

# ROOTS

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CAL POLY  
SAN LUIS OBISPO



# MCC Puts Brown Sugar in Cal Poly's Oatmeal

## Black History Month 'I am' campaign hits February

**T**he title says it all. During Black History Month, the MCC is bringing to Cal Poly African-American culture, history, and contemporary issues in the form of entertaining and revealing events.

It all begins with African-American Jeopardy on Tuesday, February 5, in UU 221 (San Luis Lounge) from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Anyone can be a contestant and put their knowledge of black history and culture to the test in this version of the classic TV show. Winners will win gift cards to local restaurants, retail stores, and gas stations.

The slam poetry sensation Another Type Of Groove returns on Wednesday, February 6, in the PAC Pavilion from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. African-American poet Talaam Acey will perform. A full-time poet since 1999, Acey has published a novel, an award-winning memoir and nine spoken word CD's. His work has been featured on BET, TV One, and in Essence magazine. Acey is an accomplished slam poet who has won competitions throughout the United States as well as in Germany and England.

The exciting and entertaining African-American tradition of step dancing is going off on Tuesday, February 12, from 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. in the Spanos Breezeway. Various student organizations will be performing this style of dance, which combines rhythmic stomping and clapping and is performed for entertainment as well as to promote bonding and pride within an organization.

Also on Tuesday, February 12, the film "Stomp the Yard" will be shown from

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in UU 221. The movie follows DJ (Columbus Short), a great street dancer, as he bypasses juvenile hall by attending Truth University. A fraternity recruits DJ to help in their quest to win the coveted national step dance competition. The film also features R&B sensations Ne-Yo and Chris Brown.

In exploring contemporary African-American issues, the CNN special investigation, "The Noose: An American

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## What Does 'I am' Mean?

As you can see on the cover of this newsletter and on many of our flyers and posters, the MCC is adhering to the theme "I am" for our Black History Month events. One of Martin Luther King Jr.'s many ideas was the philosophy that those who are the leaders of their social circles can affect a change in those circles. These changes can then spread to other social groups. In essence, this philosophy is about grass-roots organization of social groups or the networking of people to share ideas of change. With this philosophy in mind, the MultiCultural Center is proud to bring a wide array of events to Cal Poly campus this month. Are you the leader of your circle? Will you affect a change within your community?

## M.K. Asante Jr. Gives Dr. King's Legacy A Contemporary Voice

“

If you make an observation,  
you have an obligation.”



**H**is speech was simple, dynamic, and revealing. Covering Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy as it applied during the civil rights movement as well as today, acclaimed poet and filmmaker M.K. Asante Jr. engaged a crowd of about 100 with energetic dialogue on January 15.

Asante Jr. began his speech informally; walking around the crowd in the PAC Pavilion without a microphone, reciting a poem he wrote titled "The Luxury of Ignorance." He then took his place behind the podium and began talking about Dr. King.

He said, "When we honor his legacy, we honor ourselves." He then added that Dr. King's message is as relevant today as it was in the 50's and 60's. However, Asante Jr. also said that on Martin Luther

King Jr. Day, Dr. King's whole message is not being honored, saying "Let's not just do 'I have a dream.'" Asante Jr. emphasized a need to look into what Dr. King said about Vietnam and how that applies to today and also what he said about capitalism.

Speaking directly on Dr. King and his opposition to the Vietnam War, Asante Jr. said that Dr. King considered the occupation of Vietnam a colonial effort and that in those days, publications like Time Magazine "demonized him," but today the same publications celebrate him. He built on this idea saying that new ideas are radical before they're accepted; using as an example the notion that anti-slavery was once a radical movement. Asante Jr. also said that love is a revolutionary idea.

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# MCC Invites You To Help Change the Status Quo

For two days in February, Student Life and Leadership will be holding its annual Change The Status Quo conference and the MCC will be hosting workshops on minority myth and the prison system.

Community-Based Learning/ Multi-Cultural Center Liason Shariq Hashmi organized the two events. He said that both events will take place on Feb. 15th and that the first of the two will be titled "Unpacking The Model Minority Myth." The event will explore a myth within the white community that Asians have assimilated and integrated well into American society and are therefore held up as the minority group by which other communities are measured, Hashmi said.

He added that the workshop will deal with what happens when society focuses only on the successes and "there's no discussion about the struggles communities face to achieve this success."

Hashmi also said that "it's easy to buy into the model minority perspective to the extent that a lot of people don't know about the resistance and the struggles of Asian-American communities and

therefore our understanding of Asian-American culture is limited."

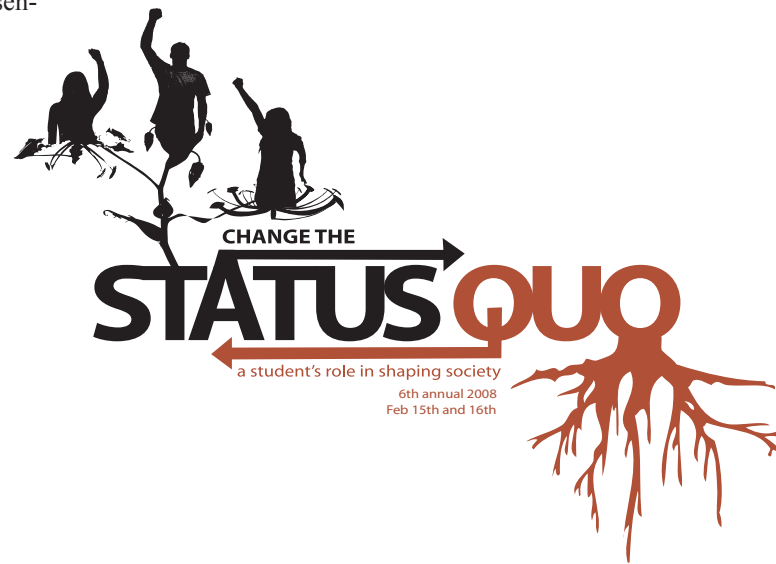
Asked if students who are not Asian-American can benefit from the workshop, Hashmi said, "Why are Asians good at math, I hope that people asking those questions attend." He added that the workshop, "won't give answers to those questions, but an understanding of why we think these things."

"Unpacking The Model Minority Myth" will include a presentation by Doctor Grace Yeh, a professor of Asian-American studies at Cal Poly and a discussion and will be held from 11:25 p.m. to 12:40 p.m. in UU 216.

The second workshop is titled "America's Prison System: A New Form of Slavery" and deals with "broadening our understanding of how we perceive what

justice and criminality means and how our current understanding affects communities – specifically communities of color and women," said Hashmi.

The event will be an activity, a presentation by sociology professor Christopher Bickel, and a discussion and will be held from 3:20 p.m. to 4:35 p.m. in UU 219.



## M.K. Asante Jr. Continued

"Love has never been a popular movement."

Switching his focus to Dr. King and capitalism, Asante Jr. said that Americans need to ask questions about the whole society and talk about Dr. King's idea for a socialist democracy.

Asante Jr. also shared his personal

mantra with the audience. He said that it was very simple, "If you make an observation, you have an obligation." To him, this mantra has helped answer questions such as, "How come there's no...?" because, as he said, it leads to the response: "Because you haven't done it yet!"

Speaking on the recent display of nooses on school campuses across the country, Asante Jr. said, "These things are the symptoms of deeper institutional problems." He added that Philadelphia is using test scores from third-grade black students to judge how many prisons to build.

Asante Jr. also broke down a philosophy he said is found all over the world and that Dr. King was the most profound example of. He said that in South Africa, this philosophy is

called Ubuntu and means "I am because we are." Asante Jr. added the description, "A person is only really a person through other persons ... we are all a part of a greater whole." He also said that the Mayans had a similar philosophy that stated, "you are my other me" and that in Dr. King's words, it was "what may not harm us individually may harm us collectively."

He then used the Iraq war as an example. Asante Jr. said that the mass media portrays American casualties different than Iraqi casualties as if "you're supposed to hurt more because an American soldier died." He then said, "We're all people ... everybody's a victim." Asante Jr. later added, "if one group of people are more important, then we're already starting on a bad foundation."

To combat this, he recommended that we as individuals continue our self enrichment, but consider the question, "how is this affecting other people?" Asante Jr. ended his speech by taking questions from the audience.



MCC staff pose with M.K. Asante Jr. after his speech



## Black History Month Continued

Nightmare” will be shown on Thursday, February 21 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in UU220 The investigation was prompted by incidents such as the Jena 6. In the program, CNN’s Kyra Phillips explores the shocking history of the noose and its re-emergence across the United States.

Bringing their jazz, soul, hip-hop, and funk fusion to the UU Plaza on Thursday,

February 28 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. is six-piece Bay Area hip-hop group the Crown City Rockers. The band consists of a bassist, drummer, keyboardist, sample maestro, and emcee and is known for driving crowds crazy with energetic music and lively improvisations and ad-libs. This event is co-sponsored by ASI Events.

On Thursday, February 28, the walls

will shake with the energy of Gospel music as the MCC presents Gospelfest from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in UU 208. Students and local church groups will perform a variety of songs. All of these great events are free and open to all who wish to attend, so come get some brown sugar in the month of February.

## Cultural Club Spotlight: Japanese Cultural Exchange

**W**ho is the number one singer in Japan? How do the Japanese celebrate Valentine’s day?

How is sushi made? If you want answers to these questions, look no further than Japanese Cultural Exchange, a Cal Poly club that specializes in exploring Japanese culture and traditions.

Club officer and computer science junior Michael McThrow said that he has seen evidence that Japanese Cultural Exchange (JCE) existed on campus as early as 1987, however, “JCE in its current form has existed since about 2006.”

Club officer Rochelle Reyes, a graphic communications senior, said that “Originally (JCE) was known as ‘Tomodachi Kai,’ and after a while the club just started to die down.” She added that in 2006 the then president and vice president decided to change the name to Japanese Cultural Exchange so that “it would be easier to remember.”

So under the new name the club meets once a week. “Every week we have a theme to center our meetings around. Like last week our theme was about Japanese music, J-Pop, this week our theme will be fashion, and next week will be Valentine’s Day in Japan,” said McThrow, “the other point of our meetings is to socialize amongst each other and talk.”

Reyes added that the club’s small size allows for everyone to get to know each other.

Club officer and sophomore social science major Jennifer Alford added that the club members come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

“It is definitely a cultural exchange in that sense,” added Reyes.

As far as events are concerned, McThrow said that, “sushi-making

parties are a highlight of JCE -- we hold one about once a quarter.” He said that the club members come together to prepare sushi and teach those who don’t know how to, and that some people bring other edible delights like the Japanese ice-cream-finger-food mochi.

Reyes added, “We also do other events as well, so it’s not just eating, like last time, I brought my karaoke revolution and we did some karaoke. It was a lot of fun.”

McThrow said that the club also participates in big cultural events like the Lantern Festival and Culturefest as well as other Cal Poly events such as Open House.

Asked what kinds of fund raising activities the club does, McThrow

responded, “They’re called dues.”

“They’re very important,” Alford added.

Reyes said, “Our events like the sushi making party -- that is a fund raiser in itself as well. The cost is five dollars person.”

So if you’re interesting in learning more about Japanese culture and traditions, or if you’re interested in being a part of a small club that puts on fun activities, you can e-mail Japanese Cultural Exchange at [JCE@Calpoly.edu](mailto:JCE@Calpoly.edu), find the JCE group page on Facebook, or go to one of their meetings which are held on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in building 33, room 287.



Members of the Japanese Cultural Exchange taught origami during Culturefest

**Tues. 1/15**

**M.K. Asante, Jr.**

**"I Am Because We Are:**

**Dr. King, Our  
Generation and the  
Next Movement"**

**PAC Pavilion**

**(06-128)**

**7 p.m. - 9 p.m.**

**Tues. 2/12**

**Step presentations**

**"Cal Poly Style"**

**Spanos Breezeway**

**11:15 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

**Tues. 2/12**

**"Stomp the  
Yard"**

**UU 221**

**7 p.m. - 9 p.m.**



**I AM**

**Black History  
Month  
2008**

**Tues. 2/05**

**African-  
American  
Jeopardy**

**UU 221**

**7 p.m. -**

**8:30 p.m.**

**Thu. 2/28**

**Crown  
City**

**Rockers**

**UU Plaza**

**11 a.m. - 12 p.m**

**Co-sponsored  
with**

**ASI Events**

**Wed. 2/06**

**Another Type of Groove:  
Spoken Word Poetry**

**Featured Poet:**

**Talaam Acey**

**PAC Pavilion (06-128)**

**7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

**Thu. 2/21**

**"The Noose-An  
American  
Nightmare"**

**CNN Special Investigations**

**Unit**

**UU 220**

**4 p.m. - 6 p.m.**

**Thu. 2/28**

**Gospelfest**

**UU 208**

**7 p.m. - 9 p.m.**