

## *From the Executive Director*



This past summer marked the completion of a highly successful Faculty Curricular Development on Asia for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program, funded by a beneficent grant from the Ford Foundation, and run by ASIANetwork. Consequently, I wish to use this opportunity to thank the Ford Foundation for making this program possible, and to express the gratitude of the ASIANetwork board and ASIANetwork members to all those who contributed to the success of this program. Toby Volkman was the program officer and contact person for the Ford Foundation. Greg Guldin, of Pacific Lutheran University, conscientiously acted as ASIANetwork's grant program director for the four-year life of the grant. In addition, we wish to thank the administrations of Earlham, St. Olaf, Kenyon, and Davidson Colleges, who hosted seminar participants during the first summer of their programs. These colleges were selected as host sites because of the strong programs they have developed in Japanese, Chinese, Southeast Asian, and South Asian studies respectively. Program directors were: Steve Nussbaum, Richard Bodman, Rita Kipp, ably assisted by Leedom Lefferts of Drew University, and Job Thomas. The directors often made full use of other Asianists at their campuses, who also contributed to the success of each program. Other scholars were also invited to participate in the first summer's workshops, and were of special assistance as the groups travelled through Asia during their second summer together.

These directors planned and conducted an intensive first summer experience geared to introducing faculty participants to a country or region of Asia, and during the second summer took them to Asia for a first-hand experience. From the beginning, seminar participants were expected to

utilize this knowledge to develop new Asian-focussed courses to be added to their college curricula.

The impact of this formula often proved dramatic. For example, at Augustana College, a biologist who completed Richard Bodman's China seminar, after auditing Chinese language courses taught at the college, enrolled last summer in an intensive Chinese language program at The University of Iowa. He is now teaching a course in traditional Chinese medicine along with his standard courses in cell biology and human physiology. Recently, I received an unsolicited letter from a participant in Professor Thomas's South Asian seminar. He wrote, "In sum, participating in the Seminar has been a highlight of my twenty-five year academic career. What I learned will dramatically affect virtually every course I teach . . . . I have already had a number of conversations with Westminster colleagues about the Seminar and begun to promote giving attention to South Asia across the curriculum."

Several past participants have written to express thanks to ASIANetwork, to seminar directors and host colleges, and to the Ford Foundation for supporting this program. Many have encouraged ASIANetwork to seek further funding for similar faculty enrichment endeavors, as effectively expressed in yet another letter I just received. "Besides expressing my appreciation to ASIANetwork for this imaginative and invaluable program, I want to advocate efforts to further develop this model as a means of providing more breadth and depth to the global curriculum at liberal arts colleges. At remarkably low cost, the seminars offer a means for colleges to initiate or strengthen course offerings on the targeted regions, and provide a campus presence for those regions through participating faculty."

If you recall, in the Winter issue of the *ASIANetwork Exchange* I ask that members write to or talk with board members about effective ways you feel ASIANetwork can help strengthen the study of Asia on our campuses. It seems that we have found one. With the help of the good folks mentioned above and Ford Foundation financial support, ASIANetwork has successfully enriched the lives of thirty-nine seminar participants, who are now prepared to introduce innovative courses focussed upon Asia into their college's curricula.

*Van Symons*