FORWARD THINKING
ALUMNA SUSAN WOJCICKI,
CEO OF YOUTUBE, IS
BLAZING A TRAIL FOR
WOMEN IN HIGH TECH
Tuned in
Alumna Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube, took a chance and joined Google as employee No. 16 in 1999. Now she’s working to bring more women into the world of high tech.

Shooting for the stars
The bright—but previously unrecognized—young scientists of UC Santa Cruz’s Lamat program have found their destiny by turning their eyes to the heavens.

Hope for housing
With housing costs becoming a crisis both locally and statewide, an ambitious UC Santa Cruz project called No Place Like Home seeks to inform the debate—and the quest for solutions—through research.

Shifting the debate
Can public philosophy teach us to think? Students and faculty at UC Santa Cruz explore that question in an unlikely place—San Quentin State Prison.
PHTHALATES NOT THE ONLY PERIL

The article on Professor Rebecca Bradley’s research on phthalates (“Preventing plastic’s peril,” page 10, spring ’18) was interesting, but left out an important aspect of polymer hazards, particularly for PVC. While phthalates are a significant concern for consumers, the precursor for making polyvinyl chloride, vinyl chloride, is a well-known carcinogen that threatens workers in the PVC production process. In addition, there are a variety of other toxicity concerns, particularly around chlorine, present in the supply chain for PVC. Elimination of phthalates will not necessarily eliminate the risks associated with PVC or other polymers that involve the use of phthalates.

In this era of federal efforts to eliminate regulations protecting human health and the environment, we should be aware and vigilant about the risks of products and materials across their entire life cycle.

—Michael S. Brown, Ph.D., Crown ’74, politics

P.S. Some of us aren’t as big fans of Chancellor Sinsheimer as the two letter writers in the spring issue [Letters, page 2]; both of whom were in executive roles in the administration. Some of us believe that UC Santa Cruz was always a “serious” university even as it took a different path.

A LIFETIME OF COMICS

I enjoyed the “Comic relief” article [page 20, spring ’18]. I particularly appreciated Jim Gunderson remembering the 1970s Graphic Stories Guild. The 8/9 annual publications are exhaustively documented in the 1982 Official Underground and Nostalgic Comic Price Guide by Jay Kennedy. I ran that guild for two years with Charlie Bouter and Angela Bocage. Jerome Schiller ran it for its last two years.


Angela Bocage (Gilden) (Porter ’84, art) published her first comics story, “The Worm,” in the Graphic Stories Guild, and created the first comics anthology from a major publisher for diverse sexual identities. She is an immigration attorney in Boston and has taken her art and activism all over the country.

Jerome Schiller (Porter ’80, art) has worked on Amnesty International’s marketing and on ads for a couple of the Star Wars movies.

This is the 40th anniversary of my senior thesis, “Understanding Comics.” After 53 years of comics reading, creating, and adventures with the ever-evolving industry, I am still fascinated with the medium and field.

—Mark Clegg (College V/Porter ’78, individual major, comics art)

CORRECTION

The inside back cover of the spring 2018 issue describes the UCSC Retirees Association Bruce Lane Memorial Scholarship Fund as being “created in the memory of the first campus architect.” Although Bruce Lane was an architect, he was not the first campus architect, and he did not hold that title. The first campus architect was Jack Wagstaff, who also holds the distinction of being UC Santa Cruz’s very first employee, preceding even founding chancellor Dean McHenry.

Bruce Lane was an architect who worked first in the Office of Physical Planning and Construction and then in capital planning, where he served as director of capital planning until his retirement. I worked closely with Bruce during my time at UC Santa Cruz, first as staff architect and then as campus architect. He was devoted to the campus and well deserves being remembered in this way; I remember him fondly.

—Frank Zwart

Campus architect emeritus
Shapiro named HHMI investigator

Beth Shapiro, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, was selected as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator.

Shapiro is a leader in the field of ancient DNA, using genetic material from the remains of plants and animals that lived long ago to study evolution and explore how species and ecosystems have changed over time. This research can provide valuable insights into how species and ecosystems responded to rapid global warming at the end of the last ice age.

Her findings can inform our decisions about how to use limited resources to preserve and protect species and ecosystems in the face of current climate change.

UC Santa Cruz alumna Gia Voeltz (Crown ‘94, biochemistry and molecular biology) was also selected as an HHMI investigator; see a profile of her on page 27.

The Baskin School of Engineering’s Corporate Sponsored Senior Project Program provides students with a unique opportunity to experience working on real-world engineering projects as part of their undergraduate education. Participants in the 2017–18 program presented projects including a system to detect foreign objects in a produce processing line and technology to support automation in construction vehicles.

During the academic year, students in the program interact with teammates, sponsors, and faculty. Some make visits to their corporate sponsor’s worksite, and all are required to solve problems along the way. By working with mentors at corporate partner companies, students produce processing line and technology to support automation in construction vehicles.

A NEW BOOK BY JOHN DIZIKES

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award | Cowell College Professor Emeritus and Former Provost

A collective biography of the interwoven lives of nine poets, all of whom found their way to Greenwich Village in the early 1900s and were pioneers of the women’s poetry movement.

“These poets rose above convention and social constraints to become powerful agents of a new poetic age. Intellectually astute, sexually adventurous, and artistically audacious, they lived lives of great courage.”

— Gary Young, Even So: New and Selected Poems

“A master historian at his most magisterial: wide-ranging, expansive, generous.” — Lawrence Weschler, Mr. Wilson’s Cabinet of Wonder

Please order directly from the author: www.johndizikeslovesongs.wordpress.com

UC SANTA CRUZ A NEW BOOK BY JOHN DIZIKES

THE LIVES, LOVES, AND POETRY OF AMERICAN WOMEN

Copyright © 2018 The Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. | 3175 Bowers Avenue, Santa Clara, CA 95054 | Courses enroll weekly. | ucsc-extension.edu

BIO SCIENCES • BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION • ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY
PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATES

A certificate, an award or a single course: what does your career need?

It’s time to focus on continuing professional education.

ucsc-extension.edu

Please order directly from the author: www.johndizikeslovesongs.wordpress.com
Corporate sponsors of student projects in 2017–18 included Atollology, Topcon, Amazon Labs, Kateeva, Mira Bella Energy, Nanometrics Incorporated, Nevro Corporation, Oracle Labs, and Seagate Technology PLC.

right: Alumna Rachel Maryam Smith with her bust of Rachel Carson. Far right: KZSC and the Cantú Center welcome room to grow.

For Smith, the piece became a physical representation of “the trials of women,” she said.

Rethinking autism and social motivation
A 2018 Cambridge University Press online article is pushing back hard on the notion that people with autism are not interested in socializing.

The article, “Being vs. Appearing Socially: Uninterested. Challenging Assumptions about Social Motivation in Autism,” questions the widespread assumption that the primary reason for autistic people’s unusual behaviors is that they are not socially motivated.

Rather, the authors suggest, their social signals are misread—an insight the authors believe could open the door to more effective interventions.

“We hope this research will lead to more respectful treatment of people with autism, as well as development of more effective methods of supporting them,” said Nameeta Akhtar, a professor of psychology at UC Santa Cruz who co-authored the paper with lead author, Vikram Ram, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Virginia.

Focusing on what autistic people have to say about their own experiences, the authors identify four behaviors that are common among people with autism and offer alternative explanations for each behavior.

PBSi adds new programs
The Division of Physical and Biological Sciences is offering three new programs beginning this fall:

Master’s degree in Science Communication
Program. The UC Santa Cruz Science Communication Program, an internationally recognized science writing program that previously led to a graduate certificate, will now award students an M.S. degree.

Major in environmental sciences
A new major in environmental science will lead to a B.S. degree. Jointly run by the Departments of Earth and Planetary Sciences and Ocean Sciences with an emphasis on the physical sciences, the new major will teach students how to apply fundamental concepts of chemistry, physics, and mathematics to environmental problems in areas such as climate, pollution, and water resources.

Coastal Science and Policy graduate program
A new graduate program in Coastal Science and Policy is welcoming its first cohort of students. The interdisciplinary master’s degree program will prepare students to design and implement solutions to the complex social, ecological, and technological problems facing the world’s coastal ecosystems and communities.

Cantú, KZSC dream of new digs
The cozy, quaint homes of the Lionel Cantú Queer Resource Center and KZSC 88.1 FM are slated for transformations in coming years.

Generations of LGBTQ+ student groups and budding broadcasters have sought life-changing experiences in the two wooden buildings perched on stilts behind Merrill College. Prompted by its need for seismic renovations, the student-run radio station and the Cantú Center see an opportunity to grow.

KZSC envisions adding workstations for modern production methods and more space for its Introductions to Broadcast Media course and new courses in journalism and nonprofit management.

Cantú Queer Center director Travis S. Becker looks forward to more room for student groups, confidential meetings, and counseling. He also wants adequate space for its library, clothing exchange closet, and food pantry.

A student fee would fund a portion of the work. The Cantú Queer Center and KZSC have begun a campaign to seek the rest of the resources from charitable contributions and create a space that continues to cultivate transformative student and alumni experiences.

For information, visit giving.ucsc.edu/cantu-kzsc.

Magic Flute enchanters a operaogers
The UC Santa Cruz Music Department presented a fully staged production of Mozart’s comic fantasy Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute) in May and June at the Music Center Recital Hall.

Mozart’s last opera, The Magic Flute premiered at the Theater auf der Wieden near Vienna in 1791, just two months before his death. One of the most beloved works in the operatic canon, the UC Santa Cruz production was sung in German with dialogues in English.

The production was directed by music lecturer Sheila Willey (M.A. ’08, music), with assistant professor of music Bruce Kiesling conducting the University Orchestra.

“It has been a thrill to watch how our singers respond to this glorious score in which we are constantly finding messages small and large from the composer about characterization, stage direction, and how to express some of humanity’s most base and elevated emotions,” said Willey.

Soares thought that the result could be chatted up to the phenomenon known as “cognitive off-loading”: that is, not remembering as well because you know the camera is there to remember for you.

Magic Flute enchanters a operaogers
The UC Santa Cruz Music Department presented a fully staged production of Mozart’s comic fantasy Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute) in May and June at the Music Center Recital Hall.

Mozart’s last opera, The Magic Flute premiered at the Theater auf der Wieden near Vienna in 1791, just two months before his death. One of the most beloved works in the operatic canon, the UC Santa Cruz production was sung in German with dialogues in English.

The production was directed by music lecturer Sheila Willey (M.A. ’08, music), with assistant professor of music Bruce Kiesling conducting the University Orchestra.

“It has been a thrill to watch how our singers respond to this glorious score in which we are constantly finding messages small and large from the composer about characterization, stage direction, and how to express some of humanity’s most base and elevated emotions,” said Willey.

Soares thought that the result could be chatted up to the phenomenon known as “cognitive off-loading”: that is, not remembering as well because you know the camera is there to remember for you.

Busting out
It’s anything but silent in the trees and shrubs near a new bronze bust of Rachel Carson on campus. In fact, the birds and bugs make a lot of noise around the sculpture, which sits atop a redwood log.

Carson, a pioneering environmentalist and the inspiration for Rachel Carson College (formerly College Eight), would have been pleased to hear this racket. After all, her most famous book, Silent Spring, documents the devastating environmental impacts of pesticides.

The bust, unveiled during Alumni Weekend this past spring, fulfills a longstanding dream of its creator, Rachel Maryam Smith (Porter ’18, art and history of art and visual culture). Smith wanted to leave a literal mark on the landscape, following in the footsteps of artists such as Kenny Farrell (Porter ’74, art), whose untitled and endlessly photographed work is popularly known as the “Porter Squiggle.”

For Smith, the piece became a physical representation of “the trials of women,” she said.

Fading memories? Thank Instagram and Snapchat
How much do you value your memories? Enough to forgo that next amazing Instagram pic?

Research by UC Santa Cruz doctoral student Julia Soares (M.S. ’16, psychology) has found evidence that the act of taking a photograph impairs people’s memories.

In a set of experiments, she invited people to her lab for a virtual museum tour where they looked at paintings on computer screens, knowing they would be tested on what they saw.

She compared how well participants remembered the paintings following three scenarios: when they just looked at the images; when they looked and took pictures using Snapchat; and when they looked and took pictures using Instagram.

She then had them recall what they had seen.

In other words, returning alumni were never at a loss for things to do, people to meet, beer glasses to drain, and topics to enjoy.

Listen to our audio story of the weekend and see pictures at alumnweekend.ucsc.edu. And mark your calendar for next year’s Alumni Weekend—April 26–28, 2019.

Emeriti: Look for your survey
The Council of UC Emeriti Associations is sending an e-mail to emeriti faculty in October, and the council encourages all UC emeriti to take part in the project.

The survey will provide an overall inventory of the work emeriti continue to do that contributes to the mission of the university, as well as how they have contributed to their communities.

This will be the ninth time the survey has been conducted; the last time the survey was done, in 2015, more than 1,600 people participated. Survey findings have been very helpful in advocating for the interests and the continuing support of UC emeriti.

Look for the survey in your email inbox and visit pictures at alumnweekend.ucsc.edu.

UC Santa Cruz joined forces with the Academy of Art University in San Francisco to create costumes for The Magic Flute.
EMPOWERING DISCOVERY THROUGH DIVERSITY

Because diversity enhances scientific success, UC Santa Cruz has established the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair for Diversity in Astronomy.

Diversity of opinion enhances the success of scientific teams, and it is essential that healthy, thriving, vibrant science broadly represents the members of the society it seeks to serve.

To advance this goal, UC Santa Cruz Astronomy has established a new kind of endowed faculty chair—one created deliberately to advance the cause of diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence in astronomy.

VERA RUBIN: AN INSPIRATION AND TRAILBLAZER

The new chair is named after one of the world’s most distinguished astronomers and champions of inclusivity in science: Vera Rubin (1928–2016) transformed modern astrophysics by showing the importance of dark matter.

Rubin (1928–2016) transformed modern astrophysics by showing the importance of dark matter.

Among the women astronomers Rubin influenced is Sandra Faber, who followed in Rubin’s footsteps by winning the National Medal of Science and the Gruber Prize for Cosmology.

In science and in life, Rubin was a kind of dark matter.

To demonstrate their deep belief in UC Santa Cruz’s mission to foster inclusive excellence in astronomy, Faber and her husband, Andy, launched the Rubin Chair campaign with an initial commitment of $250,000. Additional gifts from private donors, including Barbara and John Crary, the Heising-Simons Foundation, and Vera Rubin’s sons, plus a match of $500,000 from the University of California Office of the President, now round out the first $1.5 million, formally establishing the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair.

In the gravitational grip of vast clouds of dark matter.

You can contribute to a crowd-funding project for the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair at e-fund.us/herw.

You can contribute to a crowd-funding project for the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair at e-fund.us/herw.

We thank these generous donors:

The Heising-Simons Foundation
Sandra and Andy Faber
Loren Kinczel
An anonymous donor
John and Barbara Crary
Mark Headley (Stevenson ’83, politics and economics) and Christina Pei
Claudia Webster
Joanna Miller
The Rubin family
University of California Office of the President

USES OF CHAIR FUNDS

Chair funds will be used to:

• Sweeten recruitment offers, enabling UC Santa Cruz to compete successfully for the very best graduate students and postdocs from underrepresented backgrounds.

• Support young scientists who have disabilities or special needs.

• Launch young scientists into the world to collaborate and to promote their work.

• We are proud to be home to eminent Latinx astronomer Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz, who studies fundamental questions in high-energy astrophysics. For more on Ramirez-Ruiz, see page 12.

• Women have composed half of UC Santa Cruz astronomy Ph.D. students for more than a decade, and 30 percent of current grad students come from underrepresented backgrounds.

• UC Santa Cruz graduates receive more coveted National Science Foundation fellowships than any other astronomy program in the nation.

These activities are of special importance to the careers of young astronomers from nontraditional backgrounds.

LAUNCHING THE CAMPAIGN

Among the women astronomers Rubin influenced is Sandra Faber, who followed in Rubin’s footsteps by winning the National Medal of Science and the Gruber Prize for Cosmology.

To demonstrate their deep belief in UC Santa Cruz’s mission to foster inclusive excellence in astronomy, Faber and her husband, Andy, launched the Rubin Chair campaign with an initial commitment of $250,000. Additional gifts from private donors, including Barbara and John Crary, the Heising-Simons Foundation, and Vera Rubin’s sons, plus a match of $500,000 from the University of California Office of the President, now round out the first $1.5 million, formally establishing the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair.

We are currently pursuing our goal to build the chair endowment to $2.5 million, increasing the support we can offer for diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence.

You can contribute to a crowd-funding project for the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair at e-fund.us/herw.

We thank these generous donors:

The Heising-Simons Foundation
Sandra and Andy Faber
Loren Kinczel
An anonymous donor
John and Barbara Crary
Mark Headley (Stevenson ’83, politics and economics) and Christina Pei
Claudia Webster
Joanna Miller
The Rubin family
University of California Office of the President

Because diversity enhances scientific success, UC Santa Cruz has established the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair for Diversity in Astronomy.

In 1992, when Susan Wojcicki landed in an upper-division finance course taught by UC Santa Cruz Distinguished Professor of Economics Dan Friedman, she found herself near the bottom of the class.

“She was smart, but she didn’t have the background, the technical chops,” said Friedman of the woman who would go on to become CEO of the media giant YouTube and be ranked No. 6 on Forbes’s 2017 list of “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women.”

“ ’You have to be willing to accept you don’t have all the answers and be learning every single day,’” says Wojcicki at YouTube’s San Bruno headquarters. “Running a tech company is a lot like that. You have to be willing to always be learning and asking questions and thinking critically.

“You have to be willing to accept you don’t have all the answers and be learning every single day.’’

Relaxed and personable, Wojcicki talks about success, about what drives her, and about bringing more women into the world of high tech. She touches on the challenges facing her company, one of her most

EMPOWERING DISCOVERY THROUGH DIVERSITY

Because diversity enhances scientific success, UC Santa Cruz has established the Vera Rubin Presidential Chair for Diversity in Astronomy.

In 1992, when Susan Wojcicki landed in an upper-division finance course taught by UC Santa Cruz Distinguished Professor of Economics Dan Friedman, she found herself near the bottom of the class.

“She was smart, but she didn’t have the background, the technical chops,” said Friedman of the woman who would go on to become CEO of the media giant YouTube and be ranked No. 6 on Forbes’s 2017 list of “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women.”

“ ’You have to be willing to accept you don’t have all the answers and be learning every single day,’’ says Wojcicki at YouTube’s San Bruno headquarters. “Running a tech company is a lot like that. You have to be willing to always be learning and asking questions and thinking critically.

“You have to be willing to accept you don’t have all the answers and be learning every single day.’’

Relaxed and personable, Wojcicki talks about success, about what drives her, and about bringing more women into the world of high tech. She touches on the challenges facing her company, one of her most
difficult moments, and explains how her upbringing helped her and her two sisters—one sibling, Janet Wojcicki, is an associate professor of pediatrics and epidemiology at UC San Francisco, and the other, Anne Wojcicki, is cofounder and CEO of the genetics-testing company 23andMe—become strong, confident women.

Learning early to seek impact

Wojcicki grew up on the bucolic Stanford University campus, the oldest of three girls. Her father, Stanley Wojcicki, is a particle physicist and was chairman of the Stanford Physics Department. Her mother, Esther Wojcicki, is a physicist and was chairman of the Stanford Physics Department.

In 2014, she was named CEO of 23andMe, a genomics company that she founded in 2006. At 23andMe, Wojcicki was instrumental in the company’s $1.15 billion purchase of what was then a small online video sharing service called YouTube. In 2013, she was named CEO of YouTube, the company, now estimated to be worth $150 billion.

Wojcicki’s role in the top spot at YouTube wasn’t without challenges. There was the need to respond to reports of Russian operatives exploiting Google, Facebook, and YouTube to spread disinformation in advance of the 2016 presidential election, and Wojcicki’s role in the top spot at YouTube hasn’t been without challenges. There was the need to respond to reports of Russian operatives exploiting Google, Facebook, and YouTube to spread disinformation in advance of the 2016 presidential election, and Wojcicki’s role in the top spot at YouTube hasn’t been without challenges. There was the need to respond to reports of Russian operatives exploiting Google, Facebook, and YouTube to spread disinformation in advance of the 2016 presidential election, and...
Ramirez-Ruiz has an outsized pride in every one of these students, who truly live up to the program’s name. “Lamat” means “star” in the Mayan language. And the program has yielded a phenomenal statistic: Lamat-trained UC Santa Cruz alumni have helped increase the number of Latinx students in top astronomy graduate programs across the country from 2 percent to 8 percent in seven years. “Ultimately, my legacy is not the work that I do,” Ramirez-Ruiz says. “It is really the students I can generate, and that is the greatest legacy you have now—being able to train students in a way of thinking that will make them into transformative scientists themselves.” Here are their stories.

A door opens
At 39, Andrea Antoni (Kresge ’18), astrophysicist with a social justice bent, is more deeply into research. She also realized that her research would allow her to continue to learn about the Mayan language. “Lamat” means “star” in the Mayan language.

When Ramirez-Ruiz launched the Lamat Summer Research Program on High-Performance Computing in Astrophysics in 2009, he was throwing out a wide net, hoping to snare the most talented community college students, as well as current UC Santa Cruz students, and make them part of the astrophysics community. The Lamat program also places a special emphasis on attracting Latinx students who are skilled in the sciences but want to delve more deeply into research.

The bright—but previously unrecognized—young scientists of UC Santa Cruz’s Lamat program have found their destiny by turning their eyes to the heavens.

Some of the brightest minds in astrophysics are like undiscovered exoplanets. They are out there, but no one knows about them just yet. For some of these students, no one in their family has ever gone to college, let alone measured the masses of neutron stars. Fates and circumstances haven’t aligned with their talents. The trick is seeking such people out, and then mentoring and encouraging them. After all, “many talented students have had fewer opportunities than their wealthy peers,” says UC Santa Cruz astronomy professor Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz, who has made it part of his life’s work to recruit, nurture, and champion such students.

“Some haven’t had role models in the sciences who look like them,” he says. “Many have lived in a society that told them they weren’t good enough.”

While Ramirez-Ruiz launched the Lamat Summer Research Program on High-Performance Computing in Astrophysics in 2009, he was throwing out a wide net, hoping to snare the most talented community college students, as well as current UC Santa Cruz students, and make them part of the astrophysics community. The Lamat program also places a special emphasis on attracting Latinx students who are skilled in the sciences but want to delve more deeply into research.

Many Lamat students are transfers from community colleges; others have been at UC Santa Cruz all along but were looking for an immersive program to ramp up their astrophysics skills. And the results, so far, have been remarkable.

Consider this year’s exceptional cohort of four recent Lamat grads:

Andrea Antoni, who became one of UC Santa Cruz’s most celebrated astrophysics undergrads after returning to college in her mid-30s;

Martin Lopez, who went from struggling community college student to pursuing a Ph.D. at Harvard;

Monica Gallegos-Garcia, who found a second home in UC Santa Cruz’s scientific community; and

Krystal Ruiz-Rocha, who discovered, in science, “a world of absolute wonder.”

In the Lamat program, Antoni came to realize that the skills she developed in her life outside of astronomy and academia absolutely translated to success in research. “This was incredibly empowering because the thing that I loved (physics) turned out to be something that I could do well.”

She also realized that her research and classroom work reinforced each other in surprising ways. “Banging my head against the wall and putting wildly different physics concepts together to solve really problems really primed my ears for thinking in the classroom,” she noted.

Antoni was born in Cincinnati, but the family moved to the Bay Area when she was 5. Her mother was a waitress at Red Lobster. Her father hung drywall. “The only people I knew who had a science degree were my dentist and my doctor,” she says. “I didn’t know anyone who had gone to college.”

And yet there seems to be something innate about her drive to be a scientist. “When I was a little girl, I definitely pictured myself in a lab coat. I saw Doogie Howser and I thought, ‘That’s what you do if you go into science!’”

Watching their parents working hard, Antoni says, “my sister and I just assumed that’s what you did: Work hard, teach yourself the skills you need, become the boss.”

But Antoni had to miss part of high school because of problems at home. After she became a single mother at 18, she attended community college in her mid-30s; others have been at high school, she went to work at Togo’s, initially as a sandwich maker, but ended up a graphic designer and serving as the brand designer and serving as the brand director for the company’s Aqui Cal-Mex division.

With help from a supportive partner and while her daughter was still in high school, Antoni completed the transfer requirements for a physics major before coming to UC Santa Cruz. Though Antoni has worked very hard on campus—and she and her sister are the first in their family to go to college—the years have passed like a dream.

“I get paid to do science!” she says, referring to her grant money.

Antoni says, referring to her grant money.

The Mayan language.

When Ramirez-Ruiz launched the Lamat Summer Research Program on High-Performance Computing in Astrophysics in 2009, he was throwing out a wide net, hoping to snare the most talented community college students, as well as current UC Santa Cruz students, and make them part of the astrophysics community. The Lamat program also places a special emphasis on attracting Latinx students who are skilled in the sciences but want to delve more deeply into research.

Many Lamat students are transfers from community colleges; others have been at UC Santa Cruz all along but were looking for an immersive program to ramp up their astrophysics skills. And the results, so far, have been remarkable.

Consider this year’s exceptional cohort of four recent Lamat grads:

Andrea Antoni, who became one of UC Santa Cruz’s most celebrated astrophysics undergrads after returning to college in her mid-30s;

Martin Lopez, who went from struggling community college student to pursuing a Ph.D. at Harvard;

Monica Gallegos-Garcia, who found a second home in UC Santa Cruz’s scientific community; and

Krystal Ruiz-Rocha, who discovered, in science, “a world of absolute wonder.”

In the Lamat program, Antoni came to realize that the skills she developed in her life outside of astronomy and academia absolutely translated to success in research. “This was incredibly empowering because the thing that I loved (physics) turned out to be something that I could do well.”

She also realized that her research and classroom work reinforced each other in surprising ways. “Banging my head against the wall and putting wildly different physics concepts together to solve really problems really primed my ears for thinking in the classroom,” she noted.

Antoni was born in Cincinnati, but the family moved to the Bay Area when she was 5. Her mother was a waitress at Red Lobster. Her father hung drywall. “The only people I knew who had a science degree were my dentist and my doctor,” she says. “I didn’t know anyone who had gone to college.”

And yet there seems to be something innate about her drive to be a scientist. “When I was a little girl, I definitely pictured myself in a lab coat. I saw Doogie Howser and I thought, ‘That’s what you do if you go into science!’”

Watching their parents working hard, Antoni says, “my sister and I just assumed that’s what you did: Work hard, teach yourself the skills you need, become the boss.”

But Antoni had to miss part of high school because of problems at home. After she became a single mother at 18, she went to work at Togo’s, initially as a sandwich maker, but ended up a graphic designer and serving as the brand director for the company’s Aqui Cal-Mex division.

With help from a supportive partner and while her daughter was still in high school, Antoni completed the transfer requirements for a physics major before coming to UC Santa Cruz. Though Antoni has worked very hard on campus—and she and her sister are the first in their family to go to college—the years have passed like a dream.

“I get paid to do science!” she says, referring to her grant money.
“I just can’t believe people are willing to do that. I can have a job where people pay me to do physics? That is just the most beautiful thing. How lucky I was that life opened this door for me,” Antoni plans to begin at UC Berkeley this fall to pursue her Ph.D.

Leap of faith

Martin Lopez (Crown ’18, astrophysics) is a quiet and humble man of faith; every time he mentions a blessing in his life, or talks about plans for the future, he quickly adds the words, “Thank God.”

Clearly, Lopez has a lot to be grateful for. He has gone from failing community college to pursuing a Ph.D. in astrophysics at Harvard starting in the fall of 2019. His transformation from a struggling student to an outstanding scholar was, literally, a matter of faith.

Lopez, a New Yorker and a first-generation college student, did not give much thought to school or the sciences when he graduated from high school in 2008. He enrolled in a community college, but mostly to please his parents. After dropping out with a GPA of 1.1, he moved to San Jose to enroll at an art institute and pursue a career as a muralist. However, he was told that he could not draw and so he had to seek another profession.

In 2009, he graduated from high school and started at a community college. He decided to accept Islam and became Muslim after the class called Islam 101 to satisfy a degree requirement at Santa Clara University. After his first year at community college, he took a class with a professor who helped him understand his coursework. In that class, he found his passion for physics.

The professor, Al釶o Batta, a postdoctoral scholar, also guided him throughout his time at UC Santa Cruz. “Lamat,” Lopez says, “was an immeasurable blessing.”

Research launchpad

For Monica Gallegos-Garcia (Oakes ’18, astrophysics), the Lamat summer program was her first real exposure to astrophysics research—and posed a formidable challenge in the beginning. She was a first-generation college student, and it took a little while just to find her footing in academia.

“Lamat was my first real exposure to astrophysics and any idea of how research worked or how to do it,” Lopez said. “I didn’t know how to read a paper, how to search for papers, or even know what the point of reading them was.”

As for Ramirez-Ruiz, “he pushes all of his students to think critically and believes in us,” Lopez said. “He believed in me as a student with no background whatsoever and no research skills and helped me and mentored me through my journey at UC Santa Cruz.”

A Salinas native, she is the first in her family, on her father’s side, to attend college, and the first to pursue a STEM field. She also got to know the wonderful people with no knowledge in complex topics to my peers and methods, and how to explain it was really like.”

Research launchpad

For Monica Gallegos-Garcia (Oakes ’18, astrophysics), the Lamat summer program was her first real exposure to astrophysics research—and posed a formidable challenge in the beginning. She was a first-generation college student, and it took a little while just to find her footing in academia.

“Lamat was my first real exposure to astrophysics and any idea of how research worked or how to do it,” Lopez said. “I didn’t know how to read a paper, how to search for papers, or even know what the point of reading them was.”

As for Ramirez-Ruiz, “he pushes all of his students to think critically and believes in us,” Lopez said. “He believed in me as a student with no background whatsoever and no research skills and helped me and mentored me through my journey at UC Santa Cruz.”

research launchpad

For Monica Gallegos-Garcia (Oakes ’18, astrophysics), the Lamat summer program was her first real exposure to astrophysics research—and posed a formidable challenge in the beginning. She was a first-generation college student, and it took a little while just to find her footing in academia.

“Lamat was my first real exposure to astrophysics and any idea of how research worked or how to do it,” says Gallegos-Garcia. “But all that hands-on research experience would be a boon for Gallegos-Garcia, above: astronomy professor Enrico Ramirez-Ruiz with Lamat students (now alumni) Monica Gallegos-Garcia (at blackboard), Martin Lopez (center), Andrea Antoni (center-left), and Kyle Rocha (Oakes ’18, astrophysics; left) who has decided to attend a Ph.D. program in astronomy/astrophysics at Northwestern University.

Though she enrolled at UC Santa Cruz as an astrophysics major, Lamat took her work to a whole other level. In the process of learning about astrophysics, “I got to familiarize myself with its ups and downs and many long hours of frustration, but I also got to know the wonderful community that doing research within Lamat comes with,” she said. “Because of this I would say that the Lamat program launched my science research because it gave me a very raw look at what it was really like.”

Now she is becoming a star in her own right, studying, among other things, “the very violent deaths of stars that are disrupted by a supermassive black hole’s gravitational field.”

Gallegos-Garcia is first author of a paper entitled “Tidal Disruptions of Main-sequence Stars of Varying Mass and Age: Inferences from the Composition of the Fallback Material,” which was published in the Astronomical Journal this year.

Understanding the workings of the universe

Krystal Ruiz-Rocha (Stevenson ’18, physics) plans on continuing research in astrophysics and pursuing graduate studies. This coming year she is going to participate in the renowned Fisk-Vanderbilt Bridle Program.

A Salinas native, she is the first in her family, on her father’s side, to attend college, and the first to pursue a STEM field. And yet her connection to the sciences was strong, immediate, and unbreakable even when she was a child.

“I loved the way science allowed me to understand the world around me,” Ruiz-Rocha says. “The act of learning something new filled me with absolute wonder. My inquisitive nature only heightened as I grew older, and I strove to hear much I could.”

In Lamat, “I learned a great deal more about research practices and methods, and how to explain complex topics to my peers and people with no knowledge in astronomy,” she says.

In fact, it was Lamat that gave her the tools to understand the workings of the universe, and motivated her to major in physics. Lamat also exposed her to students from diverse backgrounds—something that was sorely lacking in her physics classes, she said.

After graduating from UC Santa Cruz two years ago, Ruiz-Rocha continued her work on campus; her mentor, Ramirez-Ruiz, hired her as a junior research assistant.

Changing the cycle

Ramirez-Ruiz believes in these students. He also believes in the inherent wisdom of “going out into society and trying your times when they become professors, they will be mentors, too. And if you mentor a first-generation student, you can change the whole story of their family. Rising up to the top and coming back as mentors of others—that is the only way to change the cycle in this country.”

For more information, visit stemdiv.ucsc.edu/lamat.
In Northern California, the outrageous cost of homeowner living and renting is more than just making cash-strapped residents sleep in sheds and cars. It’s also causing an identity crisis. How “progressive” can a city be when the people providing its goods and services can’t afford to live there anymore, and the teachers of those children must endure long, grueling commutes to work?

The scope of this problem can induce a strong sense of helplessness. As a case in point, consider the city of Santa Cruz, which was struggling with affordable housing issues even before an influx of well-paid Silicon Valley tech workers started turning every home sale into a bidding war, with the median price of a home hitting more than $900,000 this year. Meanwhile, the mean hourly wage for renters in the city is $14.62 per hour.

A study released in May points to why the California housing crisis is so severe, particularly in the Bay Area: More people are moving in from other states than moving out. No other region in California has experienced such explosive growth of high-paying jobs. Statewide, between 2011 and 2016, California added just 171 homes for every 1,000 people, according to the San Jose Mercury News.

The study, by San Francisco public policy group Next 10, noted that while pay for California’s low-wage earners grew by just 17 percent over the past decade, wages rose by 29 percent for middle-income workers and nearly 43 percent for high-wage earners. Other factors include the dramatic rise in single-family homes inhabited by renters as well as California’s relatively high costs for labor, materials, and land, making residential development less profitable. The causes are complicated but the impacts are immediate and impossible to ignore.

UC Santa Cruz students have shared stories of living in pool sheds, in tents, in cars parked in driveways of friends’ houses, just to get by. County renters are squeezed. More than 12,000 renters in Santa Cruz County paid more than half of their income for rent in 2016, and 11,000 paid more than 30 percent of income for rent, according to the Harvard University Joint Center for Housing Studies, which reported in 2017 that Santa Cruz was the third worst metro area for rent burden.

And statewide, homelessness is surging. California’s homeless population jumped nearly 14 percent from 2016 to 2017—to a total of more than 134,000 people. It rose only 9 percent over the previous seven years, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress.

No Place Like Home

But there is, at least, one positive development in the midst of this crisis: two forward-thinking UC Santa Cruz sociology professors, and more than 200 UC Santa Cruz undergraduates, have been making international headlines for an ambitious project intending to calibrate the scope, and side effects, of the housing quandary. Their research incorporates hard facts, analysis, and human stories from renters all over Santa Cruz County.

The project, No Place Like Home (noplacelikehome.ucsc.edu), is already starting to move the conversation forward, with data to help guide the dialogue. Researchers found that 73 percent of 1,700 interview subjects reported “rent burden,” meaning they spent more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities. Of renters who moved in the last five years, 50 percent said the move was “forced or involuntary,” most often due to eviction or a rent increase.

Such data can be painful to read about, but this information heightened awareness of an issue that has been building up for much too long, said UC Santa Cruz associate professor of sociology Steve McKay.

“Housing is becoming the new war, and it’s really about making cash-strapped residents understand how ‘progressive’ a city can induce a strong sense of helplessness,” said McKay. “We are getting taken seriously by city and county planners,” McKay said. “We are bringing about essential dialogue but we’re also the largest student body. “We won’t deny we have an impact, but we’re also the largest employer, and we want to help fix what is going on,” McKay said. “Sometimes our students get doors slammed in their face. But they are renters, too. It’s really about making better connections. Instead of blaming the students, why not bring them into the discussion of how do we create better housing for everyone?”

This story is adapted from a more in-depth version online. Visit magazine.ucsc.edu to read the full article.

**HOPE FOR HOUSING**

With housing costs becoming a crisis both locally and statewide, an ambitious UC Santa Cruz project called No Place Like Home seeks to inform the debate—and the quest for solutions—through research.

The initiative is also sponsoring dialogues throughout the community. In fall of 2017, McKay and Greenberg filed the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium during a free public event that kicked off Affordable Housing Week. As part of the project, UC Santa Cruz students interviewed renters and homeowners anywhere they could find them, capturing their responses at laundromats, mobile homes, and flea markets. Some students rode city buses and chatted with passengers. While going out into the community to interview residents about their housing situations, they often talked about their own housing travails as a way to break the ice and establish common ground.

Such dialogue is essential, especially when some respondents complained about UC Santa Cruz’s own impact on the rental and homebuying market because of its increasing student body.

““We won’t deny we have an impact, but we’re also the largest employer, and we want to help fix what is going on,” McKay said. “Sometimes our students get doors slammed in their face. But they are renters, too. It’s really about making better connections. Instead of blaming the students, why not bring them into the discussion of how do we create better housing for everyone?”**

Fall 2018
Students who participated in the field research said it gave them a vivid sense of their common cause with the wider community. Thao Le (Oakes ’19, sociology) was one of the students who interviewed residents in the Eastside area known as Live Oak, getting their stories about housing struggles throughout.

Even during the past two years after she transferred to UC Santa Cruz from De Anza College in Cupertino, “I have seen it get worse,” Le said. “So many of my really close friends are homeless, couch-surfing, or overcrowded.”

She said that people in the Santa Cruz community should recognize their common cause with the wider community.

“In 1988, when Don Lane (Merrill ’78, politics) was first elected to the Santa Cruz City Council, most of the discussion about affordable housing was focused on lower-income residents living in “funky, poor-quality housing. It used to be that people at the bottom were feeling the crunch. Now it’s everybody unless you are really well off.”

Since then, a mess of demographic and market forces, along with local, regional, and nationwide trends, have played their part in making the city more unaffordable, ranging from the city’s irresistible “beach town” appeal to the growth of the vacation rental market and the 2008 subprime mortgage meltdown, sending millions of evicted homeowners into the rental market.

Some housing proponents cast the blame on “no-growth” or selective removal.

“A rent control initiative proposed by tenant advocates for the city of Santa Cruz will appear on a ballot measure going before voters in November.

Project proponents of rent control say this measure is a long-overdue response to exorbitant housing costs that are disrupting neighborhoods and pricing out Santa Cruz workers. Opponents have also mobilized, arguing that it will create an expensive new bureaucracy, reduce the number of rentals available, accelerate gentrification, and raise rental prices even faster than before.

“Students who participated in the field research said it gave them a vivid sense of their common cause with the wider community. Thao Le (Oakes ’19, sociology) was one of the students who interviewed residents in the Eastside area known as Live Oak, getting their stories about housing struggles throughout. Even during the past two years after she transferred to UC Santa Cruz from De Anza College in Cupertino, “I have seen it get worse,” Le said. “So many of my really close friends are homeless, couch-surfing, or overcrowded.”

She said that people in the Santa Cruz community should recognize their common cause with the wider community.

“In 1988, when Don Lane (Merrill ’78, politics) was first elected to the Santa Cruz City Council, most of the discussion about affordable housing was focused on lower-income residents living in “funky, poor-quality housing. It used to be that people at the bottom were feeling the crunch. Now it’s everybody unless you are really well off.” Since then, a mess of demographic and market forces, along with local, regional, and nationwide trends, have played their part in making the city more unaffordable, ranging from the city’s irresistible “beach town” appeal to the growth of the vacation rental market and the 2008 subprime mortgage meltdown, sending millions of evicted homeowners into the rental market.

Some housing proponents cast the blame on “no-growth” or selective removal.

“A rent control initiative proposed by tenant advocates for the city of Santa Cruz will appear on a ballot measure going before voters in November.

Project proponents of rent control say this measure is a long-overdue response to exorbitant housing costs that are disrupting neighborhoods and pricing out Santa Cruz workers. Opponents have also mobilized, arguing that it will create an expensive new bureaucracy, reduce the number of rentals available, accelerate gentrification, and raise rental prices even faster than before.

“We see people being pushed to outside the county, to Salinas, and beyond,” Greenberg said. She noted the recent surge in commuters traveling to Santa Cruz from Monterey County because they can’t afford Santa Cruz anymore.

The financial and emotional strain of finding housing, or being forced to live in substandard housing, is another quality-of-life issue.

Kresge College is best known for its distinctive architecture, along with its legacy of experimental teaching and strong sense of community.

But this planned village of stucco-lined buildings nestled into the redwood forest of the UC Santa Cruz campus has long been showing its age.

The sixth college to open on campus, Kresge was built in 1973, occupying about eight acres of redwood forest. Designed by architect Charles Moore of Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whitaker (MLTW) with landscape architect Dan Kiley, the college is a cluster of residential, academic, and student support buildings lining a meandering pedestrian street.

Hoping to revitalize the college, address deficiencies, and update it to comply with current code, the university is undertaking a two-phased project balancing new construction, renovation, and selective removal.

The project is designed to enhance, and grow, the college’s living-learning environment while providing more space for much-needed student support, residential, and academic programs, embracing its history while meeting the needs of today’s students, said UC Santa Cruz senior architect Jolie Kerns.

The design team, working together with the campus, has been careful to knit the new design work with the original site plan designed by MLTW, Kerns said.

The new construction will add approximately 200 new student beds, while growing the footprint of Kresge from 133,000 to 200,000 square feet. The redevelopment will also include new instructional facilities, academic offices, a student and faculty center, and new student support spaces.

One driving principle of the design is for better connectivity throughout the college, and between the college and the campus, said Kerns. She also noted that the new design makes the college easier to navigate and creates inviting outdoor gathering spaces.

The plan includes four new buildings, including an academic building, a student assembly space, and two or three residential buildings for first-year students. The majority of existing buildings are retained, as are many familiar landmarks, including the piazzetta and the famous “waterfall steps.”

We are creating a multimedia special report on the Kresge renewal, and we invite alumni and the campus community to send us their Kresge stories as part of the report, which will come out later this fall.

Submit stories and memories about Kresge—and find information and updates—at magazine.ucsc.edu/kresge-renewal.
“Slow-growth” policies that halted undesirable developments in their tracks, but also had the effect of creating an inadequate stock of affordable housing.

Seeking coinciding solutions

Deep divisions within the community can make it hard to settle on any one path forward. The trick, said Greenberg, is getting solutions from different factions to coincide.

UC Santa Cruz is in dire need of student housing. Almost no one living on or off campus would debate that point. But the questions of where and how to build such housing, along with its size and scope, are the subject of impassioned discussion and debate. Such is the case with Student Housing West, a proposal to build 3,000 beds on or off campus would debate that point. The UC Santa Cruz project, currently announced in December 2016. The Santa Cruz project, currently announced in December 2016.

HELP FOR HOUSING ON CAMPUS: STUDENT HOUSING WEST

Can public philosophy teach us to think? Students and faculty at UC Santa Cruz explore that question in an unlikely place—San Quentin State Prison. UC Santa Cruz is in dire need of student housing. Almost no one living on or off campus would debate that point. But the questions of where and how to build such housing, along with its size and scope, are the subject of impassioned discussion and debate. Such is the case with Student Housing West, a proposal to build 3,000 beds on or off campus would debate that point. The UC Santa Cruz project, currently announced in December 2016. The Santa Cruz project, currently announced in December 2016.

UC Santa Cruz is in dire need of student housing. Almost no one living on or off campus would debate that point. But the questions of where and how to build such housing, along with its size and scope, are the subject of impassioned discussion and debate. Such is the case with Student Housing West, a proposal to build 3,000 beds on or off campus would debate that point. The UC Santa Cruz project, currently announced in December 2016. The Santa Cruz project, currently announced in December 2016.
of philosophy, Jon Ellis, is supported by the Humanities Institute, an incubator for humanities research on the Santa Cruz campus.

The center is also coaching and conducting regional Ethics Bowls for high schools throughout Northern California; creating short animated videos about philosophical problems that teach reasoning skills and how to avoid biased thinking; teaching moral philosophy and ethics in Santa Cruz jails; working with biologists to study how language affects conservation efforts; and even introducing philosophy, ethics, and critical thinking to children at three elementary schools in the local community.

The idea is to move philosophy away from the stereotype of the old bearded man pondering in the mountains and instead apply its principles to crucial problems we all face in today’s world. And in an era of intense partisanship, rabid fighting on social media, “fake news,” and “alternative facts,” the center promotes a new normal of how to talk about the really big issues confronting us today—a civilized, rational, and much friendlier manner.

Constructive debate

Ethics Bowl is the opposite of traditional forms of debate in this country—the “win-at-all-costs,” negative, whatever-it-takes debate that typifies all cable news congressional debates, election campaigns, and our courtrooms. Both Ellis and Robertson believe that traditional debate competitions, a well-established part of the U.S. high school curriculum since early in the 20th century, ultimately strengthen and reward one-sided thinking.

“I think that the way we argue in courts of law, and in ‘forensic’ debate competitions, has undermined our ability to engage in the constructive debate that is necessary for democracy to function. Ethics Bowl, or something like it, could be a cure,” says Robertson, assistant director of the CPP, who earned a law degree from UC Berkeley and practiced for two years in Silicon Valley before earning a Ph.D. in philosophy from UC Santa Cruz in 2016.

“Standard debate is reasoning with an agenda,” adds Ellis. “It is also what we find so corrosive in today’s politics. People have their favored view and then emphasize the information that fortifies their stance. Evidence that threatens their position is rationalized away while problems for the opposing view are scavenge for, and then magnified.

“Not surprisingly, schools and communities around the country are pursuing alternative forms of debate, ones that switch the order of priority, and set the goal of truth and understanding over the goal of persuasion.”

Excitement and anxiety

Robertson’s two-hour class for the Ethics Bowl debate at San Quentin covered topics such as moral theory and how to use ethics to justify a position in a case.

“They loved it—they were really into it,” says Robertson of the inmates. “They would stay after class to talk to me; they would not want to stop talking,” he adds.

“They read incessantly and were really well-prepared. I think also, pragmatically, they were learning moral advocacy skills for their own hearings—many have life sentences with a possibility of parole.”

But for the UC Santa Cruz students, training for the debate was a mixture of anxiety and adrenaline.

As philosophy major Anna Feygin (Oakes ’18) notes, “It’s one thing to be forewarned about what to expect when you head inside a prison; it’s another to actually experience it.

“I was nervous because I was essentially going and walking into a prison, but excited at the same time,” she recalls. “I’d never been to a prison—let alone alone talked to a prisoner, or an ex-prisoner—so it was pretty nerve-wracking at some points.”

Second-year philosophy student Pedro Enrizuez (Oakes ’19) also had some concerns.

“I thought it was going to be a lot more like the movies where they’re locked down, and you know, they’re going to be yelling or whatever,” he said. “So when we walked in after we passed the security and they were just walking around, I was like, ‘Wait, is anybody gonna do anything, like where are all the cops, what if they do something?’”

But their fears were soon alleviated.

“Once the prisoners started coming up and talking to us, they were really friendly,” says Enrizuez. “And I remember looking out into the crowd and seeing the inmates and how attentive they were, and seeing all the volunteers and just thinking, ‘Wow, this is a big deal.’ You know, it’s easy for me to think of this as an extracurricular activity, but it means a lot more than that to a lot of people.”

Inmates’ experiences

The Ethics Bowl class and subsequent debate with UC Santa Cruz philosophy undergraduates affected the inmate participants in a variety of ways. Each had a personal reason for taking part in the debate, and afterward, most expressed a desire to participate in future Ethics Bowl debates.

“I decided that it would be a great idea and learning experience to engage other students in some type of formal debate,” says inmate Randy Akins. “Just to be able to interact with the public made me feel whole again.

“I’ll do it again,” he adds. “I learned how to incorporate other people’s views into a cogent argument.”

Inmate Forrest Lee Jones had a different take on the experience.

“I wanted to represent my team and demonstrate the knowledge I’ve been learning in the Prison University Project classes,” says Jones. “I’d never participated in a debate and wanted to experience its setting.

“Coming into this Ethics Bowl class and debate, I struggled in the understanding of the concepts of ethics,” Jones adds. “But doing the exercise of applying them to real-life events has helped me better understand them. They are not some abstract concepts, but relevant and applicable in solving life’s problems.”

Thinking and reasoning

There’s no shortage of contentious topics that can be debated in an Ethics Bowl—ranging from the Trump Administration’s “Muslim Ban,” to the use of military drones, to political discussion on social media, to the ethics of marital infidelity.

At San Quentin, the students and prisoners grappled with just two cases: “Should we change a rule made by the American Psychiatric Association that states it is unethical for psychiatrists to give a professional opinion about public figures they have not examined in person?” is a rule that has recently generated public debate because of President Donald Trump, and “Is it ethical to boycott, divest, and sanction Israel for its actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip?”

But perhaps the most stirring thing for UC Santa Cruz philosophy professor Jon Ellis was how genuinely excited the inmates in the audience were by the excellent job the San Quentin team was doing at this particular exercise of fair-minded reasoning and open-minded listening.

“There was an integrity there that really stood out to me, in the way that both teams—but especially the San Quentin team—engaged with the questions that were posed, showing a sincere respect for the complexities of the thinking and reasoning required by the difficulty of the issues,” says Ellis.
Each winter, high school teams from Salinas to San Francisco travel to UC Santa Cruz to vie in the Northern California High School Regional Ethics Bowl. The topics discussed are relevant and easy for a high school student to relate to: “Is it ever OK to lie for a friend?” “Is it ethical for a school to punish or fire teachers for conduct that occurs off campus?” “Should a student confront the father of a friend making homophobic and sexist remarks in his own home?”

But the process is very different from traditional debates where teams are assigned a particular side for which to argue. Instead, the Ethics Bowl teams are asked to defend whatever ethical position their sustained reasoning has led them to endorse. The emphasis is on sincere, thoughtful reflection, as opposed to simply persuasion. Kyle Robertson, assistant director of the Center for Public Philosophy, founded the regional high school program in 2012 when he was a Ph.D. student at UC Santa Cruz, and has watched it steadily grow. But his team soon noticed that most of the growth had come from socioeconomically advanced schools and student bodies. “We saw a need to reach out to schools that don’t have debate programs and students that don’t have these sorts of opportunities,” said Robertson. As a result, in 2016, the center established an “Outreach Invitational” program for those schools. It trained undergraduate philosophy majors to coach the high school teams and brought in community leaders to serve as judges. And by bringing the students to UC Santa Cruz for the main event, they made college a much more tangible possibility.

“A lot of our students are really not exposed to the college culture,” said Luis Ruelas, a teacher at Downtown College Prep Alum Rock High School in San Jose. “So being on a college campus was super exciting for them because they haven’t really seen themselves at a college before.”

“I was no less impressed by the UC Santa Cruz team,” he adds. “What was most impressive to me was the poise and goodwill the students showed after losing the debate to the inmate team. If there was bitterness or disappointment, it didn’t come through at all; rather, directly after the event, they were genuinely and eagerly debriefing with the inmates, exchanging ideas, perspectives, and appreciation.” Robertson says that he plans to co-teach a class this year with the Prison University Project at San Quentin, and that together they hope to hold future Ethics Bowls at San Quentin involving up to four new prison teams. He adds that the Center for Public Philosophy is also hoping to expand its outreach locally and host the first-ever Ethics Bowl in the Santa Cruz County jail system.

“This type of event embodies the type of activity I value at the center for a variety of reasons,” said Robertson. “It reaches out to communities that are generally not included in our public deliberations about difficult ethical and political situations. The San Quentin inmates are often the objects of such deliberation, but rarely, if ever, participants. “It also teaches students much more about what they believe, and why they believe it, than a traditional ethics classroom experience,” he adds. “This pushes them, I think, to make arguments that they themselves believe in rather than trying to predict what others want to hear.”

**Ada Recinos:**

**Council crusader**

College Ten ’15, sociology

Ada Recinos’s Salvadoran mother and grandmother were on her mind when the 26-year-old was sworn in as the city of Richmond’s youngest council member in 2017. Her grandmother raised nine children on her own, working to give them a life of freedom and education. Her mother fled her war-torn country for the U.S. at 17, looking for the same things.

“They made this (the council appointment) happen,” says Recinos, her voice breaking. “It was never about my name being announced. It was about the possibility that I could make happen here all that my mother and grandmother wished could have happened in El Salvador.”

Recinos says her political awakening came in 2006 when she joined thousands of L.A. high school students to protest a House bill designed to tighten immigration rules and realized that, even though her parents were citizens, she needed to work for those who weren’t protected. The tools for that engagement, however, came from UC Santa Cruz, says Recinos, where she was part of the Everett Program, which helps students learn the theory and practice of social activism.

After graduation, Recinos, who was the first in her family to go to college, worked in nonprofits, including an Oakland program that helped Latino immigrants build cooperatively owned businesses.

She moved to Richmond, where she got involved in progressive politics and, in a decision that surprised many, was appointed to fill a vacant city council seat. Recinos says her goals around housing, immigration, and accessibility rise out of her background.

“I think I’ve always known that what was important to me was to advocate and create policies to help people like my family,” Recinos says. “Not just immigrants but people who work 40 hours a week and yet still have a difficult time keeping their homes and paying for transportation and day care—the barriers to wealth and asset building.”

“That is my calling.”

—Peggy Townsend
**Darrick Smith: A mission to give back**

Smith went on to work as the co-principal of the June Jordan School for Equity, a small public high school in San Francisco’s Excelsior neighborhood. These days, he is spending his time revamping a 50-year-old school leadership program and teach graduate students in transformative school leadership skills, discipline practices, critical pedagogy, immersing them in culturally responsive teaching and social justice. He wants his students grooming future school administrators.

At the time he enrolled, UC Santa Cruz, which opened its doors to students in 1965, was still new. The intimate program gave him a chance to forge connections with faculty, while the interdisciplinary teachings taught him to look at a piece of art from a fresh perspective.

“It was a new model for public higher education with a kind of openness and experimentation,” Strick said.

Strick met his wife, Wendy (Cowell ’78, history), at Cowell College during his first day of sophomore year. He also made connections with lifelong mentors, including the late Nan Rosenthal, the first professor of art history at UC Santa Cruz.

Harry Berger Jr., now a professor emeritus in the Humanities and Arts divisions, had an enormous influence on Strick’s studies, as well.

After graduating from UC Santa Cruz, Strick went on to study art history at Harvard. He credits the education he received at UC Santa Cruz with giving him the intellectual tools he needed in graduate school and in his career.

“It felt in some ways that we were on the edge of the Western world,” he said, “and it was an opportunity to look back with fresh eyes.”

—Amy Estinger

**Jeremy Strick: Living artfully**

When Jeremy Strick arrived at UC Santa Cruz, its Art History Department was tiny. Santa Cruz itself seemed far removed from any viable art scene. Strick had to travel 75 miles to San Francisco to visit a world-class art museum.

But that small department, with its strong emphasis on student independence and creativity, was fertile ground for Strick, who went on to pursue a distinguished career overseeing prestigious collections of modern and contemporary art, including the directorship of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in downtown Los Angeles. He has also been a curator at the National Gallery and the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Gia Voeltz: Cell sleuth**

Voeltz’s work, which not only has upended the way scientists think about the understanding of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s, ALS, and Parkinson’s, now Voeltz is one of a select few who have been awarded an $8 million Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant, which will allow her to delve more deeply into the secrets our cells hold.

Currently a professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology at Colorado University Boulder, Voeltz came to UC Santa Cruz from New York intending to become a medical doctor. Then, she joined Distinguished Professor of MCD Biology, Manuel Ares’s lab, which was focused on RNA research, and found her home.

Voeltz continued her RNA work at Yale University, where she got her Ph.D. But a funny thing happened. During a seminar lecture, a Harvard Medical School biologist mentioned that no one really had any idea how an organelle called the endoplasmic reticulum (ER) actually formed.

Voeltz thought that was a cool question. In introductory textbooks, ER is described as an interconnected system of membranes that looks like a stack of pancakes inside the cell and is involved in lipid and protein synthesis. Voeltz knew little more than these basic ideas, and she spent the next few days reading everything she could find on ER before stepping completely out of her field.

Using state-of-the-art equipment at her lab in Boulder, Voeltz discovered that instead of a stack of pancakes, the ER “had a beautiful architecture” that was more like lacy coral with other organelles hanging from it as if they were Christmas ornaments. Not only that but other organelles were communicating through the ER. This unexpected discovery spurred her forward, and she found that ER also seemed to clump onto mitochondria and endosomes and clip them in certain spots, which is important because these organelles can play a role in human disease.

“As soon as something gets surprising, that’s what I want to work on,” says Voeltz.

UC Santa Cruz professor of ecology and evolutionary biology Beth Shapiro was also selected as one of this year’s Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigators. See story on page 5.

—Peggy Townsend
One of the first rules for a successful leader is to set and clearly communicate an agenda. In these tumultuous times, that is truer than ever, and it is as much about leadership and personal values as it is about policy.

In my public career I have obsessed over telling the truth. That is not always the norm right now, but the fact that others don’t value the truth in the same way should not change that basic goal of honesty for the rest of us.

A key part of getting to an agreement is being able to explain someone else’s opinion back to them in a way that they feel heard. As a polarizing lack of civility in public discourse increases, there is less incentive to reach agreements, and this goal is even more important.

Our democracy gives the opportunity for anyone to step up to leadership, but many talented people take a look at the current situation and think that it’s not for them. Our system will not be successful unless a wide variety of people step up, set a more civil tone, and make sure that diverse views are represented in public affairs.

I speak with many young people just starting their careers. I want them to know that after I graduated from UC Santa Cruz, I was not certain of success—but I took risks, experienced achievements and setbacks as I tested these leadership premises, and have a career I am proud of.

I try to make that message to these young people just starting out, and emphasize that I was once just where they are and they will face these same challenges, and have the same opportunity for achievement.

We need to fight climate change, have accessible and effective higher education, guarantee health care to all, and ensure that everyone shares in our economic bounty. Leadership qualities of truth, inclusion, and civility will get us a significant way toward these goals. And we all have a role. I can’t encourage you enough to stand up, get involved, make your voice heard, and help us set the tone and build the road to the society we want to be.

A former mayor of Santa Cruz, John Laird went on to serve three terms as a California State Assemblyman before being appointed as California’s Secretary for Natural Resources in 2011. He will receive the Fiat Lux Award at UC Santa Cruz’s Founders Celebration on October 20, 2018.

For information about a fund-raising effort for KZSC and the Cantor Center, see page 7.

Whatever your passion, you can help it live on. Find out how to include UC Santa Cruz in your estate plan. Please contact the Office of Planned Giving at (831) 459-1045.

KZSC, where hundreds of students have learned broadcasting (and other life skills) has passed the half-decade mark. In 1976, when it was only a few years old, Gallant (Kresge ’76, individual major) and Monahan (Kresge) had back-to-back shows on Friday nights. Their young romance grew into their decades-long marriage.

Their time at UC Santa Cruz was transformational for them. In Kresge’s Town Hall, they experimented with technologies they would both use in their careers. Gallant became a video producer, Monahan an audio engineer. Regular donors for years, they now are making an even bigger difference by including KZSC and Kresge in their will.

Denise Gallant and Kevin Monahan fell in love at KZSC. But the radio station, and Kresge College, also gave them the skills that built their careers. By including the college and the station in their will, they’re able to make a gift well above their annual donation.

“We’re so indebted to Kresge and the radio station... This planned gift is our way of giving back.” —DENISE GALLANT

plannedgifts.ucsc.edu
Join us as we share the excitement of learning See what’s happening on campus!

UC Santa Cruz 2017 student production of *Zoot Suit* by Luis Valdez. Photo: Steve DiBartolomeo