

## *From the Executive Director*



I just returned from a weekend in Chicago working with four ASIANetwork colleagues to select the summer 2002 Student-Faculty Fellows. As was the case last year, the pool of applicants was much larger and stronger than was anticipated when the grant proposal was submitted to the Freeman Foundation two years ago and, once again, the foundation has allocated an additional \$126,000 to enable 20 persons beyond the 40 funded in the original proposal to conduct undergraduate research in Asia. We are immensely grateful to the Freemans for their generosity.

This year's proposals are outstanding and affirm the high level of scholarship and mentoring available at small liberal arts colleges. From an applicant pool of 29 teams, twelve have been selected to travel to Asia. Half of these faculty-led programs selected for funding this year come from ASIANetwork colleges who have not previously received a Student-Faculty Fellows grant. The range of research that will be conducted during the summer 2002 program is impressive and will enable students to explore themes as diverse as "The Social and Cultural History of Music Education in Japan," the "Tobacco Regime in Taiwan," and "Tradition and Change along the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands."

I found two study proposals focussed on Han dynastic dance and *kunchu* Chinese theater especially intriguing. The first, to be conducted by Professor Yunyu Wang, involves students from the dance major program at Colorado College in the study of Han paintings archived at Sichuan University and traditional folk dance in the Sichuan region to analyze Han dance forms. All of the students have already studied Chinese dance forms with Professor Wang

and faculty visiting Colorado College from China. All are currently enrolled in Chinese language classes to prepare for next summer's experience. When they return they will join Professor Wang in conducting workshops on Chinese dance at Colorado College and in the Colorado Springs area.

The second group of students, from Whitman College, will travel to Beijing with Dr. Shu-chu Wei, their Chinese language and literature professor, who is a specialist in Chinese drama. While in China they will study *kunchu* production and performance techniques with members of the Beijing Institute of Kunchu. When they return to their campus this fall they are planning to produce a short adaptation, written by a student participant, of the classic Chinese drama, *The Peach Blossom Fan*. The student research team is perfectly configured to undertake this project. In addition to the writer/actor who will study *kunchu* dramaturgy and stage movements, the group includes a young man who has directed a number of plays for the stage at Whitman College, a young woman quite conversant in Chinese who will study stage costumes and be the costume designer for the production, and a flutist who will study the music of *kunchu* and integrate it into the production.

In a grant proposal ASIANetwork is currently working on, Paul Watt, a new member of the board of directors, boldly states that "ASIANetwork's two fundamental principles are a deep loyalty to the liberal arts, and a staunch commitment to promoting the study of Asia in undergraduate education." At the end of next summer, ASIANetwork, with the generous support of the Freeman Foundation, will have enabled 181 Student-Faculty Fellows to study in Asia. Summaries of these projects are all listed on our website at [www.asianetwork.org](http://www.asianetwork.org). As one reads them, one cannot help but reflect upon the impact of this program on the student and faculty participants and upon their home campuses as they return to introduce others to Chinese dance and drama or other wonderful discoveries from their Asian experiences.

The Student-Faculty Fellows Program, like many others developed and sustained by our consortium, clearly sustains the fundamental principles of ASIANetwork. It has become a benchmark for the development of undergraduate research in Asia. We remain indebted to the Freemans for their beneficence; to Teddy Amoloza at Illinois Wesleyan University and Madeline Chu at Kalamazoo College for their careful management of the program; and to 43 faculty mentors who have led 76 undergraduate liberal arts students to conduct research in Asia, and to the 12 mentors who will lead an additional 60 students to Asia this coming summer.

*Van Symons*