and Success (IDEAS), a community outreach project and advocacy group for undocumented students.

Students have contested that the actions of the Regents do not correspond with the 1960 Master Plan of Higher Education. The Master Plan defined the roles of the University of California, California State University and California community college systems; it was approved by the Regents and the State Board of Education. Tenets of the Master Plan ensured the accessibility and affordability of higher education through the Cal Grant program, tuition-free education and the selection of the top one-eighth (12.5 percent) of the high school graduating class a place in a UC.

However, throughout the UC campuses 2300 students (or 6 percent) will be cut from the freshmen class for 2010-2011. Funded by the state of California, UCLA will be witnessing a projected budget cut of \$637 million. Current efforts to meet this shortfall include furloughs, pay cuts and eliminating student services and academic supports program. Started on the first of September, furloughs are structured pay cuts depending on an employee's earnings. Those earning less than \$40,000 will have 11 furlough days (equivalent to a 4 percent pay cut) while those earning more than \$240,000 will have 26 furlough days (about a 10 percent pay cut).

To meet the demands of budget cuts in the classroom, Challenge 45 is a reduction of upper-division requirements for the major to 45 units. Students will have less options for classes and for majors, which are currently being streamlined.

"I hear that next year class sizes are going to increase," said fourth-year Asian American studies center Peggy Truong. "I

can't even fathom the idea of being in a larger class size. You feel like another student ID number."

Courses will be receiving dramatic cuts, especially in ethnic studies and language courses which are the foundation of diversity in academia. Language courses are a requirement for students in the College of Letters and Sciences and are also the means for students of color to learn their primary language, as well as develop new language skills.

### Personalizing the Budget Problem

With the financial pressure resulting from the university's budget cuts and nationwide recession, API students are struggling to balance academics, personal welfares and work jobs that support their families.

"I have a lot of friends whose parents have lost their jobs," second-year English major Crystal Maranan said. "Their families are stressing out because they keep hearing about fee increases and they don't know how to come up with money to pay for it."

**"Just saying what you're going through is a big thing and presenting what your struggles are validates your experiences and the experiences of others in your community. Sharing your story encourages others. The more people know about your story, the more people might be moved to help."**

- John Duong

"A lot of times students internalize all of the stress that they have. They're not being up and front and facing the situation, a lot of students feel like they are just trying to get by," said Truong, who is a peer counselor for a Southeast Asian retention project.

"Of the Pacific Islander population at UCLA, a large majority of those students are on financial aid," said Austin Nakatsuka, peer counseling coordinator for Retention of American Indians Now (RAIN). "For those students especially, budget cuts affect them a lot. If they get cut from financial aid, they

## HOW IS THE FISCAL CRISIS AFFECTING THE UNIVERSITY?

### DIVERSITY OF ADMISSIONS

The UCs are projecting to cut 2300 students (6%) of the freshman class for 2010-2011. UCLA is projecting the freshman enrollment target on campus to drop by 500 for the 2009 fiscal year. Since communities of color tend to be less represented in higher education, and have less resources to access higher education, students of color will be severely affected.

### STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Working longer hours for pay may influence students' involvements. Less students may be inclined to join student organizations and be involved with the API community--in terms of advocacy, community service and outreach.

### FACULTY

Professors are faced with furloughs, and there will be a decrease of faculty size ranging from 10 to 20 percent. The Lab Center might also be dramatically cut, if not closed.



have to work to make up that money. It's a huge burden."

Students vulnerable to the financial situation may be mentally and psychologically affected by the recession. According to a mental health brief conducted by UCLA's Student Affairs Information and Research Office (SAIRO), Asian and Asian American students in both 2002 and 2006 had the greatest frequency of psychological distress, depression and anxiety. Students with parents born outside the U.S. also had higher levels of psychological instability compared to students with parents born in the U.S.

**"The easiest way you can contribute to the death of education is to be complacent when it happens before your very eyes."**

- Layhannara Tep

"A lot of times, the way that API students find support and deal with issues going on with their lives and personal well-being is through involvement with student and leadership groups," said fourth-year English and Asian American studies major Layhannara Tep. "You need that support group to ground [yourself] and keep you going. Being less developed as leaders leads to taking less ownership of what you can do at this university as a student and eventually that leads to not getting the support that one needs for graduation – it's a cycle." Tep is the Academic Affairs Commissioner for the Undergraduate Student Association Council (USAC).

#### **Reactions, Reflection and Action**

The increased fees, furloughs and quality of education has caught the attention of students, faculty and workers. On September 24, UC campuses coordinated a walk out and rally in unity against the budget cuts. During the 21st Student of Color Conference at UC San Diego, about 1200 students marched through the streets with protest signs and chants against educational inequality and fee hikes. However, the sentiment among other students differs.

"A lot of students become apathetic and complacent, 'Well it's just going to happen' and they don't feel like they can do anything

about it," said Truong.

"It is important as a student to find an avenue to express grievances against the school," added Tep. "If anything, you still have the power to let your concerns be heard by administrators through phone calls, letters, or even through newsmagazines and [Daily Bruin] Viewpoints. As real students being impacted by these things, it's important for us to express what's going on. No one will know what's going on if you don't speak up."

Despite negative ramifications of the budget crisis, third-year Asian American studies major John Duong points out the importance of speaking out on personal experiences. "A really important thing is sharing your story, your own difficulties and struggles," said Duong. "The API community tends to not be very vocal. Just saying what you're going through is a big thing and presenting what your struggles are validates your experiences and the experiences of others in your community. Sharing your story encourages others. The more people know about your story, the more people might be moved to help."

For the UC Regents meeting, students and unions are organizing protests and rallies. The External Vice President (EVP) Office of USAC is coordinating with other UC campuses to bus students from across the state and form Tent City, a congregation of tents housing students from other campuses near Pauley Pavilion. UC students will engage in on-campus rallies and demonstrations and host overnight events.

"The easiest way you can contribute to the death of education is to be complacent when it happens before your very eyes," said Tep. "As students and student leaders who are trying to revitalize education, it's important for you to figure out where your role is in that process."

#### **HOW DOES THE FISCAL CRISIS AFFECT YOU?**

**JOIN THE DIALOGUE. SHARE A STORY.**

**HTTP://PACIFICTIES.ORG**

Contact information for staff writers of feature story:

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**109 million**

dollars is UCLA's estimated share for the UC's loss of funding

**20**

the number of UCLA faculty recruited for the 2009-2010 school year, compared to 74 in 2008-2009

**585**

dollars for the proposed mid-year increase

**2300**

the number of students being cut for next year's freshman class throughout the UC system

**9.34 billion**

dollars is the amount that UCLA alone contributes to the Southern California economy

**16**

percent of UCLA's budget is funded by the state of California

**21:1**

the ratio of the number of prisons (21) built compared to universities (1) since 1984

**1.15 billion**

dollars is the two-year funding shortfall for the UC that will not be funded by the state

## **SIS AFFECTING CAMPUS LIFE?**

### **STUDENT SERVICES**

There have been cuts to tutorials, academic programs such as the Academic Advancement Program (AAP) and operating hours of facilities such as Night Powell. Currently, the Writing Success Program is the only center to provide English composition.

### **QUALITY OF CLASSES**

This year, 165 courses (10%) were reduced. There are efforts to streamline majors and consolidate departments, which not only reduces course options but major options as well. This means larger class sizes, fewer discussions, difficulty to enroll and limited lab access.

**\$\$\$\$**

Proposed student fees will increase 32%, which has cultivated the phrase "less for more." Students are paying more money for lower quality education.



# BRIGHT VISION DURING BLEAK TIMES

**Student-initiated, student-run project serves the dismissed and underrepresented Southeast Asian community**

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It was a hot July evening in 2004, and Kevin Tse was clutching a letter addressed from Murphy Hall. Knowing it probably wasn't good news, he tore it open. He was right. After three quarters of being subject to dismissal, the letter read that he was "officially dismissed" from UCLA. Tse took a deep breath. He knew he had to change his grades, his ways. What was going to happen to him now? How would he tell his mom? He heaved a heavy sigh, threw the letter to the floor and turned off the lights. It was too late.

Tse's story is only one of many in the shadows of the ivory tower. Among the dismissed students are Asian Pacific Islanders (API), particularly Pacific Islanders, Filipina/os and Southeast Asians, who often face academic difficulty at UCLA. The reasons are multiple and varying: a lack of role models, obligation to work, minimal high school preparation and no support network.

Established in 1998 by the Vietnamese Student Union, the Southeast Asian Campus Learning Education and Retention (SEA CLEAR) seeks to retain UCLA students, focusing specifically on the Southeast Asian community.

As an emerging immigrant group, the majority of Southeast Asians (Laotians, Vietnamese, Hmong and Cambodians) do not have high school diplomas or bachelor's degrees. As recent refugees and immigrants, Southeast Asians face poverty, gang violence, language barriers, generational gaps and mental disorders such as post-traumatic stress syndrome.

#### "100 percent retention"

SEA CLEAR's three-pronged structure includes peer counseling, internship and mentorship. The project's purpose is to develop students holistically, in which all aspects of students' lives—academic, relationships and family—are integral in their personal growth.

"We talk to students about their relationships and analyze how that affects the student's goals; in turn, how the students' actions affect the bigger group too," said Cecilia Ngo,

UCLA alumna and project director.

"100 percent retention means that we want everyone to graduate," said third-year political science and retention coordinator Layhearn Tep. "We're not a number, we need to care about our dismissed students and treat them as people."

According to Tep, Southeast Asian students are finding themselves greatly impacted by the recession. More students are working multiple jobs to pay for increased tuition and financial aid cuts. With massive lay-offs happening, some students also work to support their families while bearing the burden of funding their educations. The school's restrictive policies, over-enrollment and large class sizes, Tep adds, are not conducive to student learning.

This past year, SEA CLEAR served nearly 250 students with eight peer counselors who logged 499 sessions and around 1,510 hours. Counseling sessions prioritized student involvement in community service and the use of academic services at the Student Retention Center in the Student Activities Center building.

"We promote interactions with professors and taking hold of your education, while making the connection that history plays a role in your life today," Tep said.

**"100 percent retention means that we want everyone to graduate. We're not a number, we need to care about our dismissed students and treat them as people."**

- Layhearn Tep

#### HOW MANY SOUTHEAST ASIANS HAVE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE?



COMPARE TO: TOTAL ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION 42.7%

TOTAL U.S. POPULATION 24.4%

19.5%

Information provided by the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau

NOTE: THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN 'CON SAFOS' SUMMER ISSUE 2009

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tween mentorship pairs throughout the year.

According to their 2008-2009 end-of-the-year evaluation, SEA CLEAR promotes goal-setting, action plans to meet those goals and engagement with culturally relevant events and courses, such as ethnic studies and gender and sexuality studies.

#### New beginnings, second chances

In 2007, Tse was re-admitted to UCLA after spending three at Mt. SAC, a community college in Walnut. At Mt. SAC, Tse honed his study skills, worked two part-time jobs and earned a spot on the Dean's honor list. But Tse's journey to good academic standing was not over.

As a re-admitted transfer, Tse still needed to raise his freshman year GPA from 1.3 to a minimum of 2.0. During a probationary period, Tse was on a quarterly contract: if he was unable to raise his GPA, he would be dismissed again. For fear of not graduating, Tse agreed to attend peer counseling sessions with then- SEA CLEAR director Diana Ngo-Vuong.

"When I came in for peer counseling before fall started, I was really open and I shared my experience with her," said Tse. "And we started setting goals. We mapped it out quar-

Compared to other students, first-year and transfer students face greater difficulties in transitioning from high school to college; from their hometowns to UCLA. The large student body environment and academic prestige of the university are daunting for many incoming students.

"I was another lost person," said third-year Nancy Nguyen. "It's easy to lose purpose of what you do here on campus. I was introduced to SEA CLEAR and it broke down walls and insecurities; it was the support I needed to find who I am again. Really, how do you know who you are when you start a new chapter in your life?"

#### Home away from home

During spring quarter of 2009, SEA CLEAR collaborated with Southeast Asian student organizations for the first-ever Southeast Asian Admit Weekend at UCLA. For three days, admitted high school seniors toured the campus, networked with alumni and created close bonds with current students.

"SEA CLEAR extends its arms to anyone, that's why people are so comfortable in it," said Ngo, who finds SEA CLEAR as an extension of her own family.

"The project is so unique," added Nguyen. "You can be a mad and dysfunctional staff, but you're still a family at the end of the day."

For many, SEA CLEAR provides a safe space, whether or not students identify as Southeast Asians (Tse's parents are Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong). Students become invested and immersed in the project, based on shared histories, issues and goals that give back to their on-campus community.

"When I was given a second chance...education was worth so much more," Tse said.

Tse has served as a peer counselor for SEA CLEAR and graduated in spring 2009 with a bachelor's degree in sociology.

"It's a full circle for me—being an intern, being on staff, now I'm coming back as assistant director," said Nguyen. "I could finally give-back to the project in the way that it did for me."

#### GUIDE TO THE STUDENT RETENTION CENTER

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES AT THE  
STUDENT ACTIVITIES CENTER, SUITE 105

MECHA CALMECAC | DIRECTOR: MIGUEL DOMINGUEZ

SOUTHEAST ASIAN CAMPUS LEARNING AND EDUCATION | DIRECTOR: CECILIA NGO

SAMAHANG PILIPINO EDUCATION AND RETENTION | DIRECTOR: RENE GUTIERREZ

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM | DIRECTOR: LESLIE SNYDER

RETENTION OF AMERICAN INDIANS NOW | DIRECTOR: THERESA STEWART

## FILM

**PONYO ON THE CLIFF BY THE SEA:***Miyazaki's latest delivers eye candy, but not much else*

SHIRLEY MAK // MANAGING EDITOR // smak@media.ucla.edu

Audiences familiar with Miyazaki's works will most likely go into *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea*, his latest animated feature, with high expectations.

While the premise – a loose retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* – may not hold much appeal for crowds older than Disney's target audience, many might expect a master filmmaker such as Miyazaki to be able to turn an overworked story into something unpredictable. Perhaps, if they're lucky, it will be a mixture of *Spirited Away*, which everyone loved, and *Howl's Moving Castle*, which no one understood. In other words, a film that's bizarre but still profoundly interesting – the best of both worlds. Unfortunately, *Ponyo* fails on both accounts.

Don't get me wrong; *Ponyo* was by no means a bad movie. If it had been made by anyone other than Miyazaki, the lack of originality in favor of a strong visual pull might be excusable. There were certainly some delightful moments in the film, particularly in its opening sequences, which made for wonderful eye candy – a swansong to the smile-inducing images, for kids and adults alike, that Miyazaki typically creates. One scene that immediately comes to mind is the rainbow sea of fish following Ponyo as she emerges from the depths of the ocean to ride on giant Tsunami waves. Miyazaki's flourishing underwater world, illuminated by the creamy pastel colors, hand-drawn animation and Joe Hisaishi's lullaby-evoking soundtrack, is hard to dislike.

No matter how old you are, *Ponyo* doesn't fail to evoke a sense of wonder and even delight in the viewer, but it

doesn't make a strong enough impression for an older audience, one that wants more than just pretty pictures and a fluffy, somewhat inexplicable ending. In the end, there's a lot to see, but simply not too much to think about. *Ponyo*, the goldfish who wants to be a girl, is clearly lovable (the scene where she has ramen for the first time will make one laugh out loud), but unlike Chihiro or Sophie, the heroines in *Spirited Away* and *Howl's Moving Castle*, *Ponyo's* transformation in the film is purely physical. Her falling for Sosuke, the male protagonist and another lovable character, seems superficial as well.

As *Ponyo* went on, the pretty pictures on the screen were dwarfed by the movie's painfully simplistic storyline. I walked out of the theater thinking, "That's it?" and judging from the disgruntled conversations of people around me, I wasn't the only one. *Ponyo* may have been fun to watch, but it lacked the thematic flair that accompanies most Miyazaki movies. The experience was like setting out to eat cake but only getting the frosting; one emerges feeling more than a little empty.

Although *Ponyo* boasts an all-star voice cast (including the voice talents of Tina Fey, Liam Neeson and Cate Blanchett), the characters in themselves are relatively forgettable, save for the no-nonsense sass elicited by Sosuke's mother (played by Tina Fey). Her presence in the film was a refreshing homage to the strong female characters that Miyazaki's films are known for. And her manic driving is something else.

In line with *Ponyo's* stunning visuals but sub par plot,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STUDIO GHIBLI

*Ponyo on the Cliff* is a cute Japanese-animated rendition of *The Little Mermaid*, but it doesn't quite deliver the magic.

the audience is left with characters that are eccentric and interesting to look at but who lack depth and motivation. The audience never does get a true sense of why *Ponyo* wants to be a human so badly, in part because her relationship with Sosuke falls short of being anything other than cute. This may be good enough for Disney films and the traditional fairy tale, but Miyazaki's films are celebrated for a reason – and not for the happily ever after tacked on at the end.

If you want to see something fun and entertaining, by all means give *Ponyo* a shot. But for a better-crafted, more innovative animation film that doesn't just cater to the Frankie Jonas crowd, revisit one of Miyazaki's classics instead.

## FILM

**THIRST: Not just another vampire movie**

SHIRLEY MAK // MANAGING EDITOR // smak@media.ucla.edu

In an entertainment age saturated with bland rip-offs of the unnaturally popular *Twilight* saga, it's refreshing to see a vampire movie that doesn't cater to love-struck teens, whose obsession with the male lead automatically excuses the lack of an original plot or even remotely compelling characters.

Frankly, vampires have become a sheer embarrassment to the horror genre, spewing corny dialogue and sporting bad ("sparkly") skin in broad daylight when their sole purpose is to sink those razor sharp fangs into something delicious and preferably human. Whereas vampires once sucked blood, now they just suck. This is precisely why Park Chan-Wook's "Bakjwi" ("Thirst") comes as a welcome surprise, rejuvenating the over-worked genre with a number of stand-out moments that are gruesome, quirky and just plain bloody.

Most accurately characterized as unconventional horror-comedy, *Thirst* is Park's solid adaptation of ..mile Zola's *Thérèse Raquin* and follows the sordid tale of a young priest who accidentally becomes a vampire due to a blood transfusion meant to save his life but ultimately turns him into one of the undead. The twist? Father Sang-Hyeon is also a Roman-Catholic priest, and a pretty devout one at that. Suddenly forced to kill in order to survive, Sang-Hyeon (played by Korean superstar Song Kang-ho) mediates mounting guilt over his newfound condition by sucking blood out of comatose patients.

Things appear to be going well for our lovable protagonist (or as well as they could be when you're secretly draining the life-force out of the patients in your hospital) until Sang-Hyeon comes across a temptation even harder to resist than human blood: a beautiful young woman, played by Korean model Kim Ok-vin. If you need just one

reason to watch *Thirst*, Ok-vin is it.

A sheer joy to watch in every scene, Ok-vin contributes to the majority of the film's most intense moments and is a prime example of the femme fatale figure that seems to be missing from most vampire movies. Beautiful and bold, she also has a personality more vicious than that of a Siren. If Sang-Hyeon serves as the moral compass well-deserving of our sympathies, Ok-vin's character Tae-ju provides a jarring contrast: a free-spirited, fiery woman who sees life as one big smorgasbord of flavor and fun, and whose cravings for both can't be satisfied through the restraining passivity that Sang-Hyeon himself exhibits. The couple, once engaged in their dangerous dance of lust and love, must find a way to reconcile their differences – or die trying.

Though the bloodbath in *Thirst* runs a little too long (the movie clocks in at 133 minutes) and the film is somewhat uneven at certain parts, its primary strength lies in the fact that while much of it is ridiculous, it does take the vampire genre seriously. Park's flamboyant style runs through the entirety of the movie, particularly in the scenes where we aren't sure whether to laugh or cringe (following the *Oldboy* tradition, these are also the scenes where sex and violence are the most prevalent), and so too does his knack for storytelling. It's been a long time since a movie revolving around vampire-human relations was this original. Yes, Sang-Hyeon and Tae-ju are attracted to one another, but their relationship goes far beyond the overplayed notion of unrequited (or requited, but not quite fulfilled) vampire-human love.

The most prevalent themes in *Thirst* do not concern the romantic but rather the philosophical. Ok-vin and Kang-ho both do an amazing job of showing that

just as big an appetite perhaps even bigger for blood and lust, as notably demonstrated by the personality clashes of the two leading stars, as well as the shocking choice that Sang-Hyeon is forced to make at the end of the film regarding his and Tae-ju's immortality (and if you've seen *Oldboy*, you know that Park has a thing for disturbing endings).

And after so many movies where the vampire comes off as the bad guy who gives into temptation, this inversion of roles is both refreshing and considerably more entertaining.

To top it off, the majority of characters in *Thirst* actually do deserve to have their blood sucked ranging from Tae-Ju's insipid idiot husband, who gives new meaning to the word "slimy," as well as her cruel and unusual mother-in-law, whose most unforgettable scenes occur after she becomes paralyzed. And keep your eyes peeled for the infamous fish hook scene.

But do not be fooled, *Thirst* cannot be restricted to either serious drama or dark comedy. Rather, it's a mishmash of genres fun, fantastical, as well as fruitful in its exploration of humanness and redemption and memorable in every way. Easily one of the best films of this year and true to its title, *Thirst* leaves the viewer wanting more.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CJ ENTERTAINMENT

THIRST

## COMEDY

**JUSTKIDDINGFILMS:** *JustKiddingFilms* brings some serious laughter

KAREN LEE // STAFF WRITER // klee@media.ucla.edu

“Bart and Joe, the two underwear models of comedy, are destined to make you poop in your pants with their secret weapon: comedy. In addition to being the two sexiest sculptures ever born, their ultimate mission is to unite the Asian Youth to create a voice that can be heard in the entertainment industry. Thus, JustKiddingFilms was created by the Gangster’s [sic] of Comedy to spread the word of Cultural Unity through the vessel of laughter.

This is the official mission statement of Just Kidding Films, a filmmaking duo that consists of Bart Kwan, a UCLA psychobiology graduate, and Joe Jo, a fourth-year psychology major at Cal State University, Los Angeles (CSULA).

JustKiddingFilms started as a light-hearted attempt to make funny videos.

“I had the bright idea of putting some videos on YouTube,” said Jo. “At first it was a joke.

However, Jo and Kwan soon began using their videos to cover more serious issues such as racial stereotypes, discrepancies in the media and the public’s ignorance towards the two. It’s difficult to overlook the relevance of their films to present-day issues, but humor is still integral to everything they make.

“We want to make sure nobody takes things (too) seriously because at the end of the day, it’s just comedy,” said Kwan.

Jo and Kwan established JustKiddingFilms in August of 2007 on YouTube. They did not expect to garner immense popularity in such a short amount of time.

“We didn’t know it was going to blow up like this,” Jo said. “We just wanted to provide something funny.”

Their first video together was called “Chigga Hunting,” though it went under the radar. They consider their first official

video to be “Uncle Same Gets Jacked,” which marked the beginning of their Uncle Same and Uncle Chin series of films. The video gained immense popularity, garnering nearly 500,000 views on their YouTube channel to date.

Though Jo and Kwan attended the same high school and community college, they did not meet until mutual friends introduced them to one another much later. Kwan grew up in Cerritos, California, and eventually settled in San Gabriel, California. Jo grew up in Gardena, California, and eventually moved to San Gabriel as a teenager. They started Just Kidding Films a few years after they met. The name of their film troupe was derived from the initials of their last names. The rest is history.

Jo and Kwan use comedy in JustKiddingFilms as an outlet for the messages they want to convey. Mainly they want to change the perception of Asians in the media, especially in the entertainment industry.

“We don’t see (the) Asians that we grew up with represented well,” Jo said. “They’re usually a martial artist or the bad guy in a movie.”

Jo and Kwan also noticed that many comedians make fun of Asians in their routines, but there are not many Asian American comedians who retaliate by countering those insults or defending themselves.

“We (also) noticed (that) a lot of Asians in their videos make fun of themselves,” Kwan said.

Kwan and Jo feel that it’s part of their responsibility to fill that gap and provide a new source of comedy.

“For one, we’re trying to pioneer a form of comedy that Asian Americans can call their own,” Jo said. “But with Asian com-

edy, it hasn’t made its own definition yet. What I started to envision was like SNL for Asians by Asians, a sketch comedy show. We want to bring an edginess to it to represent Asian Americans.”

JustKiddingFilms incorporates the use of extreme stereotypes in order to demonstrate society’s ignorance. Kwan used Borat as an example. Borat is a stereotypical character whose words and actions are shocking, offensive and often-times racist. By being so, he exposes the nature of the people that he encounters.

“Like Borat, (we’re) exposing ignorance,” Kwan said. “We try to show the irony in society. That’s why we play characters of other ethnicities; we’re not trying to make fun of them.”

While the majority of Just Kidding Films is improvised, their ideas often come from everyday events.

“Nothing’s really written,” Jo said. “We don’t write jokes. We just have an outline. We got to stay observant of everything around us.”

Jo and Kwan admitted that the characters they portray in their films take on lives of their own.

“Our character takes over. It becomes everyday life; that’s who we are,” Joe said. “We’re a bit schizophrenic, switching between multiple personalities.”

In the film “USA AMERICAN MARTIAL ARTS SHOW!”, Jo and Kwan humorously address the fascination with

Asians in terms of martial arts and the elaborate exoticism of Asian culture.

“Asians are under the radar in terms of the media,” Kwan said. “There was a strong movement of white people wanting to be Asian in the eighties.”

In the film, Jo and Kwan portray homogenous white characters who demonstrate their skills in martial arts. It is a parody of American fascination with Asian culture.

Jo and Kwan recently completed a few large projects, such as their latest film “JustKiddingFilms Halloween Special,” which deals with racism and the importance of not judging others based solely on skin color.

The future of JustKiddingFilms appears bright, but Jo and Kwan would rather not harness unrealistic expectations.

“We don’t know what to expect, (but) if people like what we do, then we’ll gain popularity,” Jo said.

Last words for anyone reading this would be to anyone who would like to pursue a passion, don’t let race be your crutch. It’s not an Asian thing; it’s about self-esteem. I’d like to see more Asians in the entertainment industry,” Jo said.



Jo (left) and Kwan (right) are the duo also known as JustKiddingFilms

PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTKIDDINGFILMS

## FOOD

**NEW TRUCK ON THE BLOCK**

AZUSA TAKANO // STAFF WRITER // atakano@media.ucla.edu

Riding the popular wave of Asian-fusion cuisine, the Nom Nom Truck has already become a huge sensation since its launch two and a half months ago in August. The mobile food truck was created due to the lack of Vietnamese sandwiches in the greater Los Angeles area, also known as “bánh mì.”

A bánh mì consists of a Vietnamese baguette, usually filled with pickled cucumbers, carrots, daikon, cilantro, and a choice of chicken, pork or tofu. Hoping to counter the lack of bahn mi in L.A., co-founder David Stankunas, a UCLA alumnus, decided to launch a food truck in order to share his love for bahn mi with the public.

The idea of the Nom Nom Truck was first proposed in March by Stankunas and the other co-founders. Like various other food trucks, Nom Nom was heavily influenced by the Korean-BBQ-serving Kogi Truck, the godfather of food trucks. Stankunas was inspired to start his own after talking to the one of the founders of Kogi.

“They were very helpful and supportive of the idea,” said Stankunas. “They gave great advice as to what we should do.”

Stankunas and the rest of the Nom Nom team, which consists of UCLA alumni Jennifer Green and Misa Chien, worked hard to create a successful business from scratch. With none of them having any experience in the food industry, they struggled with managing ingredient purchases, deciding where and when to sell their product and trying to gain mass publicity via only their website and Twitter.

Although it has only been in business for a short amount of time, Nom Nom Truck already has great reviews and loyal regulars. Twitter users respond with great comments such as “I had @NomNomTruck for the 1st time. DELICIOUS!” and “I give the @NomNomTruck two noms up!” Some negative remarks on Yelp.



A bánh mì consists of vegetables and choice of chicken, pork, or tofu.

com include imitation of a real Vietnamese sandwich and I didn’t wow my taste buds, but the team switches things up by adding new food items to the menu during particular weeks, thus providing an incentive for customers to drop by regularly. The truck typically travels within the perimeters of Los Angeles, but if there is a high demand by customers in a certain city, Nom Nom does its best to accommodate the request.

Never did it cross Stankunas’ mind that the Nom Nom Truck would become such a great success.

“The truck was never our main focus,” Stankunas said. “I know there are others who depend on their food trucks as their (main) source of income, but we have the luxury of not having to do that. I own two other businesses, and the other co-founders have their own responsibilities as well. We’ll just see where this first truck takes us.”



For now, it’s only one truck but in the future, if people are still interested, the possibilities of more trucks, a brick and mortar shop and even a franchise devoted to bahn mi sandwiches could happen. Right now, the team simply enjoys sharing its Vietnamese delicacies with a wide audience and seeing the smiles on customers’ faces.

“I’m loving it so much,” Stankunas said.

Part of the truck’s charm may come from its catchy name. “Nom nom” is not a particularly common phrase found in daily conversation and is often used as internet lingo. It’s meant to emulate the sound of someone eating, or to poke fun at those who are eating unhealthily.

“The word just sounds funny to begin with,” Stankunas said laughingly.

**ABOVE:** Nom Nom lovers line up for their dose of Vietnamese delight.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOM NOM TRUCK

# SPOTLIGHT

## LAPU THE COYOTE THAT CARES

HUONG PHAM // COPY EDITOR // hpham@media.ucla.edu

Since 1995, Lapu the Coyote That Cares (LCC), UCLA's API-based theater group, has taken the campus by storm. Since its inception from the UniCamp names of founders Randall Park, Derek Mateo, and David Lee, their performances, ranging from improvisational skits to original plays, have served as creative outlets for its participants. They are also used as a means of breaking various stereotypes that the API population faces in the entertainment industry. Pacific Ties recently had the opportunity to sit down with members of LCC and have them share their thoughts on the group's history, goals and future growth.

**PT:** How has LCC helped you grow as an individual?

**Angela Vesagas (AV):** I joined LCC during my first year at UCLA, and it has been one of the main reasons I've stayed at UCLA. I love that LCC can give me the opportunity to grow as an actor, writer, director and comedian. LCC is my creative outlet, my muse and my sanity. These people are my castmates, my friends and my family. My UCLA experience would not be the same without these coyotes by my side.

**Mylo Lam (ML):** I never thought that I would want to be a leader or a producer (or even if I had the ability to do so), but my love and passion for LCC is what makes it worth it. Never have I shared a vision so strongly with a group of people. They are the reason that has made my UCLA experience worthwhile. Being the cynic that I am, it's amazing that I can even admit that.

**Jerry Fang (JF):** I had made my way through countless other campus organizations and I found that LCC was my niche. It was a place where I could feel free to be myself and be able to write scripts that were near and dear to my heart without feeling intimidated or judged. As someone who didn't do theater in high school, LCC gave me a chance to pursue a hobby, make good friends, and be able to do something that I really enjoyed and could never see myself doing. Technical developments aside, LCC has helped me to become a more introspective and reflective person.

**PT:** What is the group's ultimate goal?

**AV:** LCC's ultimate goal is to provide UCLA students, faculty and staff with free professional theater while also its members to break the stereotypes that Asian Americans face in the entertainment industry.

**JF:** The grassroots, student-run nature of the organization allows for accessibility in art - our cast members are encouraged to pursue whatever media they would like - as well as for the general public.

**PT:** Did the group start out with the intent of being an Asian-American theater group?

**AV:** Yes! As minorities who were not involved in the theater program at UCLA, LCC's founders wanted to create a space where their personal work and talents could be seen. "Treehouse Bachelor's Society," the company's first play, was done in 1995 and refers to Treehouse, an eatery, and the bachelor societies that were prevalent around the time of Asian immigration in the 1920s.

**PT:** Your website says that LCC is the largest Asian-American theater group in the nation. How do you think LCC contributes to the Asian-American community?

**AV:** The majority of LCC is made up of Asian-American students. This in itself gives Asian-Americans the unique opportunity to explore and experience an industry where we are minorities. Our presence has allowed for prospective Asian American theater groups to spring up and has encouraged Asian Americans to step into the entertainment industry.

Also, by presenting original scripts that confront issues of the Asian American experience, such as generational gaps and cultural misunderstandings, LCC creates live theater that relates to Asian Americans specifically, which most entertainment does not commonly touch upon.

**M.L.:** I believe that all ethnicities, whether they are misrepresented or overrepresented in the entertainment industry, are subject to stereotypes to a certain extent. With LCC, we have the unique opportunity to not only break these stereotypes but to show the camaraderie and connection that we have with all people. By finding a common ground, we seek to encourage discussion with people beyond the Asian-American community.

**PT:** For what purpose did the group start?

**AV:** To give an original voice to Asian American performers who are usually overlooked in the entertainment industry, and to break the Asian stereotypes in the entertainment industry by giving Asian Americans an outlet for their creativity. As writers, actors, directors and producers, LCC was founded for the purpose of being an all-encompassing theater group, and meant to show our ability and versatility.

**JF:** I think another purpose of LCC is to give Asian-Americans a chance to be represented in theater where they might otherwise not be able to.

**PT:** Is there any particular emphasis on the Asian-American base of the group or is the group open to any ethnicity?

**AV:** While the majority of our cast consists of Asian American students, anyone can audition, and our cast includes a wide variety of nationalities and majors, anywhere from aerospace engineering, psychology, communication studies, English and theater. At the same time, the original scenes we write for each quarter cover a (wide) array of material about the Asian American and college experiences.

**ML:** Issues range from the generation gap between child and parent and the stereotype of the model minority. However, with the continuing growth of the group, our themes have also expanded to become more wide-ranging, for example, the pressures that we, as college students, confront from our parents, peers and life in general. Regardless, our goal is to always communicate these themes in an entertaining and easily accessible fashion through performance.

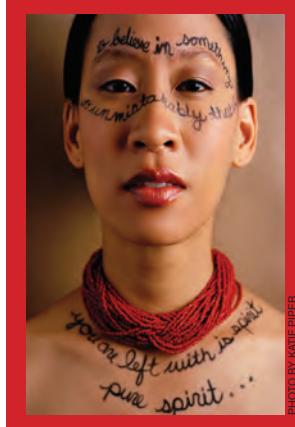


LEFT TO RIGHT:

Angela Vesagas, third year producer, english major  
Jerry Fang, fourth year producer, sociology major  
Mylo Lam, fourth year producer, communications major

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLAUDIA LI  
Interested in joining LCC?  
Check out their website at  
[www.lcttheatre.com/](http://www.lcttheatre.com/)  
for audition updates and other info!

## SPOKEN WORD ARTIST **KELLY ZEN-YIE TSAI**

SHIRLEY MAK // MANAGING EDITOR // [smak@media.ucla.edu](mailto:smak@media.ucla.edu)

"Our community is so diverse – linguistically, culturally and in terms of our history and socio-economic backgrounds – and we need as many of our voices out there as possible."

- Kelly Zen-Yie Tsai

Spoken word poetry is not a common pursuit in the Asian American community, but that didn't stop Chicago-born, Brooklyn-based Chinese Taiwanese American KELLY ZEN-YIE TSAI from following her dreams. Now a successful spoken word artist who has shared the stage with Mos Def, Sonia Sanchez, Talib Kweli and countless others, ZEN-YIE TSAI can honestly say that she has no regrets. Her poetry is both entertaining and enlightening, dealing with everything from cultural pride to awareness of underrepresented people, movements and ideas both in and outside the API community. KELLY ZEN-YIE TSAI recently shared both her work and her thoughts on the artist's life with Pacific Ties.

**PT: WHAT IS YOUR TAKE ON THE PORTRAYAL OF ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE MEDIA TODAY?**

KZT: There's a lot more Asian Americans in the media now, which I do get excited about. We feel more integrated into the general fabric of the media world. But I very actively avoid taking in media that I feel stereotypes Asians.

**PT: CAN YOU SPEAK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHINESE POETRY AT SIMMON COLLEGE LAST FALL?**

KZT: There was a conversation that came up when we were talking about what makes Chinese poetry what it is. Someone made the assertion that they saw my work more as American poetry than Chinese poetry and while I think that's interesting, I don't see it as much of an issue for me. I write what I write – I think you can read my work one way as American poetry (but) you can also read it as Chinese poetry; and you can read it as Chinese-American poetry. You can read it within the context of Asian Americans in relation to other Americans. I think it's interesting how identity conflict kind of (plays) into that, depending on the language (used), as well as your position and upbringing.

**PT: WHAT DO YOU WANT AUDIENCES TO GET OUT OF YOUR POETRY, PARTICULARLY ASIAN AMERICAN AUDIENCES?**

KZT: I think in terms of Asian Americans, it's past due for us to speak out. Our community is so diverse linguistically, culturally and in terms of our history and socio-economic backgrounds – and we need as many of our voices out there as possible. I hope that by articulating these things, by unpacking what's going on in my every day life, it helps other people to articulate what's going on in their own lives. Another thing that I hope audiences get from my work is just a pure emotional experience – whether it's thinking about a place, person or event in history.

**PT: HOW DO YOU FEEL THE PERFORMING ARTS AND CREATING SOCIAL CHANGE ARE CONNECTED, PARTICULARLY IN THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY?**

KZT: I feel very strongly that not only does the act of creating and sharing work contribute to human development – in my workshops I help people articulate their experiences, about what we can recognize about ourselves and our world – but writing and speaking out about these things can open a door for the actions that are necessary to change things in our community. I had the opportunity to go to the world social forum in Nairobi and I remember this woman (who was a singer and writer as well as a participant for an NGO that relieved poverty in a lot of regions in Africa) saying, "Art has the potential to ignite the emotions that propel people to act. We have to help create an emotional relationship to information and statistics, because if we don't make those facts feel like something to people, then that information dies."

**PT: HOW DID YOU FIRST GET INTO SPOKEN WORD POETRY?**

KZT: I've always been into writing and performing ever since I was a little kid. When I was in high school, I had a cool English teacher who was, and still is, really involved with the national poetry slam. My teacher would bring my friends and me to see (them), so I kind of grew up writing and speaking poetry.

**PT: AS AN ARTIST AND PERFORMER, WHO OR WHAT INFLUENCES YOU?**

KZT: I would say that the majority of my poems are pretty autobiographical. In general, it's based a lot on other people in my life, conversations I've had, things that just irritate me on a daily basis, as well as dreams and aspirations I have. There's a really amazing essay I read by Isabella Ayende that's called *i Art* and in that essay she says that artists hold the dreams for a civilization. I've really taken that, along with other influences, along with me over the years. Not only is art a place where we can sound off about things that we think are injustices in the world, but by using our creativity we can re-frame, and re-envision, what's possible for all of us.

CHECK OUT KELLY'S PERFORMANCES, BIO AND MORE AT:  
[WWW.YELLOWGURL.COM](http://WWW.YELLOWGURL.COM)

**PT: DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKING TO BREAK INTO THE SAME FIELD AS YOU?**

KZT: Something unfortunate that I see right now is that I think a lot of people get really focused on the business side of arts and entertainment much too early. I have a lot of young people come to me all the time just about career, talking about how their parents are making them stressed about being a doctor or an engineer. But I think the most important thing is, if you really love doing something, really contribute a lot of time and energy to think about how you can make that possible. Not if I can make this possible, but *how* I can make this possible. Every kid wants their parents' approval and I think it's important to accept that, but also realize that this is what you're meant to do on the earth and you need to do it.

**PT: DO THE STEREOTYPES THAT ACCOMPANY ASIANS IN THE MEDIA EVER AFFECT YOU?**

KZT: It's not so much that I face the stereotyping but I always get, "Wow! You're so out-spoken!" I want to see more of that in our community. I want us to be comfortable being ourselves, with all our little idiosyncrasies and all of our differences – all of the things that don't make sense to anyone else in the world, but they make sense to us because they're our lives and we live it. I'm telling myself constantly that I can't be stuck in the old ways of thinking, because we're all working very hard to change our current realities now and I want to be ready for that future where we can express ourselves and take our rightful place in terms of representation.

**MUSIC ARTIST**

## **AURÉLIE "LITTLE" NGUYEN: A little can go a long way**

ABBY KRITZBERG // CONTRIBUTOR

The music video for *Je veux des violons* features a young girl prancing around in a room filled with white furniture and pink balloons. She wears a short gray shift dress and black heels and sings to the camera with a seductive charm that is at the same time completely innocent.

With the charisma of an enthusiastic child, the singer performs a pop-rock song flawlessly, complete with cheerful guitar riffs that are smooth, catchy and

just plain cute.

Crooning sweet ballads that have a jazzy feel, Vietnamese-French artist Aurélie Nguyen is an up-and-coming star with the poise of a delicate lounge singer. She operates by the stage name Little, aptly named as she is petite at five-feet-two.

At only 21, Little already has an entire album under her belt and is steadily gaining popularity due to her Myspace

and Facebook pages. Her talents extend beyond her girly vocals, however, as she is also an accomplished guitarist, evident in the acoustic version of her hit single *Je veux des violons*.

Other songs on Little's album utilize the same singing style and girlish chants, but the French lyrics give them a sophisticated edge. The album consists of cheerful-sounding melodies and quirky piano and guitar chords, resulting in a new genre

that listeners have quickly grown to love.

Though her songs are in French, except for a few repeated phrases of "I love you in *Je veux des violons*, Little has universal appeal. Even those who don't understand French can still appreciate the simultaneously upbeat and mellow sound of her songs. Perhaps the small star tattoo on her right wrist, which is visible in Little's popular music video, is a hint towards her growing success as a starlet.

# RECESSION JACKPOT

A QUICK 'N DIRTY LIST OF API-RELATED SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS FOR YOUR MONETARY AND TUITION NEEDS.

## HMONG NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

Criteria: Applicants must be Hmong students who reside in the U.S. and are enrolled full-time in an accredited college/university.

Deadline: January 2010

Contact: 202.797.9105 | info@hdninc.org | www.hndinc.org

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Scholarships: Human Capital, Banatao Family Fil. Amer. Education Fund College & SAT Prep and Admissions Counseling, Shui Kuen & Allen Shin, Jack & Jeanette Chu, Sang Chul Lee & Donald O. Cameron Memorial, Maria Elena Yuchengco Memorial  
Deadline: Varies  
Contact: 415.433.6859 | info@asianpacificfund.org | www.asianpacificfund.org

## JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE NAT'L SCHOLARSHIPS

Criteria: Applicants must be a full-time U.S. undergrad. or grad. JACL scholarship committee chooses applicants & assigns scholarships to recipients based on qualifications.

Deadline: January 2010

Contact: 415.921.5225 | scholarships@jacl.org | www.jacl.org

## PHILIPPINE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES SCHOLARSHIP

Criteria: Applicants must be admitted to a law school in the L.A. and OC area (Asian/Pacific Islander descent).

Deadline: January 2010

Contact: 949.823.7184 | www.pabala.org

## FRIENDS OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE FAIR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Criteria: Must be enrolled/planning to enroll in 4-year university, CA community college or accredited culinary arts/trade school; min. GPA is 3.0.

Deadline: March 2010

Contact: 916.263.3636 | koneil@calexpo.com | www.bigfun.org

## HORIZONS FOUNDATION GEORGE CHOY MEMORIAL/GAY APA SCHOLARSHIPS

Criteria: Asian/Pacific Islander descent; must be in the process of applying to, or are currently attending, a post-secondary institution; min. GPA is 2.75; priority given to people who identify as LGBT or is involved in SF/Bay Area LGBT community.

Deadline: Please check with Gay Asian Pacific Alliance (GAPA)

Contact: 415.398.2333

## OCAPIA/UNITED WAY AAPI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Criteria: Asian/Pacific Islander descent; attending OC university/college, or graduated from OC HS; low-income/1st generation in family to attend college are encouraged to apply  
Deadline: March 2010

Contact: e-mail pthach@ocapica.org or jkuo@ocapica.org | www.ocapica.org

## FINANCIAL FIXES FOR BROKEN PIGGY BANKS



**1** DEVELOP A PLAN OR TIMELINE to achieve your financial goals after assessing your situation and keeping yourself accountable (i.e., making credit card payments, establishing funds for emergency use or a safety deposit or saving up for an expensive vacation or home computer).

**2** ESTABLISH YOUR BUDGET-- and stick with it! Track your expenses, reduce discretionary spending, limit your credit card use and beware of impulsive shopping sprees.

**3** PAY YOURSELF FIRST by treating yourself as an entity that must be paid often; you can do this by directly depositing into a savings account and creating saving funds made specifically for different milestones in your life (i.e. wedding, graduate school).

# CALENDAR

WHERE CULTURE & COMMUNITY COLLIDE



DATE	WHAT	DETAILS
OCT. 5 - DEC. 11	<b>40 Years of Breaking Ground</b> <i>Powell Library Rotunda</i>	UCLA Asian American Studies Center celebrates the cultural history of 40 years of Asian American studies with a visual exhibition.
NOV. 21	<b>Queer Pin@y Conference</b> 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. <i>UCLA Ackerman Grand Ballroom</i>	This year's theme "Bring It Back" will discuss issues of the LGBTIQ community and the intersections of ethnicity and sexuality.
NOV. 22	<b>Authors on Asia: Lisa See</b> 2 p.m., <i>Pacific Asia Museum</i>	See, author of Snow Flower and the Secret Fan and Peony in Love, will discuss and sign her recent novel Shanghai Girls.
NOV. 28	<b>Giving Thanks</b> \$12 students, \$20 UCLA faculty/staff 8 p.m., <i>Aratani/Japan America Theatre</i>	Holiday concert featuring artists from the World Festival of Sacred Music - Los Angeles, the Shakti Dance Company from Southern India, the Halau Keali'i O Nalani of Hawai'i,
DEC. 2	<b>Comedian Kristina Wong</b> 7:30 p.m., <i>18th Street Arts Center in Santa Monica</i>	Wong performs a show on carlessness, as part of Diane Meyer's big exhibition on carless living in Los Angeles
DEC. 12	<b>State of Chinese Americans Symposium</b> 12 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., <i>Monterey Park City Hall</i>	Assemblymember Mike Eng, along with others such as Russell Leong and Tritia Toyota, will discuss how to better connect UCLA to the Chinese American community.
JAN. 16 - JAN. 17	<b>3rd Annual Southeast Asian InterCollegiate Summit</b> <i>UC Davis</i>	The Southeast Asian InterCollegiate Summit gathers over 100 Southeast Asian organizers and students from all over California to discuss community issues and plan actions.
JAN. 18	<b>VCN: Vietnamese Culture Night</b> 7 p.m., <i>UCLA Royce Hall</i> Tickets free at the Central Ticket Office	The 30th VCN draws from a long-standing tradition that draws elements of Vietnamese culture, featuring drama, martial arts, breakdancing, modern and traditional dancing.
JAN. 30	<b>Film: Memories of the Forgotten War</b> 2 p.m., <i>Pacific Asia Museum</i>	A film that uncovers the Philippine-American War. Co-director will be present during the screening and hosting a Q&A session.

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"A SOCIALIST SMEAR GROUP." - YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION

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pacties@media.ucla.edu

# BACKPAGE AROUND TOWN



The audience listens intensely as Huggins, keynote speaker, delivers her keynote speech in the Powell Library Rotunda.

## "BUILDIN' BRIDGES AND STIRRIN' WATER" WOMEN OF COLOR FEMINISM AND ACTIVISM

WORDS BY KELI ARSLANCAN // [karslancan@media.ucla.edu](mailto:karslancan@media.ucla.edu)

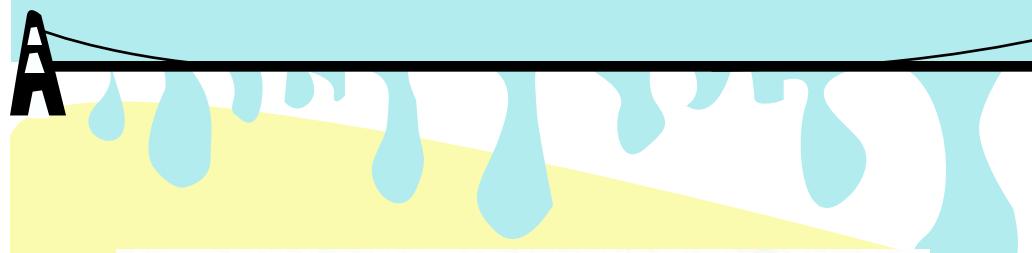
PHOTOS BY CLAUDIA LI // [cli@media.ucla.edu](mailto:cli@media.ucla.edu)

The night was dedicated to herstory. Ericka Huggins, Mary Kao, Mo Nishida and Stephanie Santos were the speakers for the night. Ericka Huggins, keynote speaker and former leader of the Black Panther Party, talked about her friend Yuri Kochiyama, a well-known Asian American activist and supporter of Malcolm X. Huggins talked of continuing to strengthen the bond between Asian and African Americans. Regarding women, she talked of moving beyond stereotypical notions of women towards truth. She talked of Kochiyama's experiences as a woman not just being treated as equal but like a complete and full human being in and of herself.

Nishida's quote of the night "Let's Have Some Unity" spoke of building bridges and urged the audience to become active and take responsibility. Santos read a section of her recently published book in which she talks about the relationship with her mother and their common struggle with diabetes. For Kao, women stories stories should serve to inspire future generations. All the speakers spoke about the importance of retaining the value and lessons of history and passing these lessons down to future generations. The speakers infused a sense of empowerment and inspiration into the audience. Let's stir some water and build some bridges!



TOP ROW TO BOTTOM ROW:  
Ericka Huggins, Stephanie Santos, Mary Kao, and Mo Nishida.



Digitized and archived by Manoa Hui, the Pacific Ties collage showcases 30 covers over the past 30 years (1977 - 2009). Currently, a display of the above poster is at an exhibit in Powell.

JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OVER 30 YEARS OF  
student voice, empowerment and activism.

### POP CULTURE ICON **HELLO KITTY**

EVELINA GIANG // ONLINE EDITOR // [egiang@media.ucla.edu](mailto:egiang@media.ucla.edu)

A pop culture icon, the most beloved Sanrio character, Hello Kitty, celebrated her 35th birthday with an all-Kitty exhibition at Royal/T Café in Culver City in November. The 10,000 square feet of art space and café at Royal/T Café was covered in Hello Kitty, showcasing the billion dollar empire that the Hello Kitty has created since its introduction on a vinyl coin purse in 1974.

PHOTOS BY WESLEY WONG