

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Luce Fund For Asian Studies Helena Kolenda and Terry Lautz (Luce Foundation)

In June 2002, the Luce Foundation concluded the Luce Fund for Asian Studies, a four-year \$12 million initiative to strengthen undergraduate study of Asia. The initiative supported creation of permanent new assistant professorships at selective American liberal arts colleges to foster the study of East and Southeast Asia and reinforce liberal arts education. Thirty-eight grants were awarded over four years through annual competitions. In making its final selection, we were guided by the recommendations of a panel of advisors, distinguished scholars familiar with Asia and liberal arts colleges.

Inspiration for the Luce Fund for Asian Studies can be attributed in large measure to ASIANetwork. Our grants to ASIANetwork and ongoing discussions with members of its board confirmed for the foundation that study of Asia was no longer limited to specialized graduate training programs and that Asian studies at the undergraduate level had become an important frontier.

The response to the initiative was highly encouraging. Of the approximately 165 liberal arts colleges invited to participate in the competition, over half responded with expressions of interest. Each year, on the basis of preliminary applications, we solicited proposals from twenty institutions with existing Asian studies programs who demonstrated a significant commitment to and long-range strategy for Asian studies. Awards were based on the quality, creativity and promise of each proposal.

Each grant is supporting salary and benefits for a new professor over a four-year period and a program fund of \$10,000 per year for Asia-related activities such as visiting lectureships, student internships, library acquisitions, and student-faculty research. Funding is provided on the condition that the institution will continue to support the position after our grant has expired.

Over the life of the program, grants were made to colleges and universities in sixteen states representing all geographic regions of the country (see list). The awards are supporting both mature and young Asian studies programs, professorships in core disciplines, and positions reflecting new needs in the field and new directions in scholarship. The strongest demands were for teachers of language and literature and social scientists. There were also a large number of requests for specialists in art history and visual culture. Most colleges sought expertise on China (the majority) or Japan, but several created positions focusing on Korea or Southeast Asia.

To date, thirty of the thirty-eight positions have been filled. We have been extremely impressed with the quality of the appointees, whose resumes exhibit depth of area

knowledge and breadth in disciplinary and research interests. For example, Dr. Ann Frechette, a Hamilton College alumna, has returned to her alma mater's Department of Anthropology. Her research on the Tibetan diaspora in Nepal fits nicely with Hamilton's desire to add expertise on Chinese ethnicity and social mobility. Bates College hired Dr. Trian Nguyen to teach Asian art history. With training in theology as well as art history, his courses have examined Buddhist visual worlds and the monuments of Southeast Asia, and explored Asian art in relation to the region's religions, cultures, and social and political histories.

Now that the Luce Fund for Asian Studies has come to an end, the Luce Foundation must look to the future. We continue to be interested in projects that create national-level resources for teaching undergraduate Asian studies. Recent site visits have enabled us to begin conversation about interests, ongoing needs and gaps that might shape a future competitive program for requests from individual institutions. Some faculty members have recommended encouragement of a more comparative approach to teaching, moving beyond a traditional area studies focus on individual countries to examine connections (both historical and contemporary) between, for example, China and India or Japan and Korea.

Another idea would bring Asia specialists and non-specialists together around specific issues and themes. Many students and scholars from "non-Asia" disciplines or applied fields of study have become interested in Asia but lack the cultural and linguistic background for teaching and research programs. An initiative could fund collaborative interdisciplinary and interdepartmental projects. One goal would be to infuse the study of Asia across the curriculum.

A third possibility would focus on spanning the gap between Asian studies and Asian diaspora studies. These two fields are rarely connected but, as the grants to Bowdoin College and Hampshire College in the final round of the Luce Fund attest, there is growing realization that knowledge about migration and migrants from Asia is critical to a broader understanding of Asia itself. Increased immigration to the United States—not to mention the growing influence of Asian religions, philosophy, literature, food, and popular culture in America—suggests that important intellectual bridges can be constructed between the study of Asians in Asia and the study of Asians in North America and other parts of the world.

Before proceeding further, it will be important to evaluate the impact on the field of the Luce Foundation's efforts and the recent Freeman Foundation initiative. In this process, we look forward to continuing the conversation with our ASIANetwork colleagues.

LUCE FUND FOR ASIAN STUDIES

2002 Grants

Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME
Asian Diasporic Studies

Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA
East Asian History (Korea)

Hampshire College, Amherst, MA
History of Global Migrations (Asia)

Sewanee, The University of the South, Sewanee, TN
Language and Literature (China)

Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY
Political Economy (East Asia)

Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
Comparative Work and Family (Korea or Southeast Asia)

Wittenberg University, Springfield, OH
Language and Cultural Studies (China)

2001 Grants

Beloit College, Beloit, WI
Language and Literature (China)

Colgate University, Hamilton, NY
Language and Culture (China)

Gettysburg Colleges, Gettysburg, PA
Language and Culture (Japan)

Kenyon College, Gambier, OH
Music and Culture (Asia)

Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA
Politics and Political Economy (China)

Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX
Politics (East Asia)

St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN
Visual Culture (East Asia)

University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA
Islamic Societies (Southeast Asia)

Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT
Political Economy (East Asia)

Willamette University, Salem, OR
Language and Culture (China)

2000 Grants

Carleton College, Northfield, MN
Language and Literature (China)

Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA
Language and Culture (China)

Hobart & William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY
Art History (East Asia)

Lawrence University, Appleton, WI
Political Economy (East/Southeast Asia)

Lewis & Clark College, Portland, OR
Social Science (China)

Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT
Int'l Studies/Political Science (Japan)

Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA
Intellectual/Cultural History (Japan/Korea)

Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY
Human/Cultural Geography (East Asia)

Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
Anthropology (East Asia)

Williams College, Williamstown, MA
Economics (East Asia)

1999 Grants

Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
Language and Literature (Japan)

Bates College, Lewiston, ME
Art History (Asia)

College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA
Balinese Dance, Theatre and Music

Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO
Art History (Asia)

Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, FL
Language and Literature (China)

Hamilton College, Clinton, NY
Anthropology (China)

Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH
Anthropology (Northeast Asia)

Reed College, Portland, OR
Anthropology (China)

Smith College, Northampton, MA
Anthropology (East Asia)

Union College, Schenectady, NY
Language and Literature (China)

Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA
Art History (Asia)