

February 2025

NEWSLETTER

FLORIDA ASIAN AMERICAN
RESTAURANT ALLIANCE

TOGETHER WE PROMOTE, EDUCATE, ADVOCATE & GROW

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Fang Shu, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

Thanks to the trust of the board of directors, this year I have been appointed as the CEO to lead the execution of FLAARA's strategy. My goal is to empower the Asian American community in South Florida, with a strong focus on the restaurant and food service industries. This is no small task, but together, we can make a real impact!

About FLAARA

The Florida Asian American Restaurant Alliance (FLAARA) is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to empowering Asian American restaurant and business owners across Florida. Our mission is to provide professional leadership, essential resources, and industry guidance to help businesses thrive in the competitive food service industry. Through advocacy, education, and collaboration, FLAARA strengthens the voice of Asian American entrepreneurs, driving policies that support sustainable growth, financial stability, and a positive public image.

FLAARA also champions Asian American businesses through its political committee, Florida Asian American Business PC, advocating for policies that address their unique challenges and unlock opportunities for success. Together, we create a unified platform for progress, leadership, and excellence.

January Rewind Moments That Mattered

LUNAR NEW YEAR

A BRIDGE BETWEEN CULTURES & COMMUNITIES

Fang Shu, Ph.D.

CEO
FLAARA

Tai Vaz

Chairwoman, AAAB,
Miami-Dade County

Jinlin Zhao, Ph.D.

Professor
FIU

Darren Mendoza

Owner
Lutong Pinoy



JANUARY 29, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

AN ONLINE DISCUSSION

Join us for an engaging webinar exploring the rich traditions of the Lunar New Year and celebrating Asian culture. Learn how South Florida can connect with the Asian community through meaningful and educational insights that foster relationships and unlock business opportunities.

REGISTER NOW



FLORIDA ASIAN AMERICAN
RESTAURANT ALLIANCE
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▶ WATCH NOW



food SOBEWFF
SOUTH BEACH WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY **Capital One**

ASIAN NIGHT MARKET

HOSTED BY
**ANDREW ZIMMERN, JET TILA
AND AARTI SEQUEIRA WITH SPECIAL
PERFORMANCE BY REV RUN**

**SUNDAY
FEB. 23, 2025 | 6PM**

American Airlines® North Venue
Entrance located on the sand
at 1 Lincoln Road

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

SOBEWFF.ORG/ASIAN

EAT, DRINK, EDUCATE!
\$40M
BENEFITTING
FIU



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Lunar New Year Celebration
Asian American student Association
University of Miami



*Lunar New
Year Festival*
by AASAUM



LUNAR
NEW
YEAR

LAKESIDE PATIO

@ 6:30-9:30PM



34th **Asian Culture Festival**

Thai American Association of Florida, Miami-Dade County
and Asian American Advisory Board Present

Annual Asian Culture Festival Festival de la Cultura Asiática

March 1 - 2, 2025 | 11am - 5pm

Tropical Park, 7900 SW 40th St, Miami

- Cultural experience with dance, arts, food and crafts
- Two days of unique world class performances
- Opening ceremony & parade, lion dance, taiko drumming, K-pop & more
- Asian-themed photo booth & luxury hotel raffles

www.AsianCultureFestival.net

\$15 Adults (2 days \$20), \$5 Kids (6-12), Free Under 6.
Family / Group Rates Available

Meet & Greet Poppy Boonyisa Chantrarachai
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Featuring the International Guest Artists
from Thailand "Moradokmai" led by
Thailand's National Artist Award in Films
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MC: Fareida Rajkumar



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Unique Keepsakes Foodie's Paradise

Kids' Play Area



How Asian Restaurants Can Shine at SOBEEFFF

February 20, 2025

By Shilat Jayo-Acuna,
Leadership Intern, FLAARA

The South Beach Wine and Food Festival (SOBEEFFF) is more than a culinary spectacle—it's a platform for exposure, networking, and education. In a recent webinar titled "Get Your Asian Restaurant Into SOBEEFFF", Professor Fang Shu and Professor Mohammad Qureshi shared insights on how Asian restaurants can participate and benefit from this prestigious event.

The Significance of SOBEEFFF

Fang Shu opened the webinar by highlighting the festival's potential to connect restaurant owners with industry leaders, celebrities, and new customer bases. More than just an event for food and drinks, SOBEEFFF plays a crucial role in philanthropy and education. Proceeds from the festival benefit the Florida International University (FIU) Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, having raised nearly \$40 million—a record-breaking achievement for a local university.

Shu emphasized that SOBEEFFF stimulates the local economy by promoting local restaurants and fostering community engagement. "This festival is more than just a place to eat and drink," Shu remarked. "It has educational components that benefit both students and restaurant owners alike."

Professor Qureshi's Journey with SOBEEFFF

Professor Mohammad Qureshi shared his extensive journey with SOBEEFFF, beginning in 1997 when it was a one-day event called the Wine Extravaganza. Over the years, Qureshi's roles expanded from volunteer to logistics manager, eventually becoming part of the internal staff that plans the festival year-round. Today, SOBEEFFF features over 90 events across Miami, drawing thousands of attendees.

Qureshi explained how the festival has evolved into a multi-day celebration, including:

- **Grand Tastings:** Featuring over 6,500 attendees who sample dishes and connect with local chefs and wineries.
- **Master Classes:** Hands-on sessions like sushi and empanada-making classes, offering educational insights into culinary arts.
- **Wine Seminars:** Providing wine enthusiasts with in-depth knowledge.
- **Asian Night Market:** Inspired by Hong Kong's street food culture, this event showcases Asian cuisine and beverages in a vibrant setting.

GET YOUR ASIAN RESTAURANTS INTO SOBEEFFF®

Fang Shu, Ph.D.
CEO, FLAARA

Mohammad Qureshi, MS
Director of Facilities,
Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management
Florida International University

FEBRUARY 17, 2025 | 9:30 - 10:30 AM EST

AN ONLINE DISCUSSION

Join us for an exclusive webinar designed to help Asian restaurant owners and chefs maximize their participation in the prestigious South Beach Wine & Food Festival (SOBEEFFF®). We'll cover how your restaurant can gain exposure, connect with food industry leaders, and attract new customers through this high-profile culinary event.

FREE REGISTRATION

FLORIDA ASIAN AMERICAN RESTAURANT ALLIANCE
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▶ WATCH NOW

Why Asian Restaurants Should Participate

Qureshi underscored the benefits for Asian restaurants participating in SOBEEFF. "It's a celebration of food and wine that gives local chefs and restaurants a platform to outshine and promote themselves," he said. With thousands of attendees and significant media coverage, the festival offers unmatched exposure.

Participating restaurants can:

- **Promote Their Brand:** Restaurants gain visibility through festival banners, website listings, and media coverage.
- **Network with Industry Leaders:** Establish connections with chefs, vendors, sponsors, and customers.
- **Receive Reimbursement:** The festival covers some costs, acknowledging the investment made by participants.
- **Capitalize on Long-Term Promotion:** Some restaurants proudly display participation banners or include SOBEEFF credentials in their marketing materials.

How to Get Involved

Given the festival's popularity, space for restaurants is limited. However, Qureshi and Shu expressed their commitment to advocating for interested Asian restaurants. The selection process focuses on ensuring diverse representation and maintaining the festival's high standards.

Educational and Philanthropic Impact

The webinar highlighted SOBEEFF's role in education, with over 1,200 FIU students volunteering annually. Students from various majors gain hands-on experience in hospitality, customer service, and event management. This practical learning complements their academic pursuits and prepares them for future careers.

Closing Thoughts

The South Beach Wine and Food Festival offers Asian restaurants a golden opportunity to gain exposure, connect with industry leaders, and contribute to educational and philanthropic causes. As SOBEEFF approaches its 25th anniversary, the festival continues to be a hallmark event that celebrates culinary excellence and community impact.

For Asian restaurant owners eager to elevate their brand and network within the culinary world, SOBEEFF is the perfect stage.

Member Spotlight



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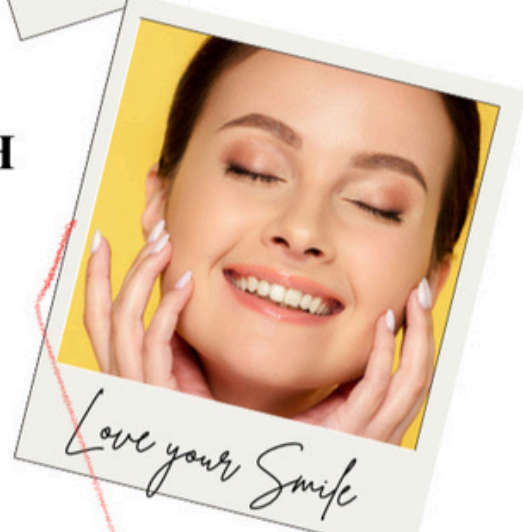
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Why Join FLAARA

FLAARA is more than a non-profit; we are the driving force behind the success of Asian American restaurant and business owners in Florida. From advocating for favorable policies and fostering government relations to providing workshops and sustainability initiatives, we empower entrepreneurs to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

With a focus on leadership, education, and collaboration, FLAARA is shaping a brighter future for the food service industry while amplifying the voices of Asian American business owners. Join us in building a stronger, more inclusive business community in Florida.



MEMBERSHIP - \$200 / YEAR.

Networking Opportunities

Connect with restaurant owners, industry leaders, government officials and business professionals through exclusive events. Free to members.

Educational Workshops

Participate in seminars, industry roundtables, and specialized workshops to enhance your knowledge and skills. Free to members.

Resource Sharing and Support

Tap into a community that values collaboration, offering shared resources and guidance. Free to members.

Restaurant Promotion

Highlight your business on the FLAARA website and social media platforms, amplifying your reach within the community.

Grant Support

Resources will be provided to assist you in applying for grants tailored to your business needs. Fees may apply, depending on the level of service.

WHAT ELSE CAN YOUR CAN HELP



Let's Collaborate



Attend our Events



Time, Talent, & Treasure


CONNECT WITH US!



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THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



 **Asian
Culture
Festival**

MARCH 1 & 2, 2025 11AM - 5PM
TROPICAL PARK
7900 SW 40TH ST
MIAMI, FL 33155

SPONSOR US!

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 FLAARA

 www.flaara.org

 marketing@flaara.org



Fang Shu, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief



Dr. Fang Shu, a Notable Global Learning Faculty at FIU, teaches Accounting & Finance at the Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management and Philanthropy at the Honors College. With 10+ years in global education, Dr. Shu has developed various study abroad and training programs. Previously, he managed FIU's China Programs, overseeing admissions, career development, and industry relations.

An active leader, Dr. Shu currently serves as the Marketing Director of SECSA-CHRIE, Faculty Advisor of Eta Sigma Delta (ESD) FIU Chapter, and Chief Executive Officer of the Florida Asian American Restaurant Alliance (FLAARA). He also sits on the Honors College Dean's Advisory Board (DAB), leads the Honors Alumni Community(ACB), and is part of the 2024 Leadership Miami® Program focused on community impact and leadership.

Shilat Jayo-Acuna is a first-year English major and aspiring attorney with a diverse skill set that includes public speaking, community engagement, professional writing, management, and presentations. As a student in the FIU Honors College, Shilat balances a demanding academic schedule while actively contributing to several campus organizations. She serves as a senator in the FIU Student Government Association, participates in the Pre-Law Advocates for Community Engagement and Service, and works with the Biscayne Bay Legislative Council. A recipient of the prestigious Silver Knight Award in English & Literature and an FIU Presidential Scholar, Shilat is committed to further developing her skills through collaboration with FLAARA.

Shilat Jayo-Acuna
Content Writer



Creative Director



Visual Content Creator

