



**RUTGERS**

School of Arts and Sciences

Department of

# Asian Languages and Cultures

Summer 2021



## ALC Newsletter 2020-2021

Faculty and students in ALC experienced two semesters of online, off-campus instruction, but even so we had many successes in 2020-2021. We hope you enjoy reading about our highlights here!

[alc.rutgers.edu](http://alc.rutgers.edu)

# Rutgers Asian Languages and Cultures—Transitions

## Congratulations!



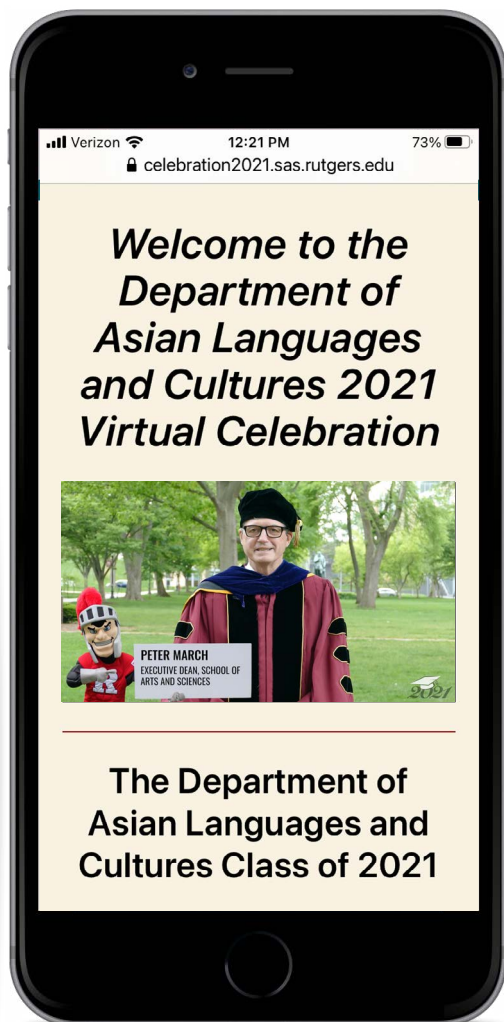
**Richard V. Simmons** retired on July 1, 2021, after almost three decades in the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. A distinguished scholar of Chinese dialectology and capable administrator, Professor Simmons chaired the department from 2008-2017 and succeeded Professor Ching-I Tu as director of the Confucius Institute at Rutgers University (CIRU) from 2017-2021.

Professor Simmons was honored with a prestigious *Leaders in Faculty Diversity Award* at Rutgers in 2018 for “advancing the instruction of Chinese language and culture, initiating partnerships with public schools and promoting cultural exchanges between the United States and China.” Students and faculty of the department will be forever grateful for his years of excellence in teaching, service and scholarship. In retirement, Professor Simmons plans to continue his teaching career at the University of Hong Kong.

## 2021 Rutgers Convocation—Virtual Celebration



In May 2021, twenty students earned their B.A. degree in Asian Studies (formerly East Asian Languages & Area Studies), Chinese, Japanese, or Korean. Congratulations to all!



The 2021 Rutgers SAS Convocation and ALC Virtual Celebration were viewed on phones and laptops across the globe.

- Mufrad M. Ahmed (Asian Studies—Cum Laude)
- Monica Y. An (East Asian Languages & Area Studies)
- Rebekah M. Blonski (Korean)
- Sarah I. Chaudhry (English, Korean)
- Yiting Fang (Japanese)
- Melanie R. Feliciano (Psychology, Korean—Summa Cum Laude)
- Harshitha S. Gandapodi (Psychology, Korean)
- Christina M. Gaudino (Chinese)
- Jack Hampton (Communication, Chinese)
- Bill H. Huang (History, Chinese)
- Matthew R. Hughes (Political Science, Chinese)
- Yanqin Li (Japanese)
- Indira L. Persaud (Asian Studies)
- Ankita Prasad (Biological Sciences, Chinese)
- Lingli Qian (Chinese)
- Paula O. Rocha (Linguistics, Korean—Cum Laude)
- Yijia Shao (Economics, Japanese)
- Gregory A. Tsai (Chinese)
- Izumi Umeda (East Asian Languages and Area Studies, Linguistics—Magna Cum Laude)
- Shiyao Zuo (Chinese)

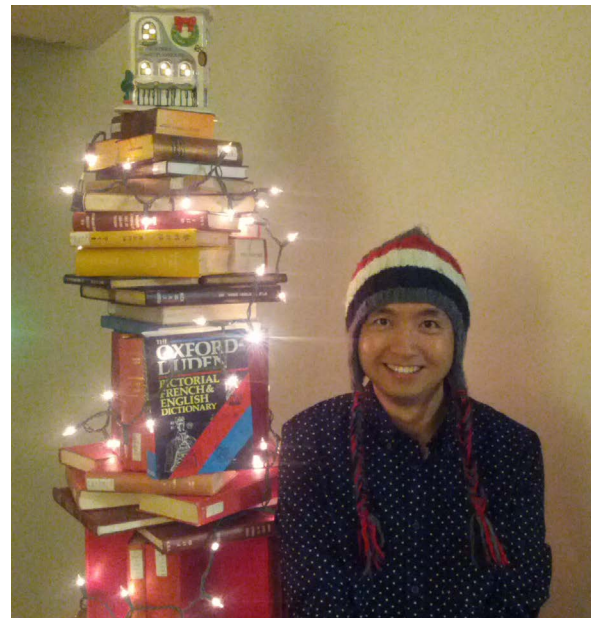


# Spotlight on Graduate Student Accomplishments

## ALC Graduate with Ph.D. in Comparative Literature

**Qingfeng Nie** was admitted in 2013 on ALC funds as a Ph.D. student in the Program in Comparative Literature. He successfully defended his dissertation “Ordering the Urban Space in Luoyang, 600–1000 CE” in December 2020. Prof. Wendy Swartz directed the dissertation and Profs. Xiaojue Wang, Weijie Song, and Sukhee Lee (History) served in the dissertation committee.

Qingfeng writes, “The coming September will see me work as assistant professor in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at New Era University College in Malaysia. The faculty there are sincere and friendly, and I personally have a preference for a tropical environment. The generous funding from Asian Languages and Cultures made it happen! I am forever grateful to the department. Last but not the least, I really cannot emphasize enough how beneficial the teaching assistant experience in ‘Global East Asia’ was to my career development. It has directly shaped my teaching style and taught me how to work in a team.”



Congratulations to newly minted Ph.D. Dr. Nie!

## M.A.T. in Teaching Chinese—Job Placements



Studying Chinese in Fort Worth, Texas. Photo by Yu-Ting Chung.

The ALC Master’s Program in Teaching Chinese was established in 2008. Our graduates have been very successful in the job market, as evidenced by four recent (or soon-to-be) graduates listed here. Congratulations to all!

**Chaoqin Chen**, 2020, accepted a teaching position at Madison Junior School, Madison, NJ (a middle school, to start in Aug 2021)

**Yu-Ting Chung**, 2021, accepted a teaching position at International Leadership of Texas, East Fort Worth K-8, Fort Worth, TX (K-8, started in Aug 2020)

**Yixiao Diana Li**, 2021, accepted a teaching position at Maurice Hawk Elementary School, West Windsor, NJ (to start in Aug 2021)

**Jing Wang** upcoming 2022, accepted a teaching position at YingHua International School, Kingston, NJ (K-8 immersion school, to start in Aug 2021)

# Spotlight on Undergraduate Student Accomplishments

## Show-Mei and I-Fang Tu Memorial Endowed Scholarship in Chinese Studies

**Tu Memorial Endowed Scholarship in Chinese Studies** is named in memory of the parents of Emeritus Professor Ching-I Tu and provides scholarships to full-time continuing undergraduates majoring or minoring in Chinese. Awards are based on academic merit and an application essay. This year's scholarship winners were chosen by faculty selection committee members Professors Jae Won Chung, Peng Liu, and Haruko Wakabayashi. Congratulations to the awardees!

- **Katherine Chen** selected for outstanding academic performance and excellent account of her educational goals in the application essay.
- **Julianna Johnson** selected for outstanding academic performance and impressive description of unique personal experiences in the application essay.

## New Category: 2021 Griffis Prize for Best Undergraduate Media Project on Asia



**Izumi Umeda**  
East Asian Languages & Studies  
Linguistics  
Magna Cum Laude

"Proud graduate of Zoom 2021! Grateful for all the friends and connections I've made throughout my time in college!"

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**Izumi Umeda, for "A Glimpse into Japanese Art and Childhood in Songs of the Japanese Children."** [Izumi's website](#) reflected extensive research, utilizing English and Japanese language materials. Her choice of illustrated sheet music as a primary focus of research also allowed for intermedial approaches, across music, lyric, and visual media. The song album by Helen Hyde had not been previously studied, which makes Izumi's work, especially as an undergraduate, quite remarkable. Finally, she managed to present the fruits of her research in an aesthetically pleasing way through a website she built herself.

## 2021 Griffis Prize for Best Undergraduate Term Paper on Asia

**Sruti Bezawada, for "Tracing the Dual Evolution of Nationalism and Female Oppression in Korea."** Sruti's paper provided a question-driven, multi-layered historical account of nationalist male chauvinism in Korea. It demonstrated her ability to analyze secondary and primary sources in depth and, at the same time, offer her own unique perspective to the account. The paper covered vast stretches of time, from cultural assimilation during the Mongol invasion period to the cultural politics of K-pop in a clear and concise narrative.

## Honorable Mention

**Sonia Singh, for "Sensuous Catharsis."** Sonia's paper was remarkable in that she was able to engage with various forms of media—literature, manga, and film—while demonstrating her deep sensitivity to the different nature of and effects created by each. The paper also offered a cross-cultural perspective, as she discussed works from Korea and Japan.



# New Opportunities in ALC



Students in the Spring 2021 Korean *minhwa* (folk painting) class had the opportunity to exhibit their work at the Kate Oh Gallery, 31 East 72nd St between Madison & Park Aves in NYC, from May 11-22, 2021.

## Global Asias—SAS faculty initiative on cross-disciplinary and trans-regional scholarship on Asia and its diasporas

The new Global Asias Initiative, co-directed by Professors Allan Punzalan Isaac (American Studies, English) and Tamara Sears (Art History), is an important ALC partner in developing exciting new directions for the study of Asia at Rutgers. A newly launched website <https://sites.rutgers.edu/global-asias/> coordinates Asia-related events and points to new opportunities for growth in our shared intellectual projects and in our teaching and service to the diverse student body at Rutgers:

*The Faculty Collaborative explores overlapping research interests and strategizes ways to build points of commonality across our various regional specializations and humanities-focused disciplinary approaches to the study of East, South, and Southeast Asia as well as Asia in Europe and the Americas.*

## Congratulations to these ALC faculty who took on new administrative roles in the School of Arts and Sciences

- **Yuan-chen Jenny Yang** was appointed Pedagogy Coordinator for the Language Engagement Project (LEP) effective July 1, 2021. As head of the LEP Pedagogy Board, she works with Rutgers faculty members, the Language Center, and the LEP pedagogy committee members to develop and implement new and existing LEP courses (including mini-courses, modules and activities). She is also in charge of the 991 Challenge grants, as well as exploring new language and culture-related initiatives with Doaa Rashard, Director of the LEP.
- **Xiaojue Wang** was appointed as Graduate Director in the Program in Comparative Literature effective July 1, 2021. She received her Ph.D. degree at the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society and the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University in 2007. Her research and teaching focus is on modern and contemporary Chinese literature and culture, Chinese-German intellectual connections, cultural Cold War studies in global Asias, film and media studies, and comparative literature. Her new position continues to strengthen the connection between the Department of Asian Languages & Cultures and the Comparative Literature Program and enhance the Asian component in the era of thinking about comparative literature across borders.



## Visit to Japanese ambassador's residence NYC May 11, 2021

Following the "Rutgers Meets Japan" workshop held in March, Ambassador Yamanouchi (right) invited Professors Haruko Wakabayashi (left), Paul Schalow, and Dr. Fernanda Perone (center), curator of the William Griffis Archive at the Alexander Library, for lunch to discuss the 150-year history of Rutgers-Japan exchange and future cooperation between the Japanese Consulate-New York and Rutgers in organizing Japan-related events.



School of Arts and Sciences

**Department of Asian Languages and Cultures**

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## The Department of Asian Languages and Cultures at Rutgers



Rutgers University–New Brunswick is a leading national research university and the state of New Jersey's preeminent comprehensive public institution of higher education.

We have created an exceptional learning environment for the study of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean languages and cultures, and we now offer Filipino and Vietnamese language study through the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). Our faculty members conduct cutting-edge research that is transforming the fields of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Studies.

## Support Us...

We invite you to make a gift and make a difference to Asian Languages and Cultures' students and faculty by supporting our dedicated gift funds: **Asian Studies Gift Fund**, **Chinese Studies Gift Fund**, **Japanese Studies Gift Fund**, and **Korean Studies Gift Fund** by visiting [alc.rutgers.edu/support-us](http://alc.rutgers.edu/support-us)