

### **THE MERLE WOO PROJECT PRIZE (3/11)**

The Merle Woo Project Prize was established to recognize academic excellence in Asian American Studies and/or on a subject related to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Candidates may be nominated by faculty, staff, and students or candidates may nominate their own senior theses projects. The senior project may be creative or community-based.

The project may fall within any discipline; however it must incorporate theories and methods central to the field of Asian American Studies. Examples include a short film, an anthology of poetry, a grant proposal, or a curriculum for a youth empowerment organization. Any senior thesis project in the general area of the Asian American Studies and/or on a subject related to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders authored or co-authored by Claremont College undergraduates may be considered for this award. Entrants must present their project at the senior presentations. The winner will be announced at the senior presentations on the first Wednesday of May. The prize carries a monetary award of \$250.

**Purpose of the Award:** The purpose of this award is to acknowledge one or more Claremont College undergraduates who have distinguished themselves through a senior project using Asian American Studies' framework and/or a subject related to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

**Description:** The Merle Woo Project Prize was created to recognize and encourage high quality senior projects using Asian American Studies' frameworks and/or related to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Merle Woo is a world-renowned Asian American lesbian feminist activist, educator and writer. While pursuing a Master's Degree in English from San Francisco State University (SFSU), she was highly influenced by the 1968-1969 Third World Student Strikes, especially the key role of student democracy. After she earned her Master's in 1969, she taught the first Third World Literature course in the English Department, while teaching in SFSU's Educational Opportunity Program. She went on to teach in Asian American Studies at UC Berkeley in 1978, where she was fired in 1982. She fought and won a free speech/multi-discrimination case against UC Berkeley and was reinstated in 1984, only to be fired again because of retaliation in 1986. In 1989, she won a union arbitration against UC Berkeley. Woo continued to teach in Women's Studies at SFSU until 1997, and then at San Jose State University. Woo's teaching, writing, and activism interrogates issues of race, gender, sexuality and class oppression. She is a member of Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party. She has been widely published including her own, *Yellow Woman Speaks: Selected Poems*, the seminal, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, to the recent, *Smash the Church, Smash the State! The Early Years of Gay Liberation*.

**Size of Award:** Each recipient of this award will be granted a prize of not more than \$250. In case of multiple authorship of the winning project or projects, the awards may be apportioned. This grant is not to be considered as a replacement for funds which the recipient may receive from any other source.

**Selection Procedure:** The selection of award recipients will be made by a selection committee from among the projects which have been submitted to the Department by

student authors, or nominated for this award by an IDAAS faculty member, staff person, or student.

**Selection Criteria:** The selection criteria to be used for this award have been designed and approved by the IDAAS Department.

**Announcement of Awards:** Merle Woo Project Prize recipients shall be officially notified of their awards by an award letter. Copies of the award letter will be furnished to the President, Vice President for Development, Dean of Faculty, Dean of Students, and Dean of Admission at the student(s)' home college.

**When No Candidates Can Be Found:** Awards need not be granted in a year when candidates or submissions cannot be found.

### **Application**

In addition to the project, each project submitted for Merle Woo Project Prize shall include a one-page summary addressing the following points:

- \* Name, home college, major(s), minor(s), email, phone
- \* Name of supervising faculty member(s)
- \* A summary describing the project conceptualization/goal, rationale, methodology, and evaluation.

### **Reviewer Criteria**

Individuals reviewing projects submitted for the Merle Woo Project Prize are asked to submit a brief written evaluation, including responses to the following questions:

- o How clear is the project's goal?
- o How well does the project achieve its goal?

**Selection Committee:** A Selection Committee will select award winners and determine the distribution of funds to successful nominees. Membership of the committee will be:

- at least one IDAAS faculty
- at least one staffperson
- at least one student or alumni

**Award Categories:** There are two possible awards within the Merle Woo Project Prize:

1. Winner
2. Commendation

**Awards Ceremony:** The Awards Ceremony will take place on the first Wednesday of May, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Aviation Room, Hoch-Shanahan Dining Hall, Harvey Mudd

### **Past Awards:**

2009-2010 Laura Beckerman (Pitzer)

**Contact:** For application information, go to [www.idaas.org](http://www.idaas.org)