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Who is AARCC?

After years of student lobbying, the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center (AARCC) opened Spring 2005 to support the needs of Asian Americans at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC).

AARCC offers social, cultural, and educational programs that promote knowledge of Asian Americans. Our co-curricular programs enhance the UIC experience and provide opportunities for integrated learning and development.

MISSION

AARCC promotes the intellectual and personal growth of UIC students, staff, and faculty; advocates for greater access, equity, and inclusion of Asian Americans; and educates the UIC community about Asian Americans.

VISION

AARCC will be a national leader in promoting the greatest academic and personal success of Asian Americans in higher education.

VALUES

- Community: Foster a safe climate that provides a sense of belonging and enhances relationships of individuals.
- Empowerment: Support individuals in reaching their greatest potential.
- Engagement: Actively encourage the community to have meaningful participation in programs, events, and organizations.
- Respect: Acknowledge and honor the diverse values and identities of individuals and communities.
AARCC Visitor Data

This academic year, we had 530 students visit AARCC. Student iCard swipes showed 8087 visits throughout the year. Despite our modest space, AARCC provides a community where students are engaged and provided a sense of belonging.

Academic Colleges of Visitors

Amount of Visitors by Gender Identity

Class Year By Visit

Students studying in the AARCC conference room.
A space survey was conducted at the end of each semester, the data from 107 survey respondents reveals the following information:

Class Year of Survey Takers

Frequency of Visits

Duration of Visits
Space Survey Results

“I love AARCC so much. It may be a small space, but it makes me feel valued as a student.” --- Student Respondent

#1 purpose visitors come to AARCC:
To connect and engage with others.
Faculty and Staff Engagement

AARCC engages UIC faculty and staff through intentional collaboration. Consistently, staff and faculty have facilitated educational programs, participated in the training of our Asian American Mentor Program (AAMP) mentors, served on our AARCC Advisory Board, and acted as a resource for our Student Organization Council. Through such partnerships with AARCC, faculty and staff play active roles in contributing to student success, and in return, AARCC promotes the engagement of staff and faculty at UIC. This year’s events include, but are not limited to:

A collaboration with the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community and Dr. Lorenzo Perillo of Asian American Studies on *The Future of Chicago’s Chinatown*. This session focused on what it means to be Chinese or Chinese American in Chicago and ways this traditionally marginalized group is changing the status quo of their community.

A lecture called *Stumbling Between Black (Lives Matter) and White (Supremacy)* which examined the contemporary Asian American desire for public affirmation of their experiences with racism and the subtle and at times apparent anti-black ideology underlying some of these efforts. The speaker was Dr. OiYan Poon, an Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago. This event was in partnership with AARCC, ASAM, and the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy.
AARCC cultivates mutually beneficial partnerships with diverse communities within and beyond Chicago through collaborations with organizations to provide cultural experiences for UIC students, staff, faculty, and alumni. This year’s events include, but are not limited to:

• hosting the Chicago’s Families: Rites of Passage exhibit with the UIC African-American Cultural Center in partnership with the Chinese-American Museum of Chicago-Raymond B. & Jean T. Lee Center and the Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago
• collaborating with Fearless Undocumented Alliance and Korean American Resource & Cultural Center to host the National AAPI DACA Video Tour. Two documentaries were shown (Dream Riders Across America and Halmoni) and a dialogue followed focusing on education access for undocumented students
• sponsoring the STOP THE HATE! ReActing Through Community Organising film screenings in partnership with Chicago Commission on Human Relations, South Asian American Policy and Research Institute, and UIC Police Department.
• visiting Kelly High School and, with partnership with Project VISION, bringing high school students to UIC to encourage them to attend college by giving them a tour of UIC and introducing them to current students
• participating in two dragon boat races, including Chinatown’s Dragon Boat Race for Literacy. This involved 39 participants: 16 students, 7 staff, 15 alumni, and 1 faculty
Guided by the George Kuh’s (2010) theory of high-impact student engagement, AARCC engages UIC students, through collaborations with staff, faculty, and community members, in many ways that contribute to their empowerment and student success.

One example is through AARCC’s Asian American Mentor Program (AAMP), a key program for retention of Asian American first-year and transfer students, directed by Associate Director Jeff Alton.

The goal of Summer AAMP, which was held in June and July, is to help students in UIC’s Summer College ease their transition to campus by engaging them with campus resources that include academic support, peer support, campus support programs, and meeting with staff and faculty with a particular focus on Asian American student needs and resources.

This support continues in AAMP, which occurs only in the Fall semester, with a heavier focus on educational and social activities through peer support that eventually benefits the non-cognitive development of participants in AAMP. While attention is given to the mentees, the mentors’ experiences are also noteworthy for leadership building.

Summer AAMP 2015 had 5 mentors assigned to 24 mentees.

Fall AAMP 2015 had 29 mentors assigned to 46 active mentees.
Another way AARCC engages UIC students and contributes to their empowerment and student success is through the Asian Student Organization Council.

In mid-August, student leaders from 11 Asian-interest student organizations were invited to the annual Student Organization Leadership Retreat at the Loyola University Chicago Retreat & Ecology Campus. Led by Assistant Director Elvin Chan and facilitated by Student Organization Outreach Coordinator Chandni Nigam ’16, this retreat was an opportunity to escape the campus and city and focus on communication skills, team building on the low ropes and high ropes course, and educational workshops.

Come September, the student organizations met regularly, shared information, and participated in workshops led by on- and off-campus persons. This year, the workshops included:

- Conflict Management with Student Leadership Development and Volunteer Services
- Financial Responsibility with Campus Programs
- Resume Building with Career Services
- Time Management with Academic Center for Excellence
- Member Retention with Campus Program’s IDEA Team
- Presidents Roundtables
- Stress Management with the Counseling Center

UIC students at leadership retreat.
The Spring semester concluded with the annual end of the year banquet, where students voted and gave out various student leadership and organizational awards. 28 student leaders were in attendance and recognized for their leadership involvement. This year, the keynote speaker was Rhonda Laylo from the Center for Student Involvement. Her speech focused on how leadership and uniqueness can lead to a path to success.

There are over 36 Asian-interest, registered student organizations. Although the organizations have a number of different resources and systems of support, AARCC creates a unique and intentional space for support and sharing of ideas and best practices.

Here’s an example of student organizations that participated this year.

- alpha Kappa Delta Phi
- Alpha Phi Gamma
- Asian American Students in Alliance
- Chi Sigma Tau
- Delta Epsilon Psi
- Delta Phi Omega
- Filipinos in Alliance
- Indian Student Association
- Kappa Pi Beta
- Korean American Student Association
- Muslim Student Association
- Sigma Beta Rho
- Theta Lambda Beta
- Vietnamese Student Association
Another example AARCC engages UIC students and contributes to their empowerment and student success is through Community Connections Events.

Led by Community Connections Student Coordinator Lahney Vilayhong, a number of community organizations were invited to campus to engage the UIC student population. These events strengthen the interwoven relationship UIC has with the city and its community organizations. This year’s outreach events included, but are not limited to:

• a Career Pathways session where students interacted with professionals in law enforcement, entrepreneurship, engineering, medicine, intellectual property law, government, and the arts.

• a Dare to Be Powerful presentation by Asian Americans Advancing Justice Chicago which looked at Asian American comic book superheroes and how identity can empower social justice movements.

• a presentation by playwright Jamil Khoury, Triangulation: Mosque Battles, Theatre, and Civic Engagement, on how his play tackles Islamophobia while serving as an educational civic engagement process.

• a collaboration with the Korean American Student Association and Korean American Women In Need (KAN-WIN) on Intimate Partner Violence where a dialogue occurred on recognizing concerns of intimate partner violence in one’s relationships and personal networks.
AARCC hosts a number of signature events and programs that expand frontiers of knowledge with the goal of promoting equity, inclusion, and respect and enhance community engagement by providing a sense of belonging.

In August, AARCC hosted its 11th Annual Ice Cream Social, which had over 250 guests, 10 student organizations, and 3 community organizations.

In early September, AARCC hosted its Open House, which had over 100 guests composed of faculty, staff, and students.

After assessing student concerns, AARCC hosted in fall semester a very successful dialogue on *Family Expectations* which had 50 attendees composed of students, faculty, and staff. This event was in partnership with AANAPISI, AASIA, ASAM, Counseling Center, and Career Services. In the spring semester, AARCC collaborated with Counseling Center and Indian Student Association for an *Asian American Racial Microaggression* presentation, which had 40 attendees.

Throughout the academic year, Jeff Alton collaborated with other CCUSC staff to facilitate *Reimagining Masculinity* sessions on topics such as men and violence; Black superhero masculinity, and masculinity in sci-fi.

In April, Asian American Awareness Month was held at UIC through the leadership of Filipinos in Alliance, who brought YouTube celebrity and actress Arden Cho to campus. She spoke about the challenges of being an Asian American actress in Hollywood. Over 250 attended.
This year, Christina Khorn, the Student Marketing Assistant, worked hard to recruit and retain a student blog team to research and write various posts about the diverse Asian American community. The blog posts moved from the Blogger site to the AARCC Facebook page. Posts ranged from movie reviews, restaurants, current events, poetry, student leadership, happenings abroad, and interviews. The blog provided another means of educational information for and about UIC and Chicagoland Asian Americans. The blog can be accessed on Facebook using #AARCCCorner.

On September 2015, UIC was awarded its second Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution Part A grant. Through the partnership of AARCC, Asian American Studies, and the Office of Social Science Research, the grant writing team successfully gained $1.5 million to launch new initiatives. The grant presently funds supplemental tutoring, academically-integrated mentorship and internship opportunities with on- and off-campus partners.
On April 6-8, 2016, the UIC AANAPISI Initiative funded 8 UIC students (Naomi Leilani, Ada Tong, Markeia Scruggs, Alysha Mancha, Christina Khorn, Phoenix Chen, Danny Michael, and Adithyan Subramanian) to attend the Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education in Oakland, CA. Also, in attendance were UIC employees Mark Martell, Karen Su, and Elvin Chan. While the professionals attended the APAHE AANAPISI Capacity Building Workshop, the students represented UIC, shared best practices, networked with other university students, staff, and faculty, and returned to campus with new ideas to better serve Asian American and Pacific Islander students. When they returned to campus, they were asked to write blog entries for AARCCorner and to share pictures that captured their experiences during APAHE.
On June 15-17, 2016, through the generous funding of the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Asian Americans and AARCC, UIC students Kara Liu and Carlo Ahumada and staff Mark Martell attended the Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund (APIASF) Education Summit. This event allowed the students to network with other university students from the US and the Pacific. Also, the summit had many speakers share information on how to better serve Asian American and Pacific Islander students with a specific focus on student success and career attainment. When the students returned to campus, they were asked to write blog entries for AARCCorner and to share pictures that captured their experiences during the APIASF Education Summit.
Campus Commitment

In addition to their roles, AARCC professional staff serve in a number of committees, task forces, professional groups that benefit the UIC campus community:

This includes but not limited to:
- Student Success Initiative: Orientation Task Force
- Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Asian Americans
- Student ACCESS Bill Task Force
- Community Affairs Internal Council
- MLK Scholarship Committee
- APIASF Scholarship Reader
- Weeks of Welcome Committee
- The UIC Experience Program
- Greek Advisory Council
- Tuesday/Thursday Advisor Topics
- (Re)imagining Masculinity Dialogue Series
- Various search committees

Mark Martell, AARCC Director, speaking at AAAMonth keynote event.

Jeffrey Alton, AARCC Associate Director, welcoming people at the AARCC Open House.

Elvin Chan, AARCC Assistant Director, participating at a dragon boat race.
Under the theme of “Peace,” the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change continue to work collaboratively.

The CCUSC affirm our commitment to social change grounded in the principles of inclusion, access, and equity. Our name reflects the collective purpose; to expand understanding of the value of cultural diversity and connect diverse assets to find creative solutions for common challenges. Centers include AARCC, African-American Cultural Center, Disability Resource Center, Gender and Sexuality Center, Latino Cultural Center, and Women’s Leadership and Resource Center.

This year, AARCC’s Student Marketing Assistant Christina Khorn created a CCUSC video to spread our message and commitment to inclusion, access, and equity. This video may be viewed at http://youtube.com/uicaarcc.
UIC’s Asian American Units

AARCC is just one part of UIC’s rich and vibrant Asian American landscape.

We regularly are in conversation and in partnership with Asian American Studies (which will become Global Asian Studies in Fall 2016), the UIC Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) Initiative, the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Asian Americans, and Asian American related student organizations. In addition, AARCC is part of Great Lakes Asian American Student Services (GLAASS) to keep informed and share best practices with other universities to better serve Asian American students.

These on-going partnerships are why UIC was awarded its second AANAPISI Part A $1.5 million grant and what keeps Asian Americans thriving at UIC.
Asian American Congratulatory Ceremony

For the first time ever, AARCC, in partnership with Asian American Studies and the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Asian Americans, hosted the UIC Asian American Congratulatory Ceremony. The welcome was done by Provost Susan Poser, and the keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Karen Su. CCSAA members Natasia Bongcas, Mark Martell, student member Meghna Bhat, and alumni Lux Molina. In attendance were 23 graduates and 40 guests consisting of family members, significant others, faculty, staff, and other students.
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Thank you to Jeff Alton, Elvin Chan, Chandni Nigam, Lahney Vilayhong, Omar Juarez, Rachelle Johnson, Imee Ignacio, Christina Khorn, Mark Chiang, Anna Guevarra, Jill Huynh, Karen Su, Thy Nguyen, Kathleen Kashima, the AARCC Bloggers, and many more.

We appreciate the constant support from the Office of Diversity, the Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change, Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Asian Americans, Asian American Studies, Asian Studies, the UIC AANAPISI Initiative, other campus departments, alumni, and community partners.

Since 2010, the University of Illinois at Chicago is a federally-designated Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI). The campus has received close to $5.6 million dollars from the U.S. Department of Education to support recruitment, retention and graduation of Asian American and Pacific Islander students and all UIC students.
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