College kicks off $70 million fundraising effort for the next generation.
In the midst of a traffic jam of students and bikes, Classics 30 meets in Wellman Hall with more than one hundred students filing in. Students of all ages and majors take this class for various reasons, but many may not think about the importance of the course itself to their overall education. Classics 30 is unique: it provides an insight to the source of grammatical structure as well as the beginnings of western culture.

Metamorphosis. As one student looks down at her workbook, there lies the word “metamorphosis” broken into three parts: -meta, -morpho, and -sis; a word that means “a transformation” now reexamines how students were just taught words when they were in grade school. In class, students learn about how letters were created and how a word like “metamorphosis” got its meaning.

The lecture is led by Emily Albu, an associate professor of classics. She explains that meta means change, -morpho means form and -sis gives the word its noun behavior. So in putting these parts together, students understand how words are more than just letters formed out of nowhere, but made to give meaning. As the class sounds out the word, Albu asks for examples, a student with blue and gold UC Davis sweatshirt answers, “metamorphosis, like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly.”

Courses in classical civilization focus on the ancient societies that have given birth to the traditions we see today. Classics 30 focuses on words; Albu explains that the course can appeal to a wide variety of people such as “word nerds” and also those who have a “genuine interest in the origins of biological terms.” It specifically selects words from mythology and ancient history and then teaches students the richness of the word by exploring its root and heritage. It also helps to break up a word into sub-categories so that students can find clues that help uncover its meaning.

At the end of class, one student jokingly says, “I wish I had this class back in high school. Maybe I would have done better on my SATs.” According to Albu, “Classics is the ultimate liberal art course because it focuses on languages such as Latin, Greek and English, but also teaches students about art, culture, history, religion, philosophy . . . basically our subject matter is endless.” While the classics major remains small compared to other majors in the College of Letters and Science, with only forty student majors and six faculty members, Albu says “the faculty and students in classics are a nurturing group of scholars and teachers that genuinely care about undergraduate teaching.” To be part of a small group in such a large university makes the major so much greater than just numbers.

Albu enjoys teaching courses like Classics 30 because it welcomes students from many majors. “It is the best way to enrich a student’s understanding of the English language without having too much stress about specific eras and details,” she says. In a world filled with infinite online access to programs, students enjoy a classic puzzle: to find the true meaning of language through something as basic as a simple dictionary.
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ON THE COVER:
Anh Tu Pham, a junior majoring in American studies and economics, is photographed near Olson Hall.

Credit: Robert Durell

College Currents is published by the College Relations and Development office, (530) 752-3429.
Editor: Amanda Price
Contributing Writers: Andy Fell, Carly Haase, Dave Jones, Kimberly Law, Nicole Nguyen, Anh Tu Pham, Amanda Price, Colleen Schulman, Jim Sweeney, Kate Washington
Design: Annette Chow
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This magazine was printed on paper from a well-managed forest, manufactured by an environmentally-friendly company that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.
As you might see from the cover of our spring magazine, the College of Letters and Science has announced a $70 million fundraising campaign, part of the $1 billion Campaign for UC Davis, which launched earlier this fall. We are thrilled to highlight just a few of the thousands who have donated to the college, or who are beneficiaries of those gifts. Philanthropy is part of the fabric of higher education – it helps drive advancements in education and innovation. We hope these stories inspire you to be part of The Campaign for UC Davis.

As we enter the spring quarter, we also look towards a year of celebration. Sixty years ago, in the fall of 1951, the College of Letters and Science welcomed its first class. Look for the celebration of our sixty year anniversary in the fall issue of College Currents. We are also pleased to announce a new College of Letters and Science website. When you have a moment, take a peek at www.ls.ucdavis.edu.

Thank you for your continued support and interest in the College of Letters and Science.

Winston Ko, Dean, Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
George R. Mangun, Dean, Division of Social Sciences
Jessie Ann Owens, Dean, Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies

Correction: Fall 2010 issue

Annual Report, page 33, Donors to the College of Letters and Science, Fiscal Year 2009-10

In the annual honor roll of donors to the College of Letters and Science, we listed the John E. Fetzer Institute, Inc. incorrectly. Their preferred listing is: Fetzer Institute.

Comments?
Comments and questions about this issue of College Currents can be sent to the editor at currentseditor@ucdavis.edu.

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THE SPARK OF INVENTION

A new Center for Science and Innovation Studies opened its doors this fall, led by Mario Biagioli, Distinguished Professor of Law and Science and Technology Studies (STS), who recently arrived to UC Davis from his former appointment at Harvard University.

“Professor Biagioli brings a unique perspective to studies of science and technology that is informed by his deep knowledge as a scholar of the history of science, as well as concepts of intellectual property and how innovations occur in science and technology,” said Ron Mangun, dean of the Division of Social Sciences. Mangun added that the division will benefit from Biagioli’s interdisciplinary scholarship (he holds a joint appointment in the School of Law and the Division of Social Sciences) and international leadership in innovation studies, advancing programs in science and technology studies, history, and others.

The center’s research engages the many dimensions of technoscientific innovation. “We’ll be studying how innovation works,” Biagioli explained, “This means looking at all of its facets, how it happens, how people come up with discoveries, how they compete and collaborate, the training of scientists, funding issues, publication matters, the way labs are designed, and socio-cultural and networking issues.”

Biagioli’s wife, Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli, also joined the college as an associate professor of technocultural studies and film studies. Jessie Ann Owens, dean of the Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies, is delighted to have Ravetto-Biagioli join the division. “She brings real strength in film history, theory and criticism,” she said.

TRIASSIC PARK

Two paleontologists from UC Davis are among a group of experts advising government leaders in Luoping, China on fossil conservation and the development of a geological park. “The area is unique in that it preserves fossils of marine reptiles such as ichthyosaurs and plesiosaur ancestors, together with the fish, arthropods and plants that lived with them,” said Ryosuke Motani, professor of geology. The fossils date from the Middle Triassic Period, about 240 million years ago. Motani and UC Davis graduate student Neil Kelley and other international experts visited Luoping in early September. They toured the fossil site and met with government officials to discuss the historical significance of the fossils and ways to protect them.

NELSON’S NEW HOME

The University Club, a longstanding fixture on the UC Davis campus, has gained a new name to go with its new residents. The building, which has served as a place for meetings as well as a studio and performance space, is the new home of the Richard L. Nelson Gallery, and has been renamed Richard L. Nelson Hall, in honor of Nelson, who founded the Department of Art and hired many of the artists who
have made UC Davis a center of the art world since the 1960s.

Planning and fundraising are under way to build a new UC Davis Museum of Art, and the new space will help create a smooth transition to the future museum. The Nelson Gallery had only 1,200 square feet of exhibition space in the Art Building. The Richard L. Nelson Hall houses the gallery in over 4,000 square feet of space, and the Fine Art Collection will be stored at another site on campus.

“I am thrilled to have the kind of room that allows a curator to spread out and think expansively,” said Renny Pritikin, director of the Richard L. Nelson Gallery and Fine Art Collection. “This is a specially-designed facility with excellent sight lines and new lighting. Most importantly, for the first time we will exhibit selections from the collection on a regular basis in dedicated gallery space, alongside rotating special exhibitions.”

**DRINKING AWAY PERFORMANCE**

Bottoms up? Then it’s grades down, says a study co-authored by Scott Carrell, an assistant professor of economics. He, along with two co-researchers, found that alcohol consumption “significantly reduces” academic performance, enough to push a final class grade down by half a letter grade. What’s more, the negative effects are the largest for the highest-performing students. Carrell, Mark Hoekstra from the University of Pittsburgh and James West of the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado, conducted a six-year review of the grades of 3,884 students in mandatory courses at the academy in order to reach this consensus. The study was published as a working paper by the National Bureau of Economic Research.

**UC DAVIS ELITE**

UC Davis has accepted an invitation to join a prestigious consortium of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), established in 2000 to increase financial support for research in the humanities. The consortium is dedicated to increasing the amount and number of fellowships awarded by the 91-year-old ACLS through rigorous, peer-reviewed competitions. “The invitation acknowledges that UC Davis has increased its stature in the humanities,” said Jessie Ann Owens, dean of the Division of Humanities, Arts and Cultural Studies. “It is an honor to be invited to join the ACLS consortium, which consists of the 32 AAU institutions that have the highest profile in the humanities.”

**NEW DNA REPAIR PATHWAY**

UC Davis researchers Sheila David and Peter Beal have found a new pathway for repairing DNA damaged by oxygen radicals. Oxygen radicals are strongly linked to cancer and aging; forming during metabolism and upon exposure to environmental toxins and radiation. Understanding more about how this damage can be repaired could lead to a better understanding of the causes of some cancers. “Chronic inflammation, for example in the gut, has been linked to cancer,” said David. As part of its inflammatory response, the body’s immune system produces oxygen radicals, reactive oxygen species, to kill bacteria, parasites or tumors. “This new inducible pathway gives cells greater capacity to repair oxidative damage,” said Beal.
ABOUT FACE

A new study by psychology professor Jeffrey Sherman and two colleagues has extended what we know about facial recognition. People learn about new things—such as diseases, dogs, or cars—by noting attributes that distinguish them from the same types of things that they already know. Sherman and colleagues have expanded on this research—their new study demonstrated for the first time that the same basic learning pattern also applies when people place others into ethnic categories based on facial characteristics. The study, published in Psychological Science, looked at two groups: Chinese people who had grown up in China or elsewhere as part of a majority Asian population and Caucasian New Zealanders. When shown a series of computer-morphed faces with both Asian and Caucasian features, the Chinese group tended to identify ambiguous faces as Caucasians, and the Caucasian group tended to identify ambiguous faces as Asian.

“Features that are more typical of minority group members draw more attention,” Sherman explained. “So, when someone has a mixture of features, the minority features are the ones that we tend to grab onto. We pay more attention to them and they are used more heavily in our judgments. They influence us to a greater degree.”

BIG FIZZ

Geology professor Howard Spero has co-authored a study on climate change that accelerates the timing of carbon sequestered in the south pole. The study reports on the mechanism of carbon flow from the Earth’s oceans at the end of the last ice age, based on chemical analyses of the shells of tiny plankton fossils. “As we alter Earth’s climate by burning oil, gas and coal, we urgently need to understand how the deep ocean sequesters carbon, and how that carbon can flow between the atmosphere and ocean in Earth’s past,” said Spero. “This study tells us more about the where-and-when mechanics of the cycle, which are still critical questions in climate science.” The report discusses the scientific consensus on the general scenario that marine phytoplankton remove carbon dioxide from the ocean surface, grow, die and sink to the ocean’s interior, where they are broken down into carbon dioxide. But where experts’ opinions diverge is where and how quickly the release of carbon occurred at the end of an ice age. Spero and his colleagues attest that the carbon-dioxide release at the end of the last ice age was more of a big fizz than a slow leak.

The study was published in the journal Nature.

RACING TO RUNWAYS: STUDENTS MAKE NOISE

Some of the college’s undergraduate and graduate students are making headlines for their work, both on and off campus. • Keith Hennessy, a doctoral candidate in performance studies, recently won the Bessie Award for outstanding work by artists in dance, music and performance art. The last time someone from the west coast won the award was a decade ago. • Another artist, Matthew Zefeldt, who is an M.F.A. candidate, has received a coveted Dedalus Foundation fellowship, a $20,000 prize and known nationally as an outstanding fellowship to receive. • Watch the Amazing Race? You might have caught Kevin Wu, also known as KevJumba in YouTube circles, in the race with his father Michael. The UC Davis junior who is a film major
entered the public eye in 2007 when he began posting videos giving a glimpse into his life. In 2008, Wu began the Jumba-Fund, a YouTube channel dedicated to raising money for charity. Kevin and Michael placed 7th in the competition, the 17th season of that show. • Design major Miquette Elliott has won first place in the Hispanic Association of College & Universities/Gap fashion scholarship competition, garnering a $5,000 scholarship.

WITCHES OF GAMBAGA

The Witches of Gambaga is a haunting 55 minute documentary film about a community of women condemned to live as witches in Northern Ghana. The film, which was co-produced by Professor Amina Mama, director of Women and Gender Studies, was named “Best Documentary” at the 2010 Black International Film Festival.

PHYSICS IN MANY SPHERES

Physics professor Lloyd Knox, with the help of two undergraduate and graduate students, has launched a new blog and “vlog” to delve into some of the areas being studied in physics today. In creating the new spot, Knox said, “We call ourselves the Spherical Cow Company as a tribute to the agricultural roots of UC Davis, as well as a reference to our focus on communicating the power of simple physical models to improve our understanding, and even aesthetic appreciation, of the natural world.” Read (and see) more at: http://sphericalcow-company.blogspot.com/

TOP GEAR

If you were to clock the speed of the Earth’s mantle, you might be surprised at how fast it is. Magali Billen, an associate professor of geology and co-author of a paper that was published in the journal Nature, studies the Alaskan subduction zone (where the Pacific tectonic plate is diving beneath another plate and pushing up the land including Mt. McKinley). She, along with graduate student Margarete Jadamec, now a postdoctoral researcher at Monash University in Australia, built a detailed computer model of the plate and surrounding mantle. The model revealed that rather than moving at roughly the same speed as the plate, the mantle was flowing much faster. “We expected it to flow faster, but the surprise was that it is flowing 20 to 30 times faster,” Billen said.

KINECT UNLOCKED

Microsoft Kinect, the new gaming system launched by Microsoft, was decoded by geology researcher Oliver Kreylos, who works in the UC Davis Keck CAVES. He unlocked the code of the device, letting him reconstruct 3-D objects in real-time, “from scratch” in C++, using his own virtual reality software. Kreylos’ first posting of his work on YouTube has garnered more than two million hits, and has caught the eye of technologists across the globe. He has been featured in the New York Times, PC World, Engadget, and many others.

TRAINING GRANT ACCELERATES MIND-BRAIN SCIENCE

UC Davis has received a $1.25 million grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to help train
the next generation of researchers in mind-brain science. The grant will enable UC Davis to organize a two-week intensive training program known as the Summer Institute in Cognitive Neuroscience for the next five years. The program will be run in collaboration with UC Santa Barbara. “The summer institute will focus on translating fundamental discoveries into treating mental illness,” said Ron Mangun, dean of the Division of Social Sciences and researcher at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain.

**Priority Number One**

The National Research Council for the National Academy of Sciences ranked the Large Synoptic Survey Telescope (LSST) as its top priority for the next large ground-based astronomical facility. The once-in-a-decade survey ranking is a huge boost for the project. UC Davis Distinguished Professor of Physics and LSST Director J. Anthony Tyson commented, “We are absolutely delighted to hear this strong endorsement from our colleagues in the scientific community for a project that we have been advocating for many years.”

**Meditate on Longer Cell Life**

Positive psychological changes that occur during meditation training are associated with greater telomerase activity, according to researchers at UC Davis and UCSF. The study is the first to link positive well-being to higher telomerase, an enzyme important for the long-term health of cells in the body. The effect appears to be attributed to psychological changes that increase a person’s ability to cope with stress. “We have found that meditation promotes positive psychological changes, and that people who practice meditation show the greatest improvement in various psychological measures and had the highest levels of telomerase,” said Clifford Saron, associate research scientist at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain.

“The take-home message from this work is not that meditation directly increases telomerase activity and therefore a person’s health and longevity, rather, meditation may improve a person’s psychological well-being and in turn these changes are related to telomerase activity in immune cells, which has the potential to promote longevity in those cells.”

**Where Are Your Childhood Memories?**

A new study from UC Davis challenges conventional wisdom on the development of memory in children. The prevailing view has been that changes in how memories are formed as children grow are driven by development of the prefrontal cortex. “The role of the hippocampus, a structure located in the middle of the brain and known to be important for forming and recalling memories, is fixed in early childhood,” said Simona Ghetti, associate professor at the UC Davis Department of Psychology and the Center for Mind and Brain. However, she and colleagues have found that in children between 8–14 years, the function of the hippocampus continues to change. The study was published in the *Journal of Neuroscience*.

**Throwing Lead**

The Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) near Geneva, Switzerland, entered a new phase of operation in November. Scientists
stopped running streams of protons through the machine and began running lead atoms, stripped of their electrons, around the ring so they smash into each other. Physicists from the Heavy Ion Group at the UC Davis physics department are part of the team concerning lead ion experiments. The group includes professors Daniel Cebra and Manuel Calderon de la Barca, postdoctoral scholar Sevil Salur and graduate student Jorge Robles. “The record-setting energies available for heavy ion collisions at the LHC will yield large numbers of rare and heavy particles,” Cebra said.

WRITE NOW: CLOSING THE WRITING GAP

The University Writing Program is partnering with the School of Education, the Area 3 Writing Project, and two Sacramento public schools on a new $926,000 grant that will use the creative talents of outstanding local students to help teachers close the achievement gap in the language arts. The project will bring talented writers and performers of the Sacramento Area Youth Speaks (SAYS) program and the Area 3 Writing Project to create and implement an in-depth professional development experience for teachers at Martin Luther King, Jr. Technology Academy and Grant Union High School.

NEAT NEWS

Two findings were recently published by the Nanomaterials in the Environment, Agriculture and Technology (NEAT) program. NEAT is led by Alexandra Navrotsky, the Edward Roessler Chair in Mathematical and Physical Sciences and Distinguished Professor of Ceramic, Earth and Environmental Materials. First, studies at NEAT show that particle size has a far more dramatic impact on chemical reactivity than previously thought; results which could have implications for understanding a wide range of vital chemical reactions, from rusting iron to the origins of life. The second finding is that calcium carbonate, one of the most widespread materials on Earth, is now measured in terms of energy change. “Calcium carbonate is the major long-term sink for atmospheric carbon dioxide,” said Navrotsky. “By measuring the heat liberated during these transformations, we can study the process by which carbon dioxide is trapped and transformed to stable carbonate minerals.”

ALZHEIMER’S SQUEEZED

Brain cells exposed to a form of the amyloid beta protein, the molecule linked to Alzheimer’s disease, become stiffer and bend less under pressure, as found by Gang-Yu Liu, professor of chemistry, and Lee-Way Jin, an associate professor of pathology and researcher at the UC Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Center. The results reveal one mechanism by which the amyloid protein damages the brain, a finding that could lead to new ways to screen drugs for Alzheimer’s and similar diseases.

PRIZED ALUMNI

College alumni have recently been recognized for a variety of accomplishments. • Marcos Rigol, a former postdoctoral researcher, was awarded the C10 Young Scientist Prize by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physicists (IUPAP), a prestigious international prize. • President Obama named 85 researchers as the recipients of the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers. One of the recipients, Ilke Arslan, received a Ph.D. in physics from UC Davis in 2004. • Placer High School ceramics teacher Toby Covich was recognized for his contributions in education in an article in the Auburn Journal. Covich received his B.A. in art studio in 1977. • Gerald Bawden (M.S., ‘95, Ph.D., ‘98, Geology), gave the Bowie Lecture at the American Geophysical Union meeting in
December. Bawden collaborates with the Department of Geology in its Keck CAVES research. • Jessica Tracy (M.A., ’01, Ph.D., ’05, Psychology), received the Early Career Award from the International Society for Self and Identity. • California’s Supreme Court has a new chief justice – Tani Catil-Sakauye. Sakauye received her B.A. in rhetoric in 1980, and her J.D. from the School of Law in 1984. • Brian Lewis (B.A., Mass Communications, ’81) has been appointed the Chief Strategy Officer for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

A NEW GENIUS

Yiyun Li is an associate professor of English and a fiction writer who has been drawing rave reviews from critics for her books. Last fall, she was awarded a MacArthur Grant, a $500,000 award given to only a handful of individuals each year. Li is the third individual from the College of Letters and Science to receive the award. “It’s an incredible honor, and it is a hugely generous gift from the MacArthur Foundation,” Li said. “I haven’t thought about the details, but their support will mean I have more time to write in the next five years.”

DISTINCTIONS: COLLEGE FACULTY IMPRESS

College of Letters and Science faculty members are making headlines. • D. Kern Holoman, distinguished professor of music and conductor emeritus of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra, has been named an honorary member of the American Musicological Society, the organization’s highest honor. Holoman was recognized for his work as a scholar of 19th century music, particularly the works of Hector Berlioz; for his writing on music for the general public; and for directing two successful fundraising campaigns for the organization. • The American Psychological Association recently presented an award to Simona Ghetti for distinguished scientific early career contributions to psychology. Ghetti was also awarded a six-year, $600,000 Scholar Award by the James S. McDonnell Foundation. The award will support Ghetti’s research on understanding processes of memory development. Ghetti is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology and a researcher at the Center for Mind and Brain. • Jesse Drew, associate professor and director of technocultural studies, has returned to San Francisco’s Mission District, a place where he spent a lot of time in early 1970s, for the opening of Turning the Tables, a series of video and audio portraits of San Francisco waiters that he made with his wife, Glenda, an associate professor of design at UC Davis. • In other news, psychologists Richard Robins, Keith Widaman and Rand Conger were awarded a $6.5 million grant for a longitudinal study of 674 Mexican-origin families. The study will look at Mexican family culture and substance abuse risk and resilience. The grant was awarded by the National Institute of Drug Abuse. • Isao Fujimoto, a senior lecturer emeritus in Asian American Studies and Human and Community Development, known as a pioneer for Asian American Studies, recently earned his Ph.D. from Cornell University at the age of 76. • Dan Romik an assistant professor of mathematics, received a National Science Foundation early career grant, nearly $400,000 for five years. Romik studies combinatorial probability, a field of pure mathematics with deep connections to fundamental physics. “It’s a very beautiful mathematics, and fertile ground for research,” Romik said. • George R. Mangun, dean of the Division of Social Sciences, along with Professor of Chemistry Sheila David, Distinguished Professor of Physics Charles S. Fadley, and Professor of Statistics Jane-Ling Wang, were elected as fellows of the American Association of the Advancement of Science.
Looking around UC Davis, it's easy to spot excellence and achievement everywhere: The Keck CAVES graphs data in glowing 3-D; the research achievements of centers like the Center for Mind and Brain or the California Lighting Technology Center are world renowned; and high-achieving students from across UC Davis learn from top-notch college faculty. The College of Letters and Science embodies all that and more.

Look closer, though, and alongside achievement you'll see need, borne of the drive to accomplish something more. Next to the Mondavi Center, an art museum awaits funding to rise. Faculty plan ambitious research projects and hope to recruit outstanding graduate students—the stars of the next generation. And the college has 10,000 undergraduates who need scholarships to stay in school and to pursue opportunities that will lead to future successes.

Making sure those dreams come true is the purpose of the College of Letters and Science's fundraising campaign, which aims to raise $70 million through a combination of grants—like a recent $1.485 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to support a program of Mellon Research Initiatives in the Humanities—as well as alumni and community gifts both large and small. That's part of the still grander goal of The Campaign for UC Davis: a university-wide initiative to raise $1 billion in philanthropic support, from 100,000 donors.

“By comparison, the college's portion might sound modest, but gifts to the college will go far,” says Maureen Miller, assistant dean of College Relations and Development in the College of Letters and Science. Some funding will go towards research projects like those in the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences such as cosmology and geosciences. Other amounts will go to support the many students in financial need in the campus's biggest academic unit, to endow chairs, and to support the college’s diverse teaching and cutting-edge research.

Philanthropic support is particularly important in the disciplines the college encompasses, says Miller: “The arts, humanities, social sciences, and fundamental research and education in the mathematical and physical sciences don't have the opportunities for industry support or government funding that are available for other disciplines. Private support has a higher impact here.”

With the most alumni of any of the ten colleges and professional schools on campus, the college can certainly attain its goal of $70 million—but it will take work and commitment. It will also take passion—not only for the college's continued excellence, but also for specific fields and interests that can be the target of gifts. “There are opportunities all over Letters and Science,” says Kevin Bacon—a Letters and Science alumnus ('72), chairman of the UC Davis Foundation Board and a member of the college's Deans' Advisory Council. He urges alumni to think first of what interests them personally as they consider making a gift. “Whatever someone’s passion is, there’s a good chance someone in Letters and Science is doing leading-edge research in that field.”

Enriching Student Life: From Scholarships to New Programs

Donors like Darryl Goss (B.A., African-American Studies, ’83) and his wife Lois Goss (B.A., Sociology, ’85) exemplify that commitment to UC Davis and passion for its educational mission. The couple, who met as student athletes, recently started a program of giving inspired by a visit to campus and by memories of their own time at the university. Their goal? To help students build...
Paul Estabrook

networks and understand how to connect with alumni, preparing them for the future. Darryl Goss recently joined the College of Letters and Science Deans’ Advisory Council.

“Having attended other private universities where alumni funding is key has been eye opening for me,” says Darryl Goss, who earned an MBA at the University of Chicago and did postgraduate work at Oxford University. “We think about some of the non-academic challenges students face, like financial challenges or lack of access to programs. That was what motivated us to give, because we could relate to that.”

As per-capita state support for education has fallen in California, student need has risen—a shift that can be invisible to alumni, as Kevin Bacon points out: “Alumni like me might just assume that UC Davis is a great place and the state is going to take care of things, but that’s not true anymore.”

In fact, the needs run deeper than most people would imagine, as Lois Goss points out. Goss—who was the first in her family to go to college and faced financial challenges as a student—notes that she was surprised by the statistic that 25 percent of UC Davis students miss a meal daily because of finances. “People would never imagine that happening here,” she says. “You look at this campus, and think everything is being taken care of. That’s probably why we hadn’t given in the past.”

Students in need can fund their education with grants and loans, but it’s increasingly difficult for them to afford opportunities, like unpaid internships or studying abroad, that may shape their post-graduation path or lead them to a fulfilling career. That’s where scholarships, funded by alumni gifts and endowments, can fill the gaps.

Most of these scholarships are restricted in some way, by college or by major—and, as Mark Foncannon, assistant director of undergraduate and prestigious scholarships, points out, although the College of Letters and Science is the most populous academic unit (approximately 38% of all undergraduates on campus), it lags far behind the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences in the number and amount of funded scholarships for its students.

These scholarships range widely in their origins, restrictions and funding, from the Frank A. Mesplé Scholarship, which benefits upper-division political science majors and awards $10,600 annually, to the Nancy and Gregory Sterling Scholarship, which recognizes students active in community volunteering with $1,000 annually. Other scholarships benefit mathematics or German-language students, the physically challenged or geology majors. There might seem to be a scholarship for everyone—but there are by no means enough to go around. More than 3,500 Letters and Science students are scholarship eligible (with a GPA greater than 3.25); 1,354 applied for scholarships for the 2010-11 academic year, and 486 received awards. But 1,058 of the scholarship-eligible Letters and Science students were also eligible for Pell grants for the neediest students, meaning that there are nowhere near enough scholarships available for students who are the most strapped—let alone others for whom scholarships might be a welcome supplement.

Foncannon notes that when UC Davis calculates financial aid, it always first uses any merit scholarships to defray the student’s own contribution burden for financial aid, and secondarily to reduce the student’s loan burden. “That’s the beauty of awarding a scholarship,” he says. “It reduces students’ need to work while they’re here, which for many students can be very difficult, especially if they’re first-generation college students trying to hold down a job and navigate the system. And even for students who may not be receiving full financial aid, a scholarship can still make a difference when deciding to take an unpaid internship, or to study abroad, or join a research group. Nowadays, every little bit of support helps!”

The experience of Amanda Whitney (Political Science, ’11), who received the Mesplé award this year, shows how scholarships can augment student experience. Whitney, a political science major who hopes to attend law school and advocate for women’s health, is currently at the University of Sussex in Brighton, U.K., studying the difference between US and European social policy and health systems. “I paid for much of my schooling,” Whitney says.
“The only way I was able to take advantage of unpaid internship opportunities was through academic scholarships.” Whitney served as a public affairs intern for Planned Parenthood for a year. “I couldn’t have pursued these opportunities had scholarships not freed me up from the financial pressures of high tuition costs,” she says. “These experiences have influenced my interests and future aspirations.”

Darryl Goss, who lives in Maryland but spends a significant portion of his time in the U.K., confirms Whitney’s sense that her international experience will help her career: “It is a global economy, and when students leave UC Davis they have to be in a global market,” he says. “We try to help students take these international opportunities.”

Some enrichment opportunities come closer to home, and are also an area where donor support can make a difference—for relatively little money. A six-year-old outreach program called Explore Math, for instance, provides mathematics graduate students as well as undergraduates with hands-on teaching experience and gives hundreds of high-school students in the greater Sacramento region enrichment in advanced math. “It’s the only tuition-free outreach program in Sacramento, and it enables the high-school students to learn new and exciting mathematics that they won’t learn in the classroom,” says Professor Jesus De Loera, the program’s faculty advisor.

The graduate students, who run the program themselves, receive funding as teaching assistants for quarters in which they serve as directors or instructors, but the hands-on experience they receive in devising lesson plans and running the classroom goes far beyond the work of the average TA, says De Loera. “It’s very positive for their careers; having done outreach and this kind of teaching sets them apart from the pack” when applying for academic jobs. “Through this program, the department gives a message to the grad students: Your research is very important, but giving back and serving the community is important too. Here’s math that can change your perspective and how you see the world.”

Explore Math changes the careers not only of UC Davis students, but also the high-school students they serve: “These students are training to become scientists and mathematicians,” says De Loera. “It’s in an investment in the future.” And that investment is relatively small, in monetary terms; just $40,000 funds the program for a year. It was originally funded by a grant matched by the university, but De Loera is now seeking private support to keep the program growing and serving its eager students.

New academic programs are another area where donor support can reach students. The Middle East/South Asia Studies Program (ME/SA), for instance, was founded in 2004. After students petitioned for the addition of Arabic and Hindi/Urdu to UC Davis’ language teaching, the university selected ME/SA to apply for a Department of Education grant for this purpose. “This program would not have happened without the students,” says founding director Suad Joseph, professor of anthropology and women’s studies. “874 students signed a petition saying they wanted Arabic and Hindi/Urdu to be taught.” (Later, 300 students signed a petition to request approval of the ME/SA major.)

“The students were very dedicated, the faculty were very dedicated, and there was a lot of goodwill from the administration, though there was little university funding,” Joseph said. Joseph reached out for donor support, both from the Middle Eastern and South Asian communities, from campus offices, and from external grants, including a matching grant from the Department of Education, called an Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Grant.

To raise the matching funds, Joseph attended community events and developed relationships with key community donors. Together, the community and campus matching funds and the grant brought in some $600,000 within two years of the founding of ME/SA. Funding from the Herbert A. Young Society, the annual giving program that allows the college to direct funding to areas that are needed most, was also allocated to start the program. Moreover, the approach of working with the community and developing committed donors continues to pay off today; for instance, the Iranian community has funded an Iranian studies lecture series and has worked with ME/SA to match funding for a proposed endowment for Iranian studies—the results of which will be announced soon. In addition, Joseph has recently raised funding from a donor for Arab studies.

“We realized from the beginning that in order to launch the program and develop it with the quality that we would like, we

"The only way I was able to take advantage of unpaid internship opportunities was through academic scholarships.” Whitney served as a public affairs intern for Planned Parenthood for a year. “I couldn’t have pursued these opportunities had scholarships not freed me up from the financial pressures of high tuition costs,” she says. “These experiences have influenced my interests and future aspirations.”

Darryl Goss, who lives in Maryland but spends a significant portion of his time in the U.K., confirms Whitney’s sense that her international experience will help her career: “It is a global economy, and when students leave UC Davis they have to be in a global market,” he says. “We try to help students take these international opportunities.”

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“We realized from the beginning that in order to launch the program and develop it with the quality that we would like, we
needed donor development and community involvement,” says Joseph. “We also felt we’d have a richer program by representing the community in the program—that, by getting community interests addressed, the program would better meet the needs of students as well as the community.”

The story of ME/SA also shows how new programs benefit the university as a whole, strengthening ties across campus. The positive ripple effects from such a program are similar to those produced by another key goal of the campaign: more endowed chairs.

CREATING “CENTERS OF DISTINCTION”: ENDEDOWED PROFESSORSHIPS
While students benefit directly from scholarships or new programs, endowed chairs—that is, professorships funded by a gift that produces income in perpetuity—boost the university’s profile, and students’ educational opportunities, in less tangible ways. Yet they’re no less important.

Just ask Robert Feenstra, the first holder of the C. Bryan Cameron Distinguished Chair in International Economics, which was created in 2006 following a $1 million gift to the university. “The chair provides a big benefit to students,” Feenstra says. “I can hire graduate students and up to half a dozen undergraduates at a time, and they get research experience. And whenever I hire grad students, my employing them creates a beneficial ripple effect to others in the department.” Feenstra also brings in speakers and funds departmental seminars.

Guaranteed funding has allowed Feenstra to become more productive in his research and to take on a long-term, high-profile research project. He recently joined an international collaborative project measuring living standards worldwide. The project, which has been called the Penn World Table and will be called PWT@UCDavis and PWT@University_of_Groningen, has been ongoing for decades. “Now, people will associate this long-standing, widely used data set with UC Davis. That’s a commitment I would have been reluctant to take on without the endowed chair.”

Such a high-profile opportunity highlights how endowed professorships sets up what Maureen Miller calls a “center of distinction,” helping the college attract research grants and outside funding and increasing the stature the department, college and university. Endowed professorships also help the university retain top faculty; Feenstra, for instance, has turned down other job opportunities, because he feels he can be more productive at UC Davis.

The chair also creates and demonstrates ties of loyalty between faculty and alumni, as Feenstra says: “Mine is the first endowed chair in economics, so it’s a great honor for me, but also for the department,” says Feenstra. “It indicates that we have alumni who have greatly benefited from the education we offer. It’s a wonderful feeling that they benefited enough to want to give back.”

Because they rely on philanthropic support, in the past endowed chairs have been more common at private universities—but UC Davis is starting to catch up, with more than 100 endowed chairs now university-wide. Nevertheless, Kevin Bacon notes, “Given our desire to be a top-tier university, we’re pretty far down in the number of endowed chairs. We need to invest in them.” And the College of Letters and Science, in particular, has fewer chairs, relative to its size, than other academic units at UC Davis.

That presents an exciting opportunity for would-be donors, as Feenstra points out: “Money that endows a chair in the College of Letters and Science is going to be extremely beneficial to the faculty member and the department,” he says. “It would not have the same impact if given to a large east coast private university with a major endowment. Here, you’re getting in on the ground floor.”

ADDING “JOIE DE VIVRE”: EXTENDING UC DAVIS’ EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS
Although endowing a chair at UC Davis raises the institution’s profile incrementally, the plans for the university’s new art museum—as well as other improvements to arts facilities—will make a bigger, more public splash, not just among alumni and members of the university community but throughout the region.

Renny Pritikin, the director of the Nelson Gallery—which in

“That’s the beauty of awarding a scholarship. It reduces students’ need to work while they’re here, which for many students can be very difficult, especially if they’re first-generation college students trying to hold down a job and navigate the system.”

—Mark Foncannon
January moved from its longtime home to an interim space—notes that gallery is severely hampered in its ability to exhibit its permanent collection, which includes more than 4,500 works of art from a wide range of periods and cultures. Its heart, however, is contemporary art. “The art department in the ‘60s and ‘70s was arguably the most exciting art school in the country, with half a dozen major artists teaching at the same time,” says Pritikin. “There’s a strong tradition of leadership and excellence. And, largely as a result of those excellent artists being here, the backbone of the collection is their work. When we have a true museum, we will have a dedicated gallery that will have rotating exhibits from the collection.”

The lack of an art museum is a glaring hole for a top-tier university, notes Maureen Miller: “If we’re going to call ourselves a major university, we need to have an art museum,” Miller says. Kevin Bacon agrees: “We have a great arts program,” he says. “And now there’s an opportunity to build a museum to show that off on campus and to the community. It’s got a place of honor waiting for it next to the Mondavi Center. For people who are crazy about the arts, there’s a huge opportunity to make a statement on the scale of the Mondavi Center.”

Other areas of the arts also cry out for improvements that will help the university realize its full potential. A music recital hall, for instance, will improve the performance space for small and chamber groups much as the Mondavi Center has revolutionized facilities for larger-scale performances.

UC Davis’ arts tradition is long and proud—and the Mondavi Center vividly illustrates how improved facilities advance that tradition. That’s a focus that Margrit Mondavi, honorary co-chair of The Campaign for UC Davis and longtime supporter (with her late husband Robert Mondavi) of the arts, recognizes and commends: “I know of the many contributions UC Davis is making in California and across the globe,” she says. “Through arts and cultural programs and teaching and research in viticulture and enology, UC Davis is advancing the art of winemaking, is enriching lives and adding joie de vivre. I am proud to be part of this historic campaign.”

“LIFTED UP”: CHANGING THE COLLEGE’S FUTURE

The $70 million the college will raise over the coming years will transform the dreams of the next generation at UC Davis, whether it’s researchers setting their sights on a new discovery in the mathematical and physical sciences, students hoping for inspiration from avant-garde art or soon-to-be-graduates reaching for an internship that will give them the experience and contacts they need for a fulfilling career. That support will come from gifts large and small, planned and spontaneous, but all equally welcome as the university plans for future success. That’s a point that donor Lois Goss underscores: “We don’t have a million dollars to give, so at first we thought that UC Davis wouldn’t want or need what we can contribute,” she says. “But then you find out that every little bit helps. We found that some of the same needs that I had, students are having today.”

As the Goss’ level of involvement with the university and the college has grown, so too has their engagement; now, they visit campus annually to speak with students about their interests and passions. But, says Darryl Goss, other alumni should follow their own passions: “If you think about the thousands and thousands of UC Davis alumni, if everyone can focus on what they enjoyed the most, every aspect of the university’s needs can be met. If everybody does something, the mission will be accomplished.”

And what will that success mean to the university, to the college, to students—and to you? “The whole College of Letters and Science will be lifted up,” says Miller. “People want their university, their alma mater to be top in their field. Gifts are an investment in that. A degree is only as valuable as the stature of the university today and in the future.”

Today’s stature is one that all UC Davis alumni can be proud to build on, says Bacon: “If people understand what the university is doing and capable of doing, they’ll be impressed. Take a look at what’s going on—it’s pretty phenomenal. And look especially at what you care about,” he urges. “You’ll find a great reason to support the College of Letters and Science and UC Davis.”
CAMPAIGN PROGRESS

The Campaign for UC Davis seeks to raise $1 billion and to inspire gifts from 100,000 donors, to advance the university’s teaching, research and public service mission.

The College of Letters and Science has raised $31.6 million of its $70 million goal, as of January 2011.

DOUBLE NOTES

The Department of Music’s recent top ranking in the 2010 National Research Council ratings (in the top 10%) recognizes the achievements of its graduate program in music scholarship and composition. Maintaining that edge, and vigorously competing for graduate students with the most prestigious programs anywhere, has become a top priority for the department. Betty and Kern Holoman (more about Kern Holoman on pg. 11), who also recently presented a major gift toward construction of a new Music Recital Hall, created the D. Kern and Elizabeth R. Holoman Award in Music History.

The award was matched 1:1 by the Soderquist Matching Fund (made possible by funds donated from the late philanthropist Charlie Soderquist, who earned his master’s and doctoral degrees from UC Davis). Betty Holoman noted that “we’ve both been graduate students, and have enjoyed the university music environment since we first met.” Kern added, “We knew and loved Charlie, too. It seemed like the right moment to get on with addressing the always urgent problems of graduate student support.”

$100,000 TO PHYSICS

Two gifts have increased funding for graduate fellowships by an additional $100,000. Paul Brady, a professor emeritus in physics, donated $25,000 to create an endowment for graduate fellowships, known as the Paul Brady Award in Physics. Thanks to the Soderquist Matching Fund initiative, an additional $25,000 was given to the endowment for a total of $50,000.

Another gift in the same amount was donated by John Jungerman, professor emeritus in physics, and his wife Nancy, known as the Nancy and John Jungerman Graduate Award in Physics. The Soderquist Matching Fund increased the endowment to $50,000 as well. Jungerman, who came to UC Davis in 1951, the same year that the College of Letters and Science was established, was also recently honored for his work in bringing the cyclotron, which is housed in the Crocker Nuclear Lab, and launching the nuclear physics program at UC Davis. The building that houses the Crocker Nuclear Laboratory, which he founded and spent so much of his career, was just recently approved to be named the John A. Jungerman Hall.

Winston Ko, dean of the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, was pleased that the naming was approved. “John Jungerman came to UC Davis when the College of Letters and Science was established 60 years ago. He led the team to build the Crocker Nuclear Lab (CNL) as the first major research facility of the college, transforming the physics department from a service-teaching department to a research-oriented department for cutting edge science. Naming the building housing the CNL in his name is a fitting honor.”

30 YEARS LATER, SCHOLARSHIP FUND HAS TREMENDOUS IMPACT

It was in January of 1980 when Edmund “Pat” Brown (32nd governor of California and father of California’s current governor Jerry Brown) helped create a scholarship in political science in the name of one of his good friends and former top aide Frank Mesplé.

Mesplé was a longtime lecturer in political science at UC Davis and lobbyist in California before a heart attack took his life in 1979 at the age of 53.

The Frank A. Mesplé Memorial Scholarship endowment was established with Brown and friends’ donations at an initial value of $22,000, and today the fund has reached $265,000, the largest endowed scholarship in the department.
The growth of the fund has been helped by Sacramento lobbyist Jackson R. Gualco, who, along with a number of Mesplé’s friends and colleagues, spearheaded the creation of the fund in 1980 and has been involved with it ever since. Gualco, a member of the College of Letters and Science Deans’ Advisory Council as well as the UC Davis Foundation Board of Trustees, began hosting an annual Third House holiday dinner to build camaraderie in the lobbying community, asking the attendees to consider a donation to the Mesplé scholarship fund. The response of the Third House has been generous indeed: each year thousands of dollars are added to the fund.

As the fund celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2010, Gualco, who just stepped down as president of the lobbyists’ association, held his seventh black-tie dinner in December, and an additional $10,000 was contributed by his lobbyist colleagues. Thanks to his generosity and that of the Sacramento lobbying community throughout the years, roughly $60,000 has been added to the Mesplé fund, thereby increasing the impact on students seeking to further their studies of state and local government in the Department of Political Science. More information on the event and the Mesplé contributors can be found at www.gualcogroup.com.

The Mesplé scholarship has been awarded to nearly 100 students in its 30-year life. Many recipients have gone on to successful careers in public policy, business, government and law after receiving the award. Gualco summarized its impact: “The quality, capacity, and poise of the Mesplé scholars are qualities consistently commented on by my colleagues who have met many of them over the course of the years. I am touched that so many of my Third House colleagues have been so generous with their personal resources to honor Frank’s legacy of mentorship and principled public service in such a meaningful way.” This is one Capitol tradition that the campus community hopes will endure.

**HIGH ENERGY PLEDGES AND GIFTS**

Last May marked the 40th anniversary of the UC Davis high energy group by the U.S. Department of Energy. Now, UC Davis physicists are pushing the boundaries of the high energy frontier at the CERN Large Hadron Collider. To function in today’s physics, the department needs an analysis laboratory where laptops can be networked around a table at UC Davis, but also at Fermilab (CERN), France and Switzerland. To meet this need, the high energy group in the Department of Physics have begun plans for a laboratory, named in honor of the high energy group’s founder, Richard Lander. The Richard L. Lander Data Analysis and Visualization Laboratory has raised $30,172 from private donors ARRA funding to date, and the group is seeking additional donations. More information can be found at http://physics.ucdavis.edu/Lander_Room.

**COLLEGE DEANS’ ADVISORY COUNCIL GAINS NEW MEMBER**

Carl Kukkonen (B.S., Physics, ‘68) is the newest member of the College of Letters and Science Deans’ Advisory Council, which is the primary volunteer advisory body for the college, and is composed of civic, business and education leaders drawn from the college’s alumni, donors, emeriti and friends.

Kukkonen, photographed here with Dean of the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences Winston Ko on Kukkonen’s plantation in China, is the CEO and co-founder of VIASPACE, a California-based clean energy company that provides products and technology for renewable and alternative energy. VIASPACE grows Giant King Grass, a high-yield, dedicated biomass energy crop, which can be used as a low-carbon, renewable replacement for coal to generate electricity and heat, and as a nonfood feedstock for second-generation liquid biofuels to replace gasoline and diesel fuel. This photo was taken at the Giant King Grass plantation, located in a remote area of Guangdong province in China.

“I studied physics at UC Davis and at Cornell where I received my Ph.D. It is funny that both are great agricultural schools, but I studied physics. Now I am a ‘farmer’ growing dedicated energy crops. I finally really appreciate good agricultural training whereas I didn’t pay much attention to it when I was a student. Davis did an excellent job of training me and preparing me for Cornell and the world. I hope I can help UC Davis continue to be a great place.”
Shirley A. Goldman
Former Associate Dean, UC Davis
College of Letters and Science

Shirley A. Goldman passed away in December at the age of 80. Goldman came to UC Davis in 1959 after earning her M.S. in mathematics from the University of Illinois and began working as a senior math lecturer. After working in the mathematics department for 30 years, Goldman eventually became the associate dean at the College of Letters and Science until she retired in 1989. In addition to her work on campus she was a charter member of the UC Davis chapter of Phi Beta Kappa and was also a treasurer on the boards of the Library Associates and the Davis Emeriti Association. She also spent 20 years as a volunteer tax preparer for the Senior Center of Yolo County. Her volunteer efforts in the community with the Yolo County Historical Society, Davis Community Meals and St. Martin’s Episcopal Church earned her recognition as the 2009 Citizen of the Year. Prior to her passing, Goldman created a charitable remainder trust to benefit UC Davis’ Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

Goldman is survived by daughters Maggie Goldman Kimmel, Olivia Goldman and Annie Goldman; granddaughters Amanda, Stella, Grace and Madeline; and great-grandchildren Charlie and Emmer.

Bruce Mather Hackett
Professor Emeritus, Sociology

Bruce Mather Hackett died in August, 2010. A graduate of Antioch College and professor of sociology at UC Davis for over thirty years, Hackett first moved to Davis in 1964. His academic interests included 1970s-era international communities on the Mendocino coast and energy conservation practices and policies.

Hackett is survived by his wife, Amanda Noble; his daughter, Gretchen Hackett Brisner; his son Jesse Hackett; and two granddaughters, Emma Brisner and Reilly Lombardi Hackett.

Costa Issidorides
Professor Emeritus, Chemistry

Costa Issidorides, professor emeritus of chemistry, passed away in November 2010. Issidorides was a professor of chemistry at the American University of Beirut (AUB) from 1952 to 1986. Issidorides’ career achievements included discovering and developing the Beirut Reaction with AUB faculty member Professor Makhluf Haddadin. The Beirut Reaction has been used by the drug company Pfizer to make commercial drug Mecadox, an antibacterial agent used in animal feed. Issidorides has 45 patents in 20 countries based on this discovery.

Issidorides and his wife moved to Woodland after he retired from AUB, and he taught organic chemistry at UC Davis from 1995 to 1998. He is survived by his wife Bonnie, his two daughters Diana and Daphne, two granddaughters, Lara and Laurie as well as two great-grandsons.

Lloyd D. Musolf
Professor Emeritus, Political Science

Lloyd D. Musolf, professor emeritus of political science, died in July, 2010. He served as a Naval Officer during WWII, serving two tours in the Pacific theatre. Following the war, Musolf earned his M.A. from the University of South Dakota and his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1950. Musolf began his academic career at Vassar College, where he taught from 1949-1959. After working as the director of the Michigan State University Public and Police Administration Institute in Saigon, South Vietnam, Musolf came to UC Davis in 1963.

The founding director of the Institute of Governmental Affairs, Musolf also taught in the political science department until 1987 when he retired as professor emeritus.

Musolf and his beloved late wife Berdyne were married for 64 years. Musolf is survived by his two daughters Stephanie Ellis and Laura Huhn, and his five grandchildren; Aram, Tyler, and Jeffery Price, and Ariel and Sylvie Huhn.
ITALIAN CONSUL GENERAL VISITS
by Kimberly Law

Faculty, students and members of the general public gathered on Oct. 7 to celebrate the visit of Italy’s Consul General, Dr. Fabrizio Marcelli. Consul Marcelli has been working in the San Francisco Consulate since 2008, serving the Italian community in the Northwestern part of the United States. The event was organized by Professor of Italian Margherita Heyer-Caput and hosted by the Department of French and Italian at UC Davis. Heyer-Caput felt the event exceeded her expectations. “It brought together the different facets of our campus identity,” Heyer-Caput said.

The reception targeted students majoring or minoring in Italian and showcased the opportunities that are available to them, and celebrated the country and its language. Heyer-Caput felt a visit by the Consul General of Italy opened doors for students who have interest in either studying abroad or pursuing a career in politics. “Their hard work and commitment to building bridges between Italy and the U.S., and between Italian and American institutions,” is evident in the Italian community at UC Davis, said Heyer-Caput. “Faculty and students from all majors at UC Davis speak to UC Davis’ innovative, interdisciplinary, and multi-faceted identity.”

WAYNE THIEBAUD PACKS HALL IN INTERVIEW WITH ART CRITIC KENNETH BAKER

By Nicole Nguyen, University Communications

Wayne Thiebaud wears many hats. He is a painter, a pop art icon, recent California Hall of Fame inductee, art professor emeritus, avid tennis player, and, as revealed by his recent on-stage conversation with San Francisco Chronicle art critic Kenneth Baker, quite the comedian.

Thiebaud gained prominence for his paintings of mass culture in the 1950s and ’60s. He formally retired in 1991 after 30 years at UC Davis. To no one’s surprise, nearly 300 people lined up inside the Buehler Alumni and Visitors Center on Nov. 18, awaiting the celebrated painter’s return — as a guest in the Art Studio Lecture Series. The room quickly filled to capacity, forcing the leftover crowd of 70 people to watch a live video feed in the lobby. Thiebaud reprised his role as professor, commenting on slides of paintings (mostly other artists’ works) and discussing them in depth — just as he would have done in his own classroom. He charmed his audience of students, faculty and longtime admirers with such quips as, “I am goofy, I’m strange. … I’m surreal! I look at the world like this.” The painter proceeded to cross his arms, pucker his lips, squint his eyes and bob his head every which way while studying the artwork before him. “What a beautiful series of nothingness. What wonderful light!” he mocked.

But Thiebaud, as he would do many times that day, redirected the humor toward more serious matters, often commenting on the place of painting in the world today. “Painting, in its richest landscape, hopefully offers new insight in terms of what the world might be like, something visionary,” said Thiebaud. Such visions may escape us now, he said, but may present themselves to “this group of young painters” — acknowledging the undergraduate and graduate art majors who comprised a majority of his audience — in the future.
Baker, in an interview before the program, said he also has learned a thing or two from Thiebaud. “To look at art with him is always a great privilege, because he can point out things that you had never noticed before,” Baker said. “That’s the kind of thing I’m supposed to do! He has his hands on the levers, he knows the internal mechanics of painting and its function — in a way that I never will.” Baker, who met Thiebaud more than 20 years ago, said the artist “stands up for painting in a way that increasingly few people can or do — painting as a way of life.”

During the lecture, Baker told Thiebaud: “We need people like you because painting is one of the few objects of interest that really requires us to slow down, if we hope to enter into them like the way you were demonstrating.” With the same patience and careful consideration, Thiebaud built upon the practice of his craft. “Hard work and perseverance,” he echoed again and again, as the secret to his success.

Because of time constraints, Baker only showed two slides of Thiebaud’s work. One of them was Mountain Roads, 2010, recently exhibited in a retrospective entitled “Homecoming” — one of the first shows in the newly expanded Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento. When Baker asked why the artist chose such a large scale, 3 feet by 4 feet, Thiebaud commented, “In this last series, I have been forcing myself to use as many different sizes and formats as possible.” After receiving some of the highest accolades of his profession, such as the National Medal of Arts in 1994, Thiebaud still works toward challenging himself with new problems — and new complications.

Wayne Thiebaud is many things but clearly, it is his humility, and his humor, that make him a remarkable teacher. For the last slide of the presentation, Thiebaud sat back in his chair and said, “I think the best thing now is for me to shut up, and let you hate it, love it, disregard it, be entranced or figure it out.”

In that minute, people in the hall and in the lobby silently examined the abstract forms — loving, hating, disregarding or being entranced by it — but actively thinking about the painting, nonetheless.

A video of the entire event is available online: http://www.ls.ucdavis.edu/harcs/news-and-research/thiebaud-baker-visit.html

FROM INVENTION TO INNOVATION

Dr. Mark Ellsworth, the senior director for Polymers, Ceramics and Technical Services Laboratories at Tyco Electronics, visited UC Davis in the fall for the Division of Mathematical and Physical Science’s Dean’s Distinguished Lecture series. The focus of the talk, which was given to a full house, gave an analysis of practical examples of academic discovery leading to commercial viability.
ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE: A PHOTO CHRONICLE OF THE COUNTERCULTURE

When: March 31 – May 22
Where: Richard L. Nelson Hall
A review of this exhibition in Publisher’s Weekly depicts what will be at the Nelson. With these 121 photographs, Roberta Price (Huerfano) offers a guided tour of the communities and communes—places like the Red Rockers, Drop City, Reality Construction Company—that sprang up in New Mexico and Colorado in the late 1960s and early ’70s. Guest curated by Simon Sadler, professor of art history, UC Davis. More information: http://nelsongallery.ucdavis.edu/

ONE-PERSON SHOW: JOSH GREENE

When: March 31 – May 22
Where: Richard L. Nelson Hall
San Francisco-based Josh Greene is an art humorist and leading figure in the “Social Practice” movement of the Bay Area. More information: http://nelsongallery.ucdavis.edu/

EXTENDED VOICE: PRINTS FROM CROW’S SHADOW PRESS

When: April 4 – June 12
Where: C.N. Gorman Museum
In collaboration with Tamarind Master Printer Frank Janzen, the exhibition features a selection of prints from the Crow’s Shadow Press Collections. Developed within the Crow’s Shadow Institute of the Arts Studio, the collection reflects a range of printing techniques practiced by established and emerging Native American artists. More information: http://gormanmuseum.ucdavis.edu/

DESIGN BY DESIGN: JURIED STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

When: April 11–22
Where: Design Museum
This annual installation timed to coincide with the university’s Picnic Day, is a lively survey of student talent and creativity that reflects the multi-disciplinary breadth of the Design Program.

LEVINE FAMILY FUND LECTURES, INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

When: April 14, 5:30–7:00pm, “Can the Welfare State Survive in a Global Economy?” Peter Lindert, professor emeritus, UC Davis, Emmanuel Saez, E. Morris Cox Professor of Economics and Director, Center for Equitable Growth, UC Berkeley
Where: AGR Room, Buehler Alumni and Visitors Center
More information: http://www.igi.ucdavis.edu/

THE EDGE PERFORMANCE FESTIVAL

When: April 15–17, April 20–24
Where: Wyatt Pavilion Theatre
This exciting new UC Davis festival includes two evenings of music, poetry, performances and more. Events will take place over two weeks with some occurring on the same evening. More information: http://theatredance.ucdavis.edu.

CHANCELLOR’S COLLOQUIUM DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS SERIES

When: March 30, Laura D. Tyson, Ph.D., professor of global management, UC Berkeley
When: April 20, 4pm Emilio Bizzi, president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
When: May 24, 4pm Bruce Alberts, president-elect of the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and editor-in-chief of Science
Where: Mondavi Center, Vanderhoef Studio Theatre
More information: http://dhi.ucdavis.edu/

PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIA

When: April 29, 3:10pm, Geoffrey Hellman, University of Minnesota
When: May 6, 3:10pm, David McNaughton, Florida State University
Where: Philosophy Department Library (SS&H 1231)
More information: http://www-philosophy.ucdavis.edu/

MOBY DICK VARIATIONS (WORKING TITLE)

When: May 5–8, 12–15
Where: Vanderhoef Studio Theatre, Mondavi Center
Devised and directed by John Zibell. This new work is inspired by Herman Melville’s Moby Dick. Like the novel, it is about perspectives and is a poly-cultural, poly-theistic, poly-rhythmic, poly-vocal, non-linear exploration of being in the universe. Set in the here and now, it investigates the disappearance of the human animal from the natural landscape. More information: http://theatredance.ucdavis.edu.

UC DAVIS FILM FESTIVAL

When: May 25–26
Where: Davis Varsity Theatre, 616 Second Street, Davis
Students showcase their short films and receive feedback from faculty who are professionals in the area of film, television and new media. It is produced by the Department of Theatre & Dance and presented by the Davis Varsity Theatre in association with UC Davis Technocultural Studies and co-sponsored by Film Studies and Art Studio. Tickets will be available at Varsity Box Office starting May 18. More information: http://theatredance.ucdavis.edu.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS AND SCIENCE COMMENCEMENT

When: June 12, 9am and 2pm
Where: ARC Pavilion
The goal of the new Deans’ Fellowship Awards is to honor the achievements of outstanding faculty members in the college. The award is funded by contributions to the College of Letters and Science Annual Fund and the Herbert A. Young Society, and is intended to be used for research, teaching and service activities.

Listed here are the inaugural winners; each will receive an award of $15,000 ($5,000 per year for three years).

**FRANCES E. DOLAN, PH.D.**  
Professor of English

With the help of fellowship funding, Dr. Dolan has been able to make progress on her forthcoming book, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England*. “Not only did the fellowship enable me to assemble a wide range of Renaissance texts I need to conduct this work, but it helped me launch a large lecture course on a new topic for me: Children’s Literature. I purchased a laptop computer so that I could give PowerPoint presentations, as well as books I needed to bring myself up to speed in this field,” says Dolan.

Funding has also enabled her to employ a graduate student researcher, a position that helped recruit an excellent student to UC Davis. “This student had offers from many other graduate programs offering several years without a teaching requirement. The fact that several colleagues and I were able to cobble together several such research opportunities wooed this student to UC Davis.”

**ROBERT C. FEENSTRA, PH.D.**  
C. Bryan Cameron Distinguished Chair in International Economics

One of the most widely used datasets in all of economics is The Penn World Table. Developed by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, the table was created to compute the real gross domestic product (GDP) of nearly every country in the world. Dr. Feenstra became involved in the Penn World Table because of his own research in international trade, where he gained expertise in dealing with large datasets. He and a working group of researchers meet on an annual basis, and have met three times at UC Davis.

At last year’s conference at Oxford, one of the key researchers from the University of Pennsylvania was looking for additional project funding from a government agency. Unable to obtain funding from the Federal Reserve Bank in Philadelphia or Washington D.C., the frustrated researcher decided to continue the project in partnership with The University of Groningen in the Netherlands and UC Davis.

The commitment from UC Davis was made possible with the income from the C. Bryan Cameron endowed chair and supplemented with support from the Young Society Fellowship. “We are all thoroughly networked in our fields, and the funds can make a critical difference,” says Feenstra. With the additional support, “I can hire one or two graduate students, as well as fund international travel and replace my computers when needed.”

**ISABEL P. MONTAÑEZ, PH.D.**  
Professor of Geology

Climate change is frequently in the news these days, and the work of Dr. Montañez is helping us predict what our future may look like. Her research gives us a glimpse into what earth’s climate was like millions of years ago, well before the impact of modern industry and development. “My students and I use crystallized rainfall records that are captured in cave deposits—in particular stalagmites. By dating and geochemically analyzing these as well as monitoring modern cave systems we can learn more about how California’s climate changed, and will change with continued warming,” says Montañez.

Now, she can expose more students to this area of research. “With my fellowship funds, I have been able to upgrade some of our computer resources, purchase additional real-time monitoring equipment so we can extend our monitoring to a couple new caves, and pay for publication-related costs.”
SING!
The Liquid Hotplates, a UC Davis student group that sings a cappella, gathered for this photo to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the creation as the first co-ed a cappella group at UC Davis. The 13 singers practice twice a week and perform throughout the Sacramento Valley and Bay Area. One of the oldest members of the group, Mercy Albaran, says being part of the Liquid Hotplates is one of the best parts of being at UC Davis. “Our love for music and singing brings us together, I have met some of my best friends here in this group.”

Anyone can audition for the Liquid Hotplates every fall and spring quarter as graduating seniors depart. As a cappella becomes more popular in the mainstream, one of the members commented, “We get to see how this genre can create enthusiasm and joy right before our eyes.”