

**Personal Statement**  
**Phylis Lan Lin, PhD**  
**University of Indianapolis**  
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I am an educational leader with vision, integrity, and passion (VIP). I am not just a teaching faculty at a university. I am an “active verb” who envisions the future and the direction of the university. I participate in Administrative Group meetings and I seldom miss a faculty Senate meeting. I care about the state of the university. Being a faculty member (professor of sociology) and an administrator (Director of Asian Programs and Presidential International Ambassador), I do not marginalize myself. Instead, I am able to comprehend both faculty and administrative issues and concerns with a more objective attitude and perception. I do not limit myself to my own discipline or college; I reach out and interact with faculty in other colleges and programs. I am creative and innovative in initiating new programs and projects (Social Work program, Asian Programs, University of Indianapolis Press, and the Sino-American Project, the Chinese museum, and international symposia), which I think will strengthen a modern university in changing times. These programs and projects aim to assist the needs of promising students, to provide channels for faculty to publish scholarly work, to enhance the campus aesthetics view and diversity (culture, curriculum, and population), to link the community, to engage in regional development, and to expand the university’s educational experiences regionally, nationally, and internationally.

I am very visible on campus and always accessible to my students. In addition to my professional responsibilities to my classes, I frequently assist students, especially international students. Students are the most vital entity of a university. Their needs (academic and social) must be met, and we must mentor them to achieve their educational goals (critical thinking, living and working skills, knowledge, and social responsibility).

I am a multi-faceted person. I do not single out my academic training, leadership style, or my Chinese heritage as one factor in my success in teaching, scholarship, and administrative work. I think it is the combination and interaction of these traits which makes me a very unique person and a leader in higher education in America.

I will use a few concrete examples to illustrate my scholarship, administrative leadership, and the utilization of my Asian heritage at work and in interpersonal relations.

## **I. Scholarly and Professional Contributions**

### **A. Research, Scholarship, and Publication**

I am an effective teacher and a competent scholar in my field of study. I have been doing research in general areas of women at work, stress management, and marriage and the family. I have published books in both languages—Chinese and English. Several of my Chinese books (*Crisis Intervention: Theory and Application*, *Marriage and the Family*, *Organizational Behavior*, *Sociology*, *Medical Sociology*, *Stress and Management: A Total Approach*, *Characteristics of a Healthy Family*, etc.) have been used as textbooks or major reference books at colleges and universities in Taiwan and Mainland China. I have been invited by many universities on both sides of the straights to do special lectures. At least 30 theses and dissertations have quoted my work and two master theses replicated (by using a more advanced statistical tool for data analysis) my studies on characteristics of a healthy family.

In 1978, I published *Child Welfare: Foster Care and Social Work* in Taiwan. The foster care model I have introduced in the book was endorsed by Taiwanese government and social work agencies in Taiwan. They implemented the model that I have recommended and put it into practice. I was invited to conduct a one-week assessment workshop with 61 senior social workers in Taiwan in 1988. Foster care service is one of the most recognized services, as an alternative for the institutional care, for the needy children in Taiwan today. I am pleased to read that a paper presented at the 2007 professional conference quoted my classic study on child welfare.

Hundreds of citations of my books can be found on Google.com (in both Chinese and English editions). I received a golden award for one of the Marriage and the Family books that I published in Taiwan. One of the books on stress has also been designated by the government in service training programs as a required reader. I am extremely glad and honored to be able to make my special contributions to higher education through scholarly work, especially in the fields of sociology and social work, in both Taiwan and Mainland China.

It is interesting to point out that my Asian heritage has stimulated me to take a holistic approach in dealing with different social issues. I ferret for lines between disciplines (sociology, public health, social work, organizational management, etc.) and map out relationships between cultures and social systems. My most recent lecture topic in 2007, “Female Suicide in China and the U.S.—An Interdisciplinary, Cross-Cultural, and Multifactor Model Approach” at several universities and conferences, is the best illustration for my academic and research orientation. I am profoundly interested in social issues in China. My most recent presentation at a conference in Ningbo, China and in Los Angeles, USA was on the topic of urban poverty in China.

I have written other English language books (*Islam in America: Images and Challenges*, *Stories of Chinese Children’s Hats: Symbolism and Folklore*, *China in Transition: Selected Essays*, *Selected Readings on Marriage and the Family: A Global Perspective*, *China in Transition*, *Operational Flexibility: A Study of the Conceptualizations of Aging and Retirement in China*, etc.) I have authored or edited books that have also been adopted by American universities and colleges as textbooks or references. My most recent book (2009) as a co-editor is *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Challenges and New Paradigm*. The purpose of publishing this book is to emphasize the strategic importance of service-learning in higher education and to provide ideas for building paradigms and assessment tools for educators and practitioners in the service-learning field.

I have been invited by colleges, universities, and social agencies in both Taiwan and China for special lectures since the early 1970s. I have been a frequent speaker for the Voice of America. I have made many presentations at professional conferences in America, Asia, and Europe. I am a relatively good public speaker. I have the ability to captivate an audience of various sizes and characters. I have many opportunities to share and disseminate my knowledge, ideas of a harmonious society, the essence of Chinese culture, and my visions for higher education at home and abroad.

## **B. International Symposia**

I am a very good organizer. I have organized and chaired eleven international symposia on three subjects: Marriage and the Family: East and West, China, and Service-Learning: Interdisciplinary, Intercommunity, and International. Each symposium brought international scholars and researchers from many countries in over 40 institutions of higher education to America, South Africa, Athens, and Taiwan. My ability to organize professional conferences illustrates my skills in leading, organizing, coordinating, managing, as well as national/international networking. Most of all, it exemplifies my dedication and energy to scholarship and education for service. In 1990, I received a letter of congratulations from President George H. W. Bush for my efforts in organizing the International Symposium on China. Indianapolis Mayor Hudnut proclaimed July 26, 1991, as “Dr. Phylis Lan Lin Day” for my leadership in organizing the Family Symposium, which aims to promote healthy families and family strengths. I was selected by the *Indianapolis Business Journal* in its November 2000 issue as one of the 33 most influential women in Indiana; and in the May-June 2007 issue of

the *Asian Access News Magazine*, I was featured on the cover story as one of the Indiana's Asian American community heroes. \

In addition to organizing and chairing international symposia, I have coordinated many cultural events, including art exhibits and concerts since 1970s. I think art is one of the best venues to bring East and West together. I see myself as a culture bridge that has put forth energy and zest in linking Chinese culture to the West and vice versa

### **C. University of Indianapolis Press**

In the early 1990s, I established the University of Indianapolis Press, and it was institutionalized in 2004. I was appointed as the Executive Director. My vision of institutions of higher learning is that they should not be limited to teach students, but they should also advance the world's knowledge through facilitating and promulgating research. Although the press is small and without full-time staff, it has published excellent high quality scholarly reports, conference proceedings, culturally important studies, novels, and poetry. I oversee all facets of the press—acquisition, editing, production, budgeting, and marketing. One board member commented, “Your congenial leadership continues to be the reason for the healthy climate that persists at our press. You remain the originating, driving, and sustaining power of the press. The continuation of the press remains unthinkable without your continuing leadership.” Dr. Mary Moore, VP for Research, Planning and International Partnerships wrote, “In some ways Phylis's efforts hallowed the press to appear to be much larger than it actually is in terms of staffing and budget.” I am pleased to see that my tireless efforts have brought 25 University Press books to fruition.

## **II. Contribution as an Administrator in Higher Education**

### **A. The Phylis Lan Lin Social Work Program**

I was the founder of the nationally recognized and accredited Social Work Program at the University of Indianapolis during my tenure as the chairperson of the Behavioral Sciences Department from 1978 to 1985, and it was named in my honor in 1997. I established a social work scholarship endowment in 2000, which aims to assist students while promoting social work values and encouraging diversity among the students currently in the University of Indianapolis Social Work Program. The four criteria (community service, leadership in the community, strong grade point average, and other forms of scholarship) for the scholarship award strongly reflect my idea for ideal students. The selection process is handled by the Social Work Program faculty. I am extremely pleased to be able to award our promising students scholarships with a set standard. Currently the program has 70 students, a small program with a steady growth. The quality of the program is exemplified by the employment rate upon graduation and the admission rate to graduate schools. Both are 100%. A special thanks goes to our most diligent social work faculty who have created a rich learning environment for our students. I serve on the advisory board and the ad-hoc committee.

While the program is growing steadily and it has been seen as the best “kept secret” in our region, the program is at a point to consider whether or not it should spin off from the Social Sciences Department (formerly Behavioral Sciences Department) and become an independent department. The program also needs to address the feasibility of developing a graduate program. Another challenge the program encounters is to increase diversity in its student population. I recommend an assessment and a feasibility study in the next two years. In the meantime, I will assist the program to recruit international students and also to assist the program in making the logistic arrangements for students to take practice and internships abroad. Study abroad and international experience will definitely enrich college students in their learning experience. It is especially important for social work students to work with clients and agents in a diverse cultural environment, whether it is at the micro or macro level.

## **B. The Sino-American Program**

I am able to create links for my university to establish sister schools in Asia. My roles as the director of the Asian Programs and Presidential International Ambassador also have empowered me to represent the university abroad. My Asian heritage and leadership skills have enhanced my opportunities (advantages) and linkages to advance our international partnerships. I lead students, faculty, and administrators travel to Asia. I receive and host international guests on behalf of the president. I am invested with the authority to seek strategic partners and to assist Admissions in recruiting international students.

My most recent significant contribution to the university is the initiative, establishment, and implementation of the Sino-American Program (the 2+2 dual degree program) with Ningbo Institute of Technology (NIT), Zhejiang University in China. There have been surmountable challenges, and we have been able to overcome them one by one and step by step. I was able to “bring” 82 Chinese students from NIT to our campus over the past two years and also oversee 600 Chinese students who are currently enrolled in our program in China. Although it is a concerted effort for making the program a success, so much of the negotiation and communications with our partner, the Chinese authority in higher education, and the Chinese students are made by me, my proficiency in Chinese language and my Chinese cultural background enable me to communicate with our counterpart directly and effectively. As a coordinator and administrator for the program, I was able to communicate, bridge, and issue resolutions with various units (academic, admissions, registration, accounting and budgeting, campus life, international division, etc.). From the Sino-American project, I have gained extensive experience in planning, coordination, leading, and budget management.

The Sino-American program has enhanced our campus and classroom diversity, provided funds for faculty development and student overseas travel, and brought in tuition income for the university. In addition, the program provides opportunities for Chinese students to study in China and still receive an American education (faculty is sent to teach in China.) It also enhances Chinese faculty opportunities to visit an American university for research and to observe American teaching methods. The program promotes the whole idea of the globalizing and internationalization of higher education for both American and Chinese universities.

While celebrating the success of this international program and preparing the recruitment for the fifth cohort of students from China, we shall not overlook the challenges ahead of us. One of the fundamental questions we need to address is whether we will be able to maintain the quality of education while continuing to enroll an average of 150-200 Chinese students each year. Other challenges include, but are not limited to, the following: the program’s ability to balance the budget (self-sufficient) with the anticipation of possible additional administrative and operational costs, the program’s ability to find faculty who will be interested in and willing to spend certain periods of time in China to deliver our courses, affecting Chinese higher education system to be more aligned to the U.S. system, and responding to the changing visa issues in the near future.

## **C. The Au Ho-nien Museum**

With my profound interest in Chinese art, my conviction of “bringing the world to the university, and bringing the university to the world,” I have been able to create, plan, and organize many Asian cultural programs and activities and make logistic arrangements for students to visit our sister universities in Taiwan and China. My most recent endeavor was the establishment of the Au Ho-nien Museum on campus in 2004.

The museum houses 45 paintings of the most renowned Chinese artist in Taiwan, Master Au Ho-nien. The permanent collection was made possible through my 20 years of friendship with Master Au and through the support of former university presidents. It took two years to proceed to the establishment of this museum. My efforts include the acquisition, appraisal and insurance of paintings, the negotiation of the allocation for the

museum space on campus, installation, maintenance, and designing programs to link the museum with the liberal arts education. I had to coordinate with the artist, the space and physical plant committees, the art and collection committee, and the campus life committee. The museum is open to the university community and the public without charge. I also provide guided tours for students and community groups. The museum is part of the Asian Programs international and cultural initiative. Art is one of the best means for international communication and liberal arts education. We deeply appreciate Master Au's generosity and his support for our commitment to cultural diversity and enhancement of campus aesthetics.

### **III. Challenges and Opportunities for an Asian American Leader**

#### **A. Be a Champion of Cultural Dualism**

I was born in Taiwan, came to America in 1966, and I became an American citizen in 1975. I take pride as an Asian American and I am also proud to be an American. Although I reside in America, I keep in close touch with Asia by frequent visits, direct communications, and media, especially with Taiwan and China. I am abreast in Asian political, economics, social, and educational developments. My Asian heritage cultivates my Confucian values (humanism and humility) and moral teachings (work ethics, filial piety, and royalty), and my assimilation to American culture cultivates my scientific mind (critical thinking and research skills), democratic values (leadership style and civic engagement), and volunteerism (community service and social responsibility). I am able to grasp the best of the two worlds and keep an integrated yet balanced framework between the East and the West. I am blessed to have been socialized in both cultures. I can see in myself the values and practices of the two cultures. For example, my inner resilience (able to take charge in life, self-confident, assertive yet not aggressive, intelligent yet willing to learn, initiative yet active in team work and strategic planning), self-assessment (abreast in cutting-edge knowledge and skills yet willing to adopt new paradigms), ethnic work (maintain strong Asian heritage yet integrate myself into the mainstream culture), and strategies for building interpersonal relationships (ease in relating to others yet able to agree to disagree). We can always stress racial or ethnic differences. In my case, being both Asian and American at the same time has provided me more advantages than disadvantages in a working environment in higher education.

#### **B. Redefine the Challenges and Take Charge**

However, I must recognize my three distinctive traits that may put me in a disadvantaged status. First, I am average height as an Asian American but I am short in American standards. If physical strength and height are criteria for being a leader, then I am not qualified. However, I consider my height as my asset because my physicality has never presented a threat to anyone. I can immediately put people at ease when I converse with them. Second, I am a woman. It is still a fact that women are under-represented in leadership positions in higher education. However, being a woman, I am more expressive, gentle, objective, sensitive to people's needs and feelings, trust worthy (integrity), passionate and affectionate, and possibly have better communication skills than many of my male counterparts. I have good networking experiences with professional colleagues nationally and internationally. More importantly, I am very fortunate to have both very supportive male and female mentors in my professional life. Third, I am Chinese. My challenge is that I am seen as a minority and an outsider sometimes. Since I am not a native born American, regardless of how many years I have lived in America, people continue to see me as Chinese (physically and culturally) and my accent is sometimes a disadvantage to me in verbal communication. I try to speak slowly and loudly. It seems to work. I became an American citizen 32 years ago and people continue to ask me, "Where are you from?"

Although the society is changing and there are more women and minorities breaking the glass ceiling, Asian Americans have to go extra miles to cultivate and develop leadership skills. I am a true believer that the leader is made and not born. Everyone has a potential to lead regardless of one's ethnic background. My three ingredients for a leader are "VIP"—vision, integrity, and passion. The accomplishments I have cited in this statement basically grew out of my vision and sense of purpose for a university in changing times. There are always challenges and resistance to change or to adopt a new program, but we must stay the course and dare

to take the risk. No one can accomplish a large initiative alone. We must become team players. My mother is one of the most successful women physicians in Taiwan. I remember she said to me once, "I am the crab. All my nurses are my legs. We must work together in order for the crab to move forward." The second foundation for leadership is good morals, ethics, and humanity. Integrity is one of the most important characteristics of a leader. My Chinese upbringing gives me a fundamental Confucian teaching on ethics. My parents taught me the importance of humanity. My late father left me three words: truthfulness, beauty, and kindness. The third foundation for leadership is passion. Passion brings commitment and commitment radiates energy and devotion every day of my life. I think about how I can serve more people and change the institution for the better. I often said to my colleagues and students, "When I think of doing something which will benefit someone or the university, I know I am doing the right thing." I have been teaching 34 years and I am still excited about every class I teach. I make students think and work hard to expand their horizons. I will conclude this essay by quoting a friend's evaluation of me, "A lady with a big heart, deep compassion, high spirit, far vision, overwhelming energy, unfathomable generosity, and worldwide influence. A woman who gives all of herself and engages in life fully to make a difference in everything she does. To me, knowing her is not only seeing 'education for service' in action, but an artistic experience all by itself."

Phylis Lan Lin