

**RAGA Annual Report 2008 – 2009**  
**Sunera Thobani, RAGA Director**

With the retirement of Dr. Valerie Raoul, SAGA has been in transition for the last two years. As the new Director, I plan to remake SAGA into the Centre for RAGA (Race, Autobiography, Gender and Aging) studies by expanding its mandate to include a strong focus on equity and social justice, as well to extend its activities to become more internationally and community-oriented.

My plans over the next three years are to develop RAGA into a thriving site for critical race feminist scholarship and autobiographical studies at UBC. Currently, many faculty and graduate students across the campus are working on critical race studies but are not directly connected to CWAGS. I plan to extend RAGA's links to this larger community by initiating new collaborative projects and by fostering stronger networks and increased communication.

I also plan to build stronger partnerships with community organizations in the lower mainland. The lower mainland population is culturally and racially very diverse, and there is great potential for linking historically marginalized communities to UBC through specific community-focused initiatives. RAGA was able to make very valuable connections with the South Asian community through the events we organized to commemorate 100 Years of South Asian Presence in Canada in Fall 2009. We will build on these links to strengthen our connections with immigrant and refugee service organizations and advocacy groups working in/with these communities. RAGA will welcome community activists and visitors from among these groups to access the resources of the Centre, and will organize specific activities that will bring them into greater contact with each other. In particular, I will place strong emphasis on projects that bring organizations and activists together across racial, religious and communal divides.

I am also one of the founding members of Researchers and Academics of Color for Equity (RACE), the first cross-country network of academics of colour and of Aboriginal ancestry. RACE was founded in 2001 after a consultation held at UBC with faculty, students and community activists from across the country. The network is committed to promoting critical race feminist scholarship in Canada and has organized nine annual conferences (2 in BC, 4 in Ontario, 1 in Saskatchewan, 1 in Nova Scotia and 1 in Quebec) since it's founding. RACE has a national steering committee with members from across Canada. For our 10th anniversary, we will organize our annual conference at the University of Alberta. As Director of RAGA, I plan to build stronger links between RACE and RAGA. Racelink, the bi-annual newsletter published by RACE, is available to members. For more information, kindly contact Dr. Thobani.

During 2008-2009, RAGA organized a week-long series of events to Commemorate Over 100 Years of South Asian Presence in Canada. Co-sponsored by a number of community organizations, the events included a Colloquium at UBC, panel on South Asians in the Media, community forum on Violence Against Women, film screenings and an evening of performance arts by South Asian artists. The keynote speaker for the community events was a young South Asian activist from Ontario, Kabir Joshi-Vijayan.