

## ***Saving Face but Losing Control: Experts from California School of Professional Psychology Discuss Asian American Suicide, Domestic Violence, Gambling and other Mental Health Issues***

*August 16, 2007 - San Francisco* -- Virginia Tech shooter Cho Seung-Hui – a brooding Korean American student who spoke in whispers and never removed his sunglasses – is an extreme example of a common problem. In part because cultural barriers make Asian Americans less likely to seek help for emotional problems than whites, mental health care often fails to reach them says a panel of experts at Alliant International University.

“The small amount of research that has been done on Asian and Pacific Islander Americans shows that they don’t use mental health services, and when they do, they often stop treatment before solving their problems,” said Dr. Tai Chang of the California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP) at Alliant International University. The Virginia Tech student, who killed 32 students and faculty last April, had been involuntarily committed in 2005, but was never actually treated. Despite the fact that others considered him a danger, he told the clinic he was not having mental difficulties.

“Even when Asian-Americans do seek therapy,” commented Chang, “they are less likely than European Americans to reveal their problems, and there are cultural reasons for this: Asian cultures stress ‘saving face’ and relying on family rather than outsiders. While there are many differences between Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and other Asians, there are important similarities too. There’s a stigma associated with personal problems and Asians also hold beliefs that associate health with the environment, and they equate the physical with the emotional and spiritual.” Dr. Chang, an Assistant Professor in CSPP at Alliant, is the on-site chair of the Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) Conference, which is taking place on Alliant’s San Francisco Campus August 16 and 17.

The panel members, all affiliated with CSPP at Alliant, discussed how a variety of psychological problems affect Asian Americans: child abuse, depression, domestic violence, suicides, bullying at school, gambling, eating disorders and body image were among the topics. The CSPP Asian American Mental Health panel included:

- **Tai Chang, PhD**, Assistant Professor, CSPP and on-site chair, Asian American Psychological Association Conference
- **Reiko Homma True, PhD**, Program Director, CSPP Clinical Psychology Master’s Program in Japan, Past President of AAPA and past recipient of the AAPA Lifetime Achievement Award.
- **Alex Leung PhD**, Program Director, CSPP Doctoral Program in Hong Kong
- **Eddie Yu-Wai Chiu, PhD**, Assistant Professor, CSPP San Francisco
- **Debra M Kawahara, PhD**, Assistant Professor, CSPP, San Diego. Executive Board Member of APA Division 35 - Society for the Psychology of Women, Co-Coordinator, National Multicultural Conference & Summit in 2011.



## **About CSPP & Alliant International University**

The California School of Professional Psychology (CSPP) is the largest of three schools at Alliant International University. An independent school established in 1969, it merged with United States International University in 2001 to create Alliant.

CSPP was established by a group of practicing psychologists affiliated with the California Psychological Association. They felt that a new form of professional psychology training was necessary because university-based education in psychology, with a heavy emphasis on research, did not provide students with adequate clinical skills. Now, over 30 schools of professional psychology are built on the CSPP model. CSPP is widely regarded as one of the top programs for advanced degrees in psychology in the United States and it counts a large proportion of licensed psychologists in California among its alumni.

CSPP currently has eight doctoral programs in clinical psychology accredited by the APA, COAMFTE-accredited masters and doctoral programs in marriage and family therapy, a postdoctoral masters program in clinical psychopharmacology and international programs in Mexico City, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

An independent, not-for-profit institution of higher education, Alliant International University is lauded for student diversity and prides itself on preparing students for professional careers distinguished by problem-solving and multicultural competence. Alliant's mission calls for applying professional practice expertise and scholarship to resolve individual, community and societal challenges in the face of increasing diversity and globalism. Ratings from a number of independent publications and organizations underscore Alliant International University's unique background and outlook. Alliant has been rated:

- #1 in international diversity among national doctoral universities - US News & World Report, Aug. 2006
- #6 in awarding doctorates to minority women - Diverse Magazine, 2006
- #14 in doctorates to minorities (all disciplines combined) - Diverse Magazine, 2006
- Top 10 for doctoral faculty productivity Specialized Research Universities - Business, Education, & Social Sciences - Academic Analytics, 2007
- #10 in overall campus diversity - US News & World Report, Aug. 2006

### **Contact:**

- Victoria S. De Alba: (650) 270-7810
- Jackie Wright: (415) 823-5595
- Nicolette Toussaint (415) 794-6956 or (415) 955-2037