

## Always Toward the Sun

*Finding our  
way to calm,  
connection,  
compassion  
and change*

### PLUS

#### **For Real?**

The unfortunate but true  
resurgence of book banning

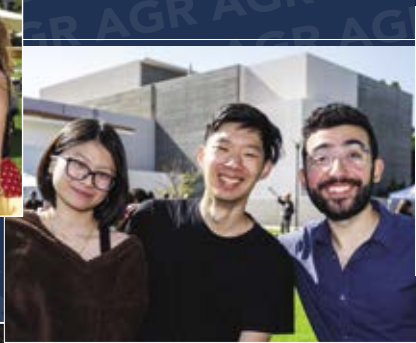
#### **Gauchos Gone Pro**

Four alumni athletes making  
their living in sports

#### **Bee Happy**

In support of  
pollinators







# All Gaucho Reunion



## Reuniting sure felt good.

Many thanks to our many alumni and friends who joined us for the 2022 All Gaucho Reunion. More than 5,000 of you returned to Santa Barbara for Taste of UCSB, Prof Slam and an array of other events. We're so grateful.

Together again after two years and we're already ready for more.

## See you next year, Gauchos!

UC SANTA BARBARA  
Alumni

[alumni.ucsb.edu/agr](https://alumni.ucsb.edu/agr)

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## From the Editor

**“Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and the shadows will fall behind you.”**

The line landed in my lap one day while I was researching a story for this issue. It resonated immediately. Evoking the University of California motto, “Let there be light,” it holds more literal relevance for our idyllic location at UC Santa Barbara, in this place of abundant sunshine. But its call for optimism struck me most.

There is long-running debate over who originated those words. Commonly attributed to Walt Whitman, they also have been credited to an otherwise unknown M.B. Whitman, while similar phrases are said to have started with Helen Keller and, way back in 1850, with English poet Charles Swain.

Whatever the true genesis, and whoever the genius behind it, the sentiment remains the same: Focus on light, on hope. It’s exactly what we sought to explore and embrace in our magazine.

Being optimistic isn’t easy. Being persistently so can feel impossible some days, and these days in particular. But given the assorted calamities swirling around our world, it feels more imperative than ever that we try. Our question, which may well be yours, was how?

The pursuit of optimism and progress – if even a glimmer – drives this issue, and it underlies many of the stories and features inside. After all, what starts as a glimmer could grow to light the sky.

Campus researchers and other experts from a diversity of disciplines proved essential voices, and provided valuable insights, to our endeavor. So did many alumni.

We’re proud of what you’re about to see, and we’re glad you’re here.

May you read and enjoy these pages with your face toward the sun.



**Shelly Leachman**  
Executive Editor









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Students take in the view from Campus Point, a favorite spot to enjoy the sun's last rays and let the stress of the day melt away.

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Photo by  
Matt Perko

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# On Campus

PHOTO: MATT PERKO





California poppies bloom en masse on Lagoon Island, part of a Cheadle Center restoration project.

Read more on [page 20.](#)



NEWS AND NOTES

## It's Getting Wheel

The A.S. Bike Shop is getting a new location — and a new look

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

INSPIRED BY THE SHAPE, form and function of bicycles, the new Associated Students Bike Shop is an inspired departure from its 1970s-era predecessor. Work is continuing on the facility, which has been reenvisioned as an interactive community hub with ample inside-outside flow and space to simply hang out.

The new site, about one-third an acre large, is right off the bike path along Ocean Road. Plans call for a one-story, low-slung 3,000-square-foot building surrounded by grass, that in addition to the workshop will feature a utility area, bicycle storage, an outdoor plaza and a lounge area.

It is expected to be up, running and providing free or subsidized bicycle parts, repair, instruction and maintenance — as it has since 1974 — in 2023.



## Championship Court

Arnhold Tennis Center sees action

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN



### *Advantage, Gauchos.*

The UC Santa Barbara women's tennis team in 2022 won the Big West Conference and a berth in the NCAA tournament, emerging victorious from their first-round match. The men's tennis team — also a perennial powerhouse and six-time consecutive champs — were Big West runners-up and landed five Big West Team selections.

Yet even before earning their respective victories, these teams received their spoils: a stunning new facility in which to practice and play. The Arnhold Tennis Center opened when the season did, in January.

The result of a \$5.2 million gift from John '75 and Jody Arnhold, the glimmering new complex includes eight courts equipped with live-streaming cameras and a digital scoreboard visible from the courts and the stands. It's also got an 1,860-square-foot building with a team lounge and locker rooms. The venue holds up to 300 spectators.

The facility was intended to aid in recruitment and to enhance the playing experience of current and future student-athletes. It also was designed with an eye toward nurturing a love of the sport, supporting connection and building community.

"The Arnhold Tennis Center is a truly tremendous gift to our women's and men's tennis programs as well as to our campus and community," said Interim Athletic Director Kelly Barsky. "The facility provides a state-of-the-art venue for student-athletes to train, compete and connect as a team. In addition to supporting current student-athletes and the recruitment of future Gauchos, the Arnhold Tennis Center is situated in a way to support the building of community through sport. It is an exceptional space that will allow our nationally competitive programs to thrive and our local community to come together."

John Arnhold is a member of the UC Santa Barbara Foundation Board of Trustees, a former chairman of the International Tennis Hall of Fame and, for the past five seasons, a volunteer assistant coach for the UCSB women's tennis team.



# Rethinking the Black Experience

Inclusion transforms Afro, Latin academic programs

BY CHERYL CRABTREE

ACROSS THE NATION and around the world, a movement to recenter and reassess the Black experience has begun to transform academic programs. “Many students in my language and literature courses are surprised to learn that roughly 95% of enslaved Africans were forcefully relocated to Latin America and the Caribbean during the transatlantic slave trade,” says Kiley Acosta, a lecturer in Spanish and Portuguese at UC Santa Barbara. “In California, my students who identify as Black Americans seem especially interested in researching Black studies beyond U.S. borders, and when Blackness is reframed as inextricable to Latinidad, those with Latin American family connections, let’s say in Panama or Cuba or Brazil, become enthusiastic about self-identifying as Black and Latinx, or as AfroLatinx/e.”

That new way of looking at individual and shared experiences in the Americas and other regions – coupled with efforts to encourage and support Black enrollment in graduate studies at all University of California campuses – anchors several innovative institutes and programs at UCSB. The Global Latinidades Project (GLP), for instance, was founded in 2017 by Ben Valdez Olguín, Ph.D., with funds from his appointment as the Robert and Liisa Erickson Presidential Chair in English. Olguín assembled a group of researchers, educators, students and community members to develop academic and community-based initiatives to globalize Latinx studies, which includes recentering African lineages. He developed a massive campaign that garnered over \$2.3 million in grants to fund the nascent center’s activities.



The AfroLatinidades Institute is a central component of the GLP. In 2022, it launched its Advanced Mentoring and Summer Research Program for undergraduates, a partnership between UCSB and three historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs): Morehouse College, Spelman College and Texas Southern University. The institute’s team worked with HBCU faculty to select six students (two from each participating HBCU).

The program began in January with monthly remote discussion groups, followed by a six-week summer session at the UC Santa Barbara campus that in 2022 includes two courses: AfroLatinx Literature and Art with Acosta; and AfroLatinx Cultural and Political Theory with Olguín. Other activities include a creative writing workshop, GRE preparation sessions, UC graduate program application mentorship, weekly meetings with faculty members in academic and social settings, and field trips to various UC campuses to meet students and faculty.

“The program is funded for three summers,” says Acosta, “but we hope to extend this initiative for years to come through more partnerships and expanding research clusters.”

## AWARDS AND HONORS

# National Recognition

Multiple UC Santa Barbara graduate programs land top rankings from U.S. News & World Report

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

IN ITS NEW RANKING of leading graduate and professional programs at American universities, U.S. News & World Report magazine has rated two of UC Santa Barbara’s programs among the top 10 in the nation.

In the 2023 U.S. News list of “Best Graduate Schools,” UC Santa Barbara’s materials program is ranked No. 2 among public institutions and No. 5 overall. The chemical engineering program, also part of the College of Engineering, was ranked No. 9 overall and No. 6 among public universities. The College of Engineering itself was ranked No. 14 among public universities.

The UC Santa Barbara graduate program in physics overall ranked No. 11, with four specializations landing in the top 10: quantum (No. 6), elementary particles/field/string theory (No. 7), condensed matter (No. 8), and cosmology/relativity/gravity (also No. 8).

Within the field of psychology, UC Santa Barbara’s graduate specialization in social psychology ranked ninth nationwide. Within sociology, a graduate specialization in sex and gender ranked third, while a specialization in the sociology of culture tied for 10th. A graduate program in geology, within the Earth science department, ranked No. 5.

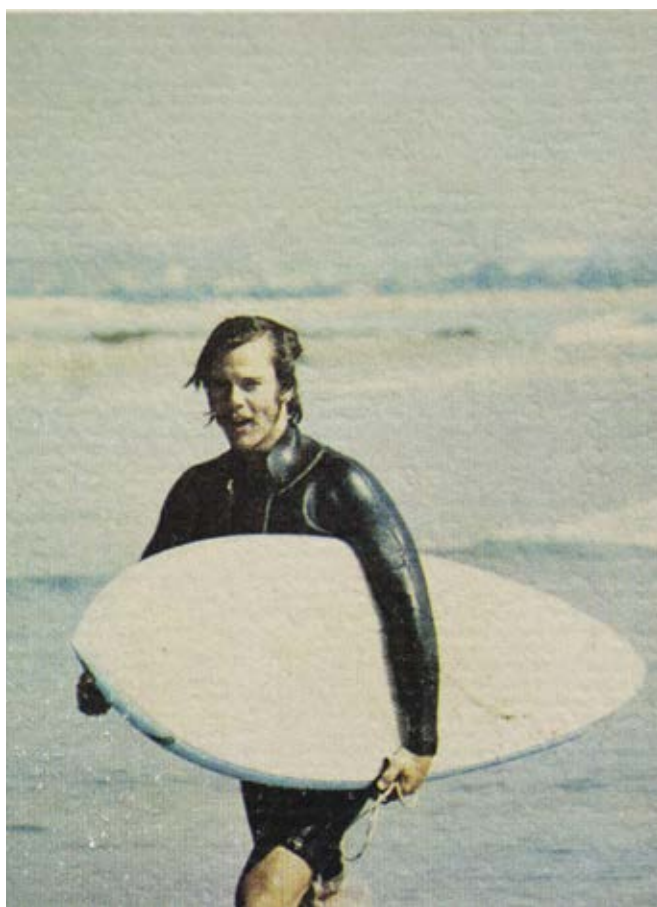
“The Graduate Division is proud of the departments that ranked so highly, which is a major accomplishment given the relatively small size of our graduate population,” said Leila J. Rupp, Interim Anne and Michael Towbes Graduate Dean. “We are also proud of the departments that are building their programs, or working in innovative fields that are not ranked, or excelling in diversity, equity and inclusion. We have a lot to celebrate.”

THEN & NOW

## Decades of Stoke

Situated almost atop some of the best surf around, UC Santa Barbara has been attracting students who surf — and inspiring many who don't to give it a shot — since moving to its coastal home. It's no wonder. Breaks at Campus Point and Sands Beach bookending the campus, waves visible from windows and a dreamy Mediterranean climate... what's not to love?

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN



### Totally Tubular

With hair wet and wavy like the ocean behind him, this surfer was photographed wandering a campus beach, board tucked under his arm. Gnarly, bro. The image appeared in the 1980 La Cumbre Yearbook.



### Blue Hair, Don't Care

With hair color to match the blue hues of her board, this woman was captured on camera in a similar pose in 2021. Choose your decade. Any time of day, any time of year, surfing never goes out of style.



## LIVING HISTORY

# Fifty Years Preserved

Surrounded by homes, a pocket of forest is protected for research and teaching

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

IT'S THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING.

Recognizing the ecological significance of a longtime and beloved family getaway – and seeking to safeguard it in the face of increasing development – Carol Valentine in 1972 spearheaded the donation of 156 acres in the Town of Mammoth Lakes to UC Santa Barbara. She asked only that her family could still visit in the summers and stay in their original, 1920s-era cabin.

And so it was that Valentine Camp – or “the Valentine,” as Mammoth locals know it – became part of a then-nascent UC Natural Land and Water Reserves System, which would later be renamed the UC Natural Reserve System. (A year later UCSB acquired another 55 acres along Convict Creek, naming it Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory, or SNARL. The pair today are known jointly as Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves.)

It was a remarkably prescient move by Valentine, a Montecito resident who helped start Lotusland and personally lobbied UC Santa Barbara Chancellor Vernon Cheadle, a botanist, to accept the donation for the university. Now celebrating 50 years in UCSB's care, Valentine Camp Reserve is a base for ecological research on plants and trees, birds, bees and other insects, wildlife and forest management, fire prevention and climate change.

“She knew that Valentine had this special significance botanically – it has a huge diversity of plant species – and she was interested in the idea of seeing it protected over time,” Carol Blanchette, director of the Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves, said of Carol Valentine. “We

are super fortunate and grateful that they had the means to do it, and the interest. We're going to keep it going and make sure it's protected forever.”

The university has a great partner in that effort: Mammoth Resorts. The ski area has long supported the Valentine Reserve, which is situated near some of its slopes, through the Valentine Reserve Fund, a nonprofit the ski area helped form to support the reserve's work. Valentine Reserve is well-known locally for its Outdoor Science Education Program, providing summer camps and school-year field trips for children, and guided walks and talks for the public.

“The Valentine Reserve and the fund are an important part of our community and an important set of relationships,” said Ron Cohen '92, the president of Mammoth Resorts and a UC Santa Barbara graduate. “Supporting the Valentine Reserve evidences our commitment to our broader community and to our environment, and at the same time fulfills the reserve's desire to make sure the land is preserved and reaches its potential. It's a great story that shows you how people can work together to mutually achieve their goals.”

Cohen lives near the Valentine, which is bordered on three sides by homes yet itself has never been logged or grazed. It surely would've been developed, too, he said, if the Valentine family hadn't acted when they did.

“Valentine itself is a postage stamp, but it's a really biodiverse postage stamp,” Cohen said. “You can learn a lot in a short walk through there. That little bit of preservation ... what an incredible piece of foresight by the owners.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Reserve Stats

NUMBER OF RESERVES  
MANAGED BY UCSB OUT OF 41  
RESERVES ACROSS THE  
UC SYSTEM

7

NUMBER OF ACRES OF  
PROTECTED LANDS USED FOR  
RESEARCH, TEACHING AND  
PUBLIC SERVICES ACROSS  
UCSB-ADMINISTERED RESERVES

53,000

AVERAGE NUMBER OF  
INDIVIDUALS USING THE SEVEN  
UCSB RESERVES  
EVERY YEAR, OVER 40,000 USER  
DAYS

14,000

NUMBER OF RESEARCH  
PROJECTS ONGOING AT UCSB  
RESERVES EVERY YEAR

250

NUMBER OF UNDERGRADUATE  
STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN  
CLASSES OR RESEARCH  
PROJECTS AT UCSB RESERVES  
EACH YEAR

2,700

NUMBER OF STATE OR FEDERAL-  
LISTED ENDANGERED,  
THREATENED OR SENSITIVE  
SPECIES PROTECTED AND  
STUDIED ON UCSB'S SEVEN  
NATURAL RESERVES

50+

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LIGHTING THE WAY

## Living Up to Its Name

ÉXITO one year in is a bona fide success

BY GEORGE YATCHISIN

BASED SIMPLY ON PRODUCTION, the first year of ÉXITO - Educational eXcellence and Inclusion Training Opportunities - has been a stunning achievement. Funded by a \$3 million U.S. Department of Education Title V grant, the program had five UC Santa Barbara students in its initial cohort. The goal is for these students to graduate with bachelor's degrees in ethnic studies or feminist studies, prepared to earn master's degrees and teaching credentials.

The two graduating seniors have been accepted to UCLA's teacher ed program. Together, the cohort wrote papers they delivered at the prestigious American Educational Research Association conference this April in San Diego. The scholars now are developing a student organization to help attract future cohort members. And, alongside faculty and staff, they have organized a summer institute to occur this June.

But while éxito means success in Spanish, that success isn't measured in numbers and projects alone. Just ask participant Victoria Rivera.

"Being a first-generation college student is not easy," Rivera notes. "This system was not built for us, so having people going through the same experiences as me makes me feel like I can get through it."

Furthermore, the Chicano studies major says: "ÉXITO gave me a voice to express the importance of ethnic and

“

I am forever grateful to have been given a path to obtain my goals of becoming an ethnic studies high school teacher.

VICTORIA RIVERA



feminist studies, which has made my undergraduate experience worth it despite the challenges. I am forever grateful to have been given a path to obtain my goals of becoming an ethnic studies high school teacher."

Jeffrey Milem, the Jules Zimmer Dean of UCSB's Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, lauded the pro-

gram's first-year productivity. "People like to talk diversity, equity and inclusion, but ÉXITO is actual frontline action in those areas," he says. "High schools will now have highly trained ethnic studies teachers. The scholarship around teaching ethnic studies will become more rigorous. And California's students will reap the rewards."



## POPULARIA

# Saving an Endangered Species

BY HANNAH RAE



IN A RACE AGAINST TIME, the elements and eBay, the UC Santa Barbara Library, in collaboration with L.A.-based collector John Levin, has created the Early Recordings Initiative – the first public-private partnership to promote the preservation and digitization of pre-1903 sound recordings and public access to them.

“The majority of these recordings have been lost due to their sensitivity to humidity and poor handling over the years,” said Levin. “It’s amazing that any of these have survived.”

First invented by Edison in 1877 and made of tinfoil, commercialized early recordings were made on wax cylinders about the size of soda cans. The cylinders have a brown, soaplike texture that makes them extremely fragile.

“Early recordings are like endangered species that scientists know cannot survive in the wild,” said Levin. “These records need special handling and care if they are to survive more than another 20 to 30 years.”

“Brown wax cylinders document an important time in our history,” Levin added. “They came before the dawn of mass media and before there was a music industry or commercializing of music and spoken word as a commodity. It’s a time of tremendous change, industrialization, people moving from rural areas to cities, and economic instability.”

Cylinders made before 1903 are particularly important as that was the year they began to be mass-produced. Most extant pre-1903 recordings are one-of-a-kind. “When we think of a record now, we think of a record being a copy,” said Levin. “Before 1903, there was almost no such thing as a copy because they were made in small batches.” Unlike printed materials, these early recordings have not been systematically collected, documented or studied – until recently.

UCSB Library has the most extensive collection of early recordings on the West Coast. Its Cylinder Audio Archive is the largest online collection of downloadable historic sound recordings.

The Early Recordings Initiative aims to create options for people to pass their collections on without forcing them to make a choice between donation, compensation or dissolution. Using a collecting strategy common in the art world and applying it to early sound recordings, people can sell, donate or both when giving their collection to UCSB Library.

“People need an incentive not to sell (cylinders) on eBay,” said Levin. “We’ve got to encourage people to get cylinders out of their attics, basements and storage lockers and into long-term preservation and public distribution.”

## BOOK TALK

# Bedside Reading



In her research, Tania Israel, a professor of counseling, clinical and school psychology, focuses on supporting the mental health of the LGBTQ community. She has advocated for — and written about — open and honest dialogue as a means of humanizing those whom we may not understand. In her reading, she seeks out human stories that deepen her own appreciation of what makes us who we are.

“As a psychologist,” said Israel, “I am interested in people and how they craft the narratives of their lives. Not surprisingly, I enjoy memoir, and these are some of my favorites.”

Here, Israel shares some titles that have resonated with her, and her reflections on why:

**Know My Name** by Chanel Miller. Author of the anonymous victim impact statement in the Stanford rape case, UCSB graduate Chanel Miller claims her story and her voice in this stunning memoir.

**The Chronology of Water** by Lidia Yuknavitch. I started by listening to the audiobook. Part-way through, I craved the words on the page, so I borrowed it from the library. A few pages in, I purchased the book and signed up for a workshop with the author. This is a powerful read.

**In the Dream House** by Carmen Maria Machado. A masterpiece of personal story told through literary craft, this memoir fully engages the mind, body and emotion.

**The Year of Magical Thinking** by Joan Didion. With the author’s recent passing, I was reminded of Didion’s reflections on her own losses. She shows us how to write our way through the most challenging moments of our lives.

**Untamed** by Glennon Doyle. The author asks and answers the question, “What is the truest, most beautiful story about your life you can imagine?” As always, Doyle is optimistic and inspiring while keeping it real.

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OFF THE CLOCK

## Let it Frisbee

Climate researcher Greg Husak is also a Hall of Fame Frisbee player

BY HARRISON TASOFF

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THEY CALLED HIM “HOLLYWOOD.”

In fact Greg Husak '96 '99 '05 hails from Long Beach, but for his Ultimate Frisbee college teammates, most of whom came from Northern California, anything south of Santa Barbara was the same. “As a rookie with the Black Tide, I also had maybe a bit more flair than most,” he recalled, “and so the nickname just kind of stuck.”

Today Husak is known for his role in UC Santa Barbara’s Climate Hazards Center, a global leader in tracking food insecurity and developing new products to support early warning monitoring. He is a principal investigator there, where he’s worked since its inception in 2003.

But as a UC Santa Barbara student in the mid-1990s, “Hollywood” Husak led the Black Tide to three consecutive national championships. And in 2018, after over two decades with the sport, he earned himself a place in the Ultimate Hall of Fame.

### Discovering the disc

Husak’s first brush with Ultimate came during his freshman year in the Anacapa residence hall. A few hallmates were keen on the sport, and he joined them on an intramural team. He slowly got more involved, first just mingling with some players from Black Tide, the club team, then joining outright in his junior year.



“There’s something about chasing a Frisbee around that just seems kind of fun,” Husak said, “and I think the team culture was also a good fit for me.”

The Black Tide won nationals his senior year, in 1996, and seemed to be on an upward trajectory. Husak, too, was hitting his stride – in the sport and in his studies, where he had taken a keen interest in remote sensing under the late geography professor Jack Estes. By the time he graduated, Husak had used only two of his five years of eligibility on the Black Tide, a fact that was not lost on him as he planned for graduate school.

“I thought, ‘Wow, if I can get into grad school here, I can both advance my interests in remote sensing’ – which I had really taken to during my senior year of undergrad working with Jack Estes – ‘and I could continue playing Frisbee,’” he recalled. “So that was good motivation to try and get into grad school.”

### A champion player

He did get in, and proceeded to lead the Tide to two more national titles, in '97 and '98. This added to the team’s victory in '96, and to titles in 1988, '89, and '90. “UCSB is the only team to win three national championships in a row,” Husak said, “and we’ve done it twice.”

The Black Tide made college championships again in '99 but fell just short of sweeping the podium for a fourth consecutive year, instead taking second place.

During his first year of grad school, Husak also joined the Condors, a local club team. After winning college nationals in May 1997, he and the Condors took fifth in the world championships that August in Vancouver.

Husak counts his time with the Condors as the height of his Ultimate career. “For three years, the Condors made the finals in every tournament we went to,”



he recalled. They won two national and one world championship titles. “We got to play in the biggest games on the biggest stages for Frisbee.”

In 2007, Husak, by then holding a doctorate and working in the geography department and the Climate Hazards Center, reunited with some old Ultimate teammates to play for the San Francisco Jam. The Jam took the national championship the following year – another title for “Hollywood.” Shortly thereafter, Husak decided to take time off from the sport.

He got the call in August 2018. Legendary Condors player Keay Nakae, who chaired the Hall of Fame committee, phoned to let Husak know he’d earned a spot on the Hall’s distinguished roster. The induction took place in San Diego.

Today Husak is again active in Ultimate. Before the pandemic, he hosted clinics for the local Boys & Girls Club and occasionally attended Black Tide practices to share his strategies and techniques with the team. He continued playing in the 33-plus master’s division on the Santa Barbara Beyondors and is currently in the grand master division (over-40), playing for the Eldors (both names are plays on the word “condors”) with 12 former Black Tide teammates.

And he’s still winning titles: The Eldors won nationals in 2018 as well as beach Ultimate Frisbee nationals in 2018 and ’19.

“I’ve played Frisbee on three continents, spanning a number of countries, in my 25 years of playing,” Husak said, “so yeah, it’s been a great ride.”

“There’s something about chasing a Frisbee around that just seems kind of fun and I think the team culture was also a good fit for me.”



GAUCHO GIVING

## The Endeavor of the Social Sciences

Donor-supported initiative helps high-achieving first-gen students excel

BY JILLIAN TEMPESTA



"I am able to refer to UC Santa Barbara as home."

-Ingrid Lopez Higuera

INGRID LOPEZ HIGUERA remembers the relief she felt when she received her acceptance letter from UC Santa Barbara: She had accomplished her only goal since leaving the rest of her family in Mexico as a teen immigrant. Moving to campus, however, was a whole new challenge.

"I was afraid I was not going to find my own comfort and community here," said Lopez Higuera, who just finished her first year on campus, "but everyone was so welcoming and kind that almost a year later, I am able to refer to UC Santa Barbara as home."

Key to her transition was her participation in PROPEL. Lopez Higuera is one of 22 students in the first cohort of the PPromoting OPportunity and Equity in Learning Scholars Program, an initiative for high-achieving, first-generation, low-income students majoring in the social sciences. In addition to scholarship funding, PROPEL scholars receive wraparound counseling, advising and academic services throughout their entire undergraduate experience.

Alumni donors like Desi Speh '99 and his wife, Gaby, help to fund the initiative.

"Gaby and I wanted to help first-generation students," said Desi Speh. "To do it at UC Santa Barbara meant so much to me and my family. It's a way to support diversity at the campus."

PROPEL helps students take advantage of campus resources from the very beginning. It also helps students find their place within the broader discipline of the social sciences.

"We are keen for students to identify not just with their major but with the larger endeavor of the social sciences," said Charles Hale, SAGE Sara Miller McCune Dean of Social Sciences. "This means using your research skills and what you learn in the classroom to engage the high stakes and crucial social problems of our society. The cohort model is about creating a sense of a larger identity for these students, and identification with what you might call the mission of the social sciences."

Hale aims to sustain 25 students per cohort for the next four years. There is a long list of motivated, talented students who would thrive in PROPEL. With increased private support, the program's objective is to serve more students.

"Dollar for dollar, there's no better way to use your generosity than to help individual students succeed," said Hale. "It's an amazing impact. It really is the promise of the University of California to be a motor of upward mobility for all students."

The Spehs made their gift to PROPEL on UCSB Give Day. "We were inspired by seeing everyone get involved with the programs they're most passionate about," said Desi Speh. "Give Day is a day to focus on something that meant so much to all of us. As we get older, we understand the impact of our time at UC Santa Barbara. The gift of helping others to share that experience fills my heart, and I'm excited to continue."

For Lopez Higuera, a student activist, being a PROPEL scholar gets her closer to her goal of becoming a lawyer. "The PROPEL Scholars Program has impacted my personal life quite a lot," she said. "I have two amazing advisers who check up on me regularly. Academically, it has allowed me to challenge myself and taught me to know my limits. I have met great people and I am excited to see what my future with this program will look like."



## TIPS AND TRICKS

# Gardening 101

Seeking Zen, friends and good food? Get your hands dirty.

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

AMID THE PANDEMIC, gardening grew to be a popular means of stress relief and community cultivation, with the added perk of having fresh produce at one's fingertips. That's the finding of a survey by UC Davis and UC Agriculture and Natural Resources. Seth Peterson '96 '11 can attest to those effects; he's been gardening for years. And as volunteer manager of UC Santa Barbara's campus Greenhouse and Garden Project, he's got great seeds of advice for those looking to get growing:

**1. Keep it loose.** Generally, vegetables like to grow in loose soil with lots of organic matter, like compost or manure. It may be easier to grow in raised beds or containers with potting soil. Add a sheet of chicken wire under your bed and you'll avoid gopher predation.

**2. Let there be light.** Most vegetables require at least eight hours of light each day. Greens are a good option for growing in shadier areas.

**3. Mind your seasons.** The vegetables at your farmers market were planted about three months before they came in. The two main times to plant things are September/October and April/May.



**4. Choose wisely.** Grow vegetables that are tastier when homegrown and/or are rare in the store, like heirloom varieties and unusual types. It's a cliché, but homegrown tomatoes really do taste better, and have you had a carrot fresh from the earth? Lovely. Dragon Tongue green beans are highly recommended; fava beans are great fresh raw, fresh cooked, or dry for storage, and they are good for soil. Garlic is a great California crop, and there are many varieties (I grow about 20); choose varieties from Spain/France/Italy, which are adapted to our Mediterranean climate. Greens like kale, collards and chard are long-lived and produce a tremendous amount of food.

**5. Water less.** I try not to water at all in the winter, and only once a week, in the morning, in the summer. You want your plants to develop strong, deep root systems to find water; a side benefit is they'll find more soil nutrients that way, too. This is for plants in the ground; for container gardening, plants need water two to three times per week.

Peterson, an environmental researcher whose day job is in the geography-based VIPER Lab on campus, started his first plot at the Greenhouse and Garden Project in 2008; he has managed the place since 2011. His favorite summer plants are heirloom tomatoes, green beans and shell beans. Winter faves: garlic, fava beans, collard greens, kale and rutabaga.

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW

# Campus Sustainability

How green is UCSB? Test your knowledge. [Answers on page 64]

**1. How many square feet of LEED certified facilities does UC Santa Barbara have?**

- A. 500,000 ft<sup>2</sup>
- B. 775,000 ft<sup>2</sup>
- C. 1,500,000 ft<sup>2</sup>
- D. 1,800,000 ft<sup>2</sup>

**2. How much of the campus landscape is irrigated with recycled water?**

- A. Over 65%
- B. Over 75%
- C. Over 80%
- D. Over 90%

**3. How many electric charging stations are available to the campus community?**

- A. 40
- B. 50
- C. 75
- D. 100

**4. How many pounds of fresh produce from the Edible Campus Project Student Farm are donated to A.S. Food Bank each year?**

- A. Over 300 pounds
- B. Over 400 pounds
- C. Over 500 pounds
- D. Over 600 pounds

**5. How many pounds of e-waste are collected by A.S. Recycling each year?**

- A. 200-500 pounds
- B. 750-1000 pounds
- C. 1,500-3,000 pounds
- D. More than 3,000 pounds

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**60-SECOND SYLLABUS**

## Making Waves

An inside look at the undergraduate class Geography of Surfing

BY NORA DRAKE

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STUART SWEENEY caught his first wave at age 8. Growing up around Los Angeles, he immersed himself in all things aquatic – surfing, swimming, lifeguarding. He was part of a group that broke the Guinness world record for longest water polo match (26 consecutive hours).

As an undergraduate student at UC San Diego, Sweeney found himself wishing his professors would craft examples more relevant to his interests. “We were learning about game theory in an economics class,” he recalled, “and I realized it was the same human behavior as my work as a lifeguard trying to keep swimmers in the swimming areas and surfers out of them. I was always trying to translate things into my experience.”

From this seed of discontent, Sweeney got the idea as a young professor to create a class about geography through the lens of surfing. And so was born Geography of Surfing – the first course of its kind and one of UCSB’s most popular classes for nearly 20 years.

Sweeney does not always teach the class, but he shaped it. Starting with the origins of surf culture and how it migrated across the Pacific region, it then delves into how waves are generated. The latter part of the class covers either the surfboard manufacturing industry as it pertains to economic geography or the topic of territorialism in surfing. Along the way, students touch on myriad geographical concepts, learning about the field in relation to one of California’s most iconic sports.

Course assignments are built around planning a surf trip to a foreign country. Students choose a destination based on mapping, then learn about its history and culture, and study the climate and quality of waves they might encounter there. “I always thought it was pretty creative,” said Sweeney. “So much of surfing is about traveling and surfing an exotic wave in a far-flung place.”

The syllabus also sprinkles in plenty of real-world examples, like the time Sweeney rode the exact waves his students had been monitoring: “One year there was a storm – we could see it in the reports we were studying in class – and we predicted when the waves would get to Campus Point,” he said. “I had a GoPro and I paddled out during that swell, so I was able to ride the particular set of waves we had been tracking.”



Guest speakers, from surfboard shapers to former pro surfers to photojournalists, also feature in the course that attracts a wide range of students – not all of them surfers or even native Californians. “I think it’s popular because it taps into the culture of Southern California,” Sweeney said. “Since we’re a UC school, many of our students are from or aware of that culture. But we also get kids from abroad who want to understand the culture and immerse themselves in it.”

Sweeney estimates that close to 6,000 students have taken the course over the years, and he hopes for at least 6,000 more. “I’m trying to push the idea that geography as a whole can be used to view a subject domain,” he said. “Geography at its core is integrative. I’m doing what I can to open the pipeline.”



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## WHAT'S COOKING?

# Top Chef

Jill Horst nourishes mind,  
body and soul

BY CHERYL CRABTREE

JILL HORST HAS WORKED in dining at UC Santa Barbara for over 27 years. It's a dream job, she says, because it blends her two passions – food and teaching – at a dream location. “I get to work at UCSB, which has been my backyard my entire life,” she says. “I feel privileged and honored to be working here.”

A Santa Barbara native, Horst started her culinary career as a high school student. She ran a deli and catering company for five years and worked in restaurants in downtown Santa Barbara. Those experiences spurred her to enroll in culinary school in Portland, Oregon. Then she landed a job back home at UCSB, in the bakery at Ortega Dining Commons.

She worked her way up the ranks through the kitchen to management.

Promoted to general manager in 2001, Horst in that role opened Carrillo Dining Commons and introduced a new market-style dining system. She also began to implement practices and procedures that reflected her commitment to sustainability. Her team's ultimate goal, Horst says, is to “provide the most nutritious, delicious, sustainable food possible. We're feeding the future leaders of the world. Food nourishes mind, body and soul and plays a big part in their success in my opinion.” Today, campus dining services craft restaurant-quality food, made from scratch with fresh, local, pesticide-free and preferably organic ingredients.

In 2008 Horst was named the director of residential dining. One of her first big initiatives was the elimination of food trays, reducing food waste by 50% and saving millions of gallons of water. “Not using trays saved about a half-million dollars a year,” she says,

adding that for years Campus Dining has also composted 100% of its pre- and post-consumer waste.

Feeding her passion for teaching, Horst educates students about nutrition and life skills. “We're part of their living quarters, their family,” she explains. Campus Dining employs about 1,200 students who are taught how to cook with fresh ingredients and seasonings as well as other skills they can carry with them the rest of their lives.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, Horst, who since 2018 has been executive director of campus dining, rallied her team to provide meals for the food insecure. From October 2020 to July 2021, with funding from several generous donors, they planned menus, cooked and delivered 263,000 meals to 13 community groups.

“To be able to give back to the community where I grew up,” Horst says, “and to make someone's day a little easier, warms my heart.”



### PRAISE FOR PROFESSORS

## Extra Credit

A snapshot look at a few of the many UC Santa Barbara faculty to receive awards and other honors in 2022



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HISTORY PROFESSOR **CAROL LANSING'S** lifetime of distinguished work has earned her a prestigious honor: She was named a fellow of the Medieval Academy of America – a status given to fewer than 5% of the organization's members. Lansing's research is aimed at understanding of life in the Middle Ages, with a special focus on gender issues in the pre-Renaissance era. She has made significant contributions to the fields of religious, gender and political history, as well as to the emerging field of the history of emotions.

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Driven by a desire to understand and foster equity in classrooms and in schools, **Sarah Roberts**, an assistant professor of mathematics education at The Gevirtz School, has been awarded an Early CAREER award from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The grant will support her project to provide multilingual learners with cognitively rich grade level instruction while also engaging students in disciplinary rich language.

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**John Harter**, an assistant professor of materials, also has received an NSF Early CAREER award – the highest honor given by the foundation to junior faculty – in support of his cutting-edge research in quantum materials science and educational activities. Harter conducts experimental work with odd-parity superconductivity, which could play a key role in the development of quantum computers.

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Professors **Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie** and **Toshiro Tanimoto** were named 2022 Guggenheim Fellows – a prestigious honor for those who have demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or for creative ability in the arts that comes with a significant grant intended to support their research and creative projects for a year. Ogbechie, a historian of art and architecture, will explore how curators and art historians represent African artists and artworks in the discourse of global contemporary art; Tanimoto, an earth scientist, will research a geophysical technique for estimating the ice melt at various locations in polar regions.

MORE AT [MAGAZINE.UCSB.EDU](https://magazine.ucsb.edu)

### SUSTAINABILITY

## An Iconic Headland

Campus Point bluffs will be restored

BY HARRISON TASOFF

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PERCHED UPON THE PACIFIC COAST in sunny Goleta, UC Santa Barbara's enviable seaside location was originally home to thousands of Chumash Indians, later serving as agricultural land and a World War II Marine air base. The military presence left an especially pronounced impact on Campus Point – the headland adjacent to the campus beach – which still bears asphalt and concrete foundations as well as carpets of invasive ice plant from that time.

### *Not for long.*

With new funding from the state, UCSB's Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration aims to remove the asphalt pad and replace invasive plants with native flora. The project will be done in collaboration with the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians, to ensure the integrity of the site's cultural resources and to create signage highlighting the location's ecological, geological and cultural heritage. Work is set to begin this summer.

"Campus Point has so much potential," said project lead Lisa Stratton, the Cheadle Center's director of ecosystem management. "It's this iconic headland that sort of defines UCSB, but it still bears the imprint of degradation from the military era."

Restoration on the 7-acre bluff first began in 2012 with the construction of a boardwalk stairway, using money from the university, the Coastal Fund and the California Coastal Conservancy. The new award, from the California Natural Resources Agency, will cover four years of work to ensure the area is stabilized and fully restored.

Plans include reestablishing the mixture of habitat types that the site once featured, including beach dune, coastal scrub and woodland. Ice plant, which smothers native plants and provides little habitat or food to the region's wildlife, has overgrown the bluff since it was introduced in the 1950s. Tarps are being used to starve them of sunlight and convert them into fertile mulch for local shrubs.

The project team also will remove some fallen trees and add native fruiting trees like toyon, elderberry and lemonade berry to support the small woodland on the lagoon side of the headland. Acorns planted in 2005 have already begun to restore the canopy in that area.





Ice plant, which smothers native plants and provides little habitat or food to the region's wildlife, has overgrown the bluff since it was introduced in the 1950s.

The team also aims to determine the unique and historical character of Campus Point's ecology. "Coastal sage scrub is a broad plant community, but I'd say there's a specific flavor to it in the varying regions of California, such as coastal Goleta," said Chris Berry, the Cheadle Center's Campus Lagoon steward.

The center already has had great success in reintroducing increasingly rare native wildflowers and annuals, which are important for supporting native bees, butterflies and other components of the food web. "Unfortunately, these annual flowering forbs tend to get lost and ignored," Stratton said. "They're really vulnerable to invasive annual grasses, so bringing them back requires long-term management, controlled burns and careful weed control."

Controlled burns on Lagoon Island have also been effective. A survey of the burn plot in 2020 found 84% native plant cover composed of 33 different species. In contrast, invasive plants accounted for barely 1% of the burned area, according to Berry. While there is no plan to carry out controlled burns at Campus Point, the Cheadle Center will expand burns on Lagoon Island.

Local community members, including school groups, student workers and interns, will contribute to the restoration project – as will members of the Barbareño Chumash.

"Part of our role is to diligently watch the work as it happens, and to keep an eye out for any significant resources and make sure that they are handled with the utmost dignity and respect,"

said Eleanor Fishburn, chairwoman of the Barbareño Band of Chumash Indians. The whole area around Goleta Slough is environmentally and culturally sensitive, with a long history of Chumash presence.

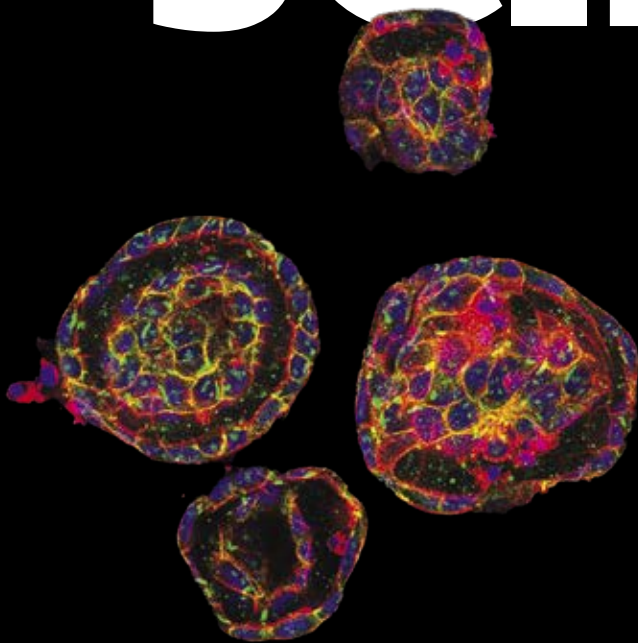
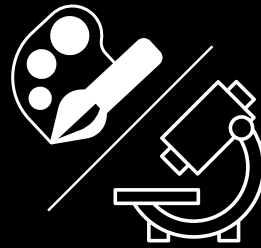
Campus Point was undoubtedly a familiar location to past Chumash people. Historic notes and maps preserve the site's Chumash name, Sismikiw. The nearby Goleta Slough (Sititip in Chumash) was once a sizable shallow bay that hosted many villages. It was among the most densely populated areas in all of pre-contact California – a veritable metropolis.

Natural processes and human activity dramatically reshaped the area around campus over the past 200 years, altering the ecology and cultural record. Large debris flows in November 1861 turned the bay into more of a shallow lagoon. Then in WWII, government airfield construction filled in most of the Goleta Slough, leaving the saltmarsh we see today. This process destroyed half of Mescalitlan Island (or Helo'), the historical site of a major Chumash village.

Slated for installation as part of the restoration, interpretive signs will inform future visitors about the site's flora and fauna, geological processes and cultural heritage. The goal is to foster a connection with the ecology, culture and history of the location.

"The site is really accessible to the campus community," Stratton said, "and the project will restore this amazing headland for generations to appreciate and enjoy."

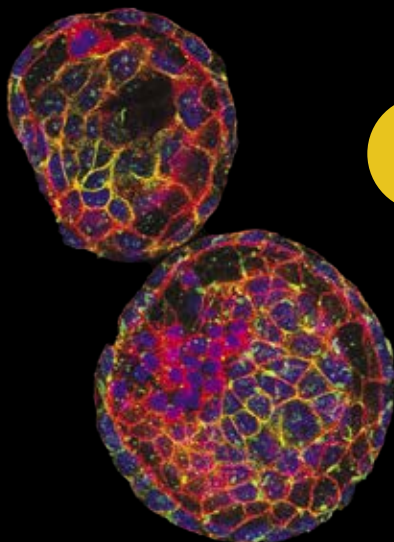
# the ART of SCIENCE



## Can you see beauty in **SCIENCE**?

In science, as in art, the practitioner pursues moments of discovery when observations become greater than the sum of their parts and begin to reveal an untold story. The Art of Science initiative recognizes the creative and experimental nature of science and challenges UC Santa Barbara researchers to visually communicate the beauty inherent to scientific investigations.

These are the winning images from  
the 2022 Art of Science competition.

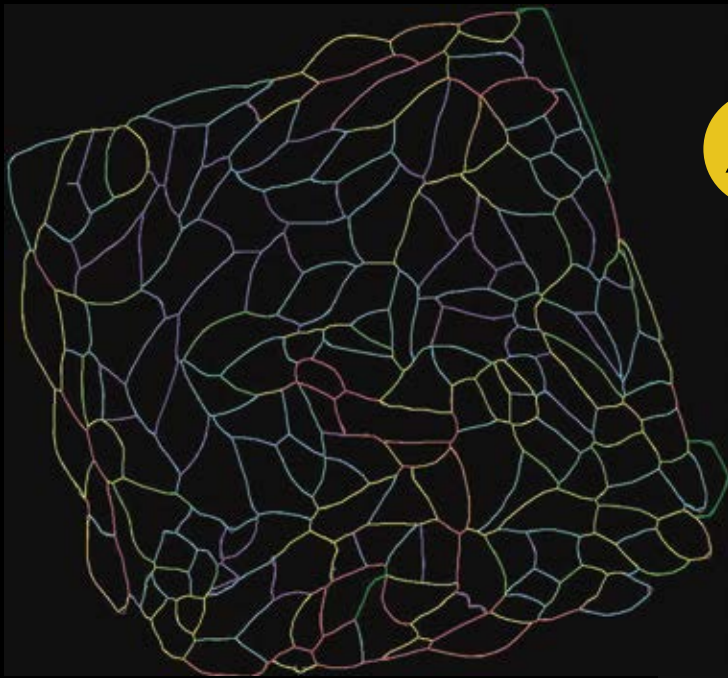


## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Artist: Jonah Rosas, graduate student  
Department: Biomolecular Science and Engineering

The mini-pancreas organs in this image are called pancreas organoids. They are tissue-derived structures that help researchers understand how cells build complex organs.





**2<sup>ND</sup>**

## TENSELLATION

Artist: Katya Morozov, undergraduate student  
Department: BioEngineering

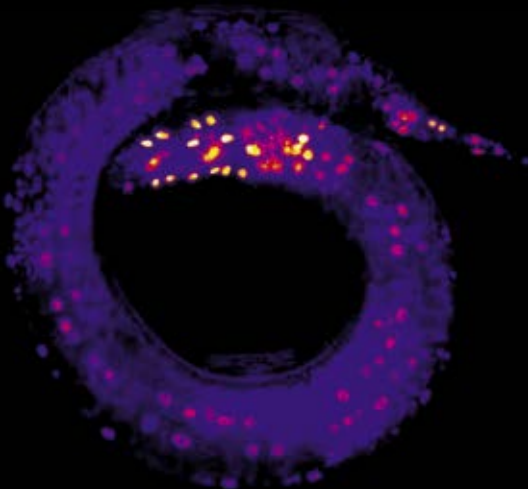
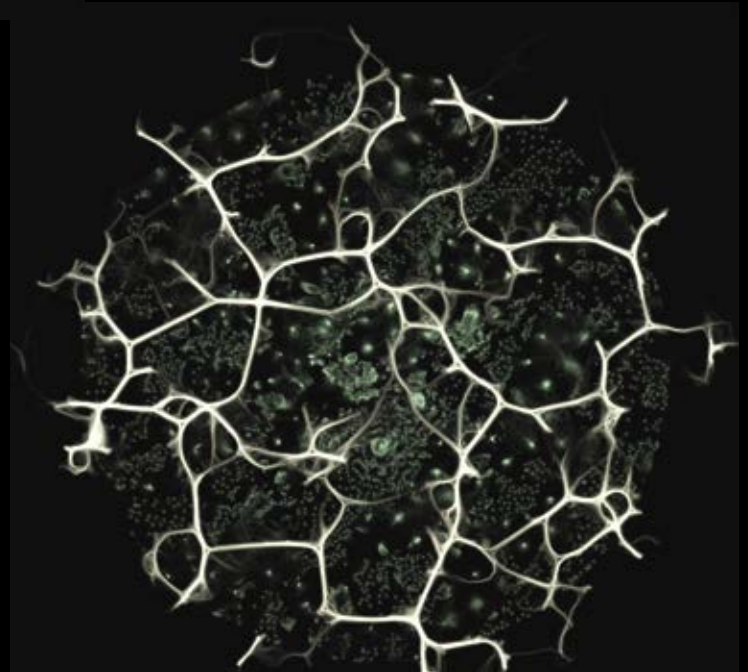
This image is a “heat map” showing relative tensions felt by individual cells in a kidney tissue; red correlates with high tension and purple correlates with low.

**3<sup>RD</sup>**

## GROWING PATTERNS IN A DIGITAL PETRI DISH

Artist: Mert Toka, graduate student  
Department: Media Arts and Technology

This work simulates the behaviors of ants and birds in a digital petri dish environment to investigate the aesthetic qualities of their self-organizing behavior.



*People's  
Choice*

## LITTLE WORM, BIG IMPACT

Artist: Chee Kiang Ewe, graduate student  
Department: Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology

The humble nematode worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* offers a simple and highly trackable system to study cellular behavior during development.



# Always Toward the Sun







# Next Steps

by Jim Logan

Where do you go when every door feels like a trap? If your life feels like an unbroken series of disorienting surprises over the past two years, how do you find the space to stop and get your bearings?

We hardly need to explain why so many of us feel besieged. The pandemic, atrocities in Ukraine, climate change, zero-sum politics – the sensory and emotional overload have many of us awash in anxiety and despair.

So what is the way forward? How can we find our paths through the noise and establish some semblance of what we used to call “normal,” however we define it?

As in all difficulties, there is no magic pill to fix things. We’re going to have to learn how to process the chaos that bombards us, and how to reconnect with one another.

It’s a tall order, but Michael Mrazek would like a word. The director of research at UC Santa Barbara’s Center for Mindfulness & Human Potential, Mrazek has shown through his research that mindfulness – being present and in the moment – is uniquely relevant to our lives right now.

“One very tangible benefit is that in mindfulness you’re training your ability to focus,” he said, “and that’s a very valuable skill, especially these days in the era of unlimited distraction.”

Indeed it is, especially in a hyperconnected world that seems to prioritize projecting the worst of humanity. If all we see is terrible, Mrazek said, it’s hard to find peace or happiness. And it’s not a circumstance limited to the present. We’ve always thought the present was a cacophony of catastrophes. What we need is perspective. And a little mindfulness.

“The world has never been without crisis and tragedy,” he said, “and if it were necessary to solve all of the world’s most dire problems before individuals could find peace and happiness, then we would all be relegated to a life without peace and happiness. It’s really important to seek compatibility between our own happiness and our aspirations to address the world’s problems.”

***Truth is, there are plenty of ways to find our balance.***

David Cleveland, a research professor in UCSB’s Environmental Studies Program who studies (and practices) sustainable food production, says that growing some of your own food can offer surprising benefits and comfort. It’s not just about eating fresher, better food with a lighter environmental and climate footprint; it’s also about connecting with nature and each other.

When the present feels hopeless, growing food, either at home, in school or in community gardens, “opens up an avenue forward, a greater understanding and empathy with the natural world, which is what so many of us lack these days,” Cleveland said. “Gardeners grow to value being outside, learning about plants and soil, and working with other people.”

We could go on, but you get the point: So many of us are searching for calmer waters. The stories that follow explore how to find them and examine some of the ways we can pick ourselves up and step into a saner, healthier world.

It’s time, don’t you think?



# Flip the Script

by Shelly Leachman

The sun rises every morning, beaming light and heat where it falls. Tides roll in and out, waves crashing onto sand then retreating to the sea. Birds chirp and sing and soar. Flowers grow, rivers flow. Leaves change color with the seasons.

Our planet is a place of incalculable beauty and wonder. Mostly all most of us can think about, though, is its impending destruction. The reality of climate change and unending barrage of bad news on the environment leaves us leaning glass-nearly-empty rather than cup-runneth-over.

## *What if we flip the script?*

"It's an unconventional way of looking at it, but start with lightness," says Sarah Ray, author of the new book *"A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety"* (UC Press, 2022). "Can you meditate today? Can you hear the birds around you? Start there. Most people aren't even doing that. If we can remember our dependence on the natural world and on each other, then the work becomes pleasurable and natural and automatic, and then it's not a slog and it's not about stamina and sacrifice or deprivation or consumption and lack thereof.

"What is added to our lives when we do these things? What do we gain rather than lose?" posits Ray, a professor and chair of the environmental studies department at Cal Poly Humboldt. "What do we desire about a climate-changed future? What if climate action was framed around joy and abundance rather than scarcity?"

It's not hard to see where the doom and gloom comes from. Insert the latest news clips on climate change here, or any number of research studies. The situation is stark. A largely scattershot, even impotent approach to climate change at the national level has left us in peril.

"Today's predicament is due, in large part, to our inaction and misguided efforts over the last 30 years," says industrial ecologist Roland Geyer, a professor in UC Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science & Management. "Thinking that it is enough to become a bit more efficient, buy 'green' products and put our recycling in the blue bin is what got us here in the first place.

"Even seasoned environmental sustainability professionals are starting to feel overwhelmed by how bad things have gotten due to our collective feet dragging over the last decades," says Geyer, whose book *"The Business of Less"* (Routledge, 2021) challenges prevailing corporate strategies for sustainability and introduces a "net-green" approach.

"Individual action is often framed in terms of consumption choices," Geyer adds, "but I think it is important to remember that we are lucky enough to live in a democracy and therefore are all part of the political process. I believe

that, at this point, our collective public decisions are more important than our individual consumer and lifestyle choices. One possible impactful action is therefore to get more involved in climate change and other environmental politics, as an individual, through an organization, or maybe even as an elected official."

## Action Begets Impact

Ken Hiltner, director of UCSB's Environmental Humanities Initiative, couldn't agree more. A professor of English, he teaches multiple large lectures that consider the climate crisis from social and cultural perspectives.

"If you only have one hour per year to do something about the climate crisis, you're in luck," says Hiltner, an early pioneer of "nearly carbon-free" virtual academic conferences, "because that thing is the most influential thing of all – and that is to vote.

"Vote, get other people to vote, get involved collectively and think about personal things you do," he adds. "We are approaching nearly 8 billion people on the planet so it's true that whatever you do alone won't make much difference. Some people turn that into an argument for why they shouldn't do anything: 'I wasn't going to fly but the plane will take off without me anyhow, and what difference does one empty seat make?' That's the argument we're facing."

Hiltner sees a better way to view it: "Sure, one person not getting on the plane makes no significant difference," he says, "but if 300 people don't get on the plane, that's one less plane that takes off. If 3,000 people don't get on, that's 10 planes that don't take off. And if 3 million people don't get on the plane, that's 10,000 planes that don't take off. We really need to think in terms of big, collective action."

If action begets action begets impact, individual efforts that catch on could be the gateway to collective endeavors and, therefore, to real change. At the very least, they make us feel better. So goes the case for recommitting to lifestyle changes, experts say – to ease our minds and build positive momentum.

It doesn't have to be complicated, says Matt O'Carroll '13, UC Santa Barbara's assistant director of grounds and landscaping services. For him, it starts at home – buying less stuff, repurposing everything possible, educating his kids about plants and empathy.

"There was this patch in our front yard and I was the only person that ever touched it, so we turned it into a native landscape where native pollinators come by," O'Carroll says.

"We teach our kids and that's meaningful for us. We're mindful of how we're buying things: Can we find it in different packaging or buy it in bulk? Do we need it at all?"





“

It's an unconventional way of looking at it, but start with lightness. Can you meditate today? Can you hear the birds around you? If we can remember our dependence on the natural world and on each other, then the work becomes pleasurable and natural and automatic...

Ultimately, O'Carroll says, "I think we have to be optimistic. Each individual action is incredibly important when we're facing something where there are a lot of unknowns."

"Different communities will be impacted in different ways," he concludes. "Being empathetic to another person's situation will make a lasting impression, and, collectively, we'll have a better understanding. Being open-minded to change and making sure your individual efforts are environmentally friendly is a great foundation to build upon."

## The Good News

There are some good Earth stories to be found. Renewable energy production is at an all-time high worldwide. The ozone layer, albeit slowly, is healing. In China, giant panda bears are no longer officially endangered. In Costa Rica's La Ceiba rainforest, the Jaguar Rescue Center has started to rescue and rehabilitate orphaned sloth cubs and ready them for release back into the forest.

"Things are moving in the right direction," says Geyer. "Environmental views and positions that were fringe only three decades ago are firmly mainstream now. Sustainable technologies that were immature and expensive, such as wind, solar, battery electric vehicles and heat pumps, are cost-competitive and ready to unseat the incumbents (coal, gas, internal combustion vehicles, furnaces)."

Growing that momentum is imperative. At the personal level, embracing plant-based diets, battery electric vehicles, e-bikes, heat pumps and rooftop solar are all great ideas. But it's going to take more than that to move the needle, says Geyer, noting that "bold policy" and "courageous legislation" will be required.

Which brings us back to the notion of collective efforts to get it done. Collective meaning together, in unison. In harmony? Is it possible that healing our relationships to one another, as well as to the planet, could be just as essential to slowing the clock on climate change?

### Absolutely it is, stresses Ray.

"What ails us is the same thing that's ailing the planet – severed relationships, disconnection between humans and the natural world, from each other and within our communities from generations past and hence," she says. "Lack of connection is the root cause of the climate crisis. It's also the root cause of our despair."

"If we think about climate change as affecting our physical and mental health, then inversely it is also true that taking care of our physical and mental health is a necessary resource to combat climate change," Ray adds. "So yeah, start a garden, but also sleep, hydrate, control your inflammation. What you need is as much pleasure and beauty and joy and community and social and kinship ties as possible."

She sums it up: "The climate needs us to be our most skillful selves. We can't on our own fix the problems at huge scale, but we sure as hell can reduce the harm that we're doing to ourselves and our relationships and our own species. We're walking around making impacts every day; let's do it more deliberately."



# Get Well Soon

by Sonia Fernandez

The Tsimané could be onto something:

This Indigenous forager-farmer group in the Bolivian Amazon has the lowest reported levels of coronary disease of any population in the world, and they rarely suffer from chronic conditions associated with aging – including stress.

“They experience loss of children, loss of relatives, floods, domestic violence, you name it,” said Michael Gurven, a UC Santa Barbara anthropology professor and one of the leaders of the multi-institution Tsimane Health and Life History Project. “[Yet] the people are very jokey. They’re relatively happy and less worried about the past or the future. They focus on the here and now.”

Not only does living in groups provide security and alleviate the anxiety of finding food, Gurven said, but it also has the benefit of protecting against social isolation and loneliness, which are associated with an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

“Even though there’s a lot of unpredictability,” he says, “there’s also a lot of confidence.”

## *Imagine.*

Meanwhile, here at home, the American Psychology Association’s annual Stress in America poll found that U.S. adults “appear to be emotionally overwhelmed and showing signs of fatigue.” That comes as no surprise. After two harrowing years of COVID-19, compounded with economic and social woes, Americans were hoping for a reprieve. And then Russia invaded Ukraine, sparking new fears and anxieties for the future.

Show of hands: Who here has recently a) woken up in the middle of the night with your heart racing; b) doomscrolled through social media like it was your job; c) felt paralyzed with even the simplest of choices; d) failed to enjoy things that normally give you great pleasure?

*If any or all of this sounds like you, welcome to the club.*

## Agency and Tools

It’s easy to feel powerless in the face of such adversity, whipped by doubt, frustration and unspent grief. But we have more agency than we might think and, like the Tsimané, tools that can not only effect immediate results but help us navigate uncertainties about the future.

“We do know there is a mental health crisis, and even globally speaking, the last few years have been a collective event that has really shaken everybody up,” said clinical psychologist Maryam



Kia-Keating, a professor in the Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology at The Gevirtz School.

At first, everybody used the term “unprecedented” to describe the situation, Kia-Keating said. “But it seems like at this point, it’s just a continuation of everything being unprecedented, and it feels like it’s never going to end.”

She’s referring to the state of hypervigilance into which the world was catapulted in the first months of 2020, when COVID-19 evolved from a concerning though fairly distant event into a disease on everyone’s doorstep.

“When our support network feels happy, and lives geographically close by, our happiness increases. So, finding family and friends and being intentional about incorporating fun into your diet is a good recipe to try.

Our threat detection systems went into overdrive and, overnight, we had to change how we lived our lives. We became alert to every bit of news. We hoarded things.

Fun fact: All that anxiety, those feelings of high stakes and the sense of impending doom are actually good things, ancient mechanisms in the body that have kept humans alive from our time on the prehistoric savannahs scanning for threats in the landscape all the way to today – as we scan for threats on social media.

“The quickest response is from epinephrine and norepinephrine – what we usually call adrenaline,” said Dr. Jay Winner, a family practice physician with Sansum Clinic and Cottage Health in Santa Barbara, who for decades has been teaching stress management. The heart races and blood pressure increases, Winner explained. Cortisol, meanwhile, increases glucose in the bloodstream for the shot of energy our muscles and brains need to fight or flee, while also reducing inflammation. Unfortunately, long-term elevations in cortisol also reduce our immunity and increase belly fat.

Optimized for short-term challenges and not for years of global existential threats, the stress response becomes a problem if left on for prolonged periods of time. The constant state of high alert leaves us feeling agitated and irritable.

“It’s a very reactive system,” Kia-Keating said, and this reactivity can often be seen in the form of short tempers and public meltdowns, as people navigate a world of high prices,

COVID-related traumas and countless other challenges. “It’s good in the moment of survival, but in most other circumstances, you want to be proactive, calm and steady.”

## Relax and Reconnect

With all the uncertainty still clouding the outcomes of the pandemic, the economy and so much else, it’s unlikely the stress is going to let up anytime soon. But we can control its effects on our minds and bodies.

“It’s important to reduce your stress for your health and your sense of well-being,” said Winner, who in his book “Relaxation on the Run” (Blue Fountain Press, 2015) links chronic stress to the worsening of a variety of physical conditions, from accelerated aging to heart disease, irritable bowel syndrome and diabetes.

Several times a day, and especially when unwarranted anxiety rears its ugly head, one powerful tool to counter the situation is to slow things down, just for a few seconds.

“You can take one diaphragmatic breath, in which you feel the abdomen expand, and then relax your neck on the exhalation,” Winner said. Doing so is thought to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, decreasing the stress response. The pause also offers an opportunity to assess the situation and check in with ourselves, a present-awareness practice that allows us to let go of the noise in our heads. It may be a challenge at first, Winner said, but with practice and a gentle approach, the deep breathing can become a habit.

We’ve heard this before and it can’t be overstated: There’s also no time like the present to foster quality social connections. It’s one of humanity’s best strategies for surviving uncertainty.

Among the Tsimané, strong social ties serve to buffer the strain of lives that by our standards contain high amounts of stress. Close friends and associates chat and share a laugh in the good times and buoy each other through hard times in a mixture of goodwill, trust and pragmatism.

### *Again, lessons for us all.*

“We’re primates,” said Gurven. “We’re very social and we don’t like to be isolated.”

“We actually get sick more and die sooner if we feel isolated and lonely,” said Kia-Keating. “But the good news is that if you can surround yourself with happiness, that’s contagious too. When our support network feels happy, and lives geographically close by, our happiness increases. So, finding family and friends and being intentional about incorporating fun into your diet is a good recipe to try.”

# Come Together

by Harrison Tasoff

We can do this.

Through active listening, open debate and one-on-one discourse, we can move past the moral darkness enshrouding many of us these days and step into a lighter state of being – and of being together.

A lot of us are struggling, to be sure, but experts agree that we can – and probably eventually will – find our way. It's not like we haven't had the practice.

Conflict is as old as humanity itself, likely older. And as a matter of course and history, it does end, but sometimes issues align in a way that can greatly exacerbate existing friction. That is where we find ourselves today amid economic and environmental woes made worse by a pandemic. A 2021 poll by Pew Research Center found that people in most advanced economies believe their society is more divided than before the pandemic. That feeling seemed most pronounced in Europe and North America. A whopping 88% of respondents from the United States held this view.

It doesn't help that politics today are so frequently linked with other facets of society, like race, class and religion, to name a few. "Problems arise when suddenly all the us-them divides fall along the same line," said Marilynn Brewer, an emeritus psychology professor at The Ohio State University and former psychology department chair at UC Santa Barbara.

What's more, issues have increasingly taken on moral overtones, leading people to adopt heated, emotional viewpoints. "When people disagree with each other today, not only do they hold different opinions but they also feel that the other person's opinion is morally wrong," said Professor Heejung Kim, a social psychologist at UCSB.

Take healthcare, for example. Conservatives stress competition and personal choice and are often wary of government involvement, pointing to Medicaid and the Veterans Affairs health service as evidence of inefficiency. Meanwhile, liberals tend to value equality, compassion and the utilitarian aspects of healthcare, viewing it as a right that the government ought to ensure.

Both perspectives are reasonable enough, but conversation breaks down once morality creeps in. Remember the 2009 congressional debates? Republican former Alaska governor Sarah Palin warned constituents of "Obama's 'death panel,'" while former congressman Alan Grayson (D-Florida) claimed that "Republicans want you to die quickly if you get sick." And that was more than a decade before the pandemic brought public opinion on healthcare to a fever pitch.

Because of this moralization, people don't just disagree anymore but actually feel hatred toward each other, researchers say. This allows emotions to take over our reactions and reasoning, turning every interaction into a fight for survival. "When you approach things out of distrust and hatred, rational communication isn't possible," Brewer said.

To quote Master Yoda: "Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering."

## Sharing Space

One thing most of us agree on is that we don't want to talk to people on the other side. Nearly three in five (59%) U.S. adults reported these conversations were "stressful and frustrating" – with similar proportions among liberals and conservatives – when polled by the Pew Research Center in September 2021. That's up from 50% in May 2019, when political discourse was by no means friendly.

Kim suspects people try to manage stress by avoiding individuals who don't share their world view. But, she counters, interacting with different people is in fact crucial to bridging the forces that divide us. "Shared, hopefully positive emotional interactions serve as a very important glue in building and maintaining relationships," she explained. Among neighbors and other casual acquaintances, she noted, these interactions only occur when people choose to talk to each other.

Neutral settings and mutual interests are helpful. Talk to people while engaging in a shared hobby, attending children's after-school activities or watching a favorite sports team. These settings highlight shared identities and provide a less threatening context for addressing the issues that divide us. But don't think you need to tackle them directly, Brewer advised. In fact, it's maybe better if you don't.

"A lot of people feel that one way to stop the problem is to get two sides talking to each other," she said, chuckling. "I've seen some of those attempts; it almost always goes badly."

Interaction and reconciliation must come indirectly, with the focus on something aside from the source of conflict. This helps people learn about each other and see each other as complex individuals.

"When you see another person who has very different perspectives and behavioral patterns, it's very easy for us to think that they are irrational," said Kim. "However, there is a reason why someone acts a certain way, or holds a particular belief, even if you don't completely understand why."

And you don't have to. But getting a sense of someone's experiences and background, and how they came to their beliefs, is far more productive than dismissing them outright.

Doing so doesn't mean condoning behaviors or opinions you disagree with. As goes the popular aphorism (commonly misattributed to Aristotle): "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it."



## Listen and Learn

What is it you want from these interactions? To connect with family or friends that hold opposing views? Perhaps it's a general desire to heal the divide. Maybe you want to convince someone you disagree with to reconsider their stance.

"It turns out that no matter which of those goals you have, the thing that is going to move you toward that goal is a conversation that promotes connection and understanding," said Professor Tania Israel, author of "Beyond Your Bubble: How to Connect Across the Political Divide," (American Psychological Association, 2020) which advocates for active listening skills as crucial to those conversations.

"Listen" is an anagram of "silent," she noted. Rephrasing and repeating what the other person said, for example, enables you to verify that you've understood them properly and allows them to correct, clarify and elaborate. "And keep in mind that we probably have misperceptions of people who disagree with us," she added.

Israel also emphasizes the importance of keeping our cool. Hearing something you disagree with – even if it wasn't meant to be aggressive or provocative – can elicit an emotional response. Slow, deep breaths are helpful, as is physically grounding your body: Focus on the sensation of contact with a chair you're sitting in. And remind yourself that you aren't in physical danger. (Of course, if you are, get out of the situation.)





Ultimately, the way to finding common ground is in trying to understand the other person's background, values, motivations and reasoning. "What is really important to remember is not that we are different but that we are different for a reason," said Kim.

Israel agreed, recalling a time she brought together people who were pro-choice with others who were pro-life, and all of whom were willing to engage with each other. "It was honestly a transformational experience for me," she said, "because while it didn't change anything about how I felt about reproductive rights, it changed so much about how I felt about people who disagreed with me. It humanized them.

"That's part of the power of dialogue," Israel concluded.





“If we’re curious about where people are coming from and what values and experiences inform their conclusions, rather than simply arguing over those conclusions, then we can get somewhere.”

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## *IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING...*

Four former UC Santa Barbara athletes have achieved professional big league prominence in 2021-22, but none of them took an easy path to get there.

Kayte Christensen was drafted by the WNBA in 2002. When her playing career ended after five years, basketball was still in her blood and on her brain. She landed a broadcasting job as a sideline reporter and studio analyst with the Sacramento Kings, and the past season she became one of the few women to work as a live-action color commentator in the NBA.

Kristen Mann entered the WNBA in 2005, and after five years in the league, she went to Europe to prolong her career. She played for teams in France, Turkey, Latvia, Spain and Portugal. She also made time to finish her degree in 2012, completing her last class online. At age 38, she celebrated the 2022 EuroCup Women championship with the French club Tango Bourges Basket.

Dillon Tate was the fourth player chosen in the 2015 MLB draft, but baseball is a sport where “can’t-miss” prospects commonly go missing. He was traded twice and played for eight different minor league clubs before securing a place on the Baltimore Orioles’ pitching staff.

Gabe Vincent was undrafted by the NBA in 2018. Sacramento signed him to a contract but soon released him. The Miami Heat sent him to the G League, where he polished his game for three years, culminating in his becoming a full-time player with a two-year, \$3.5 million contract.

Former UC Santa Barbara women’s basketball coach Mark French called it “the advantage of being a Gaucho.” Coming out of a mid-major collegiate program, he explained, “You don’t get things handed to you. One of the lessons you learn is persistence. Hang in there, and great things happen after lots and lots of hard work.”



## WHEN TANGO BOURGES OVERCAME A SEVEN-POINT DEFICIT...

in the last three minutes and defeated Galatasaray, 69-67, in this year's EuroCup semifinals, Kristen Mann flashed back to an epic night in the Thunderdome.

"I got the final rebound, and I put my arms up, just like the end of the Houston game," she said.

In that 2004 NCAA tournament game, the Gauchos women defeated Houston, 56-52, to advance to the Sweet 16. Mann pumped in a jump shot in the final minute to give UCSB enough of a margin to hold off the Cougars.

"Kristen worked hard to fine-tune that shot," French recalled. "We ran that play - pump fake, one dribble to left, it's going in." It was the reward for UCSB's effort to recruit Mann, whom French described as "the most skilled" player in his 21 years as Gauchos women's coach. "There wasn't a whole lot she couldn't do, handling it, shooting it, passing it."

Mann admits that she was "extremely talented at 18" but had some things to learn at UCSB. "If I don't meet Coach French and Cori Close, I'm not here," she said by telephone from France.

"They taught me how to develop good habits, to apply yourself in everything you do. At a video session, Cori called me out: 'You're walking here. ... This is half-assed. ... What are you doing?'" Close, then French's top assistant, is now head coach at UCLA.

Mann said she has signed a two-year contract with Basket Landaes, another French team, that will keep her playing at 40. "I never thought I would last this long," she said.

Meanwhile, she's been sharpening another skill, as a musician. A singer/songwriter, she performed a solo 30-minute set before a crowd of several hundred at a festival in Bourges, and released her first single, "Bourbon."



PHOTO: COURTESY IMAGE

**KRISTEN  
MANN '12**

## A MONTH INTO THE 2022 BASEBALL SEASON...

Dillon Tate established himself as a dependable relief pitcher with the Orioles, as his ERA dipped below 2.00.

He displayed his confidence and maturity during the seventh inning of an April game in Anaheim. Dispatched to protect Baltimore's 5-4 lead over the Angels, with one out he walked MVP Shohei Ohtani on a 3-2 pitch. Ohtani stole second while Tate worked the count to 3-2 against Mike Trout. His next pitch was a fastball that tailed over the plate and caught Trout looking. Tate then retired Anthony Rendon on a fly to left. The Orioles won the game, 5-4.

"I feel real comfortable out on the mound," Tate said before the season opener. "Sometimes I get nervous before a game, but [the mound] is a place I calm down. I find peace on both good and bad days."

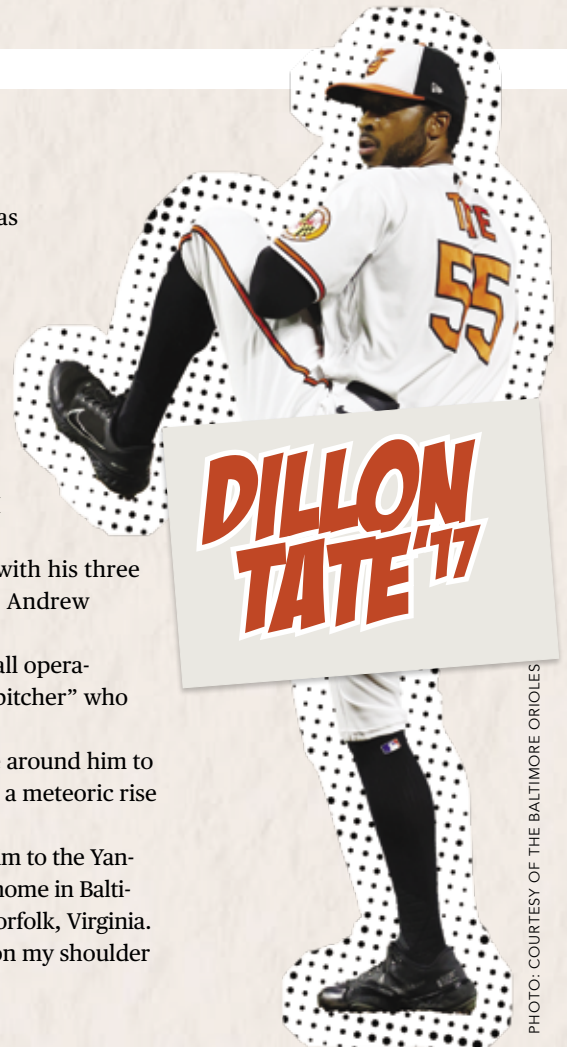
Tate worked hard to reach that state of mind in the major leagues, beginning with his three years in Santa Barbara. "His work ethic was off the charts," UCSB baseball coach Andrew Checketts said.

One of his teammates was Justin Jacome '19, now the Gauchos' director of baseball operations, who remembers Tate as a "skinny freshman" and "an average right-handed pitcher" who strengthened his body and mind to become a highly sought prospect.

"Dillon not only led by example but he would bring others along and want those around him to get better," Jacome said. A younger pitcher on that Gauchos staff, Shane Bieber, had a meteoric rise to a Cy Young Award in 2020.

Tate took longer to reach the majors. The Texas Rangers drafted him but traded him to the Yankees organization. "That shook me, but I got used to it," he said. Finally, he found a home in Baltimore, but only after visiting minor league outposts from Spokane, Washington, to Norfolk, Virginia.

"I always feel I have something to prove," Tate said. "The years have put a chip on my shoulder in a way. But I'm thankful more than anything the way things have turned out."



**DILLON  
TATE '17**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE BALTIMORE ORIOLES



## KAYTE CHRISTENSEN HAD A LOT OF WORK TO DO WHEN SHE ARRIVED AT UCSB...

She grew up on a ranch in Likely, a tiny dot on the map in northeastern California. “It was a rough-and-tumble background,” French recalled. “The first time I called her, she was out deer hunting with a bow and arrow.”

Her toughness served her well on the basketball court. “She had a beauty queen exterior,” French said of the 6-foot-3 forward. “When we played against male scout teams, most of them wanted to guard Kayte. After five or six times down the court, they’re bleeding through the nose or bruised around the sternum.”

Christensen got a wake-up call in the classroom. “I had a good GPA in my small town,” she recalled. “I got a D on my first paper at UCSB. I took advantage of every tutor, and by the end of school I became a tutor myself. I was not comfortable in public speaking, but Coach French wanted us to be able to speak publicly. That’s a huge factor in what I do now.”

She was a four-year Gaucho basketball starter and Big West Player of the Year as a senior. A classics major, she was the keynote speaker for arts and humanities graduates at UCSB’s commencement ceremonies.

Christensen went on to play for the WNBA’s Phoenix Mercury and Chicago Sky. Then a producer suggested she take a TV test in Los Angeles. “There were 200 people there,” she said. “I shot demo reel, and they offered me a one-year contract. I didn’t have media experience. My resumé was playing.”

Now she’s been in the business 15 years, carried along by her knowledge of the game. When NBA veteran Doug Christie left his commentator’s position, Christensen was elevated to take his place alongside Kings play-by-play men Mark Jones and Kyle Draper.


Christensen says she received her highest compliment from a fan: “Listening to you makes me understand the game better.”



KAYTE CHRISTENSEN '04

PHOTO: ROCKY WIDNER / NBA

## FROM A TEAM STANDPOINT, GABRIEL NNAMDI VINCENT HAD A MUCH BETTER YEAR THAN HIS ONE-TIME BASKETBALL IDOL...



While LeBron James and the Lakers did not make the NBA playoffs, Vincent and the Miami Heat went into the postseason as the East’s No. 1-seeded team.

“LeBron’s career speaks for itself,” Vincent said. “My game doesn’t reflect his. It is a team game. My role changes night in and night out. Whatever I can do, I try to find ways to increase my impact.”

The Heat knew what they were doing when they added the former UCSB guard to their roster. During the 2021-22 season, in games when Vincent played, Miami’s record was 47-21. The Heat went 6-8 in games he missed.

“We harped on team success at UCSB,” Vincent said. In his senior year, success was a 23-9 record in Joe Pasternack’s first season as head coach. A big reason was that Vincent stayed after Bob Williams, the coach who recruited him, left the program.

“I was concerned with my career, my health [he had a serious knee injury the previous season] and my teammates,” Vincent said. “Joe and I sat down and talked, and I decided to stay.”

That loyalty did not surprise his former coach. “What separates Gabe is how coachable he is,” Williams said. “He gives a program exactly what they need. Miami develops what they need better than any other NBA team.”

Vincent said he had ups and downs in his road to the NBA, but Miami proved to be “a perfect fit.” The Heat needed him to start several playoff games when veteran point guard Kyle Lowry was out with an injury.

Vincent prepared last summer by playing for Nigeria at the Tokyo Olympics. In an exhibition game at Las Vegas, he scored 21 points to lead Nigeria to a 90-87 upset of the United States.

“We lost to them by 60 or 70 points last time,” he said. His Miami teammate Bam Adebayo was on the U.S. team. “When Bam dangles his gold medal in my face,” Vincent said, “I remind him of Las Vegas.”

GABE VINCENT '18

PHOTO: ADAM HAGY / NBA



## WHILE AT UCSB...

**1,700**  
CAREER POINTS



**KRISTEN  
MANN**

PHOTO: TONY MASTRES, UC SANTA BARBARA

**2.16**  
CAREER ERA



**DILLON  
TATE**

PHOTO: THOMAS KELSEY, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

**76.9%**  
FREE THROWS



**GABE  
VINCENT**

PHOTO: ERIC ISAACS, UC SANTA BARBARA

**7.3**  
AVERAGE  
REBOUNDS  
PER GAME



**KAYTE  
CHRISTENSEN**

PHOTO: TONY MASTRES, UC SANTA BARBARA



# For Real?

The unfortunate but,

yes,

real

resurgence of

book banning

by Tom Jacobs



[REDACTED]

Books can do many things. They can transport you to faraway lands, confront you with intriguing ideas, and elicit empathy for people very much unlike yourself.

But there are many things books cannot do. They cannot physically harm you (unless you drop a heavy volume on your toe). They cannot change the past. And they definitely can't alter your sexual orientation.

We are currently experiencing a concerted effort to keep certain books out of the hands of certain people. Like the plot of a literary novel, the campaign, driven by ideologues of wildly different persuasions, is complicated and sometimes contradictory.

It's essentially symbolic but very real. It's driven by both deeply held beliefs and political expediency. It's reminiscent of previous controversies but different in terms of scale and scope.

And in the mind of one UC Santa Barbara scholar, it's based on a fundamental misunderstanding about the nature of reading.

"It seems to me that those who want to challenge books attribute more power to books than they really have and don't understand the ways reading actually affects us," says Tim Dewar, associate teaching professor at the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education. "Reading doesn't have magic power to transform you – and yet it does!"

That power clearly scares a lot of people, especially as it applies to those seen as impressionable youngsters. In a recent report, the advocacy group PEN America found the scope of book censorship in the U.S. "expanded rapidly" over the nine months ending March 31, 2022. It listed 1,586 instances of individual books being banned, "including removal of books from school libraries, prohibitions in classrooms, or both."

Moreover, it found 41% of these "are tied to directives from state officials or elected lawmakers," a trend the organization calls "unprecedented." These statewide initiatives are overwhelmingly in Republican-led states and reflect pressure by conservative activist groups.

Attempts to ban books from the left are less organized and have been primarily waged through social pressure as opposed to legislation. But the number of troubling anecdotes keeps growing. As a student in Burbank, California, recently wrote in *The New York Times*, her school district withdrew such classics as "Huckleberry Finn" from core classroom reading lists for fear they would offend contemporary sensibilities.

"What's new to me is the inclination to restrict access to books coming from both the political right and the political left," says UC Santa Barbara University Librarian Kristin Antelman. "It has traditionally come from the forces of cultural conservatism."

Not anymore – or, at least, not exclusively. "I went to a bookstore in Amherst, Massachusetts, last summer, and I was shocked to find conservatives' books criticizing the social-justice movement that were selling well elsewhere had been removed," recalls William Warner, professor emeritus of English and comparative literature, who has taught and researched censorship for decades. "They were very proud of this when I asked them about this."

[REDACTED]

The books under attack from the right tend to take the opposite point of view; many offer a more nuanced view of both American history and human sexuality than traditional textbooks. This has raised fears among socially conservative parents – much of it stoked by right-wing media – that their kids are getting indoctrinated with leftist values. Republican state legislatures have responded with bills that more clearly establish parental rights – bills that often involve making sure such books are in the “adult” or restricted sections of libraries.

“Parents do have an interest in their kids’ education, and there should be opportunities for them to provide feedback,” Antelman says. “The idea that any child of any age should have

“

It seems to me that those who want to challenge books attribute more power to books than they really have and don’t understand the ways reading actually affects us... Reading doesn’t have magic power to transform you – and yet it does!

access to anything they want without their parents knowing is an extremist position, and probably a losing one.

“That said, writing into law what books libraries can have is a direct attack on intellectual freedom, free-speech norms and the First Amendment.”

“While there’s a long history of attempts to ban books, this recent effort feels more nationally driven than locally driven,” agrees Dewar. “Where there are individual parents who are concerned about what their children do or don’t read – rightfully so – this appears to be a concerted effort to push ideas, tactics and resources to individuals at the local level. I think mostly well-intentioned folks are being drawn into something that political partisans benefit from.

“My undergrads and I have looked at the most frequently banned and challenged books in high schools. Historically, they haven’t changed much from year to year – until the past two or three years. You find these brand-new titles. They’re not widely taught as instructional materials intended for a whole class. For a book (in that category) to race to the top of the most challenged books means somebody is sharing the titles.”

Alice O’Connor, professor of history and director of the Blum Center on Poverty, Inequality and Democracy, sees this as part of a larger effort to inhibit “the exercise of either political voice or pedagogical voice that doesn’t comport with a very narrow view of what American history and culture are all about.” She argues the threat from the right is far stronger than that from the left.

“Some of these right-wing campaigns are truly radical in their willingness to exert state power in unprecedented ways to subvert free expression and evidence-based scholarship,” she says. “It is embedded in a larger movement to undermine democracy. That’s deeply worrisome. There’s an utter disregard for the Constitution, for actual history and for people’s livelihoods.”



While Warner hopes and believes many of the new red-state laws will ultimately be declared unconstitutional, he also sees threats to free speech emerging from the left. He points to the argument from certain scholars that “racial and ethnic slurs are words that wound. They assault people. They cause harm, especially to disadvantaged groups. The distinction between saying ‘I hate you’ and hitting you is erased. Words are treated as acts. The distinction between citing something and using a word as a means of attack is also lost.”

Antelman, who has had leadership positions in several university libraries, says no one has come up to her and said, “This book contains outdated and offensive stereotypes and shouldn’t be on your shelves.” “But I’m afraid we’re headed in that direction,” she says.

“Over the last couple of years, libraries have been putting ‘content warnings’ on their metadata – the catalog that describes works in the collection. They say, ‘We recognize this book, or collection in the archive, contains language that is outdated and might be harmful.’ That’s a new concept. If you are saying the content is ‘harmful,’ why would you have it in the library? Why wouldn’t you remove it?”

Could such labels be a slippery slope to censorship? “I don’t want to be alarmist about this, but yes,” Antelman says.

If feelings of safety – inherently subjective criteria – trump freedom of expression, the implications are disturbing, especially since the argument can cut both ways. A teacher who was recently fired from a Florida school after putting up rainbow stickers was told such symbols were banned to “ensure that all students feel safe regardless of background or identity.”

The bizarre idea that straight students could somehow be harmed by rainbow flags clearly stems from the belief on the right that gay teachers or mentors are somehow “grooming” straight kids. This idea seems to be behind many of the attempts on the right to keep certain volumes out of both school libraries and school classrooms. Of the American Library Association’s list of 10 Most Challenged Books for 2020, five of them contain LGBTQ content.

This is a new variation on a historical pattern. “The most commonly challenged type of book in school libraries is probably the ‘exploring my body’ book, about sexuality and/or sexual orientation,” says Antelman. Warner notes that James Joyce’s “Ulysses” was initially banned from sale in the U.S. when a judge declared it obscene.

But a lot has changed since the 1920s. Given the proliferation of information on the internet and beyond, denying access to books is extremely difficult. The New York and Brooklyn Public Libraries recently set up websites where people anywhere in the country can get electronic copies of certain banned volumes.

So why are so many people effectively trying to hold back the tide?

“It is a scary time to be a parent,” says Dewar. “For a parent or community member who feels the world is spinning out of control, this feels like something you can get your arms around. ‘I can’t control the internet or what those darn kids are watching on their phones, but I can control what they have in the library.’”

“I see it as a symbolic action,” agrees Antelman. “I don’t think it’s dangerous in terms of people not having access to this information. We have a pretty open society. It’s a problem more on the symbolic level – the impulse to control the freedom to read, the freedom to be exposed to new ideas through books.”

How can advocates of free speech counter these efforts? “You have to fight for it,” stresses Warner. “You need school boards that are committed to plurality and letting a variety of positions coexist. There are institutional checks like tenure and academic freedom that need to be supported. It would also help to value diversity not just of race but of viewpoint.”

“Get beyond the defensive,” says O’Connor. “Tell a different story about the benefits, and the joy, of teaching in a free and open environment.”

Dewar’s answer is the simplest: “Read more! The more people read, the more they’ll understand how reading works, and the better they’ll be able to counter simplistic notions of the power of books.

“When we are carried away into another world – say, the world of Harry Potter’s magic – it can have real effects on us, but they’re not simplistic effects,” he says. “If it was the case that reading a book with a homosexual character can make you a homosexual, then reading a religious text would make you a saint!”

By Sonia Fernandez

# THE ETHICS OF TECHNOLOGY

It's the storyline of some of the best-known works of science fiction, from Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" to the "Terminator" series: Man-made creation runs amok, rapidly outpacing its creators' abilities to control it. The result? Chaos.

**WHILE WE'RE NOWHERE NEAR** capable of creating time-traveling robots or resurrecting dead flesh with electricity, our technology has come disturbingly close to producing a decidedly dystopian future in less flashy but more insidious ways. To wit: misinformation spread on social media, bias in datasets that exacerbates inequality and discrimination, and a lack of transparency that makes it difficult to predict and get ahead of problems, let alone solve them.

"A lot of people forget just how much technology they use – all the different types of software and how they work," said UC Santa Barbara art professor Sarah Rosalena Brady, who specializes in computational craft and haptic media. "Especially now that we've become so dependent on it, we see it as an extension of our bodies, yet we forget all the different layers that we're navigating. And so it becomes complex with the ethics involved because there isn't a lot of transparency."

## REPRESENTATION, MISINFORMATION

Indeed, while technology takes advantage of computers and their marvelous capacity for executing multitudes of calculations, the act of programming, to Brady, is also an act of forgetting. As data becomes encoded and processed, the knowledge of how it was gathered, and from whose perspective it comes, becomes less obvious – and the bias is created or perpetuated, whether intentional or not.



For example, a widely used healthcare risk prediction algorithm was found in 2019 to favor non-Black patients over Black patients because it used previous healthcare spending as a metric for assessing need. Research shows that Black patients generally spend less on healthcare due to issues of income and access to quality care, leading to the unintentional interpretation that Black people needed less.

Herein lies the rub: Some of the most powerful and complex computational systems, such as artificial intelligence (AI), are black boxes. Trained to recognize patterns in large datasets, machine learning models make predictions based on connections between data points and outcomes in a highly iterative process. Each iteration adds a layer of complexity that refines those predictions, while also making their process more difficult to understand.

A version of this problem exists in the realm of geographic information systems (GIS), another field that handles massive amounts of current and historical data. And it has some serious social repercussions.

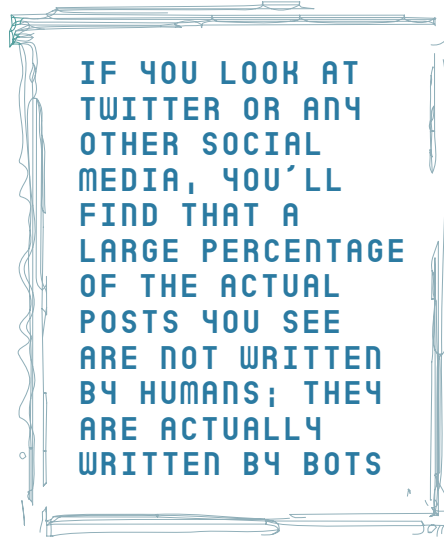
"Some specific problems at the top of my personal list are redlining, gerrymandering, environmental racism and the lack of COVID testing and vaccination sites within communities of color," said geographer Dawn Wright, a UC Santa Barbara alumna and chief scientist of Esri, the world's leading supplier of GIS software.

Maps can perpetuate these problems, researchers say. The information often presented in maps inherit longstanding biases, such as colonial and racist place names that obscure or diminish the presence of Indigenous peoples, or promote the stigma of certain people by association with certain locations, such as the redlining of predominantly Black neighborhoods in the 1930s.

"Maps are often interpreted as social constructions that represent the political, commercial and other agendas of their makers," Wright and UCSB geographers Trisalyn Nelson and Michael Goodchild said in a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

As if bias weren't enough, we also have to contend with active forms of misrepresentation, such as the spread of misinformation.

"If you look at Twitter or any other social media, you'll find that a large percentage of the actual posts you see are not written by humans; they are actually written by bots," said William Wang, a professor of computer science. In this case, people with dishonorable intentions take advantage of social media's wildfire-like spread of context-free information to inject lies that become part of the discourse. A 2018 study by the Knight Foundation found that in the month prior to the 2016 elections, more than 6.6 million tweets linked to fake news and conspiracy news publishers – the majority of them the result of automated posts.



## BUILDING TRUST, TRANSPARENCY AND DIVERSITY

For scholars and researchers alike, the development of more ethical technology requires an examination of our assumptions: Where and how do we get our information and what is the context?

This is one of the big questions Brady addresses in her art, fusing weaving techniques with AI to make tangible the invisible complexities and stealth operations that underlie some of our most powerful technologies, and to present a critique of their origins.

Her textiles series "Above Below," for instance, is based on satellite images generated from the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. While the textiles are stunning in their futuristic depictions of the red planet, the materials and techniques are decidedly Indigenous, offering a look at Mars exploration through the perspective of people who have historically borne the brunt of such expeditions in the name of progress. The Earth's blues seep into Mars' reds, indicating the gradual takeover of the planet by notions of colonization: the extraction and commodification of resources, the notion of new terrain as property to be divided between and accessible only to the rich. It's a cautionary tale.

Back on Earth, Wang, who leads UCSB's Center for Responsible Machine Learning, tackles the fake fruits of technology with a shift toward transparency.

"My students and I have been working on how to decompose the concept of transparency into some workable definitions," he said.

Among the measures: trust scores – algorithms that rank web content based on the trustworthiness and reliability of the source; or content moderation, in which actual people evaluate questionable content on social media sites.

While we increasingly trust data and computers to do the heavy lifting of modern life – from choosing what to watch next, to driving, to making life-altering decisions – in the end, we are the heroes we're looking for.

"What I see in the future is not just a human receiving information from AI," Wang said. "It's a virtuous circle in which the human is trying to adapt to the technology, but also giving feedback about how to improve the technology."

Similarly, according to Wright, humans – the more diverse, the better – are key to ensuring that our technology reflects the best of us, as we grapple with current issues and with ones yet to emerge. With that in mind, she said, Esri is leveraging the power of maps, apps and geographic information systems to promote social and racial equity. Its Racial Equity and Social Justice Unified Team is "building apps that communities can actually use to potentially reimagine what public safety looks like, neighborhood by neighborhood."

"Regardless of the dataset or the huge problem that affects people on a day-to-day basis," Wright said, "it's the diversity of the team involved that increases the likelihood that the solution is in the room."

BEE  
HONEY



**SANTA BARBARA BUZZING WITH WORK TO  
SUPPORT, AND SAVE, NATIVE BEE POPULATIONS**

MATT KETTMANN



**AT FIRST GLANCE**, the best chance at salvation for dozens of wild, native bee species is a rather scraggly sight: clumps of what look to the untrained eye to be dusty weeds, whether scattered around the new visitor's plaza at North Campus Open Space, atop the bluffs above Campus Point or in the garden boxes beneath the stained-glass windows of St. Michael's University Church in Isla Vista.

But upon closer examination, a rainbow of colors explodes from these native plants: deep purple hues on floppy white datura flowers, shocks of vibrant orange on California poppies, flashes of pastel pink on wild roses, sherbetlike oranges on monkey flowers, subtle lavenders on the puffy caterpillar phacelia, radiant pops of gold on the deerweed.

Inside many of these flowers, patient observers can spot an array of insects – often no bigger than a couple millimeters, but sometimes more imposing, even lumbering in clumsy flight. Some will be flies, and some may be beetles, but many of these flying bugs are wild bees, all working hard to collect pollen from these plants to bring back to their underground dens, pollinating along the way.

Much buzz is made about the scary trajectory of honeybees, the ubiquitous domestic species brought by Europeans to the New World centuries ago for candle wax, honey and crop pollination, an especially important honeybee usage today. In short, they're dying in mass amounts – nearly 50% of American beekeeper hives died between April 2020 and April 2021 – and no one knows exactly why. That's a big problem for the human diet, in which one out of every three bites of food comes from something that honeybees pollinated.

But even less understood is the status and fate of native bee species, of which 1,600 live in California – a healthy fraction of the 4,000 total known to be in the United States and the more than 20,000 species worldwide. Many scientists believe that native bee populations are in a deeper dive than honeybees, with as many as a quarter in severe risk of extinction. This decline could have disastrous effects on the ecosystem at large, putting numerous plant and animal species into a tailspin. Wild bees may also be playing significant roles in our food production system, though that too remains a bit of a mystery.

## PLAN BEE

UC Santa Barbara is not taking this sting lightly. Under a range of initiatives, students and faculty alike are monitoring which bees are on campus while planting pollinator gardens, all in hopes of combating the loss of coastal sage scrub and other ecosystems that have been paved over during past decades. And this year, the campus joined a coalition of 13 universities nationwide in what may be the most ambitious research project ever regarding wild bee populations. Altogether, these efforts are improving

ecosystems and, perhaps most importantly, inspiring students to get engaged in solutions that they can actually see working.

"It is easy to see a tangible difference," said Alyssa Jain, a third-year student who grew up afraid of honeybees in San Jose. The environmental studies major became enthralled with native bee species at UCSB, where more than 70 have been identified. Nearly two years ago, she started Plan Bee, which has developed gardens at St. Michael's, at the UCSB Greenhouse and Garden Project around Harder Stadium, and around the faculty housing developments of West Campus and Storke Road.

"With these gardens, the plants will bloom and we can show other students that there are more bees there and different species of bees," said Jain, who led a tour of the sites this past April and plans for more. "It's really rewarding to have an impact that you can see."

Jain got involved in Plan Bee as part of UCSB's Environmental Leadership Incubator program. That's where she met Katja Seltmann, a parasitic wasp researcher by background who is now the director of the Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration. Upon arriving at UCSB in 2016, Seltmann saw the opportunity to use bees as a vehicle, both for supporting habitat restoration projects and for providing a positive outlet to students who wanted to make a difference.

"As an entomologist, it's commonly a struggle to get people excited about insects," said Seltmann, whose parents supported her bug bewilderment while she grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina. "I love insects, and if other people knew what I do, they would love them just as much. At least with bees, the messaging is out there and people are starting to understand their importance for humans and our planet."

## UCSBEEES

Seeing bees as a "gateway bug" like monarch butterflies and ladybugs, Seltmann grasped the opportunity to turn UCSB into a hub for bee buzz. "Working with bees is a place where undergrads can make real change," she said. "It's hard for them to always think that the world is in some kind of spiral to devastation. But with bees and the urban environment in California, we do have the opportunity to make a difference."

First Seltmann launched UCSBees, a research project that includes students tracking native plants and insects both on campus and far beyond, including Santa Cruz Island and the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Reserve. Since it started in November 2018, more than 330 students and community members have tallied 4,300 observations of 460 species, from yellow-faced bumblebees to valley carpenter bees, all posted on the iNaturalist website.

With Plan Bee in full swing, Seltmann and Jain also worked to get UCSB certified as a Bee Campus USA, one of 139 across the country that have committed to reducing pesticide use while restoring native plant populations. That was a natural fit.

“Our campus is really different than a lot of campuses in the country,” said Seltmann, explaining that all of the Cheadle Center’s many restoration projects already include extensive wildflower planting, and that pesticide use on campus was limited years earlier. “UCSB is very sensitive to sustainability, and very sensitive to the fact that we’re in an endangered coastal ecosystem.”

With the Cheadle Center’s North Campus Open Space restoration project, in particular, the campus already had 350 acres of pollinator garden to tout.

On the research front, Seltmann secured a major grant from the National Science Foundation for a data-collection project, Big Bee, on which UCSB is partnering with a dozen campuses and institutions, including the California Academy of Sciences and Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology. Set on developing more information about wild bee species, what makes them distinct and how those differences might aid in resilience to climate change, Big Bee’s goal is to collect detailed digital images of more than half a million bees over the next four years. Then scientists can analyze traits such as hairiness to see whether that is helping or hurting in a shifting environment.

“We really have very limited knowledge as to why they’re declining because many of our bees do very different things in these ecosystems and they are affected by environmental factors differently,” said Seltmann. “Big Bee is looking to address this through imaging bees.”

## GETTING HANDS-ON WITH BEES

The region’s bee work isn’t limited to the UCSB campus. One major partner is the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, which is also restoring native plant populations, monitoring wild bee populations and assessing biodiversity across a range of landscapes – from pollinator surveys for the U.S. Navy on San Clemente Island to tracking habitat rejuvenation following wildfires in the Los Padres National Forest.

“We’re using insects as indicators to how well we have rebuilt the habitat since insects respond really quickly, they’re diverse and they’re uniquely tied to the plants,” said Denise Knapp, the garden’s director of conservation and research.

Knapp’s colleague Kylie Etter is monitoring community gardens around town, such as those near La Cumbre Junior High and on the Santa Barbara City College campus. “We’re looking at what wild bees are visiting these public spaces,” said Etter, who is getting a better handle on how wild bees work as pollinators even for food plants. “There are some plants, like the tomato plant, that need buzz pollinators,” explained Etter, noting that honeybees don’t do the sort of shaking required to free up the

THE GREEN SWEAT BEE “IS SO DIFFERENT THAN WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF A BEE,” ETTER SAID. THE FEMALES ARE METALLIC AND HAVE NO STRIPES.







tomato pollen. Added Knapp, “Native bees can be better at pollinating than honeybees can, because honeybees are generalists.”

The Botanic Garden is a great place to get hands-on with bees, as volunteers are constantly working on bees and other insects both in the field and in the labs. “Bugs are so much work; you spend one day in the field and 10 days in the lab,” said Knapp. Included in that work: “beautifying the bees,” in which they’re cleaned, dried and made pretty enough to be shown off as specimens. “We have to give them the diva treatment,” she laughed.

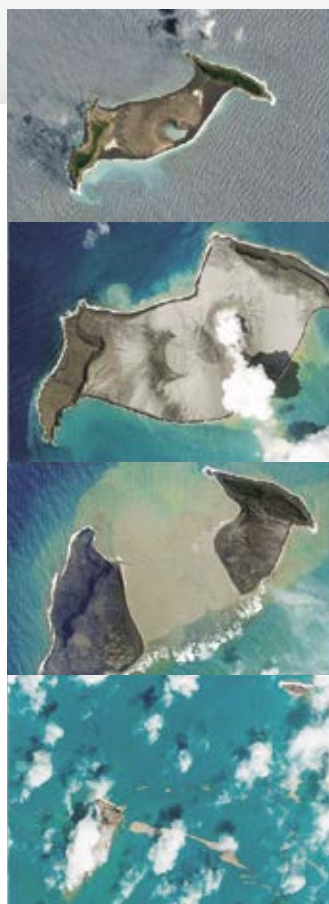
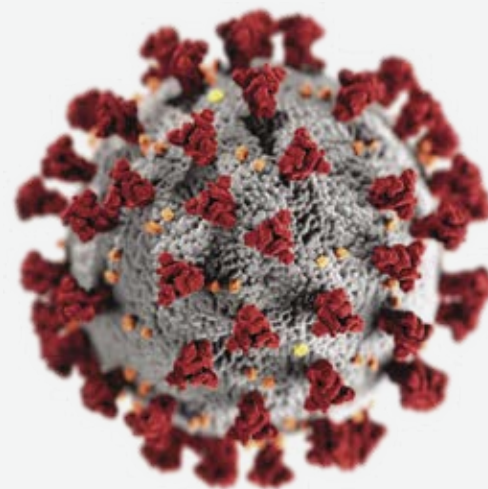
For students like Jain, bees are proving to be a path into caring for the natural world and embarking on potential careers in science. “There are so many species of wild bees,” said Jain, who’s considering graduate school after she graduates. “It’s a whole exciting world that you can step into and learn about.”

Though the momentum is strong, Seltsmann isn’t quite satisfied yet. “We want to do more public outreach. We can plant a broader array of plants. We can create even more concentrated pollinator gardens,” she said. “Everyone can always do better.”

# Chasing COVID

As the omicron variant was first starting to emerge, Zach Aralis, a graduate student researcher in biomolecular science and engineering, worked quickly to develop a new lab test specific to omicron. Guided by virologist and professor Carolina Arias, and with access to the omicron genome, he designed a test from scratch that can pick up features unique to omicron, such as the genetic sequences that underlie the variant's significant number of mutations. Aralis' assay could serve as a template for defense against future major COVID variants.

A research team led by professors Michael Mahan, David Low and Charles Samuel developed a new cell phone app and lab kit that have transformed a smartphone into a COVID-19/flu detection system. The detection system is among the most rapid, sensitive, affordable and scalable tests known – and can be readily adapted for other pathogens with pandemic potential including deadly variants of COVID and flu. It also provides a platform for inexpensive home-based testing. Published in the journal JAMA Network Open, the system succeeded in achieving rapid and accurate diagnosis of COVID-19, COVID variants, and flu viruses.



# It Takes Two to Tonga

In January 2022, the volcano Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai devastated the nation of Tonga. The eruption triggered tsunamis as far afield as the Caribbean and generated atmospheric waves that traveled around the globe several times. Meanwhile, the volcano's plume shot gas and ash through the stratosphere into the lower mesosphere.

Just two months after the eruption, geologists put together a preliminary account of how it unfolded. Earth scientists Melissa Scruggs, a recent doctoral graduate, and emeritus professor Frank Spera were part of an international team of researchers that published the first holistic account of the event in the journal Earthquake Research Advances.

Robin Matoza led a team of 76 scientists, from 17 nations, to characterize the eruption's atmospheric waves, the strongest recorded from a volcano since the 1883 Krakatau eruption. The team's work details the size of the waves originating from the eruption, which the authors found were on par with those from Krakatau. The data also provides exceptional resolution of the evolving wavefield compared to what was available from the historic event. Published in the journal Science, it is the first comprehensive account of the eruption's atmospheric waves.



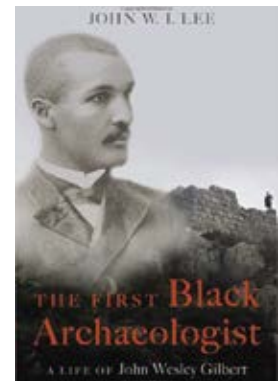
# Racism and Representation

Anti-Asian racism and violence seemed to spike during the pandemic. But Diane Fujino, a professor of Asian American studies, notes this racism is nothing new; the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II are merely the most visible manifestations of physical and structural racism Asians have faced since their arrival to this country. Asian American activism, however, is “conspicuously invisible,” Fujino writes in “Contemporary Asian American Activism: Building Movements for Liberation” (University of Washington Press, 2022). Co-edited with UC Davis professor Robyn Magalit Rodriguez ’96, a UCSB alumna, the book counters the trope of the “model minority,” highlighting current Asian American activism and centering on the question of how to create change.



ABOVE: MICHELE BELL | CHINATOWN LIVE

Born into slavery, John Wesley Gilbert became one of America’s great scholars – a classicist, a linguist, an archaeologist and an educator, a community leader and a missionary. Yet he is little known to the general public. John W.I. Lee, an associate professor of history, aims to correct that oversight with “The First Black Archaeologist: A Life of John Wesley Gilbert” (Oxford University Press, 2022). The biography meticulously traces Gilbert’s rise to national prominence in an era when African Americans often faced obstacles in obtaining even an elementary education. It also details his lifelong commitment to interracial cooperation, an important but sometimes overlooked thread of 19th century U.S. history, and opens a window to the blossoming of African American education during and after the U.S. Civil War.



# Indigenous Lifeways & Place Names



Graduate student Sarah Noe’s research, published in the International Journal of Historical Archaeology, adds to a growing body of knowledge that highlights the resilience of Native Californians throughout the Mission Period, actively maintaining technological, subsistence and religious practices despite the hardships of the time. Understanding the continuity of their persistence in the face of colonialism, she said, counters the erasure narrative that has been the center of popular history for so long. Examining food refuse in Native Californian living quarters at Mission Santa Clara, her findings demonstrate that the group continued to traditionally prepare their Spanish-style meals by fracturing mammalian bones to extract marrow and grease.



A paper in the journal People and Nature co-authored by Grace Wu, an assistant professor of environmental studies, states that addressing place names could be a starting point for reckoning with the country’s history of dispossessing Indigenous nations from their lands. The study quantifies the scale of the problem in U.S. national parks and puts the movement to change place names in context. Reviewing more than 2,000 place names in 16 national parks, including Acadia, Yosemite and the Great Smoky Mountains, the researchers’ analysis revealed a striking trend of names that commemorate violence and colonialism while erasing Indigenous cultures. The team places its work in service to local and national name-changing campaigns. For over a century, Native American groups like the Blackfeet and Lakota have called for changing place names at national parks and monuments.







# Alumni



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## Note from the Executive Director

**Spring is an exciting time on campus**, busy with events and activities, planning for the next fiscal year, and the palpable sense of anticipation among students gearing up for the end of the school year. For some it's the end of their time in Santa Barbara. We hope it is clear to our new graduates that while their time physically at UC Santa Barbara may be over, a lifelong relationship is beginning. While they may move away from campus and embark on a new chapter in their lives, there are always opportunities to come back.

This April was just that chance for many alumni. As we celebrated the return to in-person alumni events, it was with much excitement and pride that we welcomed our Gauchos home for the All Gaucho Reunion. The weekend-long event featured many of your favorite events from past years as well as new activities such as Prof Slam and Gauchos Give Back. If you couldn't make it, save the date for 2023: April 27-30.

For so many of us, this past year has centered on establishing our new normal and we have felt that here on campus, too. I couldn't be more excited to be creating a new normal with our wonderful Alumni team. We have four new Gauchos on staff who started over the course of the last year: Programs Director Julie Mickelberry '01, Mosher Alumni House Manager Sandi (Worley '03) Quinly, Assistant Programs Director Carmiya Baskin '20 and Assistant Programs Director for Digital Engagement Veronica Torres '22.

In partnership with our Alumni Board of Directors we will be working towards our vision: By 2030, UCSB Alumni will be a reason why people choose UC Santa Barbara. To get there, we need to strengthen our alumni engagement culture. When we strengthen our alumni engagement culture, we strengthen the stature of the university, and we can't wait to see you on this journey!



**Samantha Putnam**

Interim Executive Director,  
UCSB Alumni Association  
Interim Director, Alumni Affairs  
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## ASK AN EXPERT

## Sensible Investing

Audrey Weitz matches investors with unique opportunities

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

AS MANAGING DIRECTOR at Old City Investment Partners, a New York-based firm, Audrey (Russakov '92) Weitz connects investors with promising alternative investments, from asset-backed leasing to private credit funds.

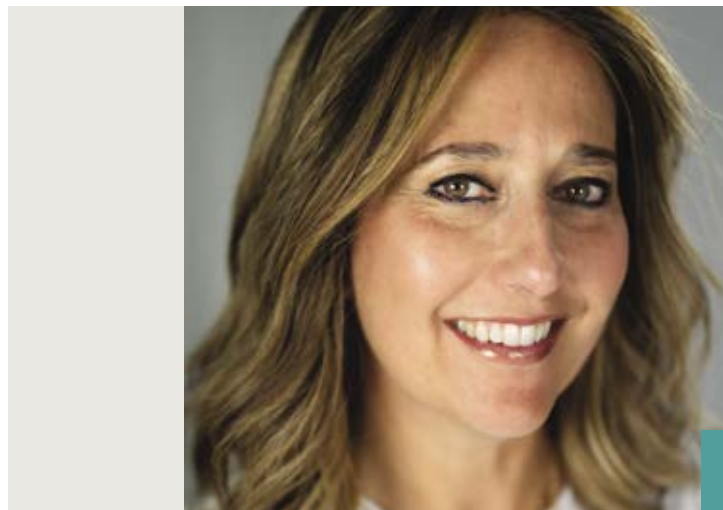
"I'm a matchmaker, plain and simple," says Weitz, who after graduating from UC Santa Barbara first went to work in political fundraising. That experience, which included time with the Democratic National Committee's finance arm, laid the groundwork for her current career.

"When I was fundraising, I was learning one skill: how to ask people for money and how to get the check. At the time, I didn't realize how valuable that would be in the future," Weitz says. "Many people aren't comfortable discussing finances, asking for donations, but for some reason I was – and that world of political fundraising gave me the tools to do what I do now.

"I did have to learn the lingo. I'm not going to lie, I bought 'Hedge Funds for Dummies,'" she jokes, "but UC Santa Barbara gave me enough of a foundation that I was able to pick things up quickly."

Weitz didn't study finance as a Gauchero. Her degree is in political science; she specialized in global peace and security and spent a year studying in Israel.

"Because I'm not a math brain, I wasn't an economics brain; I never thought about this work for me as a career," says Weitz, a mother of five who got into finance when her youngest started preschool. "But this is an amazing career for those who are comfortable in the space and know how to listen to people's needs – especially women, mothers included – who can do sales, and for those who have high social intelligence."



Audrey Weitz,  
Managing Director,  
Old City Capital

Weitz worked at Nordstrom throughout her high school and college years. "It's a retail and consumer brand and although it's sales, the focus is always on the customer," she says. "What I do now is no different.

"This is a great opportunity," adds Weitz, who helped launch the nascent Gauchos in Finance group prior to the pandemic. "There are many careers within finance that are not about how to make a dollar, and they can be really lucrative."

Although Weitz works with investors with significant capital, including large endowments and institutions, she has three top investing tips for beginners:

(shown below)

"Invest \$1,000 at age 20 and see where you'll be when you're 50," she says. "It happens much earlier than people think and you can secure your financial future with very little when you start early."

More important than making money, Weitz emphasizes, is giving it away.

"I am a big proponent of getting involved and giving money to philanthropic causes that are close to your heart," she says. "From a networking perspective, it's a great opportunity to meet people whose interests align with yours. But bigger than that: When we're gone, our money or material things won't matter, but we will always have what we've given away – our time, our resources – and that's so valuable."

## TOP TIP\$

Siphon off \$50 per month, \$20 per month – anything you think you can afford – and invest.

Invest in anything you can get your hands on.

Invest with reputable firms, even in an index; then hold onto it and don't touch it.



## The Road to Discovery

Her post-college path unclear, Yvett Merino kept taking her next right step — and ended up with an Academy Award

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

WHEN YVETT MERINO '94 moved from Norwalk, California, to UC Santa Barbara, it was like moving a world away. She was the first in her family to leave home for college, and the two-hour drive from Los Angeles County seemed to take light-years.

Yet the longest-shortest journey Merino has made to date may well be her walk to the Oscar stage at the 2022 Academy Awards. The sociology alumna-turned Disney producer picked up the Best Animated Feature statuette for “Encanto.”

“They called ‘Encanto’ and all I remember thinking all the way up there (was), ‘Don’t trip, don’t trip, just don’t trip,’ then suddenly there I was on this stage,” Merino recalled of that night. “It was very surreal and it still feels like a dream. Every now and then I have to look at the Oscar to remind myself it really happened.”

Indeed it did, and it marked many firsts. “Encanto” was Merino’s first full producing credit and it brought her first Oscar nomination. She was the first Latina nominated in the category, and the first to win. That it all happened for a film about a multiracial Latino family, and that it’s been celebrated for its representation of diversity, makes the victory especially sweet.

“It was a dream in and of itself to get this job,” Merino said. “I would’ve volunteered on this film. It’s the film I wish I had as a little girl. Seeing videos after it came out of little ones seeing themselves in this movie – seeing they are a part of something ... that is so important to me. One of the goals I’ve always had is to work on projects where we put diverse characters in main roles.

“There is still some knocking and kicking in we have to do, but the doors are slowly opening,” continued Merino, whose grandparents emigrated from Mexico. “I’m excited for the future of animation and all storytelling. So many different stories within many different communities are yet to be told and for years haven’t even been considered, so it’s an exciting time.”

Merino didn’t arrive at UC Santa Barbara thinking about a career in film. She wasn’t necessarily thinking about a career, in formal terms, at all.

“My parents didn’t go to college. The instruction for us growing up wasn’t, ‘Find what you’re passionate about.’ It was, ‘Go to college and find a good job,’” said Merino, one of four daughters. “My parents never loved their jobs, they weren’t passionate about what they were doing, but they worked hard, they raised us in a nice, loving home and we were very happy.

“But I didn’t know these jobs existed when I was a kid,” she added of her experiences at Disney, where she has been for 25 years.

“I studied sociology at UC Santa Barbara and then I did social work for about a year, but I realized quickly it wasn’t for me,” Merino said. “I loved it but I took it home with me, and it was a lot of emotional stuff to carry. I didn’t think I could do that for a living. The road took me to temping, which took me to Disney, and I just fell in love with the people and the culture.”

Merino is a big believer in following “the road.” It’s what led her to UCSB, where she found her “family away from home” in multicultural sorority Lambda Sigma Gamma. It took her to a temp agency when she left social work and wasn’t sure what she wanted to do. It

landed her at Disney, where she eventually discovered production, scored the top job on “Encanto” and won the industry’s top award. Merino followed her road all the way to the Oscar stage.

Her advice to those still searching for their own paths?

“Be open,” she said. “Allow yourself to dream – that’s first and foremost. There is so much pressure on 18-, 19-, 20-year-olds to decide what they’re going to do for the next 40 or 50 years of their life. There’s time. Work hard, be open and if you don’t know what you want, it’s OK.

“When I found production, I was like, ‘My gosh, this is it,’” Merino said. “All those hours – it’s hard and stressful and a lot of work, but it doesn’t feel like work. It took time but I found something I am truly passionate about – being part of a team, helping to get films done, helping artists achieve their vision. For the first time I saw a career path rather than just a job.”



## Bianca Valenti

Fighting for equity,  
representation — and  
really big waves

BY SHELLY LEACHMAN

THE SPARKS OF HER FIGHTING SPIRIT were lit in her teenage years. As a surfing phenom competing against boys — and landing atop the podium — Bianca Valenti '07 says it wasn't lost on her, even then, that boys almost always got better sponsorship deals than girls.

"I subscribed to every surf magazine, I watched all the films, and I started realizing that women and girls were not represented unless they were bikini models," she recalls now. "Women and girls didn't have the same opportunities in this sport than boys and men. Men and women were surfing different boards and different waves. And a fire started burning within me."

That fire would eventually become a full-blown blaze, as Valenti fought for women's inclusion in big wave surf contests and, with three other professional women surfers, for pay equity in the sport, too. They won on both fronts, securing equal pay for women across the World Surf League and an invitation to the famed big wave contest at Mavericks. (Women have yet to compete at Mavericks; the event was canceled due to conditions the year they won access and hasn't been held since.)

"As one of few women in the culture, I always felt like I was in the boys' locker room," Valenti said. "But I kept going and didn't let it stop me. Turns out that's the best action I could have taken — to not be intimidated and just keep going out there. It's amazing what people are capable of when they believe in themselves and are brought up believing they are the gold standard and they can do anything."



Bianca Valenti is a regular at the legendary Northern California big wave break known as Mavericks, where she led an effort to score women an invitation to compete.

Valenti was brought up in Dana Point, California. She caught her first wave at Doheny Beach, at age 7, and was soon obsessed. Surfing pro events by age 15, she watched many of her competitors go into a home-school program so they could focus solely on surfing. Her parents weren't having it.

"My first year at UCSB I was kind of bitter about being at college; I just wanted to surf," said Valenti, who won nationals three times with the UCSB Surf Team, which she captained her senior year. "But I leaned into it and I fell in love with UC Santa Barbara. I made so many great friends and learned so much. I'm so grateful my parents were so adamant about me getting a good education."

It certainly paid off.

Valenti earned her degree in global studies with an emphasis in socioeconomics; she minored in sports management. Pieces of a puzzle, along with her passion for surfing, that she's using to fuel a new fight: pay equity for all athletes in outdoor sports — climbing, mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding, surfing — where the economics are driven by big brands.

"There is a movement for change not just for women and underrepresented groups, but for everyone in these sports; there is a lot of fire around it," she said. "Winning for me is working hard. It's trying my best; it's enjoying it; it's falling down a million times and getting back up and continuing to ride a better wave every day, whether it's on the land or in the water."







## Locket Camera

The Gift of an Image

BY JAMES BADHAM

PHOTO SHARING has been a major boon to our need for connection. One problem: Normally images can be accessed only via an app, and they live forever on the public worldwide web. Now there's an alternative, thanks to Matt Moss '21, a former Apple Worldwide Developer Conference student scholarship winner who earned a Bachelor of Science in computer science. Moss developed the app Locket for sharing photos with friends or family in a way that bypasses those issues.

Locket allows users to connect with up to 10 friends, who can then share photos among themselves. "It's like a portal to the people you care about," reads the company website. The small images appear (like the small photo in an old-time jewelry locket) without the need for an intervening app. Rather, the shared image appears directly on the home screen Locket widget of the recipient's device, which can process the tiny amount of data in the image.

It's been a huge hit. Locket shot to the top spot in Apple's App Store when it was released, after a viral TikTok video showing the user interface sparked a major surge of downloads. Locket is now also available for Android.

And to think it all started as a birthday present.

Moss originally developed the app as a gift for his girlfriend, current UC Santa Barbara student Ava Thompson. He never imagined it would be so popular.

"It has been so meaningful to see millions of people enjoy the app," Moss said from his office at Locket Labs, Inc., in Venice, California. "Long term, we want Locket to be the best way to feel closer to your friends and family."



Long term, we want Locket to be the best way to feel closer to your friends and family.



# Black Bow Sweets

Stylish Nuts for Every Occasion

BY CHERYL CRABTREE

LISA WOJCİK '05 grew up in the Sacramento area, surrounded by avid chefs and bakers who loved to make homemade treats for events and gifts. Friends and family raved in particular about her mother's specialty, candied pecans. Wojcik learned the recipe early, and every winter she helped her mother make countless batches of the confections.

After moving away for school and for work, Wojcik continued to make candied pecans for winter holiday gifts. But friends soon began to request "The Nuts," as they were known, for occasions throughout the year. The demand inspired Wojcik, then a visual merchandiser at Deckers Brands, to veer away from a corporate career and launch her own business. She named the artisanal confectionery Black Bow Sweets, to reflect the elegance of the products she planned to craft.

At first Wojcik rented space in a commercial kitchen in Goleta along with Kate Flynn, owner of Sun & Swell Foods. As her business grew, Northern California beckoned. "My whole family is in Sacramento and the Bay Area," Wojcik explains. "I missed everyone, and it was easier to find expansive places for the business of nuts."

Today Black Bow Sweets still specializes in nuts: candied walnuts, almonds and pecans sourced from San Joaquin Valley family farms, plus savory salt and pepper cashews. The company has five employees, and Black Bow Sweets are in about 1,000 outlets across the nation.

"All my passions are combined in this business," says Wojcik. "I've taken all the skill sets I've developed in my life – baking, design and business acumen – and converged them here."



LISA WOJCİK '05

"All my passions are combined in this business... I've taken all the skill sets I've developed in my life — baking, design and business acumen — and converged them here."



## The Circle of Innovation



“To be successful, you have to believe you are doing something very special and the world will be a better place if you succeed.”

Bo Hu '04

After earning his Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering, Bo Hu '04 worked at several startups that folded. He went on to lead world-class engineering teams at some of the world's best known technology companies, including Facebook, Dropbox, Uber and Lime. But the onset, then onslaught of COVID-19 inspired a return to the startup scene – this time, his own.

Seeking to empower people to live healthier and happier lives, Bo co-founded Circolo, maker of the Circolo Mirror, a smart home fitness device.

“I have a passion for fitness and wellness,” said Bo. “I want to help people to live an active lifestyle and stay healthy and happy. The pandemic was a trigger. I felt compelled to start ‘today’ rather than waiting for tomorrow.”

Home fitness products had a massive surge in popularity when the pandemic forced gyms to close. Companies like Peloton saw demand for their products and services increase dramatically. Described as “the most versatile smart fitness device,” Circolo stands out by targeting consumers who often don't.

“Our vision is to help everyone,” said Bo. “There are many market segments which have not received attention from big players like Peloton. For example, senior fitness. Older people need more

specialized programs and experiences due to aging and other conditions. We want to build an open fitness platform to tackle all those underserved segments first.

“It's always about how I can make a bigger difference,” Bo adds. “To be successful, you have to believe you are doing something very special and the world will be a better place if you succeed.”

At UC Santa Barbara, Bo focused his doctoral work on automation for chip design and “researching the algorithms to efficiently layout millions of transistors on a computer chip.” Coming to the campus as an international graduate student after earning a B.S. in electrical engineering from Tsinghua University in Beijing, he “felt very welcomed and supported along the way.”

That's part of the reason Bo chose to support current students by becoming an inaugural member of the UCSB Innovators Circle, a recently launched network for UCSB entrepreneurs, including alumni, faculty, students and staff. “I attribute a lot of where I am today to the opportunity I received from UC Santa Barbara,” he said. “Many times the only thing people need is an opportunity. I feel happy and honored to provide that same opportunity to current and future students by giving back.”

—UC SANTA BARBARA ALUMNI



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## Presidential Perspectives

With a desire to help create lasting change in multiple sectors of society, Aila Malik '01 has dedicated her career to doing exactly that. She hopes to impact systems that affect the most vulnerable people, such as justice, foster care and the environment, by elevating the capacity of the nonprofit sector.

Her experience as a 2022 Presidential Leadership Scholar will help her achieve that goal.

The competitive Presidential Leadership Scholars (PLS) Program annually selects a group of professionals and community change agents looking to elevate their leadership. Determined to promote collaboration and understanding, the scholars spend six months learning from different people – and different presidencies – with an ultimate aim to foster bipartisan solutions to some of our biggest problems. Scholars are chosen based on their leadership growth potential and the strength of their personal leadership projects aimed at improving the civic or social good by addressing a critical challenge or need in a community, profession or organization.

“PLS is very intentional about creating cohorts with diverse identities, ideologies and practices to cultivate leaders that can mobilize solutions on a national scale,” said Malik, founder and owner of a consultancy that serves nonprofits. Malik has a law degree from Santa Clara University.

At UC Santa Barbara, Malik earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies, and minor degrees in music and in professional writing. During her undergraduate years, she volunteered with vulnerable populations in the nonprofit sector. As a law school student, she spent time with children who were either incarcerated or on probation.

“Because I am so passionate about equity and justice, I never thought of my work solely coming from either an environmental angle or the juvenile angle,” she said, “but from all different angles of society.”

Malik's company, Venture Leadership Consulting, is a “collective of practitioners instead of traditional consultants,” she said. They provide tools and support to leaders in the field, share their learnings with the sector at large and even serve as interim executives in individual organizations “to drive change from the inside out,” she said. “Then we turn it over to a permanent person to continue this momentum to success.”

“I firmly believe that change in our world depends on human behavior and our ability to create healthy communities that care about a healthy environment,” Malik said. “We must have those hard conversations about true accountability and effectiveness within the nonprofit space, in service of great impact.”

—UC SANTA BARBARA ALUMNI

"I firmly believe that change in our world depends on human behavior and our ability to create healthy communities that care about a healthy environment."

Aila Malik '01



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## ALUMNI

### NEWSMAKERS AND MILESTONES

# Listening to Learn



“The most important part of being a journalist,” Forster said, “is listening.”

## Molly Forster '18

Just four years after graduating from UC Santa Barbara, Molly Forster '18 is an award-winning investigative producer. She credits her degree in communication, and her undergraduate minor in professional writing, for giving her the tools to succeed when she entered the media world after college.

“Having the professional writing skill in my toolbelt gave me the confidence that I lacked before to pitch my stories and take on bigger projects that an entry-level writer wouldn't normally have the confidence for,” Forster said.

Looks like it worked.

Forster won an Emmy Award and an award from the Society of Professional Journalists for a story on visa fraud that she co-produced at NBC's Bay Area Investigative Unit. Today she works at Ample Entertainment, which produces nonfiction feature films and series. She also served as a producer and investigative reporter on the Showtime documentary series “Buried.”

“I have always felt passionate about good storytelling,” said Forster, who did an internship at the Santa Barbara Independent, a weekly newspaper, during her time at UCSB. “Having something that you created and that people can learn from was definitely something that I got excited about as an undergrad.”

After earning her bachelor's degree, Forster moved on to graduate school in journalism at UC Berkeley, where she focused on investigative reporting, video production, and health and environment reporting. But it was the UCSB Writing Program and the Communication Department, she says, that guided her shift in perspective from consumer of media to an analytical thinker who understands how we view the news – and how different groups of people are portrayed across various mediums and platforms.

It was her time at UC Santa Barbara, Foster added, that helped her learn to be an open listener and gain the trust of people she interviews.

“The most important part of being a journalist,” Forster said, “is listening.”

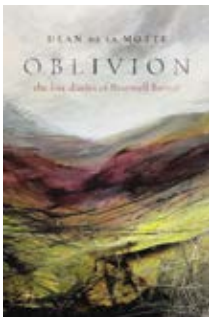
—UC SANTA BARBARA WRITING PROGRAM



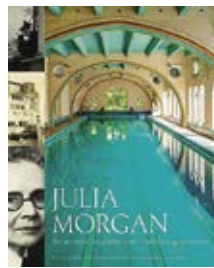
# Noteworthy

## Alumni Books

**Dean de la Motte '83** has written a historical novel, “Oblivion: The Lost Diaries of Branwell Brontë,” forthcoming in July from Valley Press UK, that is described as a compelling reconstruction of the life of the famous literary sisters’ often-misunderstood brother and a dramatic, sweeping portrayal of a century in rapid transition to modernity. A comparative literature alumnus, de la Motte is a professor of French and comparative literature at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island.



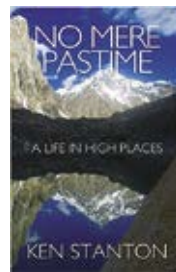
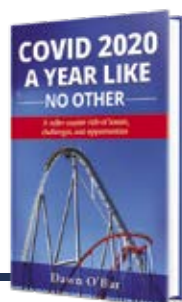
**Victoria Kastner '89** has published the new book “Julia Morgan: An Intimate Biography of the Trailblazing Architect” (Chronicle Books, LLC, 2022). Working for three decades as Hearst Castle’s official historian, Kastner wrote several books about the estate; Morgan was the architect who built it. Kastner has also published books on the Beverly Hills Hotel and the San Francisco Pan American Expedition.



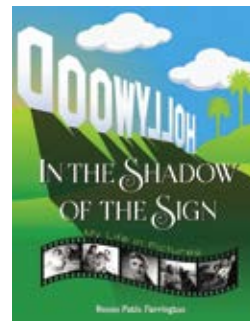
**Via Bleidner '22** published her first book while still an undergraduate in the College of Creative Studies. “If You Lived Here You’d Be Famous by Now” (Flatiron Books, 2021) tells true stories from her experiences at Calabasas High School and reflects on Bleidner’s culture shock after moving to affluent Calabasas, home to the Kardashian-Jenners and the notorious “Bling Ring.”



**Dawn Michaels O’Bar '80** shares her experiences during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic and interviews others about their own in the book “COVID 2020 A Year Like No Other: A roller coaster ride of losses, challenges, and opportunities.”

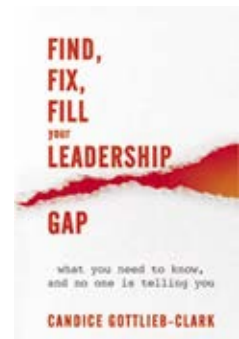


**Ken Stanton '75** has published his fourth book. “No Mere Pastime, A Life in High Places” chronicles 50 years of adventuring in the outdoors, from big wall climbing in Yosemite and the Dolomites to alpine climbing in the Sierra Nevada and British Columbia, canyoneering, white water kayaking, and trekking in the Karakoram Himalaya.



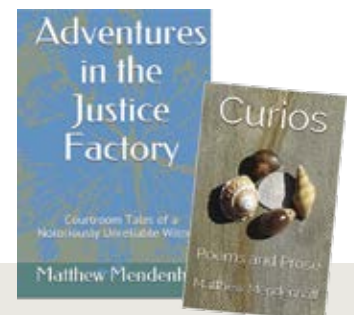
**Renée (Patin '60) Farrington** has written and released an autobiography, “In the Shadow of the Sign,” chronicling her life growing up on the “wrong” side of the Hollywood sign, daughter to one of Disney’s original animators. She also details her time at UCSB.

**Candice Gottlieb-Clark '90**, founder and CEO of Dynamic Team Solutions and a member of the Advisory Board of the Women in Leadership program at UCSB, has published “Find, Fix, Fill your



Leadership Gap.” The book aims to enlighten leaders to their gaps, provide strategies for repairing past damage, and teach skills that secure a healthy and successful future for leaders, their teams and their companies.

**Matt Mendenhall '82** has self-published two books: “Amazon: Adventures in the Justice Factory: Courtroom Tales of a Notoriously Unreliable Witness,” a collection of humorous stories drawn from his experiences as a career Spanish-English court interpreter, and “Curios: Poems and Prose,” which includes poems he wrote while living in Isla Vista from 1973-1982.



Please submit your news and milestones to [editor@magazine.ucsb.edu](mailto:editor@magazine.ucsb.edu).

Find even more alumni milestones on our website: [alumni.ucsb.edu](http://alumni.ucsb.edu).

## ALUMNI

### SOCIAL SNIPPETS

Follow us on Instagram @UCSBAlumni



#### #TBT

More than 10,000 people bicycle-commute on the seven miles of campus bike paths every day. For every year since 2011, the League of American Bicyclists has given UCSB "gold level" designation on its list of "bike-friendly universities."



#### #Meta

Campus point on canvas!

Credit: (@chrispotterart)



#### #AllGauchoReunion #ProudGaucho

Live music, great friends, and good memories. Taste of UCSB was a huge success! Thank you for coming out to enjoy wine and brews from your favorite vendors while reconnecting with friends.



#### #ImissUCSB

Sunsets in Santa Barbara > sunsets anywhere else. Where's your favorite spot to catch sunset?

## We are UC Santa Barbara PaCE

We are committed to providing essential skills and expertise to compete in today's job market. We are helping shape the future of our community, connecting UCSB with our fast-growing entrepreneurial base, and providing opportunities for career advancement and lifelong learning for students of all ages.

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## Access for All

Undergraduate champions inclusion as founder and CEO of nonprofit Pre-Health Shadowing

BY NORA DRAKE

IN EARLIER DAYS of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nina Bouzamondo-Bernstein, an aspiring doctor, saw the lockdowns disrupting the usual internship path for pre-med students. More concerning, they were exacerbating obstacles faced by many of her peers – namely, issues of inequity and accessibility. She quickly sprang into action.

Bouzamondo-Bernstein, a third-year biopsychology major, soon founded Pre-Health Shadowing (PHS), a nonprofit organization that aims to expand options for such students to learn about a variety of different jobs in medicine. Finding hands-on experiences and mentoring in the field of medicine was difficult before the pandemic, she said, and nearly impossible at the height of it.

“Pre-Health Shadowing was inspired by this idea of being able to create accessible opportunities for students,” said Bouzamondo-Bernstein, a transfer student who came to Santa Barbara by way of UC Merced. “Medicine is a very elitist field. You have to have the means to pursue it.”

Struck in particular by the experience of a friend leaving school to support her family, Bouzamondo-Bernstein was driven to create those avenues for everyone – regardless of income level, location or means of transportation.

“There was one friend of mine at UC Merced who was interested in going into medicine but ended up dropping out of college because she had to help her family pay the bills,” Bouzamondo-Bernstein recalled. “She had to postpone her career, and that was a catalyst for me. I wanted to provide opportunities that anyone could participate in, despite their circumstances.”

Her organization, which now has 46,000 members (and counting), helps students get crucial access to healthcare professionals who might inspire or mentor them. And most importantly, Bouzamondo-Bernstein said, it lets them connect with these professionals on their own schedules. “It’s 100% remote and superflexible,” she said. “This allows students to engage in what they need to do in their lives outside of school while also pursuing their long-term career goals.”

Amid her own studies, Bouzamondo-Bernstein estimates that she spends 20 to 50 hours per week working on PHS. As the organization’s CEO, she helps to oversee every part of daily operations, including onboarding and training for large groups of volunteers. She often hosts the virtual shadowing sessions herself.

Bouzamondo-Bernstein is especially proud, though, of the diversity that anchors and lies at the heart of PHS. “It’s diverse in the speakers we have, their backgrounds, careers and even the types of presentations they give,” she said.



NINA BOUZAMONDO-BERNSTEIN

As the pandemic continues to shift, Bouzamondo-Bernstein aspires to also start offering in-person opportunities for pre-health students around the globe while continuing to honor her commitment to equity.

“This affects everyone,” she said of her desire to keep PHS as accessible as possible through the ongoing pandemic, and thereafter. “These are the future doctors, nurses, physician’s assistants and dentists that are going to be taking care of all of us.”

**Andrea Adams**, an assistant researcher in the Earth Research Institute, is studying the amphibian disease chytridiomycosis in the **Mediterranean region of Baja California**, where scientists are investigating its origin, trajectory, genetics and impact in an effort to safeguard vulnerable and valuable biodiversity.

**Gerardo Aldana**, dean of the College of Creative Studies and a professor of Chicana and Chicano Studies, has a longtime interest in – and has long studied – the history and culture of Mayans in the **Yucatan** region of Mexico. His new book is “Calculating Brilliance: An Intellectual History of Mayan Astronomy at **Chich’en Itza**.”

**David Chin ’92** turned his passion for sports into an opportunity to raise a family in **Japan**, making his way up the corporate ladder from retail to the vice president and managing director for Adidas Golf APAC Region based in Tokyo. Prior to joining Adidas, Chin spent 12 years traveling with Nike from Indonesia to Thailand, Korea and Japan. He then went to TaylorMade Golf, working in **South East Asia, India and Korea**.

With funding from a National Science Foundation Early CAREER Award, structural seismologist **Zach Eilon** is studying the bottom of the ocean to learn how tectonic plates are made. He will deploy two arrays of temporary ocean bottom seismometers around the Galápagos Triple Junction, a location west of the **Galápagos Islands**, at the bottom of the equatorial Pacific Ocean, where three tectonic plates touch. His will be the first experiment to record energy from earthquakes in that geologically active area.

**Brandon Hugueley ’12** spent a year in Guatemala conducting research with Project Concern International in an effort to improve regional food security in the department of Huehuetenango. Previously part of the Peace Corps in **Nepal**, he worked in the nutrition and agriculture sectors in

a small Nepali village as part of USAID’s Feed the Future initiative. Hugueley is currently a senior data scientist for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Anthropologist **Douglas J. Kennett** and former UCSB postdoctoral scholar **Weston McCool** examined climate data from the **Nasca highland region in the central Andes** for a study examining long-term lethal violence in the precolonial Andes highlands from 750 to 1450 Common Era (CE). Focusing on ancient DNA from two rock shelters in Belize, Kennett in a different study revealed a previously unknown Mayan migration from as far away as **South America**, some 5,600 years ago, that contributed more than 50% of Maya ancestry today. He also is part of a global team of scientists that documented a major migration into **Britain** during the Late Bronze Age that would displace half the genetic makeup of England and Wales.

Researchers including **Sarah McClure**, chair of the anthropology department, and **Nick Triozzi**, an anthropology Ph.D. candidate, studied archaeological remains of domesticated dogs from the **eastern Adriatic region of present-day Croatia**. Their findings strongly suggest that changes in the dogs’ bodies reflect an evolution in the relationship between those early canines and humans, helping them make the case that when Neolithic farmers spread into Europe, they brought dogs with them that became larger in the Bronze and Iron Ages.

The expertise of **Sara Poot-Herrera**, a professor of Spanish and Portuguese, covers all periods and genres of Mexican literature – from Indigenous cultures and colonial conflicts to contemporary fiction and border studies. She is a leading scholar of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a 17th-century intellectual, writer, theologian, politician and artist, and was awarded the Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz medal from **University of the Cloister of Sor Juana in Mexico City**.

### Campus Sustainability Quiz Answers from p17

1: C) 1.8 million, 2: D) Over 90%, 3: C) 100, 4: D) Over 600 pounds, 5: C) 1,500-3,000 pounds



## MAKING CONNECTIONS

# The Gaucho Network

Connecting Gauchos One Click at a Time

BY CARMIIYA BASKIN

A WEALTH OF RESOURCES is available at UC Santa Barbara for students seeking to start now on their post-degree professional path, from resume assistance to career counseling. Future generations of Gaucho professionals are set up for success at the No. 5 public university in the nation.

Consider the Gaucho Network. The hype-personalized professional networking platform, built exclusively for Gauchos, provides opportunities for job guidance, mentorship and career connection. Fiona Affronti '25 and Paul-Michael Ochoa '14 used the Gaucho Network to get connected, and subsequently developed a strong mentoring relationship through the UCSB COMM Mentoring Program.

The Gaucho Network matches mentors and mentees in the COMM Program based on an expert algorithm.

It certainly worked well for Affronti and Ochoa, who started out on the Gaucho Network before switching to more informal modes of communication like email and phone, lending them both a higher level of confidence in their pairing.

With over 8,000 users, the Gaucho Network provides a space to interact with posts on the feed as well as make posts of your own, to stay updated with current UC Santa Barbara happenings, and to search for specific people or groups such as Olé in the Bay, Gauchos in Tech, and Gaucho Transfer Network.

Drey Lubin '22, a communication major, said that the site “makes it easier to create meaningful connections with alumni” given that everyone shares similar experiences as part of the UCSB community.



FIONA AFFRONTI '25



PAUL-MICHAEL OCHOA '14



DREY LUBIN '22

## Creating an account is simple, quick, and FREE:

### 1. Sign up with email, Facebook, or LinkedIn

(hint: connecting LinkedIn makes it easy to transfer over all of your professional and academic experiences!)

### 2. Wait for approval.

### 3. You're in!

## Register on [gauchonetwork.com](https://gauchonetwork.com)

Kickstart your career connection and inspire the next generation of Gaucho professionals!

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## Thank You!

Wherever we are, we share a common experience as UC Santa Barbara alumni, friends, family, faculty, staff, and scholars. The UC Santa Barbara community is worth celebrating, and we loved seeing the outpouring of support and pride on April 7th for Give Day 2022!

Your generosity helps make the UC Santa Barbara experience possible.

**\$6,004,402** raised

**1,725** gifts

**155** funds supported

Over **50%** of gifts made were from alumni

**Join us again for our next flagship digital fundraising event: UCSB Give Day 2023!**

