

VOLUME 3 / ISSUE 01 / FALL 2016

# MAASU

MIDWEST ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS UNION

**MEMBERS OF  
THE MONTH**

CHECK OUT SOME  
OUTSTANDING MAAASU  
MEMBERS

TAKE A LOOK BACK  
AT OUR LAST  
CONFERENCE IN  
ILLINOIS

OUT @MIAA  
MEET THE NEW  
EXECUTIVE  
COORDINATING  
COMMITTEE

# upcoming events

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## MAASU SPRING CONFERENCE 2017: UNITED WE STAND

**WHEN:** April 7-8, 2017

**WHERE:** University of Michigan in Ann Arbor

As one of MAASU's missions is to "unite and strengthen the A/P/A community's stance against all forms of oppression," #UnitedWeStand is aimed towards uniting the A/P/A community with one another to discover the history of our roots and our identities that serve as the grounds of current social justice movements.

This conference's aim is to be inclusive and strengthen our connections with other people of color, of ability, of sexuality, of experiences, to unite for the common cause of intersectionality and bettering quality of our lives.

Together, with our different backgrounds and unique experiences, we will form a movement of solidarity that inspires those from all walks of life.



MAASU

[www.maasu2017.org/](http://www.maasu2017.org/)



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MAASU YouTube

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# STORIES OF



## The Bridge: The 'L' Word | Jubilee Project

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Jubilee Project has done it again with another great video about a topic that all Asian Americans face. We've all been there. Saying "I love you" to your parents isn't a familiar phrase that we hear, but this video will certainly pull some heartstrings. You might shed a tear or maybe even be inspired to say those rare words to the ones that you love.

## *As An Asian American, I Am Invisible In This Country* | David Yi

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David Yi, founder and editor at Very Good Light, shares a personal essay about what it means to be Asian American in the United States. [Read it here!](#)

"Citizenship was traded for dignity, an American passport came with annihilating our heritage."



# THE MONTH

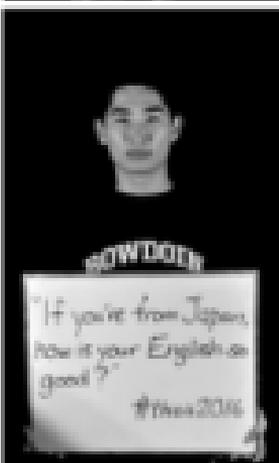
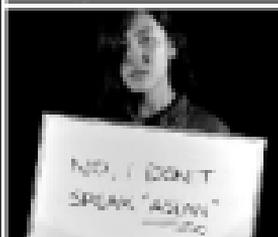
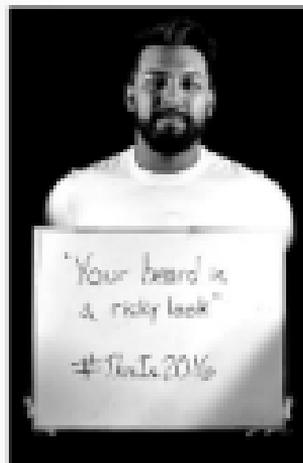
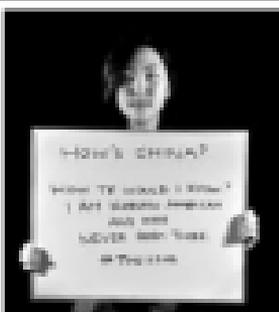
Haikus on Hotties 2017 Calendar | Ada Tseng



After the success of the 2016 calendar, Ada Tseng is bringing back Haikus on Hotties for 2017 featuring Asian-American actors, writers and celebrities. Tseng's purpose was to show that Asian men deserve movie and television roles and can be attractive. The cost is \$19.99, and the proceeds go towards the Asian-American centered blog Angry Asian Man.

## #ThisIs2016 | Bowdoin Asian Students Association

Students of Bowdoin College created their version of #ThisIs2016, which was an open letter by New York Times's editor Michael Luo to a woman who told him to "go back to China". There are over 40 photos of real experiences Bowdoin students faced. View them all [here](#).



# MAASU LS RECAP

By Hoyon Nephokoe

MAASU Fall Leadership Summit took place this year on November 12, 2016 at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Among the attendees were those from The Ohio State University, University of Missouri, Ball State University, University of Minnesota-Duluth, and University of Wisconsin-Madison. The format of the Leadership Summit was much like that of any other conference. However, from personal experience, the LS was much smaller and more intimate than the Spring Conferences that I was used to. The Friday night check-in mixer had food and games, a four-day way for us to get to know students from other schools. This was a welcome atmosphere, and I had a great time meeting fellow APAs from across the Midwest.

The opening ceremony included speeches from Phou La, chair of the LS Planning Committee, Daphne Yu, executive chair of the MAASU Executive Coordinating Committee, and guest speaker Joseph Bokum Lee, MD, MAE. Joseph is a pediatric resident and dual masters of public policy candidate at the University of Chicago, where he serves as a representative on the



Diversity and Inclusion Trainee Committee. He spoke briefly about himself before talking about the importance of getting, and staying involved and of securing mentors. He talked about the anger that many college students feel when they see or experience incidents of hate and bias, and the importance of internalizing that anger and fire. This was what stuck out the most to me - the need to internalize this fire, and the fact that we had to take action on our campuses now, because it takes only one person to spur change. If not us, then who? If not now then when?

Being of the Executive Coordinating Committee, I was only able to attend my first and third workshops, as the second workshop period was for the ECC to meet with the H-Rays and other APA leaders. This meeting was very well received by me and by the other attendees. We talked about the climate on our campuses, various problems that our campuses faced and how to address them, as well as more specific issues that our respective student organizations were experiencing. We talked about problems with member retention, finances and funding, with our

**"IF NOT US, THEN WHO? IF NOT NOW THEN WHEN?"**



organizational structures, with the fact that our workshops and events were reaching the same core group of people rather than other members of our campus communities, among other things. A notable light-bulb moment that came out of these discussions was when I spoke about my experience as president of UN-Madison's Asian American Student Union (AASU) when I had a Skype call with officers from Penn State's Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC). I talked about the possibility of regular scheduled Skype sessions with other AAPI folks in the midwest. Thomas Thao, Programming Chair of the MNASU ECC combined my idea with a previous idea of having a Facebook group, and came up with the idea of using Facebook Live to stream events happening on campus to create a stronger AAPI community in the midwest. If this was not the epitome of synergy and collaboration, I don't know what is!

The highlight of this LS was definitely the closing ceremony. In addition to the many performers (including our very own Jonathan Sun, member of



the Graduate Advisory Council, who bestowed his reminder for us to take the post-LS survey), we were able to hear from Dr. Ji-Yeon Yuh, director of Asian American Studies at Northwestern. Her speech centered around the core questions: who makes America great? Her answer: we do - "we who are marginalized racialized minorities, we who are women, we who are poor, we who are in the prisons, we who are undocumented, we who have been scored, stereotyped, excluded, and shut on. We are the ones who have made America great by forcing it to live up to its lofty rhetoric of freedom, equality, and rights." She spoke about the importance of knowing our history and the struggles that we went through, from fighting for our rights to citizenship in the 1930s (and challenging the idea that those who weren't "white" were ineligible for naturalization) to establishing the first Asian American studies departments in the 1960s.

From speeches by Joseph and Professor Yuh, to the many workshops on constructing race in the midwest and the power of storytelling, among others, this year's Leadership Summit was one of the best and most inspiring conferences that I have been to. I hope you all took valuable lessons back to your campuses, and continue to advocate for your communities. I look forward to seeing you all at the Spring Conference, this year at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor from April 7-8!

**"WE ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE MADE AMERICA GREAT BY FORCING IT TO LIVE UP TO ITS LOFTY RHETORIC OF FREEDOM, EQUALITY, AND RIGHTS."**

# MEMBERS OF THE MONTH

Every newsletter, we will be featuring two students from MAASU's member schools that are nominated by their peers. This month's two nominees are Alison Yang and Nicole Kil

## ALISON YANG



(Al for short) is a senior at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying Life Sciences Communication, and pursuing a certificate in Digital Studies and Entrepreneurship. Hailing from Manitowish, Wisconsin, Al grew up in a predominantly white environment. Coming to UW-Madison, he decided to become more involved with the APIA community by becoming a brother of the Chi Sigma Tau (CST) National Fraternity, Inc. He is currently the Vice President of CST and has worked on various projects to advocate for the APIA community, such as CST's annual Made in Asia event. He also took a service trip to Vietnam last summer as part of the Vietnam Health Project to help less fortunate folks. He also sat on the Hmong American Student Association council as secretary, working on projects and events to celebrate and inform the UW-Madison community about Hmong culture.

His most recent projects include "Badgers Give Consent" t-shirt sales, which he designed as part of an ongoing effort by the community to address sexual assault and dating violence. The proceeds from his t-shirt sales were donated to the University Health Services' EVOG (End Violence on Campus) program. He has also attended many workshops on campus in order to grow as an advocate, such as one on deconstructing masculinity in the APIA community, as well as a series called "Breaking the Silence", which is an on-going series of workshops, each addressing a critical issue in the Hmong community. After he graduates, he hopes to go into social entrepreneurship as way to

continue his many projects and programs. He sees social entrepreneurship as a way to continue working for the causes that he cares about, while making a living and providing for himself and his family. A fun fact about Al is that he loves the great outdoors, and he hopes to one day visit Mount Everest, and maybe even reach its peak.



## NICOLE KI

is a sophomore at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, planning on majoring in Journalism with a certificate in Asian American Studies. She was born and raised in Long Island, New York. This year, Nicole became involved with the UW-Madison Asian American Student Union this year, specifically working with the Education Chair

as a general committee member to help plan and facilitate educational workshops on Asian American Issues. She decided to join because she wanted to find a way to address the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in the discussion of race. The largest minority at this PWI is APIA, additionally including those who are foreign born. Especially considering the racial tensions this presidential election has brought and the passion of social justice activists on campus with Black Lives Matter and #NoDAPL, APIA's are often active supporters of these movements but find it difficult to find intentional spaces exclusively for them or that focus on this identity. Nicole wanted to provide this space for APIA's to engage with each other and find a sense of community. This semester she has been mainly involved with AASU.

Last month, she held her first workshop on cultural appropriation in APIA culture regarding film, food, and fashion, and this month she focused on the fragmentation of APIA students on campus and what factors play into this. Her second workshop was largely discussion based, and was a forum for people to discuss with one another the social factors of why people tend to stick within their own cultural groups and hopefully bring more unity to our community. She thinks it is very important that the APIA community be connected and united to overcome the underrepresentation of APIA issues and to be in solidarity with other movements. She has also been involved in writing articles for the Badger Herald, a student newspaper on campus, and has been working on more articles that focus on Asian issues. After college, Nicole wants to write for a newspaper and report on issues in the APIA community as well as the community of color. She would also love to network and be involved with people who are leading the movement on addressing change within the APIA community. She also wants to improve her Cantonese and live in Hong Kong sometime in her life. An interesting fact about Nicole is that she has visited about half of the Seven Wonders of the World, and plans on going to the others in the future.

# MEET THE 2016-2017 EXECUTIVE COORDINATORS



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Journalism & Political Science

**DAPHNE YU**



Secretary

University of Wisconsin-Madison '18

Art History & Political Science

**HOYON MEPHREE**



Advocacy Co-chair

Kalamazoo College '17

Psychology

**SAKADA PHAL**



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Art

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Fundraising Chair

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French language & culture

**AMY LIU**



Membership Outreach Co-chair

University of Minnesota Duluth '18

Computer Information Systems

**JEFF YANG**



Membership Outreach Co-chair

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Computer Science

**DANIEL DOYLE**



Public Relations Chair

University of Missouri '18

Journalism

**JESSICA LIU**



Programming Chair

University of Minnesota Duluth '17

Electrical Engineering

**THOMAS THAO**



Technical Networking Chair

Central Michigan University '18

Thesis in Interpersonal & Intercultural Communication Arts

**TIFFANY NGUYEN**

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# MAASU

Midwest Asian American Students Union