

History of Asian Americans at Wellesley

- 1887 First international student to enroll was Japanese.
- 1894 First Japanese student to receive a B.A.
- 1913 First Chinese student to receive a B.A.
- 1917 Mayling Soong graduates.
- 1967 Rooming policy places students of the same ethnic category into the same room. Ethos protests rooming policy. Asian Americans do not.
- 1968 Ethos threatens a hunger strike, demanding increased enrollment of black students, increase in black employees, increased scholarships for black students, the establishment of a Martin Luther King, Jr. fund, and increased black representation in all academic departments. Asian Americans do not support Ethos.
- 1973 Wellesley College Asian Association (WCAA) is founded for social and cultural needs of Asian American students.
- 1977-80 Number of Asian Americans accepted at Wellesley hovers around 60.
- 1980 WCAA and Asian/Asian American students lose Crawford House because of a “long-standing request for cooperative housing on campus.” An internal memo by an administrator says, “I am interested in the fact that the *Asian Association receives one of the largest sums of money from SOFCE. Why?... It would seem to me that Slater could be shared with Asian students, as these should be Cultural Centers. Barring that, they should think about approaching TZA. I believe that financial problems there are substantial, and if the Asian Association has so much money, it could help support a shared house... Gray House is over there. Mezcla is certainly such a small organization that Asians could certainly share. A gain, if they have money, they could paint and furnish it.*”
- 1980's Asian American enrollment was low due to institutional practices:
- legacy creates white privilege
 - affirmative action policy did not incorporate Asian Americans because Asian Americans were not considered disadvantaged
 - 1958-69 admissions formula doubled verbal SAT scores, putting applicants whose first language was not English at a disability
- Asian American acceptance begins to increase.
Because WCAA could no longer meet the needs of all Asian/Asian American students, ethnic-based Asian organizations are formed.
- 1987 WOST offers first AAS course, “Asian Women in America.”
- 1988 Students again push for an Asian house, including a proposal and a petition with 226 signatures. The proposal was rejected. The Dean of Students responded, “I fully understand your desire for a permanent home base, and I hoped that we had provided that through your association with Slater Center.”
- 1990's Asian American enrollment peaks in the early 90's. Acceptance rates are still lower than those for Caucasian applicants.
Asian American population within Wellesley is not as diverse as the general population because all Asian Americans are lumped into one category.
- 1992 Representatives of WCAA, along with the other 7 Asian organizations, collectively form the Wellesley Asian Alliance (WAA), which was created for political purposes.
- 1994 Diana Chapman Walsh is inaugurated. She creates the new senior staff position of Director of Equal Opportunity and Multicultural Affairs, filling the position with African American Lee Elliott Brown. Since then, the position has been split in two, neither of which are senior staff positions.
- 1996 Only 5 Asian American staff and administrators work at Wellesley. Asian/Asian Americans make up 24% of the student population.
- 1999 Advisor for Student of Asian Descent, a part time position, leaves due to poor compensation.
- 2000 Elena Creef, the only Wellesley professor who specialized in Asian American Studies, is denied tenure. The search for an advisor continues.
- 2000-01 List of grievance was drawn by Asian American students of Wellesley College. Failure of administration to address these demands led to the WAAM-SLAM movement.
- 2002 Karen Shih is finally accepted as advisor to students of Asian descent.
- 2005 Asian/Asian American student population reaches 30%