

UCLA College

2022 EDITION

Magazine

FOOD

FOR

THOUGHT





MATT HARBICHT

A MOVABLE FEAST

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David Schaberg
Senior Dean of the College
Dean of Humanities

Sharing a meal is a lovely way to mark a special occasion, and we hope you're nourished by the banquet you now hold in your hands.

Our centerpiece feature is all about food—explorations of the innovative, interdisciplinary ways our faculty and students are using this lens to tackle some of society's most complex issues. Other features include a spotlight on long-view projects expected to bear fruit in the coming decades and a piece on creative combinations of majors and minors devised by students (and professors) to round out their undergraduate education. We have filled these pages with some of the many extraordinary stories and voices that help make the UCLA College a world leader in every way.

Please join us, too, in a grateful toast to David Schaberg, senior dean of the College and dean of humanities, who concludes his distinguished leadership term this October. He has long been—and will continue to be—an exemplary champion of the UCLA College and its mission.

We hope you enjoy this issue and that it inspires you to connect further with the College and all the incredible work we're cooking up. Bon appétit!

As a land grant institution, UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands).



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STAY CONNECTED

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THE SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCE CENTER: 25 YEARS OF HELPING UCLA STUDENTS GRADUATE WITH LESS DEBT



ALYSSA BIERCE

To get a sense of its profound impact, ask any of the hundreds of students whom Angela Deaver Campbell and the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center have helped since she launched it in 1996.

“I absolutely would not be where I am today without Angela’s and the SRC’s support,” said Aleksandr Katsnelson, a 2009 graduate who went on to earn a law degree from Harvard University. “Angela wore many hats during our interactions: role model, emotional support provider and hero.”

The center’s legacy keeps growing thanks to Deaver Campbell, who still serves as director, and assistant director Rebecca Blustein, student affairs officer Mac Harris and a group of graduate students who act as student affairs advisors. And while its scope has expanded, the center’s core mission remains unchanged: to provide free scholarship information, resources, mentoring and support to all UCLA students, regardless of their financial aid eligibility.

“We would love for a donor to step in and provide permanent funding, so that no economic downturn could ever affect our ability to help change lives,” Deaver Campbell said. “Every year, more students and families come to us for solutions. Our work is too important to be vulnerable.” —**JONATHAN RIGGS**



DON LIEBIG/ASUCLA

Created by Judy Baca, professor emerita of Chicana/o and Central American studies, the nearly 80-foot mural “La Memoria de la Tierra: UCLA” on Ackerman Union was unveiled April 1. The central panel (above) is built around Toypurina, a Tongva woman who opposed the colonial rule by Spanish missionaries in California in the late 1700s; Angela Davis, civil rights activist and former UCLA faculty member; and Dolores Huerta, the iconic labor leader. —**MIKE FRICANO**

“It’s a tribute to the legacy of the Black women astronauts who have come before me, as well as to the exciting future ahead.” —Jessica Watkins



Jessica Watkins, who earned a doctorate in geology from UCLA in 2015, is currently spending six months on the International Space Station as part of NASA’s SpaceX Crew-4 mission; she has also already been selected for NASA’s Artemis program, which plans to return explorers to the moon by 2024. —ELIZABETH KIVOWITZ and STUART WOLPERT

#1

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RANKED UCLA THE **TOP PUBLIC** UNIVERSITY IN THE NATION FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS



PERENNIALY THE **#1 APPLIED-TO** FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY IN THE U.S.



Meyer and Renee Luskin with legendary journalist Bob Woodward, who delivered the 2022 Luskin Lecture for Thought Leadership on May 9. The event connects the UCLA community to some of the most visionary figures of our time, inspiring attendees to change the world for the better.

DON LIEBIG/ASUCLA



Farwiza Farhan, who works to sustainably protect the Leuser Ecosystem—the last place where tigers, elephants, rhinos and orangutans live together in the wild—won the Pritzker Emerging Environmental Genius Award from the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability.

“I look forward to providing creative and responsive leadership at UCLA, and partnering with all of the excellent and diverse units and communities within and beyond the division,” said Alexandra Minna Stern, who comes from the University of Michigan and will become dean of the UCLA Division of Humanities Nov. 1.



CARLA RICHMOND COFFING

David Kaplan, the Hans Reichenbach Professor of Scientific Philosophy, won the 2022 Rolf Schock Prize in Logic and Philosophy “for his contributions to the understanding of the role played by the extra-linguistic context for the semantics of natural language, for the logic of natural language sentences, and for the nature of belief.”



“BEHERE / 1942”: A LIFE-CHANGING EXHIBITION

During World War II, the U.S. government forcibly removed Japanese Americans from the West Coast, incarcerating 120,000 in concentration camps. Starting this May, an exhibition at the Japanese American National Museum lets visitors step into those dark days of 1942 through an augmented reality re-creation at the very site where thousands of Angelinos reported before being taken to the camps.

“BeHere / 1942: A New Lens on the Japanese American Incarceration,” which runs until Oct. 9, is presented by the Yanai Initiative for Globalizing Japanese Humanities, a joint project of UCLA and Japan’s Waseda University, in collaboration with the museum.

“On one level, it is about what happened here in Little Tokyo and all along the West Coast in 1942, but it is also about the present,” said UCLA Professor Michael Emmerich, director of the Yanai Initiative. “Even 80 years later, we are still grappling with anti-Asian violence and racism and still dealing as a society with the same civil rights issues.” —ALISON HEWITT



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS/RUSSELL LEE



UC Grad Slam finalist Kelsi Rutledge holds a preserved museum specimen of *Pseudobatos buthi*, a new species of ray she discovered and named.

THE NATURE OF INNOVATION

Marine scientist Kelsi Rutledge wants you to understand the world from a stingray’s perspective—and for good reason. Rays and their relatives have a little-known sensory superpower: a curiously shaped, powerful nose that can track a scent like a bloodhound.

Rutledge, a doctoral student in UCLA’s Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, is researching these fishes’ potential to lead the way to a more sustainable future. Odors are chemicals, and monitoring their presence is vital in protecting our seas, which provide nearly three-quarters of our oxygen. While current methods are expensive and tech-heavy, the rays’ form and function may inspire efficient, energy-conscious alternatives.

“Through thousands of years of evolution, nature often provides innovative solutions to complex problems,” says Rutledge, whose findings are already being used by U.S. Navy engineers. “If we can mimic what animals do so elegantly, we can advance our own technology.” After graduation, Rutledge will go on to Caltech to continue exploring the world of fishes, our fascinating evolutionary ancestors. “There’s so much we can learn about them,” she says. “There’s still so much to be discovered.” —LUCY BERBEO

HASTE YE BACK

This summer, Margaret MacDonald, senior associate director of communications, retired. The co-founder of UCLA’s first women’s soccer club, a political science alumna and a longtime pillar of College Development, she has been the College’s heart, memory and voice for more than 12 years. Whether or not you knew it—and those of us lucky to have worked with her know it well—she’s been a guiding light and a good friend beyond measure to UCLA. Thank you for everything, Margaret. *Lang may yer lum reek!*



CONNECTIONS AND CONVERSATIONS

SHE'S STRENGTHENING THE ISLAMIC STUDIES PROGRAM AND ITS CONNECTION TO L.A. AND BEYOND

While looking through boxes from her youth, Asma Sayeed was surprised as she retraced her path from a child newly moved from India to the South Bronx, too shy to speak English, to a dedicated associate professor and director of Islamic studies at UCLA.

"I had always seen my life as a straight line to academia, but I noticed there are threads running through my zigzagging," Sayeed says. "The first is grappling with my own difference and connecting that to my community; the second is the art of thinking about words and how they convey meaning; and the third is service, which I credit to my parents, who embodied it in every sense."

When she arrived in 2012, Sayeed relished the challenge and opportunity to chart a course for UCLA's Islamic studies program, the oldest in the country. She launched the "Islam in the West" course and the freshman cluster "Global Islam," which offer opportunities for undergrads to gain core literacy on both Islam and Muslims—something that will help them be better informed citizens of the world going forward, no matter their major.

"I'm so excited about what we've been able to do in terms of augmenting our curriculum and making real strides in public outreach," Sayeed says. "These vibrant, important conversations about contemporary global Islam and the fascinating histories of Muslims should never be limited just to academics."

As part of outreach efforts, Sayeed and the program have partnered with Amy Landau, director of education and interpretation at the Fowler Museum, to launch the new Community Bridges Residency, where civic leaders engaged with the Muslim community can connect with UCLA students and faculty, and benefit from research resources. As part of this partnership, they are collaborating on an exhibit at the Fowler to represent a fuller diversity of Muslim experiences in Los Angeles as well as developing online exhibits and K–12 workshops.

Sayeed's current research focuses on Islamic higher education. In particular, she examines the ways in which universities teaching the Islamic sciences grapple with issues of integrating Western academic disciplines alongside classical Islamic ones, the impact of increasing numbers of female students and faculty, and how the digital revolution has transformed teaching and research.

"Where I conduct fieldwork in Morocco, there is still some suspicion that Western academia is a space to undermine Islam, but I see so many wonderful opportunities for international collaborations that can shift that perception," says Sayeed. "My dream is that my next book will serve as a template for research in other countries like Indonesia, Egypt and even Syria and Iraq: war-torn areas where Islamic education is as alive as it is vigorous in spite of sustained and profound upheavals." 

MUSIC OF THE HEART

HE WON THE MARSHALL SCHOLARSHIP BY HONORING HIS BOLIVIAN HERITAGE AND TRANSFER EXPERIENCE

Herman Luis Chavez found his destiny inside his aunt's piano bench while visiting her in Bolivia. Leafing through sheet music to perform for his family, Chavez happened upon the score to "6 Danzas Bolivianas del ciclo Runas para violín y piano" by Atiliano Auza León.

"I had been playing classical music my whole life, but I was trained in an entirely European tradition," says Chavez, who was born in Utah to immigrant parents. "When I realized this was a Bolivian art music composer, it changed everything for me."

Determined to explore classical music beyond the European canon, Chavez decided he needed to transfer from Colorado State University to UCLA—one of the only U.S. institutions to hold compositions by León.

Once at UCLA, he completed 20-plus units of coursework every quarter to earn a double major in comparative

literature and ethnomusicology, received the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship and even taught his own course, "Latinx the Word: Discourse and Expression."

"The incredible UCLA community that I have found here has empowered me to know that I can continue into the academy myself one day as a queer Latinx scholar," Chavez says. "My dream is to become a professor at a public university engaged in my own research and teaching while also paying forward the remarkable mentorship I've received at UCLA."

In fact, Chavez says that his status as a transfer Bruin helped him to become one of the 41 American students honored as Marshall Scholars. Crediting the Scholarship Resource Center's assistance, Chavez will follow his predecessor Leia Yen to King's College London, where the Marshall Scholarship will cover the cost of his graduate work in musicology and cultural policy research.

"It means so much to be the third UCLA student in more than a decade—and the second UCLA transfer student ever—to earn this honor," Chavez says. "I hope I'm an example of how driven transfer students are to get as much as possible out of their UCLA experience. No matter what school we come from or what unique path we take, we come here to seek knowledge and make a difference."

Wherever his journey takes him, Chavez will always draw much strength and inspiration from his Bolivian roots. He especially wants to ensure that the home country of his parents—and of Auza León, his senior thesis subject—receives its due consideration across the board in global academic conversations.

"I'm so excited to take this next step with the Marshall Scholarship to look into cultural policy, and how music both shapes and is shaped by it, specifically in terms of Bolivia and the Andes," Chavez says. "Music can tell us about policy, the environment, social movements and ourselves. I owe everything to my transfer journey, and I'm proud to say it's just beginning." 



STEVEN RUIZ

THE POWER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

RISING SCIENTIFIC STARS ARE RECIPIENTS OF THE PRITZKER GRADUATE SCHOLAR AWARD

According to the CDC, emergency room visits for suspected suicide attempts by adolescents have risen during COVID-19. The organization also found that about 38 million adults in the U.S. consume too much alcohol. The desire to help people struggling with these issues inspired Julia Yarrington and Lindsay Meredith to pursue doctoral work in psychology at UCLA, where their incredible potential has been honored with the first two Pritzker Graduate Scholar Awards.

“Thanks to this recognition, I am more connected to the department, the academic community and my research than ever,” says Yarrington, who grew up in New York state and was named the inaugural Pritzker Scholar in 2021.

With Professor Michelle G. Craske as her mentor, Yarrington began looking into

risk factors for depression, anxiety or suicide in adolescents and young adults. Seeing how rates of psychopathology have continued to increase, despite a large body of evidence that has clarified risk factors, she’s pivoted to studying protective factors in hopes of determining how to best leverage them to reduce the likelihood of developing clinical levels of depression or anxiety in the first place.

“It has been such a blessing to have more time to focus on research, mentoring undergraduates and exploring other clinical training opportunities,” says Meredith, who grew up in rural Ohio and was named the second Pritzker Scholar in 2022.

Mentored by Professor Lara A. Ray, Meredith hopes to develop and advance evidence-based treatments for addiction, specifically alcohol use disorder. Recently focusing on clinical trials testing ibudilast, a medication that may help reduce alcohol use, she seeks to better understand how this new class of therapy works on the psychological level.

The Pritzker Graduate Scholar Award, established as a result of a gift from long-time UCLA supporters Tony and Jeanne Pritzker, supports psychology graduate students who demonstrate excellence with the potential for high public impact.

“I’m a first-generation college student, so I didn’t even know research was an option for me at first,” says Meredith. “It’s been so nice connecting with Julia and building a sense of community while being able to serve as mentors for others, as mentorship has been invaluable to my own growth.”

“Sometimes it feels very surreal to be here, with all of the opportunities at UCLA at our fingertips,” adds Yarrington. “We are both grateful to everyone who has supported us in this collaborative, inspiring environment.” 



Julia Yarrington
and Lindsay Meredith

FIRST, DO NO HARM

SHE'S HELPING CREATE A MORE EQUITABLE BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FOR ALL

Native Americans and Alaska Natives have long experienced disproportionate negative health outcomes, including lower life expectancy. Born and raised on the Navajo Nation, Nanibaa' Garrison saw these disparities firsthand and vowed as a child to do something about them. Today, she is an associate professor at UCLA who holds appointments in the Institute for Society and Genetics, the Institute for Precision Health and the Division of General Internal Medicine & Health Services Research. Garrison also teaches bioethics for UCLA's new genetic counseling program.

"I really found my place in bioethics exploring anthropological, sociological and historical questions of genetic research," she says. "Most recently, I've been engaged in a lot of policy-related discussions with tribes to think through how to strengthen tribal governance over Indigenous data, how to ensure that tribes have the capacity to evaluate genetic research protocols and how to deliver more educational opportunities to tribes."

Key to Garrison's mission is building bioethical bridges between researchers working on world-changing science and communities who can benefit from it. This often involves restoring trust, explaining complicated concepts in layperson's terms and navigating cultural differences to ensure that appropriate guidelines are mutually established, understood, agreed upon and followed. (A cautionary tale occurred in 2003, when the Havasupai Tribe successfully sued Arizona State University over misuse of their genetic samples. They won a settlement and the return of their DNA.)



"While my main focus has been with Indigenous communities, this work bleeds over into others as well," she adds. "I identify barriers and then work with different teams to create solutions or pathways to reduce those barriers and move toward a more equitable future for all, with regard to genetics."

It has been a special point of pride for Garrison that she can tackle certain aspects of her work with her father, a retired biology professor, and her mother, a Navajo language scholar, who both taught for many years at Diné College, the first tribally controlled and accredited collegiate institution in the United States. It's important to her, too, that she

can continue her work in Los Angeles, home to a large population of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, and at a university like UCLA.

Garrison remains equally excited about engaging with students, who approach these topics in ways that inspire and reaffirm her enduring passion for her work.

"Students often come in with grandiose ideas for change. Sometimes they aren't achievable, but that's OK, because I have big ideas, too," she says. "This is a field where you face a lot of pushback, because we're trying to accomplish very lofty goals. But I don't look at my work as something to get done in a year or two—I see it as a lifelong commitment." [U](#)

SEARCHING FOR THE DARK

SHE'S ON THE LEADING EDGE OF SOLVING ONE OF THE UNIVERSE'S ULTIMATE MYSTERIES

Alvine Kamaha, who became UCLA's first Keith and Cecilia Terasaki Endowed Chair in Physical Sciences, always knew she wanted to teach.

"My preferred childhood game was to gather my friends on our porch and play school," she says. "I have always been thrilled by the opportunity to share knowledge with someone and help them absorb it and grow."

Choosing her field of study, however, proved more challenging.

"Then, there was no experimental particle physics in Cameroon. It was also difficult to major in physics in general due to gender bias in the educational system," says Kamaha, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in physics from the University of Douala. "While pursuing my second master's degree (in high energy physics) in Italy, I fell in love with the field of physics beyond the standard model: neutrino and dark matter physics. After I graduated, I decided to switch from theoretical to experimental physics, and then went to Canada to earn my Ph.D. in astroparticle physics."

After she completed her doctoral work on using bubble chamber detection technology to search for dark matter, Kamaha next joined several experiments to acquire additional expertise across multiple particle detection technologies,

including spherical proportional counters, time projection chambers and superheated and supercooled fluids.

Still an active member of the LUX-ZEPLIN (LZ) experiment, an international direct-detection dark matter project based in an underground facility in South Dakota, Kamaha arrived at UCLA last November as a leading force in the search to discover and explore the invisible matter of the universe. Although it is theorized to account for approximately 85% of the universe, dark matter has yet to be directly observed.

"When they look at the night sky, most people would say that they see stars. What I study—sort of—is the darkness between the stars. These stars are within galaxies that are surrounded by a halo of non-luminous matter (also called dark matter), that keeps them gravitationally bound," Kamaha says. "This fascinating dark matter has been there from the very beginning of the universe, acting almost as a 'glue' that facilitated the formation of large-scale

structures—galaxies—and it also has an impact on the way our universe evolves."

In some ways, she believes her work building detectors for dark matter and analyzing their data is like digging for buried treasure. While the ultimate goal is to directly observe dark matter, every attempt yields invaluable data and narrows the search for future generations. The idea that there are scientific riches to be found in any search, no matter its success, is one of the key lessons she seeks to impart to her UCLA students.

"We've been searching for dark matter for more than 80 years. Although we haven't found it yet, we have learned so much. Sometimes finding nothing isn't bad, it's just part of the scientific process," Kamaha says. "I want my students to live by this lesson, that no matter what they do—whether they become a scientist or choose a different path—remaining open-minded, curious and resourceful are invaluable skills to possess." [U](#)





SGEG members Zoe Pierrat, Sarah Worden, Nique Stumbaugh, Cat Banach, Aly Fritzmann, Sarah Johnson, Jordan Bretzfelder, Elisha Jhoti and Laura Thapa

EQUITY AND EMPOWERMENT

THEY SAW THE CHANGE THEY WANTED AND CREATED THE ORGANIZATION TO DELIVER IT

The laboratory notebooks containing work from Marie Curie, the only person to win Nobel Prizes in two sciences thus far, remain so radioactive that they must be stored in lead-lined boxes for the next 1,500 years. That the scientific legacy of a brilliant woman is literally untouchable is a powerful metaphor for today.

Women remain underrepresented in scientific fields and must contend with additional higher education barriers. For example, in geosciences today, women represent about 42% of the graduate student population, a 5% decline over the past 10 years. At the faculty level, the numbers are worse—and significantly more so for women of color.

Inspired to tackle these issues in 2018, UCLA Physical Sciences doctoral students

Alexandrea Arnold, Emily Hawkins, Jordyn Moscoso, Zoe Pierrat and Katie Tuite launched the Society of Gender Equity in Geosciences at UCLA.

“The initiative, vision and energy SGEG brings to outreach, community building, institutional reform and career development make a difference and fill a need that has been there for decades,” says Professor Suzanne Paulson, SGEG faculty advisor and the first woman to chair UCLA’s department of atmospheric and oceanic sciences. “We desperately need the talent and passion of the many young people SGEG encourages and makes more welcome.”

Another one of the group’s important priorities has been to identify issues of and advocate for solutions to the gender imbalance within their departments across the division of physical sciences. Working with a receptive faculty, they have raised awareness of unintentional biases when recruiting and admitting graduate students.

The group has been able to offer a stronger support network, and their efforts have paid off, with an increase in female-identifying graduate students entering these disciplines at UCLA.

“SGEG has also brought the physical sciences departments closer together,” adds Pierrat. “I’ve gained new friends I wouldn’t necessarily have met without the benefit of this group, and we’ve also been able to have more serious discussions about supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in our respective departments.”

“Imposter syndrome and isolation can be especially challenging, so having a network of mentors, peers and role models can be critical for those who don’t see themselves well represented in the geosciences,” says Jordan Bretzfelder, SGEG’s current co-chief communications officer. “Plus, the importance of having effective allies cannot be overstated. We invite anyone interested in our mission to reach out to us.” [U](#)



SEED TO HARVEST

THIS BLACK FEMINIST FUTURIST IS WORKING TO CREATE MORE EQUITABLE MEDICAL CARE FOR ALL

Ariel Hart grew up in Pasadena, grateful for the love and care of their family, especially their grandmother, a former nurse at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center. However, Hart realized at a young age how the lives of Black people were unfairly marked when

several of their beloved family members suffered untimely deaths.

“As a child, I felt injustice on such a personal level I couldn’t even see a movie with someone hurt comedically because I was so sensitive,” Hart says. “Losing those loved ones opened my eyes and made me determined to work against racialized premature death.”

Interested in exploring public health as well as medicine, Hart (who uses they/ them pronouns) earned their M.P.H. from the University of Washington while working as a local community organizer

resisting the construction of a new Seattle juvenile incarceration facility. Today, they are in the UCLA-Caltech Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), earning their Ph.D. in sociology from UCLA and their M.D. from the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, a historically Black institution founded after the 1965 Watts Rebellion.

“I was lucky to start with people who are committed to addressing structural problems within medicine and bringing high-quality care to places like Watts,” Hart says. “I wanted space to dig into a deeper understanding of the ways health inequities continued to be produced within health ‘care’ systems. UCLA’s MSTP program allowed me that space.”

Of particular interest to Hart is the resurgence of Black birth workers, whose critical contributions were systematically erased by racist public health campaigns criminalizing Black midwifery. Seeing how activists have worked tirelessly to reclaim this traditional healing practice in direct response to the modern maternal health crisis inspires Hart to make sure these and other invaluable voices are not lost to medical history.

“I want to be a part of conversations and actions that create models of deep care and healing that enhance and support Black people’s well-being,” Hart says. “That requires us as health care professionals to honor the knowledge that every person has about their own body and the history of their people.”

While the road ahead is long—both to complete their two doctoral degrees and to begin their chosen work—Hart remains purposeful and passionate.

“I was able to take formative classes to explore issues of Black women and Black queer people’s health and bodies in a historical context,” Hart says. “Black feminist thought provides a long history of embodied critiques of medical harm that is compelling and necessary for actors within medical spaces. I want to keep engaging with this history and learning from Black birth workers about possibilities for building more caring spaces, systems and worlds.” [🔗](#)

A MORE PERFECT UNION

HE'S COACHING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SKILLED SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

UCLA Professor Efrén Pérez made a surprising New Year's resolution: learn the accordion. Surprising because, well, accordion, but also because his previous musical history was limited to a teenage attempt to master the alto sax that traumatized his loved ones' ears.

It makes sense that Pérez, a professor of political science and of psychology, has a unique hobby—he's carved out a unique career bridging two fields. As a political psychologist, his research explores how demographic changes are unleashing new political forces in the nation.

"Having a joint appointment in two such strong departments is intellectually exhilarating," Pérez says. "As our country continues toward minority-majority status, we need to better understand what these trends imply. I believe that our UCLA undergraduates are uniquely positioned to provide some of the answers."

A native Angeleno, Pérez worked in local politics before earning his Ph.D. in political science from Duke University. After spending 10 years as a professor at Vanderbilt University in Tennessee, he joined UCLA. Growing up, he'd never set foot on the campus, believing it was out of reach, so he began his tenure here with a mission.

"Someone with my profile is not the pony you're going to bet on to make it through a grueling doctoral program," he says. "The fact that I did was strongly related to the mentoring I received. I learned firsthand if you want to see real change in academia, active support and mentorship of folks who come from nontraditional backgrounds are crucial."

And so Pérez was inspired to found the Race, Ethnicity, Politics & Society Lab.

Its mission is twofold: to further his systematic research into the effects of demographic diversity on U.S. society as well as to offer a training ground and pipeline for gifted undergraduate and graduate students from nontraditional backgrounds to gain the footing they need to pursue academic careers in the social sciences.

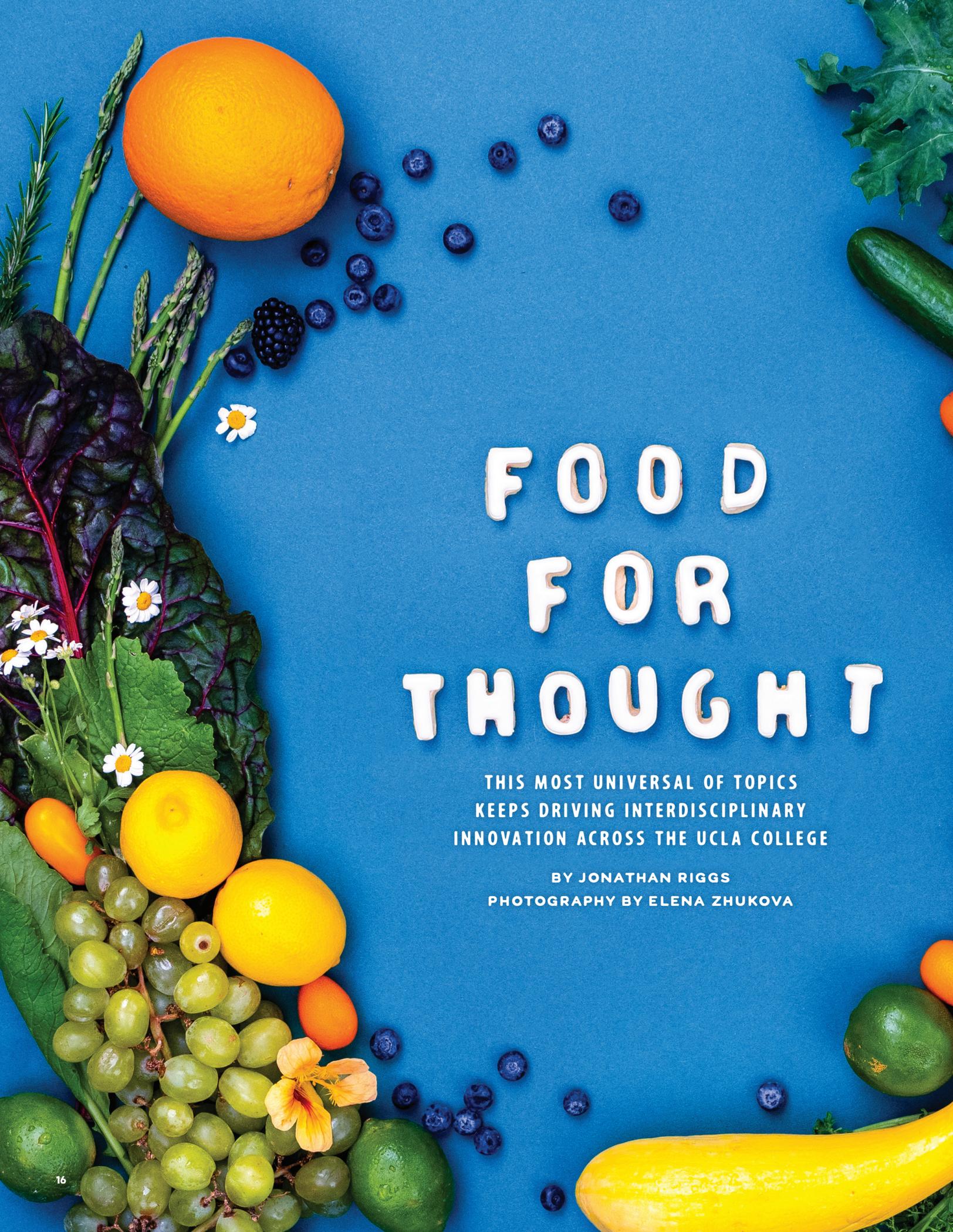
"There are plenty of directions I could be taking my career in, but empowering students is so gratifying. It feeds into what the UC system prides itself on: generating future leaders and upward mobility," he

says. "And if we want to keep California's reputation as a paragon of innovation, we need to be investing more in the skill set that our undergraduates take with them once they leave our campus."

It all comes back to that accordion (as everything should). Pérez was able to succeed where he once failed because he thoughtfully took the time not only to see the instrument's potential but also to do the work to master it.

"When it comes to the art of making music or growing talent, it's a long process," Pérez says. "But it pays off." 





FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THIS MOST UNIVERSAL OF TOPICS
KEEPS DRIVING INTERDISCIPLINARY
INNOVATION ACROSS THE UCLA COLLEGE

BY JONATHAN RIGGS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELENA ZHUKOVA



IT STARTS WITH CANDY MAKING AND THE ALCHEMY OF SUGARED SYRUP'S TRANSMUTATIONS: FUDGE INTO NOUGAT, TAFFY INTO TOFFEE, CARAMEL INTO ... BURNT KITCHEN DISASTER.

That alone is enough to hook students, says professor of biochemistry and chemistry James Gober, whose new course "Food: Molecules, Microbes, Environment" explores the basic scientific principles of cooking. (We have the phenomenon of boiling-point elevation to thank for candy making's versatility.)

Gober's course includes a discussion on heat transfer—what actually happens on the molecular level when you smoke meat versus grill it—and he is planning a demonstration in which students learn about the concept of emulsion by making mayonnaise. Future discussions will cover everything from the bacteria that make cheese possible to why xanthan gum thickens Thanksgiving gravy.

"I wanted to do this course because, as a scientist, it really bugs me how many myths and misconceptions there are about what we eat," Gober says. "I thought it'd be fun to use the science of what food actually is to make students think critically."

No fewer than 90 students enrolled in Gober's course, whereas most upper-level chemistry electives typically enroll about 30.

"It's empowering for students to learn even something like ice cream represents science in action," he says. "My course dovetails nicely with so many other things going on at UCLA around food, one of the most intrinsically multidisciplinary areas."



ENGINE OF EVERYTHING

Across UCLA's campus, food represents a powerful and accessible entry point into any field, with local, national and global repercussions. Nowhere is this clearer than in the recent creation of the UCLA Rothman Family Institute for Food Studies. Located in the division of undergraduate education, it will house UCLA's food studies minor and support expansion of curricular and co-curricular activities while bringing together faculty, staff, students, chefs and community members.

A \$13.5-million gift will provide ongoing funding for research, curriculum and resources, including the first endowed food studies librarian at a university, as well as hands-on experiential learning opportunities, a new chef-in-residence program and expansion of the UCLA Teaching Kitchen.

"The institute will also guide and inform public policy while addressing issues that impact us all, including food insecurity, climate change and advancing innovations in food systems," says dean of the division of undergraduate education Adriana Galván. "By providing a means and the resources to explore these concepts, our students will have an unparalleled collaborative opportunity to enact true change."

A UCLA political science alumna who became famous as TV's "\$5 chef," Marcie H. Rothman was key to helping the institute take permanent shape, tracing its genesis back to her parents and sister, Bruins all.

"Food connects and sustains," she says, "and the Rothman Family Institute for Food Studies will represent all of

that and more for current and future students and faculty."

Fittingly, biophysicist Amy Rowat, a pioneer in engaging general audiences and students with science via cooking, serves as UCLA's inaugural Marcie H. Rothman Professor of Food Studies.

"I'm thrilled and grateful that this chair will support our vision of a world where we can produce delicious, nutritious foods to sustainably feed all," Rowat says. "I'm also excited to expand my education research, using food to empower students to tackle complex societal challenges."

One such challenge looks to the impending reality of cultured meat. The process involves cultivating animal cells in a lab—eliminating the need to kill any animal—to create an unlimited amount of genuine meat products, potentially engineered to be healthier for human consumption.

"Cultured meat is not commercially available yet, but it will be soon," says A. Janet Tomiyama, an associate professor of psychology. "It could save the Earth, but humans have to adopt it, so the psychological aspect is crucial."

Tomiyama and Rowat are part of an interdisciplinary team that published a paper outlining the potential challenges of bridging the gap between science and public perception.

"Food isn't nutritious until it's eaten—the decision to eat or not is important but not studied often," says Tomiyama. "We make so many different decisions every day to eat this or not eat that. And people think about food all the time; they take pictures, talk about it. It seems natural to study what drives different eating behaviors."

A FOOD FRONTRUNNER

UCLA recently earned the No. 1 spot in Niche's "Best College Food in America" rankings for the third year in a row, but our entire community also leads the way in food access, health and sustainability efforts. Here, a menu of milestones and innovations. —LUCY BERBEO

2012

Formal launch of DIG at UCLA: The Campus Garden Coalition, a student group that runs a community garden, hosts peer-led workshops and donates produce to the campus food closet.

2013

The Semel Healthy Campus Initiative kicks off and includes the EatWell Pod, a workgroup focused on food literacy, access and knowledge.

2013

The sustainability-themed Bruin Plate dining hall opens its doors. A certified green restaurant, it forgoes typical college fare to offer locally sourced, whole foods—including herbs and greens grown on campus.



MUSE AND METAPHOR

A conversation between food studies committee leaders Robin (Lauren) Derby, associate professor of history, and Michael Roberts, founding executive director of the Resnick Center for Food Law and Policy at the UCLA School of Law, inspired them to create a new travel study summer course, “Atlantic Foodways: Culture, Science, Governance.”

“We’ll focus on Italian food history from the medieval period to Mussolini, examining how he used beer to craft a populist face for his regime,” says Derby. “From there, we’ll go into the slow food movement, cooking classes and market visits, and we’ll discuss changing labor practices, including immigration and the current experience of Ukrainians arriving in Italy.”

Derby has long been fascinated by how food shines a light on the historical labor of women, enslaved people and Indigenous people, as well as how Americans have naturalized an unsustainable food system.

“Food’s an inspiring area of study because you can come at it from so many angles,” she says. “I’ve had students who’ve done everything from writing about dumpster diving to completing ethnographies on food labels.”

Even without travel, food inspires creativity and community, both in and out of the classroom.

Continuing lecturer Michelle Huneven—a novelist who spent 15 years as a food writer and whose new novel, *Search*, features recipes and is narrated by a restaurant critic—was delighted to launch a UCLA course on food writing as creative writing.

“I have been so impressed and enlightened by my students. They are fully attuned to the great pleasures of cooking, serving and eating food while also being painfully aware of how fragile and imperiled food resources are due to climate change and destructive agricultural practices,” Huneven says. “They know they are inheriting a gravely damaged world, and I am struck by their determination to heal it. Their righteous anger and activism find a voice in writing about food. They give me hope.”

EQUALITY FOR ALL

Food justice and activism are integral parts of the movement across UCLA’s campus. Geography major Tori Crisostomo-Rickman, for example, works through the Undergraduate Research Centers and the Center for Community Engagement to study food deserts.

“My research partners with a local nonprofit to examine food disparities and create strategies for expanding community access to fresh food in South L.A.,” she says. “I’m using GIS and mapping to identify resources like farmers markets, local markets and chain grocery stores while trying to understand what factors prevent community members from accessing these resources and what local organizations can do to help.”

Earlier this year, the UCLA Labor Center published a study on the Los Angeles fast food sector, which employs more than a third of all of L.A.’s restaurant workers. It found that these fast food workers—in frontline pandemic roles—were placed at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 while facing increased violations of labor standards.



2016

UCLA’s food providers increase the use of sustainable packaging, converting all to-go containers to compostable products. As part of today’s campus sustainability plan, UCLA aims to be plastic-free by 2023.

2019

Student leaders partner with the UCLA dining team to launch Bruin Dine, which serves surplus food from dining halls as free meals to students and others in need.

2020

The UCLA–Venice Family Clinic Emergency Food Partnership distributes roughly 13,000 free meals a week to patients and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021

UCLA partners with Starship Technologies to launch contact-free campus food delivery robots.

2022

The UCLA Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden advances a native species restoration project in partnership with members of the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, who will harvest the plants.



POETICS OF SOUL FOOD

I created my “Poetics of Soul Food” course to explore the historical and cultural context of a cuisine defined by spiritual as well as material and aesthetic values.

Many people associate “soul food” with processed ingredients. Contrary to popular belief amplified by media images, soul food is not inherently unhealthy and easily lends itself to nutritious meals.

Soul food is not synonymous with “slave food.” The majority of African Americans in bondage rarely or never tasted these dishes. Fresh meat, milk and dairy products, wheat, sugar, fruits and vegetables were not included in minimal rations provided for enslaved workers. In other words: no fried chicken, no macaroni and cheese, no biscuits, no peach cobbler.

Decades after abolition, such foods were reserved in freedom for celebrating special occasions. Most slaveholders, like our nation’s first president, fed workers enough to survive and no more. The daily allowance for an adult worker on George Washington’s Mount Vernon plantation was one quart of cornmeal and five to eight ounces of dried salted fish.

In certain cases, enslaved laborers might achieve a more varied diet by working extra hours growing, foraging, hunting, trapping, fishing and trading food to supplement their meager allotment. What eventually became soul food began with African Americans determined to survive body-and-soul-killing conditions. This culinary tradition is a tribute to their ingenuity and perseverance.

Everyone eats. Everyone has a visceral connection with food and an intimate understanding of its essential role in personal and collective survival. It involves virtually every imaginable disciplinary study and inspires a comprehensive, holistic approach to teaching and learning. The subject is inexhaustible; my students never get tired of talking about food. —**HARRYETTE R. MULLEN, PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH**

“More than half of workers felt that employers didn’t address their needs after they spoke up, and some even faced retaliation for doing so,” says Tia Koonse, report author and legal and policy research manager at the Labor Center. “Only 47% of fast food workers received paid sick leave when they or their coworkers contracted the virus.”

Authors of the report, which is the first on COVID-19 safety compliance through this particular lens, offered recommendations for policy interventions and further documentation by researchers.

“Our study shows that fast food workers face an array of workplace challenges that extend beyond COVID-19,” says Saba Waheed, report author and research director at the Labor Center. “The pandemic lifted up how essential this workforce is, and we need to address the deeper structural problems in the sector.”

Anthropology doctoral student Sucharita Kanjilal, who earned a 2021 Robert B. Edgerton Endowed Graduate Fellowship, studies a different kind of food-related labor. She focuses on digital food media and the large number of women making a living posting online home cooking and recipe content in India and its diasporas.

“My research uses food to understand the relationships between the household, cultural politics and digital capitalism,” she says. “It’s inspired in part by my career as a journalist in India at a time when food and dietary choices became a violent site of state repression and political struggle.”

Reporting on the “beef lynchings” of Muslims, Kanjilal grew deeply aware of both the material and symbolic value of food as well as the importance of recognizing its inherent complexity.

“Food simply cannot be reduced to any one thing. Rather, it can give us a powerful window into thinking about a wider set of political-economic structures,” she says. “Taking food seriously means always being attentive to power, domination, struggle, justice and internationalism. If your passion for food has not radicalized you, you’re not thinking hard enough!”

INSPIRATION AND AWE

UCLA’s food studies minor has had a big impact on countless students already, regardless of their major. For example, transfer student and history major Arianna Sepulveda was always intrigued by the science of nutrition.

As part of her food studies minor, she completed an internship at a farmers market in Torrance, which resulted in the offer of a full-time post-graduation position. She's looking forward to gaining more hands-on experience that she hopes to use in graduate school one day.

"I feel so lucky I got to pursue both my passions at UCLA," Sepulveda says. "Being a part of the food studies minor opened up many doors in this field I'm excited to explore."

Dana Gillis, another transfer student, knew she wanted to major in philosophy. But as she perused the list of minors, one in particular caught her eye.

"I have always loved food in all aspects—eating, cooking, reviewing and more—and I realized that, like philosophy, food studies is applicable to every subject," she says. "Whether you are interested in STEM or the humanities (or a bit of both), food connects to any topic or class."

For her minor capstone project, Gillis wrote a research paper on the impact of industrialization on oral health, which sparked her interest in potentially becoming a registered dietician or dentist.

"Before I transferred to UCLA, I had no idea the subject of food studies even existed," she says. "I'll always be grateful I got the opportunity to expand my knowledge, curiosity and drive."

Like Gillis, Sarah Mejia is a philosophy major who had her eyes opened to an academic discipline she had never considered before.

"I realized that during my K–12 education, I had never been taught anything about food beyond the food pyramid," she says. "When I saw the food studies minor would have me taking classes across every discipline, I knew this was a rare opportunity to broaden my understanding of our world."

Particularly inspired by the social justice and creativity angles of studying food, Mejia hopes to get into magazine journalism and design, but says she'll carry lessons from her minor with her no matter what.

"I learned so much about food justice, food history and even how to grow my own food—Professor James Bassett has a gardening component where students can use the plots at Sunset Rec," Mejia says. "So much of our lives revolves around food. I will never look at it indifferently again."

JUST 'DESSERTS'

No matter the field, UCLA's food-related research and work encourages us all to be more thoughtful about what we consume. After all, the acts of preparing food and eating remind us how tied we are to the Earth—and to one another.

"Just think of how many imaginative ways food has been cultivated throughout history. Everything we eat and every method of preparation represent so much curiosity, effort and creativity," says Gober, the aforementioned professor of biochemistry and chemistry. "Can you imagine being the first person to discover how to cook food—and what that first meal must have tasted like to them? Food should remind us all of our ingenuity, our progress and our potential." 

FROM UCLA TO YOUR TABLE: All food items pictured throughout this feature were sourced and inspired by our Bruin family, representing students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community of UCLA. We thank the Semel Healthy Campus Initiative Center; E3: Ecology, Economy, Equity; Professor Amy Rowat; Bruin Plate dining hall; Emily Yetter '10; Ashton Yoon '12; Laila Adarkar (class of 2023); the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability in partnership with Airly Foods; and our Westwood community and farmers market. All food was gratefully eaten, donated or composted after being photographed.

For additional information, please visit college.ucla.edu/magazine.

CONSIDER THE APPLE

"If you ever need proof we are all part of the interconnected web of existence, consider the apple you're eating and how it came into your hands, from the person who grafted the varietal onto the rootstock to the picker, the warehouse worker, the truck drivers (not to mention the people who built the trucks, highways, pallets, boxes), all the way to the checkout person at your grocery store. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people made your apple possible."

—MICHELLE HUNEVEN,
CONTINUING LECTURER

SEEDS AND STARS

TAKING THE LONG
VIEW TOWARD
A BETTER FUTURE

BY JONATHAN RIGGS

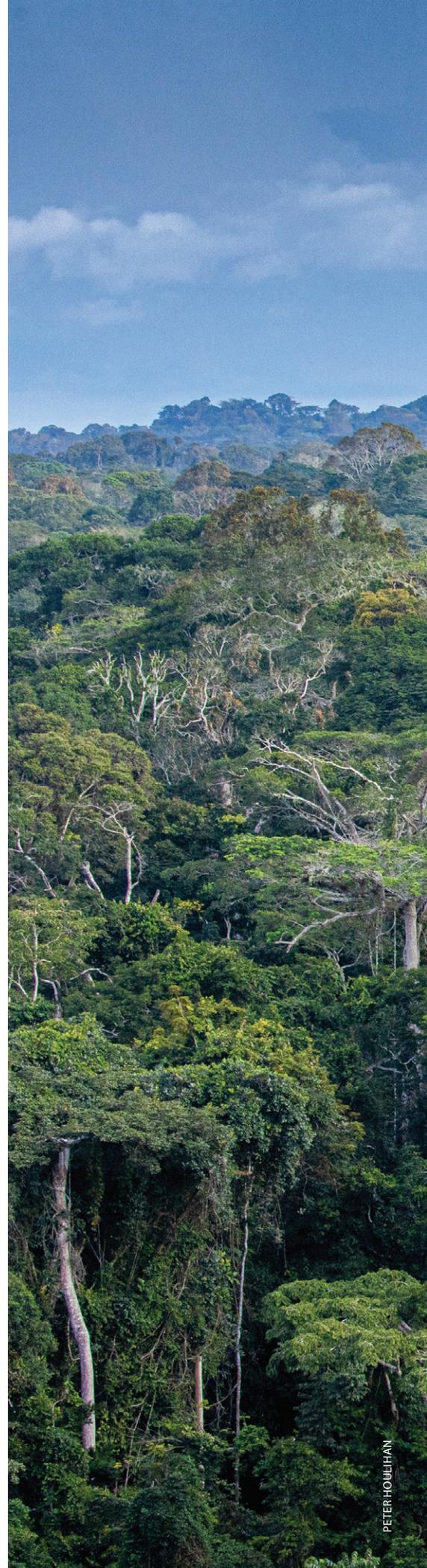
Since its inception, the UCLA College has taken a thoughtful long view by investing in today's projects that will pay off tomorrow—even if "tomorrow" arrives years into the future. Here are a few examples of the types of long-term investments that showcase Bruins' trademark patience, vision and foresight.

STRONG ROOTS

One of UCLA's many far-sighted efforts seeks to prevent irreversible catastrophe in Central Africa. Home to the world's largest rainforest still absorbing carbon, the Congo Basin is one of the planet's two "lungs." Containing approximately one of every five animal species, it faces grave threats, including climate change, exploitation of natural resources, poverty and disease.

To help solve these massive challenges, UCLA and the nonprofit International Institute of Tropical Agriculture launched the Congo Basin Institute in 2015. While it unites a global network of partners, CBI crucially supports African scientists with resources and funds for labs, research and graduate students, slowing "brain drain" and bolstering their role as the continent's greatest change agents.

In one of its most impactful initiatives to date, CBI launched the Ebony Project with the support of Bob and Cindy Taylor (of Taylor Guitars) and the expertise of UCLA's Thomas B. Smith, founding director of the Center for Tropical Research as well as a distinguished professor in the department of ecology and evolutionary biology.



An aerial photograph of a vast, dense tropical rainforest. The forest is composed of a thick canopy of green trees, with some taller, more prominent trees visible. The sky above is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is lush and vibrant, capturing the scale and beauty of a natural ecosystem.

“A SOCIETY GROWS GREAT
WHEN ITS ELDERS PLANT TREES
IN WHOSE SHADE THEY KNOW
THEY SHALL NEVER SIT.” —A PROVERB



Low numbers coupled with high demand have left tropical hardwood trees vulnerable. The project teams with communities to plant a combination of ebony trees and locally valuable fruit, medicinal and timber trees. The communities tend the trees and, for the first five years, receive stipends for this work. After the fifth year, the communities care for the trees independently and harvest the fruits and medicines to sell or use.

So far, 21,000 ebony trees and nearly 6,000 locally valuable fruit and medicinal trees have been planted—although ebony trees take up to 200 years to reach maturity. Because of the research and planting activities, ebony was moved from the “endangered” to the less critical “vulnerable” list, with thousands of additional saplings growing in project nurseries.

Closer to campus, UCLA is also laying careful groundwork as the first formal university partner of the newly formed Climate and Wildfire Institute. Although wildfires are a natural part of California’s ecosystems, they are burning with increasing frequency, ferocity and unpredictability due to climate change.

Key UCLA faculty leadership is involved: Alex Hall, a professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences and director of the Center for Climate Science at UCLA, serves as CWI’s inaugural secretary. The institute has also spurred serious conversations about establishing a major regional research hub at UCLA.

Among the center’s ambitious goals are developing a prediction system that continuously produces maps of future fire risks; building climate, ecological and fire models that reflect changing conditions; and incorporating the monitoring of harmful smoke emissions.

Although progress may be slow and measured, it’s necessary: 2020 was the most destructive wildfire season in California’s recorded history, with 4.4 million acres burned—more than 4% of the state’s land.

GUIDING LIGHTS

Anyone who studies outer space must also be an expert in perseverance and patience. Both are required to access the best “seeing” into space on Earth: the twin Keck Observatory telescopes on Mauna Kea, Hawaii.

An application for telescope time allocation is required every six months, even for renowned 2020 Nobel laureate Andrea Ghez, UCLA’s Lauren B. Leichtman and Arthur E. Levine Professor of Astrophysics. In fact, it wasn’t until after 25 years of short-term allocations that Ghez was able to secure an unprecedented 10 years’ worth of telescope time—a show of faith in both her incredible science and the necessary time commitment to advance it.

Paving the way for Ghez and her generation of scientists was Margaret Kivelson, a UCLA distinguished professor emerita of space physics who delivered a talk at the April 22 celebration for the launch of the UCLA SPACE Institute. She joined UCLA’s faculty in 1967 as an assistant research geophysicist and spent most of her legendary career furthering exploration of Jupiter’s moons.

“That area of study goes back to 1610, when Galileo looked through his telescope and noticed two small dots going back and forth, night to night, on different sides of Jupiter,” Kivelson says. “He realized that they must be moons circling Jupiter the way the

planets circle the sun in a heliocentric model of the solar system—and he got into a lot of trouble for it.”

Space missions to Jupiter began in the early 1970s, but it wasn't until 1979 that the Voyager 1 and 2 spacecraft captured well-resolved photos of its many moons, and scientists realized their uniqueness.

Kivelson deepened her study of Jupiter with the aptly named Galileo mission, which began in 1976 and was scheduled to launch in 1985 before being postponed. The spacecraft took off in 1989; the commute to Jupiter was six additional years. And once it arrived, the only information captured came from a secondary antenna.

Even so, Kivelson and her team discovered more about four of Jupiter's unique moons than was previously known, including evidence for the possibility of a salty ocean beneath Europa's surface ice. Extensive follow-up missions are planned for the 2030s.

“We're going to make measurements that will allow us to determine much more precisely what the ocean's properties are, how deep it is buried, how deep it is,” Kivelson says. “We will be part of a team asking whether conditions on Europa could be hospitable to life. The answers are coming.”

Personally responsible for helping push science forward in ways even Galileo himself couldn't have imagined, she marvels at what is to come.

“As someone who knows what it means to wait many, many years,” says Kivelson, “I learned that patience is a requirement for exploring the solar system.”

SEEING OURSELVES

Patience and perseverance are also necessary when addressing social and psychological issues of representation.

Both a reflection and distortion of humanity, Hollywood is a powerful force for shaping how we see ourselves and each other. That lens has long been anything but inclusive.

Tracking this topic, the annual Hollywood Diversity Report co-authored by Darnell Hunt, dean of the division of social sciences, and Ana-Christina Ramón, the division's director of research and civic engagement, has become required reading.

“People of color constituted nearly 43% of the U.S. population in 2021, and their share is increasing by about half a percent a year,” Hunt and Ramón write in this year's report. “This trend, combined with diverse audiences' heavy engagement with original, streaming film content, underscores the importance of diversity as a first-order business imperative for the film industry.”

In addition, UCLA's Center for Scholars and Storytellers is building a library of reports laying important groundwork with a view to long-term progress in diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility in the entertainment industry. The CSS was founded by Yalda T. Uhls, a former senior film executive who earned her Ph.D. at UCLA in developmental psychology before becoming an assistant adjunct professor.

“The CSS is the only youth-centered organization that bridges research science and content creation,” Uhls says. “We collaborate with the creative community to unlock the power of storytelling so the next generation can thrive and grow.” 



DIGITAL SEEDS: PRESERVING THE PAST FOR FUTURE RESEARCH



UCLA GEOGRAPHY AERIAL ARCHIVES

The Benjamin and Gladys Thomas Air Photo Archives at the UCLA Department of Geography feature aerial photographs taken in the first half of the 20th century, available both as fine art prints and for scholars whose research involves creating meticulously accurate historical models.

PICTURING MEXICAN AMERICA

In partnership with the Los Angeles Public Library, Marissa López, professor in the department of English and the César E. Chávez Department of Chicana/o and Central American Studies, is developing a mobile app to display relevant archival images of 19th-century Mexican Los Angeles based on locations of users.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL GAZETTEER OF IRAN

Conserving the virtual memory of archaeological remains, this is a free, open-access resource and research tool for scholars in all branches of the humanities, powered in part by UCLA's Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World.

JAPAN PAST & PRESENT

UCLA's Yanai Initiative for Globalizing Japanese Humanities and Waseda University in Tokyo are developing this new digital hub to benefit and facilitate communication among scholars in the Japanese humanities based around the world.



The Major Power of Minors

ART BY DOWN THE STREET DESIGNS | ART DIRECTION BY KATIE SIEPK

With 90-plus minors—and more constantly taking shape—UCLA offers endless educational opportunities for resourceful students and faculty to innovate and collaborate. In their own words, here are a few stories of Bruins who crafted a powerfully unique path of their own.



Sherwin Atighetchi

physiological science major/food studies minor

I want to go to medical school, so I'm majoring in physiological science to be as prepared as possible. But I've always felt that there isn't enough of an emphasis on nutrition within medicine, so I chose to minor in food studies. I wanted to learn more about something I'm really passionate about and that I believe will make me a more effective doctor one day.

Plus, I hope my minor will help me stand out more in the process of applying to medical school. I could have chosen a more traditional minor, but I wanted to pursue something that really interested me, and that I could talk about passionately in my medical school applications.

The classes I've taken in food studies have been my favorites at UCLA, covering everything from nutrition to urban agriculture to the cultural significance of food—one of the best was a class on chocolate in the Americas.

When people focus too much on their major, they don't get to see the wide scope of study a place like UCLA has to offer. So having a minor opened up my entire college experience, where I could follow my curiosity and find joy in the unexpected. 📍

“I’m proud the new social data science minor will allow students to interact more with the incredible UCLA statistics community.”

—PROFESSOR MARK S. HANDCOCK

Anushka Chakrabarti

mathematics and economics double major/professional writing minor

I’ve always been interested in math and how it intersects with economics. After I got to UCLA, I took a few classes and realized I wanted to major in both. But at the same time, I’d always been an avid reader and writer; I had made it a point to write for the *Daily Bruin*. And that got me to thinking: maybe I could consider a minor that would help me diversify my skills.

I’ve loved how customizable my professional writing minor is to my interests—I’ve taken writing courses based in journalism, finance and entrepreneurship—and it’s the perfect fit to balance my major.

My roommate and a lot of my friends are in the minor with me, and we all have different pathways. For example, I know a lot of pre-med students who are minoring in professional writing because it’s incredibly valuable to be a good communicator and to be able to write in that sphere. After I graduate, I’d love to go into data journalism or finance because they both tie together everything I’m learning.

My major/minor combination has really shaped my time at UCLA in lots of great ways. Not only did it help frame a career pathway for me, but it’s kept me well rounded and ensured that I’ve never stopped exploring UCLA’s campus or its course options! 📍

Lilah Hays

world arts and cultures/dance and public affairs double major/African American studies minor

I always knew I wanted to double major, but it wasn’t until junior year that I had the idea to add the African American studies minor. I’m mixed race, so it was personally important to me. You wouldn’t expect dance, public affairs and African American studies to overlap, but they do—I’ve written papers on everything from the racialization of dancing bodies to the politics and perceptions of different racial groups’ dance styles.

Right now I’m in a Black reproductive justice class, a topic I focused heavily on for my public affairs major, too. I also got to choreograph a dance piece about intersectionality and how women of color experience additional levels of disempowerment.

I’m proud that I had such a well-rounded UCLA experience and got to take classes in so many departments with so many professors. I loved everything about African American studies—Professor Tananarive Due’s Black horror film aesthetic course was easily one of the most interesting I ever took.

Although I just made the Raiderettes—the NFL cheer team—my goal is to eventually get my master’s in public policy. I’m already looking up local Las Vegas legislators I’d be interested in learning more from. I encourage anyone to pick up a minor—my interest in the political sphere was solidified because of mine. 📍



Mark S. Hancock

professor of statistics/creator of the social data science minor

Statistics falls under the division of physical sciences. I was inspired to create the new social data science minor after a conversation with Darnell Hunt, who as dean of social sciences is always interested in incorporating these ideas across his division. We were discussing how the data that social scientists see is very different than the data they see in other disciplines, so we needed a new minor focused on what our social sciences students will actually encounter.

We wanted this minor to be of broad interest. Say you’re majoring in anthropology—this minor will give you exposure to the data science issues and methods you can apply directly to what’s happening in the anthropology field. Students in this minor will be better social scientists with more tools at their disposal; with statistical skills, you can contribute to almost any science.

This minor is also great for students who want to have more options. Let’s say a geography student graduates, but decides to get a job in industry rather than research—they’ll be more attractive to employers, because they’ll be data scientists who can think like social scientists.

Statistics is very interdisciplinary by nature, and the most important thing about this minor is that it strengthens ties between the physical sciences and social sciences divisions. After all, the more divisions, departments and individuals interact, the better we’re all going to be as scientists. 📍



“UCLA is such a big school. Minors allow you to branch out and meet great professors in other departments, and you never know what will inspire you.”

—LILAH HAYS

UCCLL



Katelyn Ohashi



HONORING THE UCLA COLLEGE CLASS OF 2022

All across campus the second weekend of June, our community—faculty, staff, distinguished alumni, family and friends—came together to celebrate the UCLA College Commencement.

“UCLA is made for leaders, and I want to congratulate each and every one of you on graduating and being here today, because you are all a part of that leadership,” said activist and award-winning gymnast Katelyn Ohashi ’19, who served as the College’s keynote speaker. “To say that we graduated from a place that pushes us to our limits and inspires us to be the best versions of ourselves is an understatement, because we are all the reason it is this way.”

Congratulations again to the entire Bruin family!

We invite you to visit college.ucla.edu/commencement-2022-speakers to meet the 14 incredible alumni speakers who addressed departmental ceremonies:

Neetu S. Badhan-Smith ’99; **Susan Baumgarten** ’73, M.S. ’76, M.B.A. ’79, Executive Program Certificate ’91; **Medell Briggs-Malonson** ’01, M.S. ’11; **Kamil Ud Deen** ’94, Ph.D. ’02; **D’Juan Farmer** ’10; **Jeremi Gorman** ’99; **Robert S. Harrison** ’86; **Anthea M. Hartig** ’86; **Shawn Holley** ’84; **Donald M. Korn** ’65, M.S. ’66, Ph.D. ’71; **Chip McLean** ’87; **Marcellus McRae** ’85; **Doug Pak** ’96; **Jakobi Williams** M.A. ’02, Ph.D. ’08.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

**WELL-CONSIDERED ESTATE PLANS
MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO ESTABLISH DEEPLY
PERSONAL AND HIGHLY IMPACTFUL
LEGACIES IN THE UCLA COLLEGE**

CREATIVE COMPASSION

When alumna Marcia Howard passed away in 2019, no one who knew her was surprised by her final act of generosity to UCLA: a bequest of \$2 million.

The gift was split equally between two initiatives. The first, the English department's Author in Residence program, brings eminent writers to campus to teach, introduce students to new perspectives and share their work through lectures and readings. The second is the Laboratory for Environmental Narrative Strategies, or LENS, in the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability. Through research and collaboration on storytelling, communications and media, LENS faculty and students explore



Robert and Christina Buswell

YARELL CASTELLANOS



Marcia Howard

ALYSSA BIERCE

how today's environmental challenges connect to longer histories of imagining the natural world.

A retired insurance broker, Howard considered UCLA her second home—no fewer than 20 campus committees and organizations benefited from her leadership, advocacy and philanthropy during her more than 60 years of engagement.

And in 2014, she gave \$1 million to establish the Marcia H. Howard Term Chair in Literary Studies in the English department, currently held by Ursula K. Heise, chair of the English department and interim director of LENS.

"The study of humanities is essential to all aspects of life," Howard said at the time. "It teaches us to think, reason, write and explore the meaning of what it is to be human."

A history major, Howard studied in France during her junior year, igniting a lifelong love of travel and European history and literature. After graduating, she worked as an activist in the Deep South during the budding civil rights movement before returning to Los Angeles in 1961. She received the 1998 Alumni Association's University Service Award. [U](#)

SPIRITUAL JOURNEYS

Eminent UCLA scholar of Buddhist studies Robert E. Buswell Jr. and his wife, Christina Lee Buswell, fulfilled a longstanding dream when they established the first permanent endowed chair in Korean Buddhist studies outside of Korea.

Through a "blended" gift with a portion paid over five years and the balance as a deferred gift from their estate, the couple committed \$3.7 million to the UCLA Department of Asian Languages and Cultures. Their commitments created the Chinul Endowed Chair in Korean Buddhist Studies (pending Academic Senate approval), named for the most influential monk in Korean Buddhist history, as well as the Robert E. and Christina L. Buswell Fellowship in Buddhist Studies.

Robert Buswell, who recently retired from UCLA after 36 years, holds the Irving and Jean Stone Endowed Chair in Humanities at UCLA and is considered the premier Western scholar on Korean Buddhism. He founded UCLA's Center for Korean Studies in 1993 and Center for Buddhist Studies in 2000, and served as this year's UCLA Humanities commencement speaker.

"Robert's impact on the fields of Buddhist studies and Korean studies has been unparalleled," says David Schaberg, senior dean of the College and dean of humanities. "Not only has he built, here at UCLA, the nation's largest programs in these two areas, he has also trained dozens of scholars now teaching and studying at academic institutions all over the world. I am immensely grateful for his leadership and for his and Christina's extraordinary generosity."

The fellowship gift was augmented by \$25,000 by the Humanities Division Centennial Matching Program (made possible by the Kaplan/Panzer Humanities Endowment).

Buswell's path to UCLA began with a search for life's meaning that led him to drop out of college in 1972 and serve for seven years as an ordained Buddhist monk in Thailand, Hong Kong and Korea. Drawn to the scholarly study of the Buddhist tradition, he returned to the U.S. and resumed his university education, eventually earning his Ph.D. in Buddhist studies from UC Berkeley in 1985.

Christina Buswell's embrace of Buddhism also arose from her search for answers: Raised a Catholic in Korea, she immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 13. She earned a B.A. in religious studies from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and an M.A. in Korean studies from Columbia, and went on to become a translator of Korean religious scriptures.

"It was important to both of us that there be at least one U.S. university with a permanent faculty chair specifically devoted to Korean Buddhism," she says. "UCLA is the ideal place since it has played such an important role in developing Korean and Buddhist studies as fields." 

A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

"When you are lucky in life, it feels good to spread the luck around." This pronouncement by Richard Turco, founding director of the UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, underpins a recent \$1.5-million pledge to the institute from him and his wife, Linda Turco. The couple's gift commitment was augmented by \$750,000 from the UCLA dean of physical sciences' gift matching program, bringing the total to \$2.25 million.

"Thanks in large part to the dedication and pioneering efforts of Richard Turco, the institute has evolved to become a real force for environmental truth and equity," says current IoES director Marilyn Raphael. "And now we add our deep gratitude for the Turcos' generosity, which will provide the resources to effectively recruit, retain and empower generations of students eager to become change agents for a sustainable environment."

The initial gift funds will be contributed over the next five years, with the deferred balance coming from the couple's estate. When fully funded, the endowment will support an annual lecture, publication awards and fellowships for graduate students,

and research awards for undergraduates, with priority given to first-generation students.

"The future of human civilization will best be served by education—at all levels, in all places—and the world's great universities will be called on to provide an unshakable foundation for global progress, equity and prosperity," says Turco, a distinguished professor emeritus and former chair of UCLA's department of atmospheric and oceanic sciences. "Those who have benefited most from past access to education should be among the most willing to support future access for others, with generosity and hope."

Miguel García-Garibay, dean of physical sciences, lauded the Turcos' ongoing support: "Not only has Richard been instrumental in building UCLA's excellence in researching environmental solutions, but he and Linda have chosen to establish a lasting legacy of financial support for this area, helping to ensure the institute's impact for years to come." 



Richard and Linda Turco

UCLA's Office of Gift Planning provides flexible, accessible ways to set up an impactful legacy gift. Explore your options: bit.ly/UCLALegacyGiving

TRAILBLAZER'S GIFT HONORS ROLE OF WOMEN IN POLITICS

UCLA's department of political science received a major boost when June Jaffee '54 pledged \$1 million to establish a prestigious endowed term chair in her home department.

The June and Alexander Jaffee Chair in Women and Politics, which is pending Academic Senate approval, will support a faculty member and further research and teaching in this vital area.

"Our department is so grateful for June Jaffee's generosity," says department chair Michael Chwe. "It is wonderfully resonant that June, a constant advocate for women's participation in the workplace, is supporting research in our department on crucial questions of women's participation in politics throughout the world."

Politics wasn't on Jaffee's radar when she started at UCLA in 1949. Seeing medicine as a way to help people, she initially

chose pre-med as her major. But after her election as vice president of the Associated Students of UCLA, she changed her major to political science.

"Getting pulled into the internal workings of student activities awakened my interest in politics," she says.

A year or so after graduation, Jaffee moved from her native Los Angeles to New York, drawn by the excitement and promise of the big city. She met Alexander Jaffee, an accountant, at a party, and they married in 1967. An avid reader, Alex shared his wife's interest in contemporary issues, and their apartment became a lively salon for UCLA alumni.

Jaffee immersed herself in the hustle-bustle of city and corporate life during the 1960s and '70s, a time of cultural upheaval, emerging feminism and political awakening.

"The world was opening up and changing so fast," she recalls. "It was a terrific, exciting time."

Jaffee went on to forge a long and successful career working for several international companies in a variety of public relations roles, including 12 years at Revlon Corporation.

In 2004, she was appointed executive director of a foundation started by Muriel "Mickie" Siebert, the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange.

"June and Mickie got along so well because both were female trailblazers who were ahead of their time," says Jaffee's cousin, Ann Feder. "They always believed in helping young people—especially women—gain confidence to succeed in their careers."

It comes as no surprise, then, that this endowed chair marks a lovely full circle moment for Jaffee.

"Women have been the backbone of political campaigns and activism for generations," Jaffee says. "It is incredibly gratifying to know that my gift will contribute to new research and teaching at UCLA about the vital role of women in politics." [U](#)





Rafael Romero and Anastasia Lubarsky

A POWERFUL TRIBUTE TO A LEGEND

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS HONOR ARNOLD SCHEIBEL

The late UCLA neuroscience pioneer

Arnold “Arne” Scheibel once wrote, “Above all, to be a teacher is to play a very special life role, whose challenges and rewards are beyond price.”

During an eminent career spanning nearly six decades, Scheibel inspired generations of students and helped shape UCLA’s multidisciplinary neuroscience community while making major breakthroughs in his field. He led the

UCLA Brain Research Institute from 1987 to 1995 and launched Project Brainstorm, a K–12 outreach program that continues to this day. Among his many honors, Scheibel earned election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as well as UCLA’s highest teaching honor, the Distinguished Teaching Award.

Today, Scheibel’s remarkable legacy lives on in the form of scholarships for UCLA neuroscience undergraduates.

In 2019, two years after his death at 94, trustees of the Scheibel Foundation Trust established the Scheibel Scholarship; they also recently donated a further \$480,000, adding to the trust’s previous donations totaling \$1 million. The scholarship—awarded so far to 67 outstanding neuroscience majors—provides financial support, hands-on research experience, mentoring by faculty, career workshops and networking opportunities.

Because neuroscience at UCLA is an interdepartmental major, students have vital access to the expertise of more than

200 faculty members spanning nearly 30 academic departments.

“This scholarship is instrumental to train the next generation of neuroscientists,” says Tracy Johnson, dean of life sciences. “This support is making it possible for our diverse and accomplished undergraduates to participate in research leading to groundbreaking discoveries.”

Scheibel Scholar Anastasia Lubarsky (class of 2023) works in the lab of chemistry professor Alexander Spokoyny conducting independent research on the neurological impacts on nearby populations of certain coal-mining techniques used in Appalachia.

“Working in the lab has been a highlight of my time at UCLA so far,” she says. “Thanks to the scholarship, I am able to work on my research part-time while being financially supported. It is my hope that the scholarship continues for years to come to help up-and-coming students like me to conduct influential research.”

Rafael Romero, instructor and academic administrator for the undergraduate neuroscience major, was a first-year graduate student when he took Scheibel’s neuroanatomy class in 2000.

“Arne Scheibel was deeply inspiring, especially to those of us who were considering teaching careers,” Romero recalls. “His ability to weave dry factual knowledge into beautiful narratives helped us all understand and appreciate the nervous system. He effortlessly commanded our full attention every lecture, and we could not wait to hear what he was going to teach us next.”

Romero adds, “The Scheibel Scholars are keeping his legacy alive by actively engaging in research in a well-mentored and supportive environment, and generating new nuggets of knowledge. Arne would be proud indeed!”

Glen Alpert, a neighbor and close friend, became co-trustee of the Scheibel Foundation Trust after Scheibel’s death.

“Arne had by far the most brilliant mind of anyone I’ve ever met. But he was also without ego, simply a wonderful person who loved his students and believed in humanity,” says Alpert, owner of L.A. business management firm Alpert & Associates. “He wanted more than anything to make a difference and move the field of neuroscience forward.” 



I grew up with an activist single parent, and it's beautiful to honor that work by giving back to UCLA and the Academic Advancement Program. As an undergraduate who felt imposter syndrome, AAP is where I found my confidence, my springboard, my community. It led me to go to medical school and inspired me to make volunteering a lifelong commitment. Now that I'm a Kaiser pediatrician, it feels like I've come full circle by serving on AAP's Advisory Council.

Getting involved at UCLA as an alumna has made a huge difference in my life.

I will never forget my heroes who helped pave the way for me and so many others to become doctors: people like Dr. Bob Montoya, Statewide Health Policy and Development; Dr. David E. Hayes-Bautista, director of UCLA's Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture; and the late Dr. Frank Meza, AltaMed Health Systems.

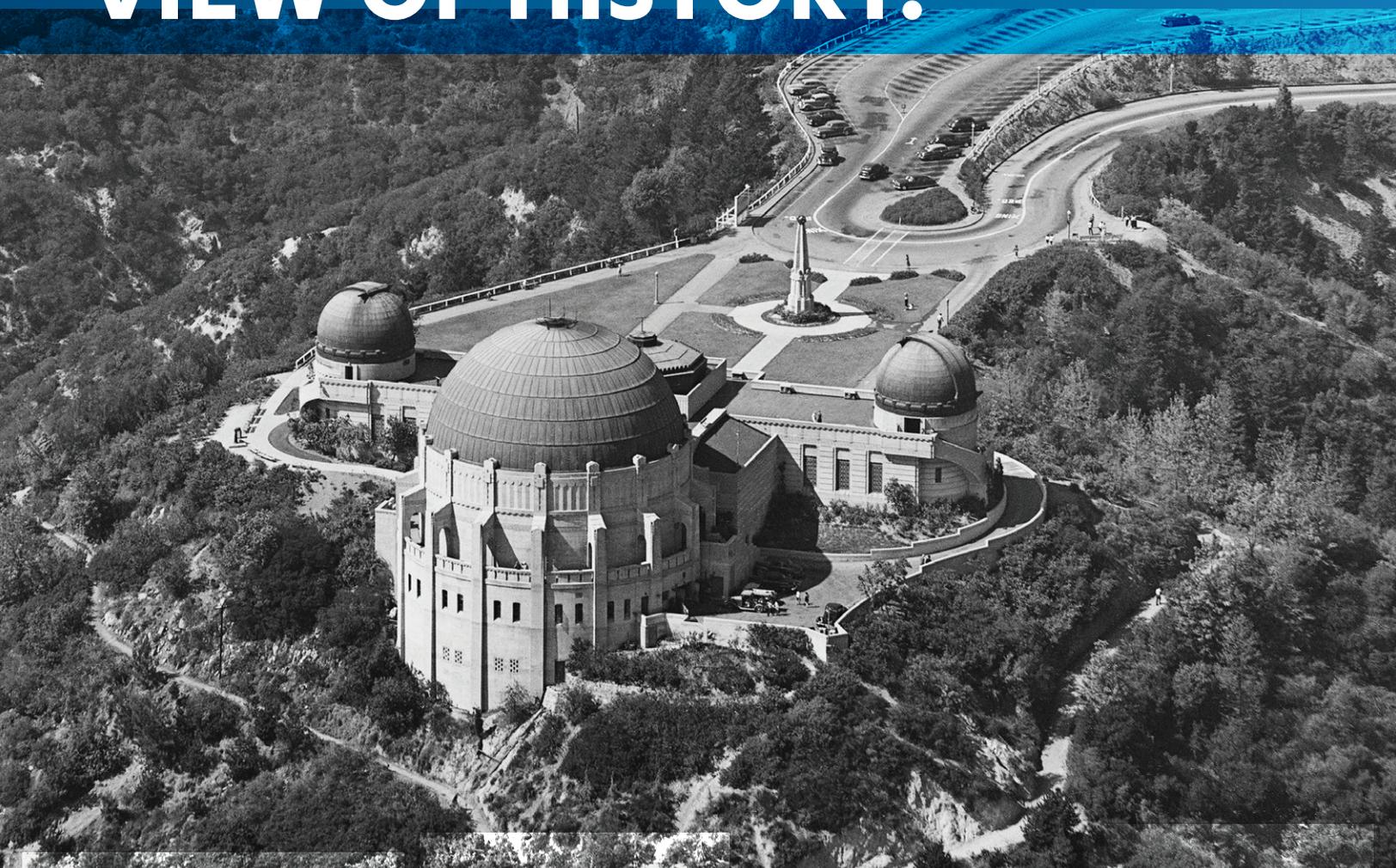
With these giants in health equity and workforce diversity, I was part of a younger group that created MiMentor. After 10 years, we now have 14,000 aspiring health care leaders who will one day serve the underserved. This free app welcomes those with no mentors into a community full of resources and inspiration, where they realize they can achieve their dreams and that people like me want to help them.

UCLA's alumni magazines are special to me; my late father, who passed of COVID-19, would read every issue, cover to cover. He was a proud dad. UCLA is a place my mother transferred into at a time when she never saw another Latina until the day of her graduation. I am a proud daughter. My *abuelita*, who lived to 102, wanted to become a nurse but never had the opportunity. We are a proud family.

These are the role models who turned my blood blue and gold, and I think of them every time I mentor a student or give back to UCLA. I want to spread the message that medicine needs diverse voices and there is no shame in overcoming adversities. *Adelante!*

—LISA MONTES '92

BRING HOME A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF HISTORY.



Support the UCLA Department of Geography by purchasing fine art prints from its Benjamin and Gladys Thomas Air Photo Archives. Taken by daredevil aerial photographers, the prints showcase California and New York life and landscapes as far back as 1920.

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The ocean provides endless inspiration for Kelsi Rutledge, UCLA ecology and evolutionary biology doctoral student and 2022 UC Grad Slam finalist. Meet her and the new species of ray she discovered (this one's a preserved museum specimen) on pg. 7.