

# REAPA

**Research on the Education of Asian and Pacific Americans**

Summer 2014

## *Message from REAPA Chair*

I am truly excited to begin my 2-year term as AERA-REAPA SIG Chair. I would like to thank my predecessor, Dr. Samuel Museus, members of the Executive Board, and graduate representatives for their incredible service to our academic community.



It is an interesting and challenging time for educators and researchers committed to protecting education as a public good and advancing social justice. I am writing this note shortly after the AERA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Our business session featured a wonderful panel of youth and community leaders who led direct efforts to respond to anti-Asian school violence in a south Philadelphia community. These community leaders built multi-racial coalitions that fought for improved educational environments for all students and families in south Philadelphia. It will be important for us to continue to highlight the work and efforts of local communities that are engaged in research, practice and policy.

I first joined REAPA about a decade ago as a graduate student and this SIG represents an important community for me and many other AAPI researchers. As we look to the future of REAPA and AAPI research, it is important to recognize the numerous past officers and members that have contributed to this group over the years. These individuals have helped carve a critical space from which many AAPI scholars have benefited.

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*The AERA Special Interest Group (SIG) REAPA promotes inquiry into educational and equity issues affecting Asian and Pacific Americans, facilitates interdisciplinary discussions around these issues, and provides members with collegiality and support.*

## *Reflections on Scholarship-in-Solidarity*



**Dr. Kevin Kumashiro**  
**Dean, School of Education**  
**University of San Francisco**



As I write these reflections, I cannot help but to replay in my mind a conversation that took place this morning in a seminar where I was asked several questions about what it means to act in solidarity. The starting point for many was to identify ways to act as an ally to those who

struggle, to the “Other,” which, in a binaried, black-white framework of racial inequity, erases the complicated experiences and contradictory positioning of Asian Americans. The framings of “inequity” and “solidarity” that common sense makes available not only forces me, as an Asian American, to occupy an untenable position, but also and in so doing, masks the very discourses and experiences that trouble what it means to act in solidarity, particularly those discourses and experiences of the “model minority” that reify systems of racial injustice.

Perhaps some of you are hearing this type of conversation as all-too-familiar. It certainly reminds me of conversations that colored much of my experiences in graduate school, when my friends and I struggled to show how even critical racial analyses could ironically reinforce White privilege when they failed to address the insidious and hegemonic nature of anti-Asian American discourses. Or when such analyses did include Asian Americans, we then had to ask: which Asian Americans? Whose experiences? Who speaks? Just as there is no single story of racial inequity, so too is there no single story of what it means to be Asian American, and therein lies the challenge for scholars whose goal of troubling the single stories pushes us toward solidarity work.

I was so deeply humbled and flattered to hear that I received this year’s REAPA Distinguished Scholar Award, especially because I think of my scholarship as being quite untraditional in a number of ways: as intersectional, as applied, as “engaged.” This reminds me of another conversation I had recently about how rare it is for our institutions and our professional organizations to honor those who do engaged scholarship. My colleagues and I debated what entails such work, and some of us were insistent that it involves more than putting our theories into practice, more than working outside of the ivory tower; rather, it is about doing work in ways that are in solidarity with those who struggle and with whom we, in salient ways, identify.

REAPA has long done incredible work of supporting the scholars who are not only raising awareness and understanding of our Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, but are also really pushing back against the anti-Asian discourses, messages, and frames that mask racist policies and practices. Such work has been the foundation on which I built, and continues to inspire me to persist, which is why I look forward to more opportunities to learn from and celebrate the newest scholars of today and tomorrow who push the envelope with your scholarship-in-solidarity. Thanks especially to Rachel Endo and everyone who nominated and selected me. Onward!

*Kevin Kumashiro is dean of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. In 2014, he received the Distinguished Scholar Award from AERA’s REAPA SIG as well as the Engaged Scholar Award from the Association for Asian American Studies.*

**Message from Chair continued from Page 1...**

We will be in touch throughout the year with REAPA related news and information. Please do not hesitate to share with us your ideas for improving our SIG. I look forward to seeing everyone in Chicago next spring.

Vichet Chhuon, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor of Culture and Teaching at the University of Minnesota  
REAPA Chair 2014-2016*

***Get Involved with REAPA*****Looking for Graduate Student Representatives**

We are currently soliciting nominations for graduate student representatives. Feel free to nominate yourself or a graduate student colleague. Please contact Malaphone Phommasa ([mphommasa@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:mphommasa@education.ucsb.edu)) for details.

**Got ideas?**

If you have ideas and recommendations on what REAPA should look like in the coming year, please share that with any of the board members.

***REAPA Board Members*****Chair: Vichet Chhuon, Ph.D.**

University of Minnesota  
Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
Email: [vichet@umn.edu](mailto:vichet@umn.edu)

**Newsletter Editor: Yen Ling Shek, Ph.D.**

University of California, Los Angeles  
Residential Life Research Coordinator  
Email: [ylshek@orl.ucla.edu](mailto:ylshek@orl.ucla.edu)

**Secretary: Tracy Lachica Buenavista, Ph.D.**

California State University, Northridge  
Asian American Studies Department  
Email: [tracy.buenavista@csun.edu](mailto:tracy.buenavista@csun.edu)

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Teachers College, Columbia University  
Email: [tth2101@columbia.edu](mailto:tth2101@columbia.edu)

**Treasurer: Oiyen Poon, Ph.D.**

Loyola University Chicago  
School of Education  
Email: [opoon@luc.edu](mailto:opoon@luc.edu)

Malaphone Phommasa

University of California- Santa Barbara  
Email: [mphommasa@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:mphommasa@education.ucsb.edu)

**Program Co-Chair: Ann E. Tiao, Ph.D.**

Assistant Dean for Research and Graduate  
Education  
College of Education  
Rowan University  
Email: [tiao@rowan.edu](mailto:tiao@rowan.edu)

**Program Co-Chair: Judy Yu, Ed.D.**

Founding Executive Director of REACH  
**Research. Educate. Aspire. Change. History**  
Email: [Judy.Yu@reach-education.org](mailto:Judy.Yu@reach-education.org)

## *AERA Annual Meeting 2015 Call for Proposals*

### *Deadline: July 22, 2014 @ 11:59 pm (PST)*

The AERA Special Interest Group (SIG): Research on the Education of Asian and Pacific Americans (REAPA) invites proposals for the 2015 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois. The aims of the REAPA SIG include: promotion of inquiry into the educational issues that affect Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities; facilitation of critical conversations around issues of equity and diversity in education; and providing members with support and collegiality.

We especially encourage proposals that align with the 2015 conference theme "Toward Justice: Culture, Language, and Heritage in Education Research and Praxis." We are in the midst of an exciting period for research with AAPI communities, thus, we invite submissions that highlight the challenges and diversity of various AAPI educational issues through critical perspectives, theories and practice. For instance, consistent with the conference theme, we encourage proposals to address how AAPI educational issues might relate to larger themes and principles of social justice in education. In addition, how does new research shed light onto rapidly changing AAPI demographics locally and nationally, and how should educational institutions respond to those changes?

Individual submissions will undergo a blind review and be evaluated using AERA's standard criteria and alignment to the REAPA SIG mission. Authors do not need to be REAPA SIG members. All individual proposals should be submitted without author identification. Session proposals will be reviewed with author identification. Any proposals that do not adhere to the AERA guidelines cannot be reviewed. \*All proposals are due on July 22, 2014 at 11:59pm (PST) via the AERA submission system\*. Guidelines for individual and session proposals and instructions for submission can be found at [aera.net](http://aera.net) under "Annual Meeting". If you have additional questions, please contact the AERA REAPA SIG Program Co-chairs, Judy Yu ([judy.yu@reach-education.org](mailto:judy.yu@reach-education.org)) and Ann Tiao ([tiao@rowan.edu](mailto:tiao@rowan.edu)).

### *Important Websites*

#### **AERA Annual Meeting Submission**

<http://www.aera.net/EventsMeetings/AnnualMeeting/2015AnnualMeetingCallforPaperandSessionSubmissionsJune2-July22/tabid/15538/Default.aspx>

#### **AERA REAPA SIG**

<http://www.aera.net/SIG094/AboutREAPA/tabid/11774/Default.aspx>

#### **2015 Annual Conference Theme**

<http://www.aera.net/EventsMeetings/AnnualMeeting/2015AnnualMeetingTheme/tabid/15492/Default.aspx>

### *Scholar Conversations*

REAPA "Scholar Conversations" were created to allow for open and informal dialogue between senior faculty, junior faculty, and graduate students. This past April, we held two successful conversations, "How to Achieve Balance: Navigating the Challenges of Negotiating Personal and Professional Responsibilities in Academia" and "Thinking Ahead: Making Yourself Competitive on the Academic Job Market." Emerging scholars were able to solicit advice and hear the experiences of Dr. Vichet Chhuon, Dr. Bic Ngo, Dr. Julie J. Park, Dr. Ann Tiao, and Dr. Phitsamay Uy.

Please send suggestions for future conversations to Malaphone Phommasa at [mphommasa@education.ucsb.edu](mailto:mphommasa@education.ucsb.edu)

## *REAPA 2014 Awards Recipients*

### **Dr. Kevin Kumashiro is the 2014 REAPA Distinguished Scholar**

At the AERA Annual Meeting, we were excited to honor Dr. Kevin Kumashiro as the 2014 REAPA Distinguished Scholar. The REAPA Distinguished Scholar award is presented to a scholar, from any discipline, whose program of research has had a significant impact on our understanding of Asian Americans and/ or Pacific Islanders and education.

Dr. Kumashiro is the Dean of the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. He is the founding director of the Center for Anti-Oppressive Education and currently serves as the president of the National Association for Multicultural Education. Dr. Kumashiro has written groundbreaking articles and is the author or editor of nine books on anti-oppressive education and activism. His research, teaching, and service have (re)defined the field of "anti-oppressive education" and we are proud to have him as part of the REAPA community.

### **Travel Grant Recipients**

Mingcai Zhang, Michigan State University; Eujin Park, University of Wisconsin; Rican Vue, UCLA; Lihong Yang, Michigan State University; Trish Morita-Mullaney, Purdue University/IUPUI; Miao Chun Wei, George Washington University; Rob Ho, UCLA

## *AERA 2014 REAPA Business Meeting & Social*



This year's business meeting featured a special panel of community organizers working against anti-Asian violence in South Philadelphia school. In 2009, over 30 Asian American students were beaten up in ONE DAY. The panelists shared powerful stories of the struggles they encountered in confronting anti-Asian violence, as well as the new relationships that developed out of the movement. Included are bios for the distinguished panelists

who moved the attendees to tears just by sharing their lives. Thank you.

### **HELEN GYM, Asian Americans United**

Gym is a parent and community leader whose work across different organizations supports the right to a quality public education for all children. She is on the board of Asian Americans United, where she helped anchor the successful federal civil rights case on South Philadelphia High, which focused on the responsibility of adults to create educational environments free from harassment. She is also co-founder of Parents United for Public Education, a citywide parent group seeking greater investments in schools and classrooms, and is on the editorial board of *Rethinking Schools*, a social justice teaching journal.

*Continued on next page.*

## *AERA 2014 REAPA Business Meeting & Social (cont.)*

### **WEI CHEN, Chinese Youth Organizing Project/ Asian Americans United**

Chen was one of the student leaders of the South Philadelphia High student organizing, whose anti-bias and racial healing work during that struggle (and since!) has won national acclaim. As a 17 year old student, he played a pivotal role in documenting and leading an organized student response to persistent anti-Asian/anti-immigrant harassment at his school, including an 8-day boycott. Wei works at Asian Americans United as a youth organizer and helps lead the Chinese Youth Organizing Project. He was a winner of the Princeton Prize in Race Relations and was one of ten people nationally awarded a Peace First Prize fellowship to continue his organizing work in peace studies and addressing bias harassment.

### **DUONG NGHE LY, Student/ BPSOS-Delaware Valley**

Ly was a student leader during the South Philadelphia High boycott. Duong played a major role in organizing Viet students at his school and working with students citywide to address bias harassment and safe school climates in the year following the boycott. For his work, Duong was a winner of the Princeton Prize in Race Relations. He works for BPSOS-Delaware Valley, a community based service organization for the Philadelphia region's Vietnamese community, and is a student at the University of Pennsylvania.

### **TOM McNEILL, Former Staffer, South Philadelphia High School**

McNeill was the former South Philadelphia High School Community and Parent Ombudsman, responsible for outreach to families. He reached out to families of victims of anti-Asian violence, connected them with services and resources, and attended public events in support of the student boycotters. This work made him a target of the District. In early 2010, he was removed from his position at SPHS. He spent the next seven months in the School District's "rubber room" while various unsubstantiated charges were investigated without any conclusions. He was eventually reassigned to another school. Though Tom's sacrifice went largely unnoticed outside of the school, he stands as a figure of courage for students and families of that struggle.



## *REAPA 2015 Call for Award Nominations*

REAPA is proud to recognize and support its members through its annual awards and travel grants. REAPA offers the following awards and grants:

**The Outstanding Dissertation Award** highlights the work of a scholar whose dissertation research represents a unique and important contribution to the field of Asian Americans and/or Pacific Islanders and education. Nominees are invited from all disciplines and do not need to be members of the REAPA SIG. Both faculty and self-nominations are strongly encouraged.

**The Early Career Award** is presented to a scholar who has had a significant impact on our understanding of research and/ or practice on Asian American and/or Pacific Islanders and education. Recipients must be an untenured faculty member or a scholar who is within 7 years of completing the terminal degree. Nominees are invited from all disciplines and do not need to be a member of AERA. Peer and self-nominations are strongly encouraged.

**The Distinguished Scholar Award** is presented to a scholar whose program of research has had a significant impact on our understanding of Asian Americans and/or Pacific Islanders and education. Nominees and recipients of the Distinguished Scholar Award may be from any discipline and do not need to be REAPA members. Peer and self-nominations are strongly encouraged.

### **REAPA SIG Travel Grants**

Conference travel grant awards will be available for REAPA members who: 1) present a paper or poster at a REAPA SIG-sponsored AERA session, 2) are a registered SIG member during the year of travel, and 3) are a graduate student member of the SIG (priority) or SIG members who are not in tenured/tenure-track academic positions and who have limited institutional financial support. Travel grant applications are usually due after the AERA program is announced and prior to the annual meeting.

**Nominations for awards are usually due in the Fall quarter/semester prior to the annual meeting, while REAPA SIG Travel Grant applications are usually due 1-2 months prior to the annual meeting. We encourage you to check regularly for upcoming award announcements.**

## *New Program Co-Chair*

We are proud to welcome Dr. Judy W. Yu as Program Co-chair for a 3 year term. Dr. Yu is the Founding Executive Director of REACH®, a non-profit educational consulting firm based in New York City. REACH® utilizes critical multicultural education to collaborate with children, families, teachers, administrators, and community leaders as active participants to conduct research on the challenges of curriculum and instruction in schools to educational change. Dr. Yu received her EdD from Teachers College, Columbia University and her M.Ed from UCLA. She was a first grade teacher at Loreto Elementary School in East Los Angeles where she designed and implemented an Asian American studies curricula and created an Asian American History museum with elementary school students.



## *REAPA Statement on Affirmative Action*

### *June 2014*

The Research on the Education of Asian Pacific Americans (REAPA) Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Education Research Association (AERA) affirms its commitment to race conscious affirmative action policies for racial equity. We assert a critical AAPI perspective in ongoing public debates over affirmative action by:

1. Acknowledging that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders directly benefit from affirmative action;
2. Denouncing the deceptive ways AAPIs, especially Asian Americans, have been cast as a racial wedge group to roll back the civil rights gains of affirmative action policies;
3. Opposing the distortion of information about affirmative action policies as they relate to AAPI communities.

#### **AAPIs Benefit from Affirmative Action**

Affirmative action has opened doors of opportunities that would normally be shut for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Moreover, AAPIs, including REAPA members, directly benefit from affirmative action policies. Affirmative action policies emerged out of the civil rights movement to combat both intentionally discriminatory policies (e.g., see the court cases of *Tape vs. Hurley*, 1885 and *Gong Lum vs. Rice*, 1927) and underhanded practices with racially disparate impacts (e.g., see U.S. Supreme Court cases *Lau vs. Nichols*, 1974 and *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins*, 1886), that reproduce inequalities. Persistent inequalities faced by AAPIs in education, as documented by social science research (e.g. Asian American Justice Center, 2008; Benham, 2006; Milkman, Akinola, & Chugh, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007), demonstrate the continued need for race conscious affirmative action policies.

#### **REAPA Denounces the Casting of AAPIs as an Anti-Affirmative Action Wedge Group**

As direct beneficiaries of affirmative action, individually and as a collective of scholars and educators interested in the well-being of AAPIs in education, REAPA denounces the ways stereotypes of AAPIs have been used to roll back affirmative action policies. At the beginning of 2014, a vocal minority of mostly Chinese Americans organized an ardent opposition to a proposed partial repeal of Proposition 209 in the State Senate (Senate Constitutional Amendment 5 [SCA5]) that would have allowed for the reinstatement of affirmative action in public higher education. Even more troubling are efforts by Edward Blum, a white anti-affirmative action crusader, to locate an Asian American plaintiff in a future anti-affirmative action lawsuit. REAPA cannot stand for the ways AAPIs, particularly Asian Americans, have been cast as a wedge group and discursive antithesis to discount the realities of unequal education systems and practices.

#### **REAPA Opposes the Distortion of Information about Affirmative Action and AAPIs**

REAPA calls on its members and community of education scholars committed to social justice to oppose the distortion of information about AAPIs in the debates over affirmative action. Since the 1980s, opponents of affirmative action have manipulatively used terms like “reverse racism” in anti-affirmative action propaganda. More recently, they have spread fear and misinformation about affirmative action as policies of anti-Asian quotas. However, racial quotas have been legally banned since the 1978 Supreme Court case, *University of California vs. Bakke*. Despite what some claim, affirmative action practices in college admissions do not lead to the acceptance of academically unqualified students. As institutions concerned with developing robust communities of learning, selective colleges and universities evaluate student qualifications in a holistic manner, accounting for the diverse ways students may contribute to a campus learning community. As such, they do not admit students based solely on test scores and grades, which have been shown to have racial and gender biases that also negatively affect Asian Americans (Santelices & Wilson, 2010; Shih, Pittinsky, & Ambady, 1999), nor can they legally admit or deny students based solely on race.

### **AAPIs Support Affirmative Action**

Asian American and Pacific Islander communities hold strong to values of racial justice and equity, and a large majority support affirmative action. Though affirmative action opponents claim that Asian Americans also oppose race conscious policies, time and again AAPIs have demonstrated their support for affirmative action policies in research (Park, 2009) and civic participation. Over 60 percent of AAPI voters in California opposed Proposition 209 (i.e., the California constitutional ban on affirmative action) in 1996. Three-quarters of AAPI voters in Michigan cast their ballots against Proposal 2 (i.e., the Michigan constitutional ban on affirmative action) in 2006. Moreover, the National Asian American Survey in 2012, a rigorous national opinion study of AAPIs conducted in various Asian languages, found that about 76 percent of AAPIs support affirmative action. Therefore, in presenting its statement supporting affirmative action, REAPA is no different than the majority of AAPIs nationally who oppose racial discrimination and believe that social institutions must take affirmative action to counter systemic racial inequities.

The mission of REAPA, a Special Interest Group of AERA, is to promote inquiry into educational and equity issues affecting AAPIs, facilitate interdisciplinary discussions around these issues, and provide members with collegiality and support. The affirmative action debate is a critical one that requires the inclusion of AAPI perspectives. REAPA supports AERA's continued advocacy for affirmative action, as demonstrated by the Association's submission of *amicus* briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court in related cases. However, we note the lack of meaningful inclusion of AAPIs in the Association's previous briefs. REAPA asserts that AAPI interests cannot be overlooked by advocates and scholars concerned with racial equity in education, especially when an overwhelming majority of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders support affirmative action.

*Author:*

*OiYan Poon, Ph.D.*

*Assistant Professor, School of Education, Loyola University*

*REAPA Treasurer*

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