

From the Board Chair



In less than a decade, ASIANetwork membership has grown four-fold. As one who came to the consortium after its inception, I owe a great deal to ASIANetwork's founding women and men for their efforts on its behalf, but even more for the ideas that have shaped it. Their primary insight was to recognize the unique educational niche shared by the small, liberal arts colleges at which many of us teach. ASIANetwork has striven to mirror these institutions' undeniable strengths: a deep commitment to teaching and learning, a collegial and personalized atmosphere, and recognition that intellectual capital is our greatest asset. The constraints are also distressingly common—limited resources (of all kinds), small size, difficulties in setting up programs, and a sense of isolation, especially for faculty in small programs. ASIANetwork has grown precisely because it addressed these particular needs, by sharing existing resources and by using our collective strength to accomplish things beyond any individual's capacity.

RESOURCES

These resources have come in many different forms. Faculty exchanges with various Asian colleges have been facilitated through long-standing connections with The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. Other important resources for faculty development have come through the annual conference and our thrice-yearly *ASIANetwork Exchange*, which have both made it possible for us to talk to and learn from each other in a gradual and natural way.

Yet the most dramatic results have clearly come through the more than \$2.5 million in grants awarded by the Luce, Ford, Japan, and Freeman Foundations. These grants have funded faculty development, consultancies aimed to

enrich members' Asian studies programs, faculty-student research, ASIANetwork's website (www.asianetwork.org), and our just-published book, *Asia in the Undergraduate Curriculum: A Case for Asian Studies in Liberal Arts Education*, whose chapters provide not only a theoretical justification for Asian studies, but a "road map" for implementing them in the liberal arts context.

OPPORTUNITIES

I am delighted to report that the Freeman Foundation has renewed its initial million dollar grant for both the Faculty-Student Research program (which will run through the summer of 2003), and for the College in Asia Summer Institute. The latter program, which aims to help ASIANetwork institutions create on-site programs in Asia, will run in the summers of 2002-03. The Freeman Foundation has doubled its commitment to the former program by committing funds to enable forty students and faculty to do research in Asia during the summer of 2001, rather than the twenty in previous years. Faculty can now take groups of up to five students for both collaborative or individual undergraduate research projects, and proposals involving multiple students are especially encouraged.

Another underutilized resource has been the Asian Studies consultancies to member institutions, which aim to assess the state of Asia-related programs at these institutions, and to recommend ways to enhance and improve such programs. The seed money for the original consultancies came through a grant from the Luce Foundation, but ASIANetwork has continued to arrange for such consultancies even after the original grant money was exhausted. Please plan to take advantage of these marvelous opportunities that membership brings.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in ASIANetwork is primarily by institution. The most recent business meeting saw the approval of new categories for institutional membership: Regular, Associate, and Affiliate. Regular members are institutions who define their primary mission as providing an undergraduate liberal arts education. Associate Members are institutions for whom providing an undergraduate liberal arts education is one of their institutional missions. Affiliate Members are organizations (foundations, publishing houses, etc.) or individuals with an interest in undergraduate liberal arts education. Associate Members are eligible for all the benefits open to Regular members, including board service and grants administered by ASIANetwork, but when competing applications are of equal merit, preference will be given to Regular members. Affiliate membership confers all the benefits open to other members, except that they are not eligible: 1) to apply for fellowships or grants administered by ASIANetwork; and 2) nominate or elect candidates to serve as officers of the organization.

ASIANetwork's members support the organization not only with their time and talent, but also through their membership dues, which provide a significant portion of the consortium's operating revenue. This will be the last year that dues invoice cards will be sent to every member on the mailing list, a practice that has sometimes generated multiple dues payments from a single institution (including one from me last year!). We are now requesting that each institution designate a "point person" who will be responsible for arranging dues payments, as well as a "backup" contact (for cases in which the designated person is on leave, out of the country, or otherwise unable to respond). We hope that this innovation will help make ASIANetwork operations more efficient, and appreciate your cooperation in implementing this.

2001 CONFERENCE

The annual conference will be held on April 20-22 at the Marriott East in Cleveland, Ohio. Our local host is John Carroll University, at which we will enjoy an evening reception and banquet on Saturday, April 21. On Saturday afternoon the conference setting will shift downtown to the Cleveland Museum of Art, where participants will have the opportunity to attend panels, and also to enjoy the Museum's marvelous collection of Asian art. The conference registration fee will cover almost all of the conference meals (since it is here that some of the most productive conversations transpire), as well as the local transportation for Saturday's excursions. In keeping with recent tradition, there will be a pre-conference field trip on Friday, April 20 to sites connected with the Asian communities in Cleveland. You can sign up for this when you receive your conference registration card early next year; a conference registration form will also be available on the ASIANetwork web page (www.asianetwork.org).

LIFE AND ELDER, KEYNOTE SPEAKERS IN 2001

In a conference in which attention to the arts will have a prominent place, it is fitting that both keynote speakers have done significant work in film. Reggie Life is an African-American filmmaker whose experiences in Japan have led to three critically acclaimed films (*Struggle and Success*, *Doubles*, and *After America . . . After Japan*), all of which explore issues of culture, identity, and "otherness."

Dr. Joseph Elder is Professor of the Departments of Sociology, Languages and Cultures of Asia, and Integrated Liberal Studies in the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Under his direction, the South Asia center at the UW-Madison has produced stellar ethnographic films, and his current research interests include gender, culture, and religious identity in modern India.

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

ASIANetwork invites its members and friends to make individual contributions to the consortium. Your contribution, which is fully tax-deductible, will help to ensure that our collected vision and educational mission stay strong. Such contributions may either be sent directly to the Executive Director, Dr. Van Symons of Augustana College, or enclosed with your registration form for the annual conference.

In its short life ASIANetwork has accomplished a great deal, but these accomplishments have come only through the efforts and talents of all its members. We need your continued commitment, we look forward to seeing you at next spring's conference, and we invite your advice and suggestions in traveling the road ahead.

Jim Lochtefeld

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ASIANetwork website recently?
Check it out for the most
recent information on
ASIANetwork programs!
www.asianetwork.org