



Duke
UNIVERSITY

Asian/Pacific Studies
Institute

ANNUAL REPORT



2023-2024

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Director's Message



During my first full year as Director of the Asian/Pacific Studies Institute (APSI), I have found immense satisfaction in collaborating with an exceptional team of staff members, a conscientious executive, and, as I like to say, 'learnful' students in our Master's cohort. Within the institute, we extended a warm welcome to Heidi Rodeffer, our new staff member, and Dr. Jieun Cho, our postdoctoral fellow.

In addition to our Speaker Series, addressing relevant themes within the APSI community, we successfully hosted the popular East Asian film series, drawing enthusiastic participation from both within the university and the broader community. We also embarked on several innovative projects that engaged the wider university community.

One notable initiative was a collaborative program with the Middle Eastern Studies Center, featuring Peter Hessler, a distinguished journalist specializing in China and the Middle East, who conducted discussions and was interviewed by renowned China podcaster Kaiser Kuo. Another milestone was the launch of our Environmental and Climate Change project and the associated website, APSI and the Environment, which aligns with the sustainability efforts outlined in the Duke Climate Commitment.

Under the leadership of Dr. Cho, we organized a symposium titled *The Politics of Dwelling in the Anthropocene*, convening a selective group of Duke and non-Duke researchers to dive into this timely theme. A significant focus for this year was the initiation of a collaborative project seeking to bring together APSI scholars with Asian researchers on pertinent environmental issues. We are building the APSI Environmental Futures in Asia Network, including a series of annual meetings to foster knowledge exchange and collaboration. The inaugural workshop is taking place at Jeju National University in South Korea in July 2024.

—Prasenjit Duara

Oscar Tang Family Distinguished Professor,
Department of History



Vision & Mission

VISION

APSI is the focal point of research and teaching on the Asia Pacific region at Duke University, fostering an active community of scholars of East and Southeast Asia.

MISSION

APSI organizes and promotes research, teaching, programs, and events to engage scholars and practitioners dedicated to advancing Asian Studies across academic disciplines at Duke and professionally around the world.

By the Numbers

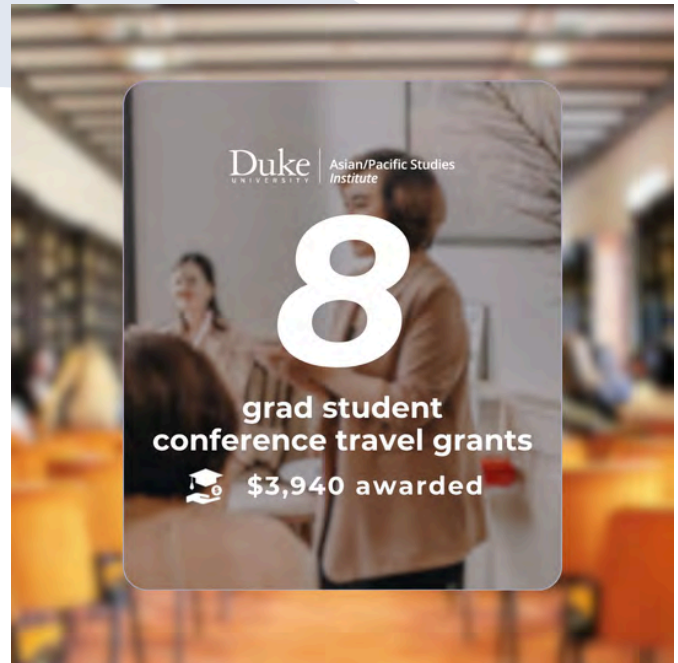
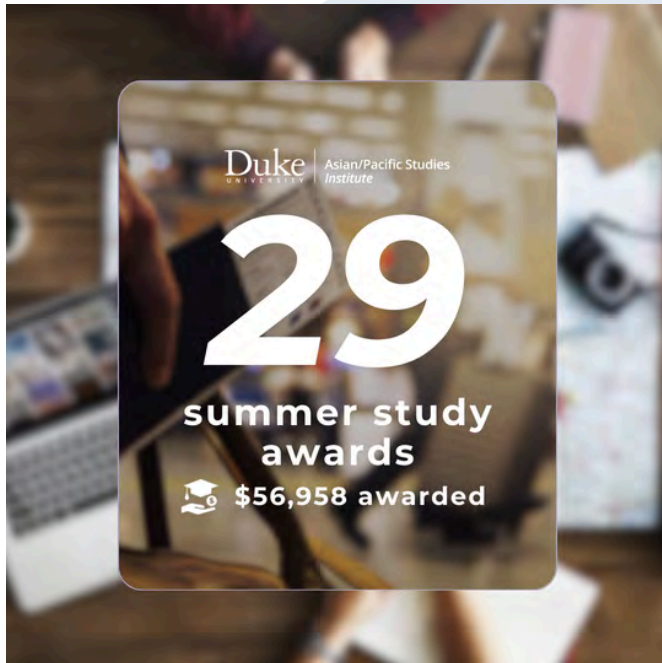


Each year, APSI dedicates efforts to pursue its mission and vision by organizing and supporting a broad array of Asia-focused programmatic activities on campus, including events featuring guest speakers from academic institutions and public intellectuals, artistic performances and exhibitions, film screenings that offer opportunities to meet with experts, and academic conferences and workshops.



Funding for students

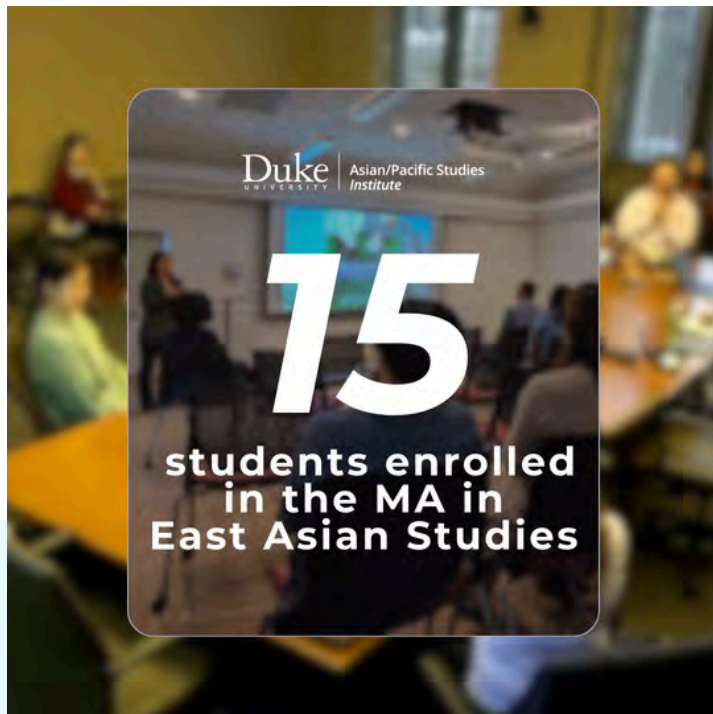
APSI offers multiple funding opportunities to support students' collaborative and individual research, supplement travel expenses to present at conferences, and recognize merit through academic-year scholarships.



During the academic year, APSI supports high-achieving undergraduates and graduate students through competitive scholarship awards such as tuition grants for students in the EAS-MA degree program and the Sirena WuDunn Memorial Scholarship.



APSI Students



APSI offers comprehensive coverage of East Asian politics, societies, history, and cultures, with particular strengths in literature; modern history; comparative history and culture; anthropology; film, media and visual studies; comparative studies of capitalism; and religious studies.

The MA in East Asian Studies provides rigorous interdisciplinary training for students seeking careers in academia or professional fields that require regional specialization. The program introduces key area studies methodologies while providing flexibility for students to specialize in specific modes of inquiry.

Students enrolled in any of Duke's graduate degree programs may document their area specialization by earning a certificate in East Asian Studies. Certificate students are integral members of our scholarly community.



Student Experiences



Duke-Meiji University Exchange

Two Duke students, David Junquan Zong (EAS-MA '24) and Danni Xu (CAH-MA '24), spent a semester in Japan.



SEC-AAS Regional Conference

Duke students went to the regional meeting of the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies (SEC-AAS). Six EAS-MA students presented on five panels.



Alumni Spotlight: Jackson Herndon

EAS-MA alumni are talented individuals who take the research and analytical skills they hone during their time at Duke into academic and professional careers.

APSI Faculty

APSI faculty are interdisciplinary scholars who are experts in the fields of anthropology, cultural studies, history, art history, language, law, literature, performing arts, political science, policy, religion, and sociology.

They teach graduate and undergraduate courses, engage in collaborative research, and mentor students in APSI's MA in East Asian Studies program.

20 ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

- ★ ART, ART HISTORY, & VISUAL STUDIES
- ★ ASIAN & MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES
- ★ CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
- ★ DANCE
- ★ ECONOMICS
- ★ ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY
- ★ GENDER, SEXUALITY, & FEMINIST STUDIES
- ★ HISTORY
- ★ LAW
- ★ LINGUISTICS
- ★ LITERATURE
- ★ MUSIC
- ★ PHILOSOPHY
- ★ POLITICAL SCIENCE
- ★ PUBLIC POLICY
- ★ RELIGIOUS STUDIES
- ★ SOCIOLOGY
- ★ THEATER STUDIES
- ★ WORLD CHRISTIANITY

47 INTERDISCIPLINARY
FACULTY



In an interview, APSI's 2023-24 postdoctoral associate, Dr. Jieun Cho, delves into her current work and discusses the joy she has found in and around Durham.

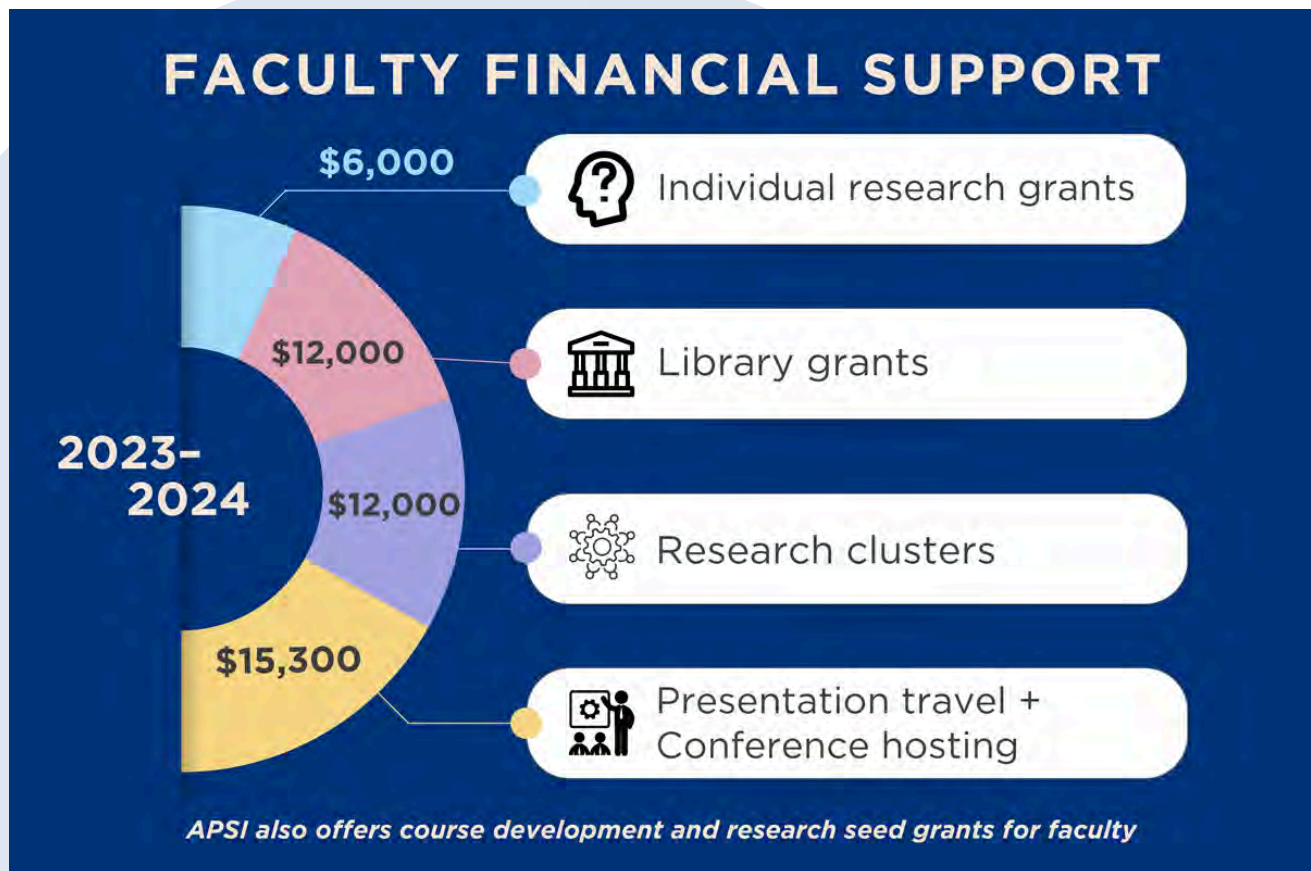
She earned her PhD in Cultural Anthropology from Duke, specializing in gender, environment, and disaster.

As a postdoctoral scholar at APSI, she contributes to the ongoing dialogue on social reproduction, toxic ecologies, and environmental futures from the perspective of post-Cold War East Asia.



youtu.be/iid4M08AMJY

Supporting faculty



Duke faculty receive support for Asia-focused research clusters, course development grants, research project grants, presentation travel, and conference hosting. APSI also supports all faculty at Duke through library grants that fund purchase of essential reference materials, database access, and subscriptions.

In 2023-24, research clusters included:

- Archival Research for East Asian Studies
- Digital Asia Research
- East Asian Language Pedagogy Research
- East Asian Religions Research

Collaborative Gallery Exhibits

HILABANA: ESPASYO TEMPORAL

Filipina street muralist Venazir Martinez visited Duke's campus for the opening of an exhibition in the John Hope Franklin Center art gallery featuring selections from her work.

The event was part of a celebration of Filipino American History Month, co-sponsored by APSI, the John Hope Franklin Center, and the Asian American & Diaspora Studies (AADS) program with support from Duke Pamilya.





CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND WORK OF CORKY LEE

For over 50 years, Corky Lee photographed the daily life of Asian Americans alongside chronicling their participation in movements for social justice.

On April 11, after a conversation between Eileen Chow and Columbia University historian Mae Ngai, the audience moved downstairs for the opening of an exhibition of 15 of Lee's prints, sponsored by APSI and the John Hope Franklin Center.

Event Highlights



Peter Hessler

In a two-day residency at Duke (Nov. 9–10, 2023), internationally-renowned journalist and author Peter Hessler provided insightful comparisons of human connections across histories and cultures while elucidating his singular method of finding the story.

The events, which included a public keynote, a writing workshop, and a live taping of the Sinica Podcast, were organized and co-sponsored by APSI and the Duke Middle East Studies Center (DUMESC).



APSI collaborated with faculty and staff in the AMES department to organize a daylong workshop focused on the theme of “Digital Asia.” Keynote speakers Florian Schneider (Universiteit Leiden) and Lisa Nakamura (University of Michigan) engaged students and faculty representing a range of academic disciplines through a combination of keynote lectures and breakout sessions. First-year EAS and CAH graduate students shared their research during a student panel moderated by Ralph Litzinger (Cultural Anthropology).



This symposium, organized by APSI Postdoctoral Associate Jieun Cho, fostered a critical examination of dwelling and place by scholars from across the U.S. with expertise in multiple academic disciplines and deep knowledge of several countries.

Through interdisciplinary dialogue, the event tapped into the transformative potential of redescribing landscapes as dwelling places—a pivotal move towards creating alternative conceptual frameworks, generating political affects, and rediscovering overlooked historical narratives.



On May 9, 2024, seven students from the EAS-MA program celebrated the conclusion of their degree program. Some of our newest alumni head to professional careers; others will begin PhD programs around the world.

All are remarkably talented and dynamic individuals who formed a unique and lifelong bond during their time at Duke. We look forward to seeing where their talents take them next.



Film Screenings

Several times each semester, APSI sponsors (and co-sponsors) screenings of films that are relevant to Asian studies—including popular cinematic movies from the region and documentaries related to issues of concern—enabling members of our community to thoughtfully engage with faculty and subject matter experts as well as one another.

Film screenings are typically introduced by APSI faculty and periodically feature Q&A with individuals involved in making the film or professionals who provide additional context and insight.



Contact Us



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report is available at

duke.is/23-24AAR