

Subject: Fall 2020 Greetings from the Pan Asian Council

Hello,

We hope you are well and taking care as you settle into the fall semester.

Although the season is changing and the days are quietly getting shorter and cooler, we recognize that the fiery unrest of the preceding summer and spring seeps into autumn as well. We've been awed and inspired by our many community members who have advocated for justice, health, safety, and equity – recalling how [fighting for social equity and racial justice is our responsibility and deeply rooted in our histories](#). As we move through this semester, we want to call our collective attention to the irreducible fact that **COVID-19 and racial justice go hand in hand**.

Since our establishment last year, the Pan Asian Council has been working to build membership, engagement, and coalition throughout our Ulowa community. We look forward to continuing these efforts to support our APIDA constituents in this 2020-2021 academic year. Below, the Pan Asian Council offers some updates as well as upcoming opportunities to engage.

Celebrations and Congratulations!

PAC member **Laurence Chan**, PhD candidate in Counseling Psychology in the College of Education, recently began an internship at the Veterans Affairs hospital in Atlanta. Laurence's research interest includes [how people's background impacts their life direction](#). "There's still lots of stigma attached to reaching out for help with mental health issues, and often not a lot of knowledge about what counseling is or how it helps," he says. After his internship, Laurence expects to graduate and plans to practice as a clinician at a hospital or community organization.

PAC member **Dr. Gigi Durham** was recently appointed as the Interim Director of the Nonfiction Writing Program! As noted in the [CLAS news announcement](#), one of Dr. Durham's strategic initiatives is focusing on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, given concerns specifically raised by Nonfiction Writing Program students in a [letter](#) this summer. Dr. Durham notes that she is "looking forward to collaborating with my new colleagues to infuse an ethos of racial and social justice into the program."

PAC co-chair **Gordon Louie** recently advanced to candidacy in his Higher Education and Student Affairs PhD program where his research focuses on [building community on and off campus](#). Gordon is specifically interested ways to make the campus environment more inclusive for international students, with whom he has extensive work experience. Guiding research questions for Gordon include, "Where does internationalization and diversity converge or diverge? . . . And how from a practitioner and policy standpoint do we silo those things or bring them together, and in what instances do we do that?"

Opportunities to engage (PAC & Campus wide):

1. **"Pandemic, State and Society"**: Two-part webinar series are brought to you by the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies. The first session will take place TODAY, **Friday, 18 September**. The second session will be on the following **Friday of 25 September**. Both will begin at **8 pm (Iowa Time)**. Please invite all colleagues, students and friends to join us for this event. Attendance is free. To register, please go to INTERNATIONAL.UIOWA.EDU/PANDEMIC-STATE-SOCIETY
2. **National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) for Students**: The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is offering five all-day, interactive National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI): Leadership for Equity and Inclusion sessions for students! NCBI has developed into an international network of associates who are trained in highly effective NCBI principles and practices to cooperatively institutionalize diversity and inclusion programs. Foundational principles discussed in this workshop include that guilt is the glue that holds prejudice in place, every issue counts, stories change attitudes, and skill-training leads to empowerment.
3. PAC co-chair Dr. Ashley Cheyemi McNeil presents her research project, "Receiving Strangers: Cosmopolitan Ethics and the Narrative Works of Seiichi Higashide and Barack Obama" at the Center for Diversity and Enrichment's **Diversity Seminar Series** on October 15 (the series offers presentations most Thursdays this semester).
4. **Register to vote, confirm you are registered to vote, and check your absentee voting status.**

As we pull through these final months of 2020, we take heart in calling on the strength and wisdom of Grace Lee Boggs, an Asian American superhero, whose vision of community solidarity continues to inform our pathway today:

"We never know how our small activities will affect others through the invisible fabric of our connectedness. In this exquisitely connected world, it's never a question of 'critical mass.' It's always about critical connections."

Feel free to visit our website at <https://pac.org.uiowa.edu/>. We would love your input on what you hope to see from the council. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at ui-panasiancouncil@uiowa.edu.

In community,

Pan Asian Council Leadership