



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

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Kajal Chattopadhyay

### Vice Chairperson

Elisa Choi

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Larry Wong  
Mabel Lam

One Ashburton Place  
12th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108  
[www.aacommission.org](http://www.aacommission.org)

## Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 at 4:30pm  
JFK, 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475

(The times indicated for each item are guidelines.)

1. Accept previous minutes (5 minutes)
2. Application Process for New Commissioners (Bora) (5 minutes)
3. Discuss and Review new language for By-laws (Kajal and All) (15 minutes)
4. Unity Dinner Update (Tony) (5 minutes)
5. Subcommittee updates  
Program - Young Leaders Symposium – (Chris/Chun-Fai) (5 minutes)  
Program - Healthcare Subcommittee – (Elisa) (5 minutes)  
Program - Economic Development  
Program - Resource Fair
6. **Old business**  
Request for Sponsorship – Ms. Pearl J. Park (Elisa) (10 minutes)  
Contribution Procedures for AAC to others (All) (10 minutes)  
  
**New Business**  
-WHA-API - White House Summit, May, 12, 2015 (All) (5 minutes)  
  
-WHA-API - Federal Emphasis on Asian American, May 27<sup>th</sup> – Nam Pham: confirmed guest speaker (Ken) (5 minutes)  
  
-White House AAPI Grant Writing Workshop – June 12, 2015 – (Ken) (5 minutes)
7. Next Commission meeting: Every second Wednesday 5/13/2015 – location for discussion – (Bora) (5 minutes)
8. Other Community updates & Meeting adjourned (All) (10 minutes)



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**Guest:** Jason Chou,

Operations Consultant

Bora Chiemruom

**Executive Director**

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## Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 11, 2015 at 4:30pm  
JFK, 15 New Sudbury Street, Room 475

Absent Commissioners are highlighted on left.

Remote Participants are indicated by an asterisk\*.

Quorum was reached by attendance.

1. Accept 2/25/2015 meeting minutes
  - Corrections are to be made. Kay motioned to accept minutes, seconded by Nick. Motion carried by a unanimous vote.
2. We've opened the application process for new Commissioners.
  - The goal is to expand on our already diverse group
  - Reach out to our networks/connections for candidates from the AAPI communities, particularly those from ethnicities not currently represented on the Commission.
3. Discussion of the By-Laws and Statute
  - Current by-laws reflect a staggered system to ensure a constant stream of new commissioners
  - Agreed to put on the agenda to amend the by-laws and add clear concise language (Kajal will work on the language)
4. Unity Dinner Discussion
  - Discussion of venue, cost analysis of the budget
  - Members discussed the "pros" and "cons" of both UMass Boston and BU
  - Discussion also included continuity of venue, event location accessibility, and transportation and parking availability.
  - Final vote 7 to 4 in favor of UMass Boston
5. Moved to cover other agenda items at next Commission meeting: Wednesday, April 8, 2015
6. Meeting adjourned



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

## **Open Meeting Law 940 CMR 29.10: Remote Participation**

(5) Permissible Reasons for Remote Participation. If remote participation has been adopted in accordance with 940 CMR 29.10(2), a member of a public body shall be permitted to participate remotely in a meeting, in accordance with the procedures described in 940 CMR 29.10(7), if the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, determines that one or more of the following factors makes the member's physical attendance unreasonably difficult:

- (a) Personal illness;
- (b) Personal disability;
- (c) Emergency;
- (d) Military service; or
- (e) Geographic distance.

You must notify the meeting coordinator with your factor(s) before participating remotely. Below is the dial-in number.

1 (712) 832-8310  
access code 170864

Request for sponsorship from the Asian American Commission of MA – Pearl J. Park  
2/25/2015

I would like to ask the Asian American Commission to sponsor the film screening at UMass Boston's one-day symposium event on Friday May 8, 2015. The event will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Southeast Asian refugee resettlement from the Viet Nam War. If a representative of the Commission would like to say a few words prior to the screening and express their commitment to educating and advocating about behavioral health, I could ask Professor Loan Dao. The event will be focused on how the impact of the war effects individuals, families and communities today, and we would like to encourage discussion about how our communities need to move forward in terms of advocacy and community development.

The event is hosted by the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston, which is the only public four-year college in the city. Asian American Studies is located in the School of Global Inclusion and Social Development, which has a strong history of advocacy for the rights, opportunities and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the U.S. and globally.

As one of the first realistic and in-depth film portrayals of an Asian American struggling with mental illness, this documentary will help to reduce the behavioral health disparity for Asian Americans by reducing the cultural stigma. The the key message of the film, which depicts a highly likeable protagonist who frequently speaks publicly about his mental illness in Asian American communities, is that it's safe to talk about mental illness in the public forum. Through the film and a post-screening presentation by the filmmaker, the program will instigate constructive, insightful and critical conversations about stigma and mental illness among student audiences.

This film educates about depression and bipolar disorder and defies age-old stereotypes of both Asian Americans and people with disabilities by offering an in-depth look at one person's recovery from mental illness. Because the stigma of mental illness is inculcated in our culture, and media affects our beliefs, a depiction of an Asian American with mental illness, which challenges stereotypes of both Asians and mental health consumers, can be a powerful tool of political and cultural change.

If the Commission's budget would allow, I as the producer/director would like to request \$350 towards travel expenses from Jersey City, NJ to Boston, MA, which may include lodging, meals, incidentals, and transportation from May 4 to May 9, 2015. The exact dates of travel have not yet been determined because plans for screenings have not yet been finalized. I am also waiting to hear back from the Center for Asian American Studies, UMass Lowell, who are also interested in scheduling a screening, possibly on May 5. If the Commission would like to sponsor that screening as well, we would be happy to acknowledge the Commission's efforts at the screening.

The film production company Light Fish Arts, LLC can offer a nonprofit DVD of "Can" with full public performance rights (\$175 fair market value) and five home DVDs (\$175 current retail value) to the Asian American Commission. Full public performance rights would allow the Commission to screen the film publicly anywhere in the U.S.A. In addition, the MA Asian American Commission's sponsorship of the screening and its commitment to achieving behavioral equity in our communities will be publicly acknowledged prior to the screenings.

#### FILM SYNOPSIS

This documentary film "Can" ([amongourkin.org](http://amongourkin.org)) depicts a first-person account of 37-year-old Can Truong, a refugee who was among the millions of boat people who fled Vietnam, as he searches for healing, dignity and recovery from initially depression and then bipolar disorder. Over a 12-year period, Can tried more than 20 different medications, was hospitalized 7 times, and underwent 15 electroconvulsive shock treatments. Fighting despair and suicidal impulses, Can becomes active in the mental health consumer movement, a social and political effort by people labeled with mental illnesses who believe in recovery through self-determination and peer support. Inspired by his peers, he embarks on a healing journey of a different kind — trying to reconcile cultural differences with his very traditional Confucian father, attempting to make sense of some of his painful

childhood wounds, serving as a volunteer on numerous mental health organizations that promote recovery, and exploring spiritual and holistic healing modalities.

#### THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

The silence about mental illness in Asian American communities, where the stigma often brands the entire family, has resulted in Asian Americans with serious and persistent mental illness receiving treatments in a severely decompensated state, years after the initial onset of the illness. Unlike other major minority groups, Asian Americans are publicly perceived as the model minority, which presents an inaccurate picture of their mental and physical health. This public perception often limits education, prevention, and treatment efforts for mental illness in these communities. Due to the stigma of mental illness and systemic barriers in care, Asian Americans utilize mental health services at significantly lower rates than the general population in the U.S. Yet Southeast Asian refugees have rates of mental illness of about 60% due to the traumatic experiences of war and migration as well as acculturation. Like all immigrants, Asian Americans, the majority of whom are foreign-born, experience the stresses of acculturation and assimilation, which may contribute to their mental health issues. The cultural and linguistic diversity of the Asian American population presents systemic challenges in health care to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care.