

KATHRYN W. AND  
SHELBY CULLOM DAVIS '30  
INTERNATIONAL CENTER

*Annual Report for the 2007-2008 Academic Year*



*In the Nation's Service and  
in the Service of All Nations*

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THE DAVIS INTERNATIONAL CENTER is committed to providing a sense of community for international Princetonians and to promote a cosmopolitan mindset on campus. Our programs facilitate social, cultural, and intellectual interactions and foster mutual appreciation among Princetonians of varied perspectives.

Founded as International Center by town/gown volunteers in 1974, we became part of Princeton University in 1978. The Center was named the Kathryn W. and Shelby Collum Davis '30 International Center in May 2007. We are grateful to Kathryn Davis SP'30, P'58 for her generosity, which ensures perpetuity of our programs. A scholar in Russian Studies, Ms. Davis is an advocate of world peace through diplomacy and ecological balances at waterways. We are inspired by her visions and activism.

THIS YEAR, Princeton has had over two thousand international students, visiting scientists, and scholars studying or working on campus; they have come from one hundred and fifteen countries. The Davis Center organizes orientations and receptions and facilitates programs in Host Family, Individual, and Group English Conversations for new arrivals and their families. We host weekly social lunches and stress-management meditations over meals, facilitate bi-weekly cross-cultural discussions at residential colleges and in our meeting room, and initiate exhibitions, presentations, and celebrations to highlight perspectives and lifestyles of other cultures.

Students and visitors stop by my office for assistance or advice. Our resource/social room, opened until midnight, has a refrigerator and shelves of classical films, books, and students-produced

periodicals. The room is popular for meeting, studying, relaxing, distributing publicity materials, and collecting charity donations. Partners of our English Conversations and faculty and students of 'Go' Club meet there every week.

### **Discussion and Speakers Programs**

Last summer, about fifteen scholars and students met for weekly lunch to share experiences on health care and child rearing and their attitudes towards inter-ethnic and inter-national marriages. We also talked about stereotyping, meanings of gestures, and jokes and sense of humor in their own cultures. During the school year, we held monthly luncheons, first, to share among the new arrivals experiences in cultural confrontation and accommodation, then, for alumni to talk about how they prepared for their first American job interviews; and, before their departures we anticipated cultural-shock with homebound scholars and their families. In between, among others, Rebecca Matlock talked about Peru's Chulacano pottery, while her collection of the pottery's modern versions was displayed at Frist 100 level; and Dr. Kiran Modi from India told us how she founded UdayanCare — shelters for homeless women in India.

At the residential colleges, we premiered 'Return to Afghanistan' at Whitman followed by discussion with the film's producer, director, and former ambassador to Afghanistan Professor Robert Finn. At Forbes, we invited award-winning photographer Fazal Sheikh '87 to talk about 'Beloved Daughters' — his photography exhibition of India's widowed outcasts at the Art Museum. Rebecca Matlock spoke at Rocky on Peru's Apurimac River, while her photos of workers using Inca technique and materials to repair the River's hanging bridge were in exhibition in the Common Room. We co-sponsored with Butler and Wilson a meal on eating etiquette — American style, and screened at Butler 'Mississippi Masala' for Indian American students to share their reactions. An alumna from Austria talked about her founding a home for street children in India while studying at Princeton; a freshman from Denmark described volunteering at a Sahrawi refugee camp in Western Sahara; and an Iranian research scientist talked about life as a university student in Iran.

As conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon, and those between Israel and Palestine continued to escalate, our monthly programs on the Middle East have remained popular and relevant. The town/gown Middle East Society invited the series' speakers; and we provided logistical support.

### **Annual Celebrations and Programs**

Our annual Gandhi Jayanti celebration in October, planned with Indians in New Jersey, was well attended by staff and area residents. We also displayed writings and arts by area youths, which interpreted Gandhi's principle of non-violent resistance.

During the autumn and spring Breaks we held dinners at Murray Dodge, attended Broadway's 'Legally Blonde' and 'Mary Poppins', and dined in Chinatown and Little Italy.

Focusing on Princeton's international presence, we celebrated in April a month-long International Festival; students and groups organized arrays of performances, presentations, and film series, and we co-sponsored a conference on China's Environmental Issues with several academic departments. President Shirley Tighman spoke at the Month's opening at Richardson where students presented dances and music from regions around the world. We were honored at that occasion with the presence of Cecilia Echenique, Chile's foremost singer, whose husband Ignacio Walker '84 was visiting and teaching at Princeton. Mansour Ajami, a poet, songwriter, and former Princeton faculty sang and played the Lebanese oud; and former schoolmates from California's Developing Virtue Chinese School came with their coach to help Qin Zhe Lau '11 perform the Chinese dragon and lion dances.

The Month concluded at the town/gown Communiversities with students of more than forty countries marching their flags on Nassau Street. Our displays at 'Global Village' on Nassau Green attracted children and parents with international snacks, Iranian calligraphy and artifacts, Chinese paper cuttings, Indian henna hand painting and Turkish displays, and music. The façade of Nassau Hall, as in past years, was draped with a two-storied letter P sewn together of fourteen national flags.

To celebrate the first anniversary of the naming of Davis International Center, we exhibited centurgenian Ms. Kathryn W. Davis' vivacious impressionist paintings, which she only started at age ninety-six. During the reception, she and trustee Shelby Davis '58 handed this year's International Service Awards to recipients Tashfin Huq '10 and the Princeton University Language Project. At dinner that evening with Vice President Janet Dickerson, the recipients detailed their extraordinary humanitarian endeavors to guests and friends.

During Reunions at end of May, we organized a panel with Roberto Cordon '88 and Arka Mukherjee \*95 on enhancing economic self-sufficiency in developing regions — moderated by Emeritus Professor Gregory C. Chow. We co-sponsored with Asian American Alumni Association a panel of trail blazers, featuring among others Sir Gordon Wu '58 who was returning from Hong Kong for his 50th reunion. At the annual reception, we particularly welcomed back Harvey Lam \*58, Sir Gordon, and Shelby Davis for their 50th, and introduced Kathryn Davis through her paintings to the over one hundred alumni in attendance.

In June, we wished our best to degree recipients and homebound scholars at a luncheon following the Commencement ceremony.

### **Programs Organized with Students, Individuals, and Academic Departments**

Increased funding resulting from the Davis endowment has allowed us to organize more programs and provide support to more student initiatives. There were Oktoberfest; Romanian, Bulgarian, and South Asian music and dance festivals; Romanian and Indian film series; Brazilian, Caribbean, Chinese, and African cultural festivals; and musical concerts from Latin America. We visited Manhattan's museums of Native American, Holocaust, and Chinese in the Americas and traveled to Queens for a touring orchestra of immigrants from Rome. International graduate students organized hiking trips to Bear Mountain and a harp concert at the Longwood Gardens, which were also attended by undergraduates. We supported South Asian's Diwali, Id, and Holi celebrations, and helped newly organized Pakistani Students to sponsor Chaand Raat and a discussion on Pakistan's

future. Triple 8, an Asian dance group, performed on the Berlind stage; the Arab Society held a Comedy Night and so did LGBT, featuring comedian Vidur Kapur. International undergraduates enjoyed their 2nd annual Global Groove on Prospect Street, and together with graduate students competed by regions in their 2nd annual World Cup. Taiwanese Students held an annual Asian Night Market and students from China organized presentations to showcase China.

A new initiative, Emerge! A Global Bazaar in December was spearheaded by Rachel Steinberg '10, who brought in indigenous crafts sponsored by NGOs to highlight challenges faced both by these organizations and by the communities they served. Chancellor Green's Rotunda was jammed with holiday-gift-hunters who lingered to talk with representatives from campus service organizations and participating NGOs while tasting teas from different parts of the world. Earlier during the week we had invited social entrepreneur Harold Rosen to speak about his efforts to finance indigenous craftsmen. Rachel's continuing leadership has assured the success of a 2nd annual Emerge! which will take place this December.

Many of the above programs were organized in collaboration with academic and administrative departments and Centers. They included the Program for Latin American Studies, the departments of Slavic Languages and East Asian Studies, Woodrow Wilson School, and the Freshmen Writing Program. We co-sponsored events with LGBT, Carl Fields and Women's Centers, and offices of Religious Life, Counseling Services, and Career Services. A new initiative — Workshop on China's Environmental Issues — brought fifteen scholars and policy planners from Chinese universities and academies to Princeton. This had resulted from brainstorming sessions among Chinese faculty initiated by us one year earlier. The invited Chinese scholars spent two days with our experts from the Engineering School, Economics department, and the Environmental Institute. A forum for annual workshops has now been planned and the next meeting will be held in China. We contributed financially towards this workshop and also provided some logistical support.

## Encouragement of Cross-boundary Services, Promotion of Inter-cultural Appreciation

Our annual awarding of International Services reminds Princetonians of the importance of servicing beyond one's own boundaries. Tashfin Huq '09 was honored for his leadership in establishing, while a freshman, Combating AIDS and Protecting Environment Society (CAPES), a national level NGO in his home country Bangladesh. Members of the Princeton University Language Project were awarded for volunteering professional translations for service organizations that focused on poverty, health, and environmental issues.

At Princeton, Sachi Inukai '09 and her volunteers read stories from different countries every month at the Public Library, and taught the children to make paper crafts from countries of these tales. The Japan Society helped Cotsen Children's Library to promote Japanese tales and crafts with a fair at the Public Library, and we rallied students and scholars to help Cotsen with displays and calligraphy from Morocco, Turkey, and Iran at their annual Princetonpedia, this year entitled Aladdin, at Dillon Gymnasium. Our Global Village at Communiversity, described earlier, covered a variety of cultures to much larger crowds.

Together with Office of Religious Life we worked closely with Andy Chen '09 to call attention to Myanmar's catastrophic tragedy in May resulting from a devastating cyclone which claimed life of more than seventy thousand people. We held a vigil at the University Chapel where VP Janet Dickerson and Professor Paul Mouldoon, among others, spoke and participants purchased Andy's posters to contribute towards the victims' relief. Within days, we rallied to support efforts by our Chinese graduate students to support earthquake victims in China where final counts topped eighty thousand deaths. With help from undergraduates and responses from faculty, the students were able to send more than seventeen thousand dollars one week later to relief organizations.

## **Enhancement of Community Awareness on Timely Issues; Regular TV Interviews**

All of our speakers programs and many of our discussions are open to the public.

We have continued to produce through TV30 International Forum with May Cheng and InnerCore with Paul Raushenbush. Outstanding interviews included Professor Uwe Reinhardt on 'Stalemate in American Health Policy', Professor Robert Finn on 'Afghanistan Seven Years After', former Senate Majority Leader William Frist, MD on 'Global Health and Development', and a second interview on his senate years; and Dean of Religious Life Alison Boden on 'Human Rights for Women'. These interviews, shown through Channel 30 and Channel 27, have been streamed for future use. I have been discussing with Firestone Library to stream our two hundred plus tapes accumulated from past years for web access, and to donate our entire holding to the Library.

## **Support from Friends of Davis International Center**

Friends of Davis International Center provide invaluable support to our service programs. The Friends' Board and its committees oversee over sixty community host families, sixty-six English conversation partners, and around twelve volunteers who lead our twice weekly small conversation groups for about ninety international scholars and spouses. They also raise funds to sustain an annual Excellence in Teaching Award to an international graduate student through the Graduate School. Elidor Mehilli from Albania received this award this year and was recognized by Dean William Russel during the May Graduate Alumni Dinner reception.

In May, the Friends Board and participants of our Group Conversation celebrated the 90th birthday of Sunny Onish, who has chaired this program for the past twelve years. The program was started by Phyllis Sutton, whom at age ninety-two had formed the Group upon returning from Lebanon as an English teacher.

## **Collaboration with Area Organizations**

Plans are in the making for members of the local chapter of the Distinguished Citizens International to meet, talk, and mentor our students from China and Taiwan this October. These Chinese professionals in the past four years have helped to mentor our Chinese new arrivals. I work closely with the Princeton Rotarians in support of our Rotaract Club, and collaborate with Association of Indians in America and the Middle East Society in relevant programs. I have been asked to consult for the Elm Street Senior Citizens Housing on cultural issues relating to their residents and by the Evergreen Forum, a local group which provides educational programs for the elderly, on a course about China. LAMP, the international club of Princeton High School, has joined us at Global Village and the International Consortium held a social mixer with their members.

## **Alumni Relations, Serving on the Boards of Princeton-in Asia, Princeton-in-Africa**

Upon an initiative from us, a most successful mixer for international students and alumni was organized by Pardon Mukumbe '07, Yashih Wu '03, Eckhart Richter '98, and Megan Chao '09 this spring at the Princeton Club in Manhattan where over seventy students and alumni met and networked. Pardon then followed up with correspondence and discussions with students and alumnus Arka Mukherjee \*95 on creating a website. As reported earlier, we sponsored two panels during Reunions, one involving Sir Gordon Wu '58, Helen Zia '83, and others on their trailblazing works as Asians; another with Roberto Cordon '88 and Arka Mukherjee \*95 on their efforts to help developing communities in small business management. At the reunions reception, alumni old and young inquired about our new programs and talked about vitalizing the International Alumni Association.

I have continued to sit on the Board of Princeton-in-Asia. And I serve as Secretary for Princeton-in-Africa, and was on it's Search Committee for the new director who was hired in April.

### **Collaboration with Overseas Institutions**

We sent two students this summer to the Lee Shiu program organized by the Chinese University of Hong Kong and National University of Singapore. This program brings together students from the United States, China, Hong Kong, and Singapore to live together for 4 weeks, traveling from Hong Kong to Singapore and China to learn about their social, cultural, and political issues. I plan to observe the program during my summer trip to Hong Kong.

We again helped AIU-Japan on the academic portion of their summer High School Diplomats program at Princeton. We organized and planned for seven days of English and Japanese language and cultural immersion for the visiting Japanese students and their American roommates from the Washington DC area.

### **Princeton's new International Initiative**

It is gratifying that President Tilghman's initiative of globalizing Princetonians' experiences is being realized with the April arrival of Associate Provost Diane Davies who will focus on Princeton's existing and future globalization efforts. Associate Provost Davies has met with our student leaders and has offered me her various insights. I look forward to working with Ms. Davies and developing future ventures in Princeton's internationalization efforts.

Paula K. Chow  
June, 2008