**Introduction**

Despite high demand for Asian American-specific classes, students do not have the option of taking such classes. The goal of this project is to work directly with faculty whose research falls in the field of Asian American Studies (“Asian Americanists”) to put forward more Asian American-specific classes for the 2019-2020 academic year and to develop new course offerings.

This project resulted in an Asian American Studies Townhall with four professors (Grace Kao, Mary Lui, Gary Okihiro, and Sunny Xiang) at the Asian American Cultural Center (AACC) on December 4, 2018, which garnered overwhelming support, with 60-80 students in attendance. The purpose of the town hall was to raise student awareness of the project, as well as to aggregate student opinions on what classes they would like to see taught. After the town hall, Gary Okihiro suggested creating a faculty-student working group that meets periodically to develop new curriculum and sustain the conversation from this town hall. This group (two undergraduates and a graduate student) will begin meeting with Professor Okihiro in the spring semester to develop curriculum for a proposed class titled "Introduction to Asian American Studies."

*PowerPoint from the event here, YDN article on the event here.*

**Background**

In Fall 2018, the only Asian American studies class available was “HIST 183: Asian American History, 1800 to Present.” This large introductory lecture class, offered only once every two years by Mary Lui, has grown steadily in size in recent years, creating a crop of students who are unable to pursue further learning in Asian American studies after taking the course.

Yale as an institution is unique in that it has its largest group of “Asian Americanists” to date, including faculty such as Mary Lui, Grace Kao, Daniel Martinez HoSang, Sunny Xiang, Lisa Lowe, Inderpal Grewal, and Quan Tran. Additionally, at least five of these professors are tenured, meaning that the classes they offer (or any program built on those classes) have the potential to last long-term. Similar attempts at Asian American Studies programs at peer institutions have failed partially due to classes being taught by untenured lecturers and ending after the lecturers moved to other institutions.

Meetings with faculty have revealed that it is also relatively easy to change course offerings: as long as a faculty member is willing to teach a new course, and students' wants align with the faculty member’s field of research, a new course can be offered. Faculty simply need to tell Yale College in the early spring what they want to teach next calendar year.

The goal of this project is to:

- Increase Asian American-specific course offerings for the 2019-2020 school year
- Increase awareness of classes already offered in the 2019-2020 school year that are either Asian American-specific or cover Asian American issues within their broader topic of study
Increase awareness/ease for students wanting to major in ER&M and declare their ER&M concentration as “Asian American Studies"
  ○ It takes six classes and a methods course to declare an ER&M concentration
  ○ Asian American Studies has been declared as a concentration before and is currently possible, but is difficult given the low number of Asian American-specific courses
  ○ Right now, reaching the six classes mark is not easy and typically is justified through classes taught by “Asian Americanists” rather than Asian American-specific courses
  ○ Few students are aware that this can be done, but some have expressed willingness to do so if they were aware of the option

Peer Institutions
  ● Princeton: offers Asian American certificate program, equivalent of a minor
  ● UPenn: offers Asian American Studies minor
  ● Dartmouth: currently developing an Asian American Studies minor under its Asian Studies program
  ● Cornell: offers Asian American Studies minor
  ● Brown: offers Ethnic Studies major with Asian American focus and American Studies with an Asian American focus
  ● Stanford: offers Asian American Studies as both a major and minor
  ● MIT: offers Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies Concentration, equivalent of Yale’s Multidisciplinary Academic Program

In summary, 5 out of 8 of Ivy League institutions (with the exceptions of Yale, Harvard, and Columbia) offer some form of an official academic program for Asian American Studies (minor, certificate program, concentration, or focus), implying sufficient Asian American-specific classes and curriculum to allow for students to achieve some form of certification. Half of Ivy League institutions allow students to minor in Asian American Studies, while Stanford (as an Ivy+) institution offers an Asian American Studies major.

Data Analysis
In a 2018 YCC Fall Survey question with 2,353 responses, 42.1% of respondents said that yes, they would take classes in an Asian American Studies department.

15.6% of respondents (368 students) said that they were “somewhat likely” or “very likely” to major or double major in Asian American Studies, if possible. 118 students responded “very likely.”

This data reveals two important details. The first is that almost half of respondents, even ones who would not major in Asian American Studies, would like to take more Asian American-specific classes. The second is that, even only considering those who answered that they were “very likely”
to major or double major in Asian American Studies, there seems to be enough demand to constitute a program, MAP, or minor in the long-term. This project has a dual focus: (1) a short-term goal of increasing Asian American-specific classes in the next calendar year and sustaining those offerings, as well as (2) long-term goals such as minors or a potential program. Long-term discussions, however, would need to occur in tandem with the ER&M department and the Yale community at-large.

**Recommendations (based on “Challenges” section below)**

1. Grant ER&M hiring power or create a guaranteed number of hiring partnerships between ER&M and American Studies or History (to increase the number of faculty of color in tenured-track positions, which is the basis for being able to easily increase course offerings like these)
   a. Having tenured faculty whose research falls in the realm of Asian American/ethnic studies (most of whom are of color) is the only reason the Asian American Studies project was able to quickly respond to student demand.
   b. Students overwhelmingly support having more professors of color, as reflected in YCC Fall Survey data below.
2. Increase the number of faculty of color in tenured-track positions to help with retention
3. Increase hiring of faculty of color at-large, but also specifically for gaps in ethnic studies curriculum to continue building the possibility for Asian American Studies as an area of study (or concentration under ER&M) and creating a foundation for Latinx American Studies and Native American Studies (or concentration under ER&M)
Progress

- Met with Dean Yee, Director of Asian American Cultural Center
- Met with Alicia Schmidt Camacho, Chair of ER&M
- Met with Mary Lui, Professor of History and American Studies (teaches “Asian American History 1800-Present” every 2 years)
- Met with Daniel Martinez HoSang, Associate Professor of American Studies and ER&M (has offered to teach Contemporary Asian American Issues in the 2019-2020 school year)
- Met with Quan Tran, Lecturer in ER&M
- Organized successful Asian American Studies Townhall on 12/4 at the AACC with Gary Okihiro, Sunny Xiang, Mary Lui, and Grace Kao (more information in “Introduction”)

Challenges

- Lack of hiring power on the part of ER&M and their need to rely on History or American Studies partnerships.
- Many Asian Americanists (and ER&M professors in general) tend to also have large burdens as administrators (Chairs, HOCs, etc.) that prevent them from being able to teach as many classes as other professors.
- Social science/humanities departments (such as Sociology) tend to be understaffed. Unsure if Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) targets will even be sufficient given the growing undergraduate population.

Next Steps

- Keep in touch with professors and follow through on course offerings; keep community updated on progress!
  - Meet with Mary Lui about higher-level research seminar
  - Meet with Gary Okihiro regarding working group and his proposed “Introduction to Asian American Studies” class
  - Meet with Inderpal Grewal about re-teaching “Gender and Culture in South Asian America” or another South Asian course
○ Meet with Daniel Martinez HoSang on potentially offering “Contemporary Asian American Issues” course, whether that will be a seminar or a lecture
○ Meet with Quan Tran regarding re-teaching “Asian Diasporas since 1800” or a class on Vietnamese American migrations
● Create faculty-student working group, begin monthly meetings in February of Spring 2019
● Publicize both current/newly developed course offerings through cultural centers and push for student attendance beginning in Spring 2019
○ I will personally compile the list in conjunction with the professors involved with this project and have an infographic ready before the first day of shopping period
○ Criterion for course inclusion is either an explicit Asian American focus or an ethnic studies course with at least a unit focused on Asian Americans
● Evaluate success of courses through next calendar year to decide the next steps and future direction of this project

Conclusion
The core findings of this project are that there is significant interest in Asian American-specific courses and a clear demand from students for more faculty of color. The creation of additional courses for the next calendar year is an imminent possibility and can be done directly through faculty. However, that would be impossible if it were not for the 6+ faculty that consider themselves “Asian Americanists.”

In the short term, this project aims to act upon several deliverables. Starting in Spring 2019, an infographic will be compiled before each shopping period, publicizing Asian American-related courses and publicized through the YCC. A faculty-student working group led by Gary Okihiro will begin meeting in Spring 2019 to develop curriculum for “Introduction to Asian American Studies.”

The administration should continue to hire faculty of color at-large, which will also aid the specific purpose of filling gaps in ethnic studies curriculum. Ensuring that faculty of color are retained through tenure-track positions would also be greatly helpful, not only to this project but also to other potential development avenues of ER&M/ethnic studies. This problem could potentially be alleviated by granting ER&M hiring power or by ensuring a guaranteed number of hiring partnerships between ER&M and American Studies or History. Per Professor Camacho, the current Chair of ER&M, ER&M does not want to become a department so that they can continue focusing on undergraduates. Departmental status would mean that they would have to also issue graduate degrees and expand to a graduate student population as well.

This project and the townhall that followed demonstrated that the increasingly diverse undergraduate population has a strong desire to connect with and learn about their history. Considering that high school curriculums often erase the history of groups of color, Yale has a unique ability to fill those gaps in learning, putting forward a more socially-conscious group of graduates.