**Award-winning author visits Rider**

By Olivia Tattory

The theme of identity of deep, multifaceted characters was presented during author Chang-rae Lee’s appearance at the Educational Opportunity Program’s (EOP) Distinguished Writers Series held on Friday, Feb. 3 at the Fireside Lounge.

Lee, an American novelist from South Korea, immigrated to the United States in 1968 at the age of 3. He graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University and went on to receive a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Oregon. He is currently teaching at Princeton University.

Lee read from some of his works and met with the audience for a book signing. Dr. Hulsman of the English Department described Lee’s themes.

“Lee’s themes are” resisting fashionable labels and a lover of “difficult truths,” Hulsman said. “There are many shades of characters and all sorts of things going on in their lives resulting in memorable stories.”

Lee has written three novels thus far, Native Speaker (1995), A Gesture Life (1999), and Aloft (2004), all published by Riverhead Books, have each received awards or recognition.

His first novel, Native Speaker, won The American Book Award, the PEN/ Hemingway Award and numerous other honors. A Gesture Life won the Asian-American Literature Award, The Anisfield-Wolfe Prize in Fiction and earned Lee a spot on The New Yorker’s list of 20 best writers under 40. His third novel Aloft, a critically acclaimed success, was among The New Times’ “Notable Books of the Year.”

When asked about his writing technique, Lee noted that he began his writing career using a computer, which enabled him to continually edit and revise while writing. Then when satisfied with a sentence, he would move on to the next.

“When I revise, I more throw out sentences already written,” he said. Lee uses his mother’s life as a demonstration for him to observe and as a lesson for what language really means. He described his mother as a “strong, social, intellectual woman” when speaking Korean, but as “afraid of danger,” language,” he added in his core passion and belief.

For Lee, it’s a starting novel and then deciding at one point to keep going. He tries to put himself in the situation of wondering what he might want to happen next.

“I write what I want to read, not necessarily what I want to write,” said Lee. Lee gets very personal with the characters in his novels and has real-life experience with the world of characters he tries to see.

**NJDOC classes cancelled due to small turnout**

By Catherine Jablonski

An academic program that Rider University began offering in May 2004 to New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) employees at its Central Office in Trenton has been cut back because of a small number of students involved.

Although the program is available to all the staff and officers at the NJDOC, problems plagued it from the start.

Different work-shifts and other personal responsibilities caused many of the students to drop the courses, leaving only eight of the students who were initially involved still taking classes. With such a small number of students enrolled, courses held in the Central Office in Trenton had to be cancelled, said Karen Crowell, assistant dean of the College of Continuing Studies.

“Just by the nature of the adult population – having families, jobs, we had a small group to start off with,” she said. “We integrated those who stayed with the program into the Rider community, and they are enjoying their classes.”

The program was initiated because NJDOC commissioner Devon Brown wanted to give the NJDOC community more opportunities to obtain their bachelor’s, said Dr. James Castagnera, associate provost and associate counsel.

Castagnera feels that it was not any particular person’s fault that the program was not successful, but he does believe that it was not as publicized to the NJDOC’s staff as it should have been.

“I don’t want to point any fingers at any one, but I got the sense that the program was not promoted well among the NJDOC’s staff and the course offerings were not conducive to students working in a see NJDOC, page 4

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