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Thank you so much for taking the time to read and appreciate this PASS publication! This newsletter represents our community’s ongoing desire to facilitate connections between students, faculty, and the department. This publication will also encourage our growth.

In this publication, you will find news, helpful information, discourse, opinions, and stories shared by your peers. Produced completely by students, this newsletter is your platform, so seize this opportunity to get to know your department and learn how important your voice is to the greater Pacific and Asian Studies community.

Publication of this newsletter is made possible by financial support from the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies and the Associate Dean Research of Humanities, in support of student participation in community discourse. Many thanks to the students and faculty who gave their time to the completion and content of this newsletter. It was a pleasure to work with you.
I grew up in Tokyo and had never left Japan until I came to Canada in late 80's. I was an exchange student and went to a high school in the middle of nowhere in Southern Alberta, faced with the need to use English to explain Japanese culture, history, and language. I learned not only the medium (English) but also the content (Japanese). But, most importantly, I was fascinated with how challenging but rewarding it is to examine and explain what I think I knew implicitly. It was then I knew what I wanted to do when I grew up.

After graduating from a college in Tokyo, I worked as a "salary-man" for a Japanese learners inferences the meaning of Japanese as a foreign language across five different institutions ranging from Large State University, to an Ivy School. I am very excited to have finally come back to Canada to join Pacific and Asian Studies at UVic and exploring the key linguistics, and multi-cultural island has with the beauty and quirkiness of the language.

In the Japanese language, the word university is written as "大学" (daikaku). These characters indicate that the university is a place "to learn in a large way." These ideas are equally important. I look forward to meeting my students at UVic and exploring the world through interaction with the students in the classroom.

Hello, everyone! My official name, in Chinese, is Pin-Yun Wang (王品韵), but here I am also known by my English name, Ben. I am originally from Taipei, Taiwan. Before relocating to Victoria this summer, I had lived in Pennsylvania for 8 years. I am therefore very excited to move here and enjoy warmer weather in the winter as well as fresh seafood!

At UVic, I am mainly responsible for teaching Chinese language courses for non-native speakers. In these courses, I aim to not only enhance the learners' communicative competence in Mandarin Chinese, but to inspire them to appreciate the beauty and quirkiness of the language as a window to Chinese culture in general. Witnessing my students' growth in language proficiency and in cross-cultural awareness is among the best parts of my job.

You may also see me offering courses about some socio-cultural and linguistic issues of the contemporary Chinese-speaking world, depending on departmental needs. For example, in Spring 2020, I am offering a special-topics course in English: Global Taiwan (PAAS 395), in which students will be taken on a journey that explores—through readings, literature, film and other media—the key aspects of Taiwanese history, culture and society. Come join and participate in the discussions on the dynamic relations and interactions that this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-cultural island has with countries in Asia, North America and beyond!

In my spare time, I love to travel and enjoy bowling (with my skinny arm) very much. As a new faculty member to say I have learned more about what our PAAS students are interested in, feel free to drop by my office (CIE C210) or write me an email (benpywang@uvic.ca) when you want to have a chat about your experience and goals!
One of my favourite PAAS classes I’ve taken at UVic would be PAAS 181: Modern Japanese Culture, because it was the first class I took in the department and it really jump started my interest in Pacific and Asian Studies.”

-Hannah

My favourite PAAS course is PAAS 238 (Intensive Beginner Japanese II). Through this course, my Japanese improved a lot and my interest in the language and the culture increased. Professor Kimura was excellent at explaining complicated concepts and was very patient and helpful.

- Anna

Acquiring Japanese as a third language has always been on my dream list. Taking PAAS 238 -Intensive Beginner Japanese II allows me to put words into actions. Various practicing opportunities, such as Japanese video content and skin presentation were given in this course and highly encouraged by Kimura Sensei.

Even though it might be a fairly intensive course, understanding that learning a different language requires patients and active involvements is crucial for me as well. Overall, it was a rewarding journey and I enjoyed all the challenges and fulfillment that came along with it.

-Juno Liu

The department of Pacific and Asian Studies is made up of all kinds of courses, whether they are offered every term, every year, or very rarely. If you ever feel like a course is missing, make that opinion heard! Contact the PAAS Undergraduate Representative at uvicpass@uvic.ca to ensure that the department knows what you want.
PAAS Professors

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Events & Important Dates

September 10
PAAS BBQ Event

September 11 & 12
Club Day @ SUB

September 27
SouthEast Asia Event

October 25
Japan Event

November 29
Taiwan Event

December
Exams

January 31
Lunar New Year Event

February 28
Korean Valentine’s Day

February 29
Language Showcase Application Deadline

March 27
(Final Event) Language Showcase

Language Showcase
Submit your application by February 29 to show off the results of your tireless studying! Do a 3-5 minute speech, skit, or sing a song! Any learners of Asian languages are welcome to perform! Application forms will be available via Course Spaces or email us and we will send you one!

Monthly Culture Event
We will be hosting monthly events rather than having weekly gatherings! So come celebrate the cultures, histories, and traditions of the continent we study here in the PAAS department! More details will be posted on our facebook and Instagram page!
I like PAAS397 because it was an extremely unforgettable experience. We travelled around Japan for two weeks and experienced a lot of things that we could not learn from a book. Also we have a chance to visit places that are not really famous compare to other tourist spot which gave us a better understanding about Japan.

-Constance Wu

During my time in the PAAS397 Field School I learned a lot about effective cultural communication, I greatly improved my Japanese language abilities and I made new friends that I hope I'll stay in contact with after graduation. I learned about the local area and also how to combine a local attitude with a global vision.

My favourite memory from the trip was when we presented our findings on the final day of the trip. All of our host families, as well as city officials and the deputy mayor, came to see us. I'm sure everyone else was just as nervous as I was but everyone practiced a lot and it was satisfying to be able to articulate myself effectively in presenting our results in Japanese.

-Mason Van-Dyk

SHOMA FUJIKI
• FROM: KONAN UNIVERSITY, JAPAN

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-Mason Van-Dyk

How was your time at Uvic?

SHOMA FUJIKI
• FROM: KONAN UNIVERSITY, JAPAN

1) WHAT WAS THE BEST PART OF YOUR EXCHANGE AT UVIC?
THE BEST PART OF MY EXCHANGE IS THAT I COULD MAKE FRIENDS AND NEW CONNECTIONS WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS. I AM JAPANESE AND JAPANESE PEOPLE ARE KNOWN TO BE BASICALLY CONSISTED OF ONE ETHNIC GROUP. THEREFORE, THERE IS VERY LITTLE OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO MEET DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN JAPAN. THAT'S WHY THIS EXCHANGE WAS VALUABLE TO ME.

2) WHAT WAS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART ABOUT UVIC?
THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF MY EXCHANGE WAS TO KEEP UP WITH CLASSES. COMPARED TO MY UNIVERSITY IN JAPAN, THERE WAS MORE HOMEWORK AND PAPERS PROVIDED AT UVIC. I THINK THERE WAS 5 TIMES MORE THAN MY HOME UNIVERSITY. HAVING IN CLASS DISCUSSION WAS ALSO HARD FOR ME.

3) WHAT CAN PAAS DO TO IMPROVE THEIR FACULTY?
I'M VERY SATISFIED WITH THE CURRENT PAAS SITUATION BECAUSE THERE IS A LOT OF EVENTS THAT I COULD ENJOY LIKE SPEECH CONTEST, FOOD PARTY, AND SO ON. I THINK MANY EXCHANGE STUDENT FROM ASIA WILL ENJOY STUDYING PAAS. IT WAS ALSO VERY HELPFUL TO HAVE SIMILAR HOMEWORK AND HELP EACH OTHER.
I wanted to thank Kai for the opportunity to revisit these questions at the start of this new academic year. We initially discussed them in an interview following my arrival in the Department last year. It’s still early days. But, in my view, things are definitely moving in the right direction!

What are the unique strengths of this department?

Having taught at a number of older, more traditionally-oriented institutions, I would have to say one of the department’s unique strengths is its relative youth and potential for innovation. In the past two years alone, PAAS has appointed five new faculty members—bringing fresh and exciting ideas to the classroom. Looking ahead, we’re poised to add at least one more regular faculty member this year, and as many as two more the following year. With the addition of new voices comes a new conversation—and increased opportunity for student involvement. To be sure, this is a challenging moment for the University, and for the Humanities in particular, with budgetary and related pressures making things more difficult than we’d prefer. But here, much like the Asia-Pacific region itself, PAAS’s greatest strength will be our ability to respond creatively, and to change with the times.

Please sum up your goals for the department.

I want to see PAAS situated at the heart of the Humanities, drawing students and faculty alike into sustained engagement with the issues and ideas that link our experience at UVic with the histories, cultures and societies of the Asia-Pacific—which, of course, now extend far beyond the boundaries of the region itself. For students in particular, my goal is for the department to provide a world-class education that encourages critical enquiry and constructive intervention, equipping our graduates with the skills, experience and connections they will need to achieve their goals.

Could faculty be doing more to engage students?

Here my answer remains the same: Yes. Absolutely. Last year we ran a series of conversations with the times.

What would you like to see improve?

As I suggested in our conversation last year, I’d like to see PAAS engaged more fully with the complexities of day-to-day life in Asia and the Pacific—both on the contemporary scene and historically. This is going to require breaking down some of the artificial boundaries—regional, disciplinary, linguistic—characteristic of a traditional Area Studies approach. If PAAS hopes to do something new and innovative, we must have the courage to lean forward and rethink the field afresh. I believe we’ve already made considerable progress in this respect, though there’s still much to be done. And, once again, student involvement will be crucial to our success—encouraging the faculty as both teachers and scholars to engage challenging questions and to think in new directions.

How do you respond to students’ desire for more diverse studies, like Korean culture/language?

How do we respond? As quickly and effectively as possible. Next year we will begin a comprehensive renewal of our curriculum, with an eye to creating a new and more diverse range of course offerings. Student input will figure centrally in this process. In the meantime, with the help of our visiting scholar of Korean history and culture, Dr. Mihyun Jang, we’ll be exploring the possibility of adding courses in Korean language—quite possibly before the end of next year. We’re also looking forward to an informal discussion group on Korean history, culture and society planned for the Spring semester.

Want to make changes to this publication?

Do it. Join PASS, open your laptop, interview your classmates and profs, and assemble it all into a cute little newsletter. The PAAS office has expressed an interest in supporting student publications meant to support community building, and we MUST make the most of that!

Quentin’s email address: qdeline@uvic.ca