

NETWORK NEWS

From the Board Chair

ASIANetwork Strategic Planning Process



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As many of you already know, the strategic planning process for ASIANetwork began with an informal meeting of past chairs at the Freeman Asian Symposium in Honolulu, Hawaii, in November, 2005. This meeting was initiated by Board action at its October, 2005, meeting, authorizing Richard Bohr and Phyllis Larson to begin planning discussions and exploring the hiring of an outside consultant to assist us in the process.

When Richard and I started our work, we leaned heavily on the work of Suzanne Barnett and others who in August, 2002, had submitted a report entitled "ASIANetwork Administrative Structure." The report spoke of the consensus that ASIANetwork had established itself as a "vital resource" for undergraduate institutions and that there was widespread satisfaction with the corporate collegiate model. The rest of the report devoted itself to a consideration of the ways in which the administrative burdens for an essentially volunteer organization could be reduced. The careful thinking of that Ad Hoc Committee has informed our planning in this phase.

Last Year's Strides

At the April 2006 meeting of the ASIANetwork Executive Committee with the Council of Advisors held during the AAS Conference in San Francisco, we were encouraged to create a "brag sheet" about ASIANetwork that could be used with donors and the general public; we also discussed ways of increasing faculty development opportunities and increasing the endowment. Joan O'Mara led a discussion, also at AAS, between the Executive Committee and the Past Chairs' Advisory Council (PCAC). Topics discussed there were: mentoring new leadership for ASIANetwork; raising AN's

visibility; sustaining the administrative structure of the organization; and systematically approaching various national foundations.

PCAC met again in April, 2006, the day before the annual conference of AN at Lisle, Chicago, to continue discussion of previous topics and to think together about where ASIANetwork would be as an organization in 10 years. At the Board meeting convened before the annual conference, a strategic planning subcommittee was formed: Richard Bohr, Teddy Amoloza, Phyllis Larson, Erin McCarthy, Mary-Ann Milford, Don Clark, and one member of the Development Team, Cathy Benton. Richard Bohr and I were authorized by the Board to explore what AN could achieve for planning with the help of a consultant experienced in guiding non-profit organizations.

We worked over the summer, talking with numerous people in grants and advancement offices, developed a short list of names from recommendations, and decided to meet with one highly recommended consultant, Terri Barreiro, to see what she would be able to offer us and what her services would cost AN. Terri came with 25 years experience in the nonprofit sector, five years in philanthropy, and two years as an academic center director. Her expertise is in the areas of organizational development, transition planning, strategic planning, and volunteer and Board management.

Richard and I reported on our meeting with her to the subcommittee, who decided to invite her to lead the full Board in a strategic planning process during a full-day meeting on Saturday of the Board meeting weekend. In order to make time for this, Board members arrived in time to begin regular Board business on Friday afternoon and evening, interrupted it for the all-day strategic planning process until 3:30 pm on

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Saturday, and returned to regular business Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

In addition to authorizing further strategic planning, the Board approved the expenditure of funds to survey the membership so that we would have firm data regarding the state of Asian Studies on our member campuses, as well as information from the membership about needs. We hoped to develop, administer, and analyze the survey by the middle of January. We are grateful for the response we received. Our Executive Director, Teddy Amoloza, oversaw this part of the process. The survey would not have been completed without Teddy's competent, efficient leadership.

Recent Developments

The Board's work in September was so productive that we decided to reconvene the strategic planning subcommittee for a weekend meeting in January, 2007, to draft a strategic plan for the next 3-5 years for ASIANetwork. We again hired Terri Barreiro to work with us for one hour on Friday evening, January 26, to set up the work for the next two days; Terri then

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With Professor Thanh's assistance, we were also able to arrange for the gifting and shipping of approximately 100 new and used reference, text, and other relevant books to VNU's University of Social Sciences and Humanities.

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As part of the exchange program, Professor Nguyen will also host Professor Carlo Bonura, a member of Puget Sound's Department of Political Science and Asian Studies Program. Already on research sabbatical in Thailand, Professor Bonura will travel from Bangkok to Hanoi in January 2007 for a one-month stay. During this month in Vietnam, Professor Bonura will explore the structure of political science as a discipline in Vietnam. The establishment of a communist academy after Vietnamese independence and its expansion to southern Vietnam after 1975 has required what would be recognized as political science in the United States not only to include the general study of politics but also to provide courses in "political studies" that are based on the primary texts of communist political theory. In conversations with Vietnamese academics in political science and philosophy, he hopes to investigate this double role of political science.

Nguyen Quy Thanh: My trip to the University of Puget Sound (UPS), Tacoma, Washington was my second trip to the US.

I was in sunny Hawaii in 2004 and this time I had a chance to experience the cold and windy weather in the Northwest part of US. I arrived in Tacoma in the middle of winter but the hospitality of the professors at UPS, especially of my host, Professor Karl Fields, made me feel "warmer" and lesser nostalgic.

During my stay at UPS, Professor Karl Fields had connected me to many professors. Since, I am interested in syllabus design, method of teaching, and method of learning, I was eager to attend different classes. In those classes I have learned a lot about the way UPS professor facilitate the class and the way students study. It is very useful for me since we are now in the process of renovation of our methods of teaching/learning. I also discussed curriculum development and syllabus design with UPS professors.

At UPS, I wanted to not only be a passive observer, thus I actively participated in many activities such as Lunar New Year celebration, presentations of invited speaker; I also delivered campus lecture and some other lectures on Vietnam related topic.

The exchange program afforded me the much needed time to finish my book projects. I put the finishing touches on my book, *Sociology of Public Opinion* which was published last January 2007 in Vietnam. By the end of my trip, I had also completed the draft of my second book on *Impact of the Internet on Student's Way of Life*. I am now doing the last round of editing and I am seeking fund for its publication.

While at UPS, I also continued with my research. I worked on my data set that I collected in Vietnam before the trip. As a result, one paper was sent out and published

in a leading sociological review in Vietnam, and one chapter written jointly with Dr. Stephen Appold, University of North Carolina on "Micro-Credit for Small Businesses in Vietnam" will appear in a book published by Rutledge Publishing House in the near future.

I consider this trip as a good chance to understand American culture and society, therefore I used all opportunities to visit, travel and to observe. In short, my trip was very productive and successful.

After I came back to Vietnam in June 2006, I immediately participated in teaching and researching activities at our university. We have been very busy, but at the same time very happy with our work. Recently, I was promoted as the deputy Director of the Center for Education Quality Assurance and Research Development of Vietnam National University-Hanoi, and as the Head of the Department of Theory and Methodology of Sociology under the Faculty of Sociology. These administrative duties make me busier, but, I see these as good ways for me to contribute to the development of our university in particular and our country in general.

From 11 January to 11 February 2007, I was very happy to host Professor Carlo Bonura, from UPS. We organized a number of activities for him. He met, discussed and interviewed with many professors at our university. He also visited some famous places in Vietnam such as Halong Bay, Aromat Pagoda (Hatay province), Hue city, Danang city including visits to old Hoi An town and My Son holy land in Quang Nam province. Although his trip was pretty short, it was very productive and successful as mine.

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worked with us for four hours on Saturday morning. The subcommittee worked the rest of the weekend until noon on Sunday, refining the five or six goals we had identified, fleshing out the strategies we would use to achieve them, and determining what we would challenge ourselves to accomplish specifically in the next year. The subcommittee will polish this document in the next few weeks and distribute it among the Board members. If it receives Board approval at its April meeting, it will then be presented to the membership at the Sunday plenary session right after the business meeting at the Annual conference.

We believe this strategic planning comes at an excellent time in ASIANetwork's history. Fifteen years since its inception, it has developed an enviable reputation among funders and undergraduate institutions for offering innovative development programs that are administered in a very lean, efficient way. It has achieved a financial stability that was only hoped for in the early years. It has enjoyed consistent, dedicated leadership. It has maintained a solid core of energetic, gifted volunteers.

We can build on this tremendous foundation and do more. We no longer are focused on merely surviving; we can take the lead. But it is important that we reaffirm our mission, sharpen the vision it inspires, and choose our projects and activities carefully so that we serve our members effectively and continue to thrive.