Dear Graduate Student,

Just two years ago, the Winter issue of the Graduate Quarterly announced the opening of the Graduate Student Resource Center (GSRC), a new organization dedicated to helping provide the support that graduate students need to excel at UCLA, get their degrees, and find rewarding jobs. From the start, the idea was to respond directly to students’ expressed interests. When plans were afoot to renovate the men’s gym, graduate students suggested including a resource center in the new layout. The Graduate Student Association was the first campus group to step up to the plate, first with funding for a part-time director, and then with a proposal for a full-time salaried director. That proposal caught the eye of Student Affairs, and their funding now supports a varied program.

With director Christine Wilson and a board that has a graduate student majority of six, as well as representatives of student-supporting groups, including the Graduate Division, the agenda moved forward quickly. Just a few months into its life, the GSRC put together the first New Graduate Student Orientation—an affair that attracted nearly 1,000 graduate students and 60 campus organizations. This year’s event fine-tuned an excellent model. Workshops on subjects of interest—from reducing stress and increasing focus to exploring career goals—are presented by various campus units.

From the beginning, writing skills have been high on the student wish list. Last spring, graduate students approved a referendum allotting a $3 per student per quarter fee to support the GSRC’s Graduate Writing Center. Besides expanding its array of writing workshops, the Center is increasing the availability of one-on-one sessions with experienced peer writing counselors.

There’s an old adage that says if you give people fish, you feed them once, whereas if you teach them to fish, you feed them forever. The same philosophy grounds the consultation program. Rather than proofreading a student manuscript, tutors help students identify and correct typical problems so they can become more effective writers. They also offer suggestions about general writing issues such as getting started, overcoming writers’ block, outlining, and self-editing. The volunteer writing consultants, all of them experienced and accomplished writers themselves, approach writing from different disciplinary perspectives: Slavic languages and literature, epidemiology, comparative literature, neuroscience, world arts and cultures, and history.

Writing can not only be a major hurdle for graduate students working on dissertations, but is also an important skill set in professional advancement. Being able to communicate clearly and, when appropriate, persuasively is an expertise that will get plenty of use over the course of a graduate career and a professional lifetime. I encourage you to stop by the GSRC in B11, Student Activities Center near Ackerman Union. You’ll almost certainly find something helpful there—or you may decide to lend a hand yourself.

Claudia Mitchell-Kernan
Vice Chancellor Graduate Studies
Dean, Graduate Division
Winter 2007

FEATURES

4 Off-Campus
Graduate Students Create Community Partnerships

14 The Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies
A New Generation of First-Rate Scholars

18 UCLA's Best TAs

PROFILES

22 María Ledesma
Education

24 Robert Taylor
Molecular Toxicology

NEWS

27 Graduate Student Accomplishments

ON THE COVER:
Stephan Pennington, one of UCLA's best TAs, pg 21

Jennifer Musto in a dance studio in the newly-renovated Kaufman Hall

María Ledesma, Education, pg 22
Heather Taylor partners with Hathaway-Sycamores, a mental health services provider.
In a strategy called Engaged Scholarship, UCLA’s Center for Community Partnerships provides grants to support projects that mobilize the resources of a major research university to meet needs in the broader community. In an important by-product, the program provides significant benefits for graduate students.
A typical community partnership teams UCLA faculty with community agencies that share an area of interest. For example, Dr. Joan Asarnow, Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science, is the principal investigator in a research project on adolescent depression and suicide; Hathaway-Sycamores is the largest nonprofit child and adolescent mental health agency in Los Angeles County. Information gathered at Hathaway-Sycamores advances Dr. Asarnow’s research, and her analysis may help the agency improve its services.

In addition, Heather Taylor, a third-year graduate student in clinical psychology, received partial support and valuable experience for her work conducting interviews with clients and staff at Hathaway-Sycamores. Two other graduate students also participated in meetings.

Pragmatically speaking, more than half a million dollars has been funneled to 121 graduate student researchers through community partnerships sponsored by UCLA in LA since 2002. Some graduate students have used their work to meet academic requirements or to further their dissertation research. Participation is also a way to explore potential careers and learn skills that will be useful, both in getting their degrees and in succeeding at subsequent jobs.

“When graduate students are learning how to do a project, to me, that’s when they learn how to do research,” says Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships and Professor of Political Science, the man in charge of these efforts. He coined the term *discovery dialectic* to describe what’s going on in the 100 or so community partnerships that UCLA has funded so far.

The land-grant institutions that were the precursors of today’s major state universities brought together scholars and farmers.

“Discovery often is a dialectic between theory and the real world,” he said. “What engaged scholarship is really about is the interplay between what we know as scholars and what practitioners and others know happens on the street.” Professor Gilliam pointed out that this is not an entirely new idea. In fact, the land-grant institutions that were the precursors of today’s major state universities brought together scholars and farmers.
At UCLA, either faculty or community agencies can apply for grants, which have ranged from $1,560 to $63,237, with a typical amount around $10,000 to $15,000. The grants are restrictive about how the money can be used, and a large portion has gone to graduate student support. The number of student participants in a single project has run as high as 22, although one or two is the norm. In the beginning, projects were funded for a single year, but two-year awards are now common.

UCLA’s program was the result of an initiative by former Chancellor Albert Carnesale. Early in its development, “trying to reach the next generation of scholars” by incorporating graduate students in projects became a declared goal, Professor Gilliam said. In the first year—the 2002 academic year—a number of grants went directly to graduate students. However, the program’s leaders became concerned that while graduate students offered “some really creative proposals,” not all of the projects involved research that would support the student’s academic progress. “We’ve found that the graduate student experience is more robust in the context of a faculty project that has some structure and parameters,” Professor Gilliam says. Although graduate student involvement is not a requirement for successful proposals, “a well-articulated role for graduate students is a bonus,” he adds.

Looking ahead, UCLA in LA is developing its own community project: an office in South Los Angeles to conduct research on the social determinants of health and wellness and to develop a survey of community needs. At least two graduate student researchers will be employed on the project, probably from fields such as public health, public affairs, urban planning, nursing, and maybe even the arts. “A thematic undercurrent of our work is to encourage transdisciplinary work,” Professor Gilliam says.

“What engaged scholarship is really about is the interplay between what we know as scholars and what practitioners and others know happens on the street.”

Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr.

The following stories show how a sampling of community partnerships have contributed to their graduate student participants.

One student was particularly intrigued by the university-community collaboration. Although social justice and poverty are discussed at the university, “UCLA can seem so detached from Los Angeles at times,” Jennifer Musto says. “This kind of program lets you see how theories play out, how we can use our theories to improve the communities we live in.”

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has given UCLA its Community Engagement Classification, recognizing its outstanding community-based curricula, outreach, and partnerships. The Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) was an important contributor in UCLA’s effort to meet the Carnegie Foundation’s criteria. UCLA was the only university in the UC system to receive this honor.

The Center has developed an array of innovative programs designed to unite university resources with neighboring communities to improve the quality of life for residents throughout Los Angeles. In particular, CCP projects are focused on supporting children, youth, and families; fostering economic development; and enriching arts and culture. To date, CCP has facilitated and funded more than 100 projects involving UCLA faculty, staff, graduate students and nonprofit organization partners, totaling more than $2 million in private donations.

In addition to the community partnership grants described here, the center also convenes Community Knowledge Forums, directs an internship program, and awards the Rosenfield Distinguished Community Partnership Prize, which recognizes the most compelling partnerships.

“UCLA is in LA every day, in many ways, working to make life better for people and shedding light on those big questions that also are the responsibility of a world-class public research university,” said Frank D. Gilliam, Associate Vice Chancellor for Community Partnerships.
During an internship with the nonprofit Esperanza Community Housing Corp., Eric Schwimmer saw that the organization needed a way to build a working database from information its health promoters were gathering about the relationship between family health and slum housing conditions in a transitional area of South Los Angeles. Esperanza’s community health promoters had been “going door to door to collect information about the neighborhood”—especially about environmental issues such as the presence of mold and mildew or lead paint in the rundown housing common in the area, Eric says. They would do internal and external inspections and record demographic information about the household. However, “they didn’t have the technical skills to develop a good survey instrument, collect and use data efficiently, and build a database that was easy to use,” Eric says. “All of those things I was able to contribute.”

Professor Neal Richman suggested that Eric might apply for a community partnership grant to help meet the organization’s need—and at the same time, fulfill requirements for his master’s degree in urban planning. Eric submitted the work he did for Esperanza—supplemented by a descriptive and analytical report—in lieu of his master’s thesis, and he sees other ways that the project helped him. "Writing a grant application forces you to be very, very clear about your objectives," Eric said, "and that helps you to get the job done." In contrast, some of his colleagues who wrote more traditional scholarly papers had trouble finding "a realistic chunk of material" to make the subject of their thesis.

Eric earned his master’s degree and left UCLA at the end of that first grant year, but Esperanza applied and won a new grant to educate its members so they could keep the project going without expert help. Eric worked as a consultant during twice-a-week classes at UCLA’s Labor Center in MacArthur Park, where community representatives mastered basic math skills and then branched out into data analysis and computer skills.

His experience with Esperanza gave him a new career goal. "I’d like to figure out how I can take this model and meet the needs of other organizations like Esperanza," he said. "There’s such a need among community-based organizations to think strategically about how they can use data to develop power in their neighborhood."
A S PART OF A COMMUNITY partnership between Dr. Joan Asarnow of UCLA and Hathaway-Sycamores, a mental health services provider, graduate student Heather Taylor is interviewing teenage clients who have attempted suicide in the last five years, along with their parents. Her questions: What services helped them? What strategies did they use during their recovery? What kinds of help would have been useful? How are they doing today?

“Conducting the interviews with youth and their parents has been an incredible experience,” Heather says. “They’ve been informative clinically, and I think it’s been a very positive experience for youth.”

Conducting these interviews as well as surveys of providers at the partner organization has provided Heather with a richer understanding of the needs of clients, families, and providers at a large community program. For instance, she has to clear a number of practical hurdles: connecting with the clinicians who must discuss the project with parents and youngsters, getting them to agree to the interviews, and then setting up an appointment.

To Dr. Asarnow, Heather’s sometimes frustrating experience means that one of her hopes for the community partnership is being realized: “creating students who have some grounding in what’s really out there.” As Dr. Asarnow sees it, “Exposure to the real world of clinical services” lets graduate students see the “real restraints and barriers as well as the pluses” of work in the field, she says. With this experience, students are better prepared not just for internships but also for their eventual careers. Besides Heather, two other UCLA graduate students have learned from the community partnership through meetings focused on developing optimal suicide and suicide attempt prevention strategies.

A third perspective on Heather’s experience is offered by Dr. Emily McGrath, a former UCLA graduate student and post-doctoral fellow who is now research director of Hathaway-Sycamores. “Building a partnership means working together in a flexible way that meets the needs of both the agency and the university,” she says. While she understands that Heather’s demanding academic schedule makes it hard for her “to get around the clients’ availability and clinicians’ work schedules,” Dr. McGrath also understands that “you can’t impose an academic structure onto research in a community mental health agency.”

Dr. Asarnow and Dr. McGrath have already realized benefits from the partnership. Parents and children say they need more time together during treatment after a suicide attempt, and previous interviews with staff at Hathaway-Sycamores showed that clinicians want more information and training, not only about suicide attempts, but also about adolescent self-harm—cutting, for example. Both findings have consequences for Dr. Asarnow’s research and Dr. McGrath’s practice.

As for Heather, besides the real-world experience she gained, she has also had an opportunity to present at conferences and is currently in the process of writing up the interview aspect of the project for publication. She also received a 25% graduate student researcher stipend for the 10 hours of work she did each week in the grant year, as well as tuition and registration fees.
When Carrie Petrucci was a doctoral student in social welfare at UCLA in 2000, she sat in on a couple of meetings with Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Science Belinda Tucker and others who were considering a study on how the incarceration of sons, brothers, and fathers affects families. Though their efforts continued, the project they anticipated never got off the ground.

Then, earlier this year, Professor Tucker called Dr. Petrucci to say that funding for such a project might be available through UCLA in LA’s community partnership grants. As it happens, Dr. Petrucci was already consulting with the perfect partner for such a study: Friends Outside, a 52-year-old nonprofit whose Los Angeles chapter was founded by a UCLA alumna, Martha Jane Dowds.

Friends Outside provides a range of services to inmates, ex-inmates, and their families. Through interviews with families, the researchers hope to describe the psychosocial impacts of incarceration on adult family members and close ties of inmates, identifying specific risks and protective factors.

Mary Weaver, the current Friends Outside director, believes the study will help tailor services for maximum impact and strengthen her proposals to funding sources: “It’s all about outcomes—being able to prove that what you’re doing is working,” she says.

Meantime, former doctoral student Carrie Petrucci will be working with two current graduate students—Gwendelyn Rivera and Neva Pemberton—and Tucker and Weaver to gather and analyze the data. The current graduate students will do the qualitative interviews, including open-ended questions about how families are impacted. “I wish it could be me,” Dr. Petrucci says.
Brette Steele &
the Western Justice Center

Graduate student participants in community partnerships may find themselves playing a central role in creating and implementing projects.

Brette Steele was only 18 when she became a state-certified mediator, and she worked at Small Claims Court all the way through her undergraduate years at UC Berkeley—where she also mediated disputes in the residence halls. By the time she arrived at UCLA for law school, mediation was at the heart of her career goals.

During an orientation session, she met Mary Nichols, director of the Institute of the Environment, who told her about a proposal to partner with the Western Justice Center to create an Environmental Mediation Center that would help resolve conflicts, especially in low-income neighborhoods. While that proposal was being considered, Brette became a summer fellow at the Western Justice Center, looking at model mediation centers around the country, developing a model for Southern California, and designing a training program for potential mediators.

When the UCLA in LA grant was approved, its focus had changed from creating a new center to training potential mediators. Brette “was the natural choice” for the job, and she spent the grant year preparing for a training session that created 30 new mediators to help in neighborhood disputes. The Western Justice Center has now hired a project coordinator to develop a framework in which the mediators can work.

If you ask Brette what she got out of her participation, “a large portion of last year’s tuition” is just the start. She also got five units of credit, using her research on the mediation model for a paper in a course called “Social Welfare.” To balance the law school’s focus on adversarial processes, she had “a facilitated opportunity to work with a collaborative system,” Brette says, and “also an incredible experience being at the ground level of the institutional cooperation to create a new project.”

The professional experience “is incredibly valuable,” she says, and the contacts she made didn’t hurt, either. This summer, she’ll take a position as clerk to Judge Dorothy Wright Nelson of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. As it happens, Judge Nelson founded the Western Justice Center; her former colleagues no doubt gave Brette an excellent reference.
Novice Teachers & the Museum of Tolerance

Community partnership grants may result in outcomes that generate long-lasting ripples of change in the Los Angeles area.

The mission of the teacher

Education Program (TEP) at UCLA is to “radically improve urban schooling for California’s racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse children.” Not surprising, then, that the Museum of Tolerance would seek TEP as a collaborator in developing tolerance-focused curricula for Los Angeles public schools—and not surprising that the program eagerly accepted the challenge.

“It was a good marriage,” says Nancy Parachini, faculty leader for the project. The community partnership gave students “practice in an aspect that we highlight, which is how to be a social justice teacher” and helped “students to define for themselves what this means,” she adds.

In the project’s first phase, 22 novice teachers prepared lesson plans linked to the Museum’s “Finding Our Families, Finding Ourselves” exhibit, adapting the themes to the elementary and middle school classes they were teaching in South Los Angeles. For example, novice teacher Huy Chung discussed the Watts riots with his fifth-grade class at the 92nd Street Elementary School, focusing on how African American and Korean families were affected and how they came together to help each other. In a related activity, each student made a construction paper strand to represent a member of his or her family, and the strands were woven together in a quilt.

In the project’s second phase, nine of the original participants—now resident teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District—are building a handbook around the lesson plans for use by their fellow LAUSD teachers. Participating teacher Michael Nemoroff says the project “made me realize how little I took the students’ personal history and background into consideration while teaching. I need to focus my lessons and make them relevant to students’ lives and experiences.”

Work on the handbook is well under way, with a target completion when the grant ends in June, and hundreds of LAUSD teachers stand to benefit. Parachini is pleased with the outcome: “a richer, more thoughtful environment for our students and for their students.”
Professor Marks’s research has involved what she calls “choreo-portraiture” a process of staging identity through movement that may involve people who do not identify as dancers. Professor Chuang thought this technique might be useful with CAST’s resident clients—women who have been rescued—and the agency was interested.

The initial outcome was a two-quarter, graduate-level course. A first-quarter seminar gave students a background on human trafficking, a complex problem that includes not only the headline-grabbing sex trade but also domestic and agricultural work. Toward the end of the quarter, there was “time for students to think about ways to interact with that community through the arts,” Professor Marks says. In the next quarter, they implemented their projects.

Jennifer Musto, a doctoral student in Women’s Studies, partnered with Indira Tyler, a senior undergraduate who was a professional choreographer. The two women spent the course’s second quarter doing dance and yoga with the clients, and “while they were moving together and laughing together, stories came out,” Jennifer says. She and Indira turned these stories into a performance, which the residents reviewed and edited. Then the UCLA students performed at a trafficking symposium and the Vitas Film Festival, both hosted by the Department of World Arts and Culture.

Besides her interaction with CAST and its clients, Jennifer learned something about “how this organization works and how they’re dividing time between advocacy and social services,” information that may be an important part of her dissertation on how non-governmental organizations have been key players in the anti-trafficking movement.

Clients at CAST also benefited from the student projects, which also included sessions in which residents cooked and shared their native foods, said executive director Kay Buck; “Not only did they have fun, but they also learned some new skills.” As a result, Ms. Buck says: “What we learned as an organization is that the arts can be a fantastic healing medium.”

Several months after the community partnership ended, Jennifer returned to CAST with Amy Campion, who has an MFA in World Arts and Culture from UCLA. In response to a continuing interest among CAST clients, Amy leads dance—salsa is a favorite—and yoga workshops. Jennifer also participates, looking for ways to “fuse dance and client narratives to express their experiences and further aid in their healing,” Jennifer says. Their work “is generating opportunities for clients to creatively express themselves, which we hope to be able to share with the community in future performance pieces.”
The Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies

The Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies at UCLA offers no graduate degrees, but it is a primary source of support for the 50 or so graduate students whose work—in East Asian languages and literatures, history, political science, art history, anthropology, geography, sociology, and theater—has to do with Japanese language, history, culture, or present-day life.

When the Center was established in 1991, an important goal was "to encourage graduate education in Japanese Studies at UCLA" and to "replenish the scholarly cohort studying Japan by nurturing a new generation of first-rate scholars," said the Center’s director Fred G. Notehelfer. To accomplish this, the Center husbanded its relatively modest resources to provide money in specific areas.

Fellowships and grants are available for general support and for specific uses: attending a conference, doing archival research, studying language in Japan, completing dissertation research. The Center also underwrites an annual graduate student symposium at a cost of about $10,000. Students get the opportunity to build a program: from choosing a topic and recruiting participants to arranging a room and providing refreshments.

A by-product of the conference is that it provides a meeting ground for UCLA students from various departments who share an interest in Japanese studies. The Center’s monthly colloquium offers the same benefit. Student interests are kept in mind as the faculty select speakers—both noted experts and "the cutting-edge younger scholars who are doing the kind of work that interests our graduate students," Professor Notehelfer said. The Center also responds in smaller ways to student needs, facilitating the acquisition of research materials and providing funds for special projects or workshops.

What does the Center receive in return for all this support? Well, the colloquium lectures are very lively, Professor Notehelfer says, because graduate students "ask lots of questions, and don’t always accept all the ‘verities.’ In all my 15 years as director, I don’t think we’ve ever had a dull colloquium."

But the major return on the Center’s investment will come in the future, he adds: "doing good dissertations, going out and getting really good jobs, and taking their place in the field, that’s what the Center expects from students."

The accompanying student profiles provide examples of how the Center helps advance a student’s academic plan.
A
S AN UNDERGRADUATE AT UC SANTA CRUZ, Jordan Smith loved Japanese literature—in English translation—but he thought he’d never be able to master the language so that he could study the originals. Then, while teaching at Korea University in Seoul, he met and married a Japanese woman. “For her and her family, I decided to learn Japanese,” he says. Having already learned some Korean, he understood the grammar, and he “worked very hard at it.” Early in his graduate career at UCLA, he took an intensive language course in Japan through a Sasakawa Japanese Language Study Fellowship from the Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies.

Then he returned to Japan last summer, also on a grant from the Center, to search the archives at a museum of ethnology, studying the role of minorities in Japanese society and looking for famous Japanese authors “who had traveled to Latin America and written about their journeys—I found literally dozens of them,” he says.

Jordan’s dissertation in comparative literature will compare and contrast these Japanese writers with Latin American writers who visited and wrote about Japan. Among the authors he examines are Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet and essayist, and Oe Kenzaburo, a Japanese novelist whose characters often travel to Mexico—as the author did. Both won the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1990 and 1994 respectively. Studying their works “helps us to think outside of the normal trends of literature,” Jordan says, “in which Europe is always the epicenter of comparison.”

In 2006, Jordan offered to take the lead in the Center’s annual graduate student conference, which was called “Transculturation and National Signifiers: Japan In, After, and Via Diaspora and Return.” Given his research direction, the conference’s theme is not surprising: looking at ways that migration and travel have led to reconsideration of what it means to be Japanese: “to reach outside of Japan or enter Japan from the outside to understand it in comparative context.”
Emily Anderson

In the late nineteenth century, just about the time Protestant missionaries began to work among the Japanese, Japan began to build an empire in Asia. “Some Japanese Christians actively advocated for empire building and saw themselves as providing the religious component,” says Emily Anderson, “while others from the very beginning opposed aggression and all kinds of expansion.” The relationship between Christian church and Japanese state during this period is the topic of Emily’s dissertation in history.

It’s a topic with considerable personal significance for a young woman whose parents are American and Japanese and who was raised in Japan but attended an American missionary school. In other words, she “had one foot in my Japanese family and the other in the American expatriate community.” Emily studied American literature as an undergraduate but always had an interest in history. That interest grew during her first job at the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo, where she was assistant curator. The work included translating the unpublished autobiography of Henry Sugimoto, a California artist who was interned during World War II. This was her “first exposure to research using primary sources,” she says, and led her directly to graduate school.

The Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies underwrote the first three years of Emily’s studies in history. In 2005, she repaid some of that debt by helping to organize the annual graduate student conference. Emily thinks the conference helps provide “the interdisciplinary nodes of networking” that link graduate students in various departments with an interest in things Japanese. The monthly colloquium of guest speakers also “gives us a chance to see what other work is getting done.”

For a while, she’ll be missing these events, however. She’s at Doshisha University, the first Christian university in Japan, seeking primary sources for her dissertation—with a Fulbright Fellowship picking up her tab.

Linda Choi Hasunuma

Linda Choi Hasunuma started out studying art history, but through the influence of several teachers, she soon “began to care a lot more about how governments work.” Here’s one of the things that got her attention.

Japan has been an urban country since the 1960s, but until recently, rural and other vested interests dominated its political life. With electoral representation based on a semiproportional vote—so that several parties could represent one district—the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) held power, even though most of its votes came from rural areas with relatively low population, Linda says. Now that each district in the lower house of its legislature has a single representative, the LDP has found that it must appeal to a broader range of voters in order to win.

The consequences go beyond the party itself, Linda says. Before the electoral reforms, the LDP rewarded its rural power base with fiscal subsidies, public works projects, and other largesse from the
central government through its local government finance system. Now the electoral reforms have been followed by a new economic regime in which more local governments have to fend for themselves. Linda is looking at the impact of these recent changes to central-local relations in Japan.

This year, Linda is making several short trips to Japan to do additional research on this topic—funded by the Terasaki Center’s George and Sakaye Aratani Field Experience Scholarship. Previously, the Asia Institute provided her with four years of fellowship support through the National Foreign Language and Area Studies Award. And the Center helped her choose her post-college direction. While she was still an undergraduate at UCLA, Linda began to attend colloquium lectures, along with the Center’s annual graduate student conference, “trying to see what it was like to be an academic or a graduate student, to understand what research in Japanese Studies was like.”

Mika Yoshitake

ALTHOUGH THEY HAD DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS—philosophical and political, respectively—the Mono-ha and Bikyōtō student art groups from late 1960s Japan have left similar legacies: their works don’t exist except on film. Both groups “shared a commitment to the aesthetics of destruction or dissolution of the art object,” says Mika Yoshitake, a doctoral student in art history. Mono-ha made one-time, temporary assemblies of natural materials such as wood and stone, more interested “in looking at space and how viewers experience that space,” she says. Bikyōtō’s works were also ephemeral, including a series of events that included projecting a film of a river onto an actual river.

Because no works survive, most critics talk about the groups’ ideas instead of their artistic creations, Mika says, something she hopes to correct. In summer 2005, she used a Sasakawa Fellowship grant funded by the Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies to conduct preliminary archival research at Tokyo’s Tama Art University, where the groups studied and worked. She’ll be going to Japan later this year to interview the artists—some individuals continue to work, although the groups disbanded long ago—and to continue archival research at the university.

She also has some impressive extracurricular matters on her plate. She is a curatorial research assistant at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, where she’s helping to organize an exhibition of Takashi Murakami, an artist-entrepreneur who is known for his cartoon-like super-flat works—and for his Louis Vuitton designs.

And Mika is helping to plan “Rajikaru! Experimentations in Japanese Art 1950-1975” (April 2007), a symposium on postwar Japanese art sponsored by the Getty Research Institute in collaboration with PoNJA-GenKon (Post-1945 Japanese Art Contemporary Discussion Group). The PoNJA-GenKon event was held at Yale University in 2005. In connection with the Getty conference, which will focus on the work of more established scholars and artists, Mika has set up a graduate workshop at UCLA’s Hammer Museum. Because the disciplinary field is new, graduate students have significant contributions to add. Mika contacted the Terasaki Center, which agreed to sponsor the workshop on April 29.
UCLA’s Best TAs
James Rocha uses aspects of the film comedy *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure* to dramatize the philosophical links between Plato, Descartes, and G. E. Moore, and he explains St. Anselm’s theory of Satan with a map of Highway 101.

When teaching how not to write a literary analysis paper, Denise Cruz offers up one of her own high school essays, and “we spend the next fifteen minutes laughing and exposing my paper’s unfortunate lack of argument.”

Stephan Pennington gets students “to sing and clap in order to get concepts like blues or syncopation into the body as well as the mind.”

And Brent James believes humor “has been my most effective tool. With humor, one can overcome several common barriers most students experience when learning a second language. . . . When the classroom atmosphere is relaxed and free of pretension, students feel more comfortable [speaking up] and taking the risk of making a grammatical mistake. . . . When humor is presented in the context
of storytelling or relating common experiences, it reinforces the conversation nature that is fundamental to any language.

As these examples show, having fun is one thread that links the teaching philosophies of this year’s Distinguished Teaching Assistants. In Moss Pike’s words, “My students should be able to actively learn in a challenging and engaging environment and also have a good deal of fun at the same time. I cannot overstate how strongly I feel that learning should be enjoyable regardless of the difficulty of the material at hand.”

If a class is enjoyable, students are more likely to be engaged. Another way to achieve this goal is to provide examples that link their learning to their lives outside of class. This can be achieved even while teaching the so-called “dead” languages of Latin and Greek. When Moss is introducing the subject of Greek festivals, for example, he finds “no better comparison than tailgating and all the accompanying fanfare of a college football game,” he says. “I hope my students gain the ability to understand the ancient world more intimately when they realize that our own modern world is remarkably similar in many ways.”

To help his students learn Portuguese, Brent asks them to find an apartment in Rio de Janeiro using the classified ads from that city’s most popular newspaper and to plan an evening’s entertainment using Internet sources. Finally, they have to plan a weekend trip to a nearby town and use the vocabulary and dialogue they need to secure a room at the inn.

The link between class and real world is part of the curriculum of an Introduction to Literature class with a service learning component, which Denise designed for the English Department. Paired with service agencies, students were challenged to consider how the issues raised in their texts were reflected in the service setting. One student read Aaron MacGruder’s satirical comic strip, The Boondocks, while tutoring students at a Los Angeles high school, then wrote about the complex disparities in the Los Angeles school system.
Stephan Pennington, Musicology

“One of the things I’m most proud of is that I reframe the classroom experience of the students I encounter not just as a music history course but also as an opportunity to experience what the academic life can be.”

Once engaged, students are more likely to participate, and this is an important goal of the Distinguished TAs. Denise asks students to generate their own list of discussion topics, and Moss uses his background in software engineering—how to solve challenging problems together step-by-step—as a pattern for “engineering an energized discussion.”

James Rocha has “developed a style of leading discussions that I like to call ‘open flow.’ I transition the discussion from student to student, which allows them to actually discuss philosophy among themselves,” he says. “Every student at UCLA is intelligent enough to have great ideas, and they mainly need work on being precise and analytical in the presentation of those ideas.”

The Distinguished TAs also make use of what technology has to offer to enhance their teaching. Moss, for example, uses course management software and has helped prospective TAs to become comfortable with these tools. Brent often relies on technological resources to structure his course, and he has created an interactive syllabus and activities that allow students some autonomy in deciding how to shape their learning experience.

Knowing that distinguished teaching doesn’t end at the classroom door, this year’s winners are all notable for the extensive time they spend outside of class—and even formal office hours—talking with students and nurturing their academic ambitions. Some have a particular interest in students who come from backgrounds where university scholarship was uncommon. Half Mexican American and half African American, Rocha has been a tutor in the Academic Advancement Program where underrepresented and lower income students get the help that can make a difference in their academic success.

Also an AAP mentor, Denise says, “Although I run the risk of Hallmark-card sentimentality, I’m not embarrassed to state my belief in the importance of listening carefully to students, which has helped me to address their individual concerns and to mentor in and out of the classroom.”

Stephan was raised as a working-class person of color in San Francisco and Oakland and went directly from high school into the U.S. Army. As a noncommissioned officer, he learned to lead by example, and he still cherishes that value: “I know that I have the ability through my very presence to be a role model for so many students.”

In turn, Stephan and other Distinguished TAs know firsthand the benefits of having mentors and role models. For Stephan, that person was his undergraduate music history professor, Michelle Fillion, the first person to get him thinking about graduate school. “Besides teaching me facts I never knew, she taught me I could be a person I never thought I could be,” he says. For James Rocha, one key mentor was Dan Sutherland, a previous Distinguished TA at UCLA. Dan was James’s TA and later mentored him and encouraged his educational interests. “Because of the help that Dan gave to me, I now, as a graduate student, try to give the same kind of help to my students as well as to younger graduate students.”

And for Moss Pike, the mentor and model was Bobbie Cartwright, a high school English teacher who “first altered my way of thinking by exposing me to the challenging problems in our own world and inviting us to think about the often contradictory answers.” Talking about his mentor, Moss brings up that word again: fun.

“Like Bobbie Cartwright over a decade ago and every other great teacher I have had, I sincerely have fun teaching,” he says. “As much fun as learning can be, teaching can be even more fun, and nothing gives me more professional and personal pleasure than challenging all my students to use their brains, as Bobbie Cartwright did for me.”
VISITING PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN Hayward as an outreach counselor for UC Berkeley, María Ledesma ran into some familiar faces. A couple of years earlier, as a member of an in-school team for the nonprofit Partners in School Innovation, she had worked with fourth graders at nearby Ruus Elementary School. Now, she “was running into some of my former elementary school students in the midst of their high school careers.”

It was her “own little personal pipeline of students,” María says, and what she saw was not entirely encouraging. Some students who had been full of promise a few years earlier—energetic, dynamic, and bright—“had been tracked
out of college preparation courses.” While certainly personal effort plays a role in academic success, “part of the outcome is institutional,” María thought, “in terms of how a student is treated and supported.” Achieving their potential would be difficult for “students tracked out of courses that are a prerequisite for higher education,” she says. “It was disheartening.”

It was not, however, entirely surprising. Growing up in Oakland and attending Oakland public schools, María says, “I was surrounded by very bright students,” most of them African American. After high school, she found herself “at UC Berkeley’s doorstep,” accepted for undergraduate studies in English and obtaining her degree. Although some of her high school peers went to college, too, others “were very deserving but didn’t get an opportunity—not because they were any less intelligent than I was.”

As María sees it, “my success was the product of a lot of people’s effort, people I know and people I don’t know.” Among the “people I know” was her brother, who had preceded her to UC Berkeley and could offer advice, and a friend who sent along a brochure that got María thinking about a program at Harvard University, where she acquired a master’s degree in education. Among the unknown were “pioneers and advocates who fought to provide a first-generation Chicana student a chance.”

At the same time she was visiting Hayward high schools, María was also sitting on a UC Berkeley team that read undergraduate applications and provided input for decisions. She saw that university faculty played a key role in setting the criteria for admissions. “Since I was interested in those issues, the next logical step was to become a faculty member.”

The Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA had a doctoral specialization in race and ethnic studies that provided “a fit in terms of what the program was offering and what I was looking for,” she says. At the start, her intention was to stay away from “anything on race-conscious admissions,” but all those previous experiences apparently had a subconscious magnetism.

Doing a paper on the University of Michigan affirmative action cases for a sociology course, María saw that the amicus briefs provided “a good data field for a dissertation,” she says, and then it occurred to her: “Why not mine?” In a widely anticipated action, the U.S. Supreme Court had issued a mixed ruling on two challenges to the university’s admissions policies. It upheld the right of universities to consider race in admissions to achieve a diverse student body. But although the ruling supported the Law School’s holistic consideration of race and ethnicity as part of admission decisions, it overturned the undergraduate practice of assigning a specific number of points to all applicants who were racial/ethnic minorities.

Because of the decision’s importance, a large number of organizations had filed briefs discussing the issues and supporting various stances. María’s plan is to do “a textual analysis of the amicus briefs to see how we frame this issue in public discourse and how we come to talk about educational opportunities.” For example, opponents of race-conscious admissions often use words like quota or preference that “trigger a certain kind of metaphor or reaction as opposed to framing the need for race-conscious policies within a historical context,” María says, the context of “past and present social, political, and economic injustices that continue to yield disparate educational opportunities.”

One of her advisers, Professor Walter R. Allen, says María’s “path breaking” work “details the stakes, key actors, and future of affirmative action in U.S. higher education,” combining “thoughtful, creative insight and state of the art methodological rigor.” María “examines the world with a critical, searching eye that insists on looking beyond conventional boundaries,” Professor Allen says. “As a result, after each conversation with her, I find myself asking new questions and questioning old answers.”

These qualities should be useful to the UC Board of Regents, on which María will serve this year as a voting member representing students, after a year as an observer and committee participant. As a first-generation graduate student, María was moved by “the opportunity to be at that table and to speak with my fellow regents and other colleagues and to be in some way representing historically underrepresented students.” Again, however, she links her success to “the work of people I know and don’t know,” pointing out that she follows 31 previous student regents “on whose shoulders I stand.”

Sitting on the Board of Regents is one opportunity for María to lend her shoulders to others, but it’s not the only one. As it happens, some of those youngsters she met at Ruus Elementary School and Hayward high schools are now “on the cusp of graduating from UCLA.” When they meet, she always points out that “if ever I can help, that’s what I’m there for.” Meantime, catching up with the progress of her “own personal pipeline of students” has been a highlight of her stay at UCLA, she says. “It’s been one of the things I treasure.”

“My success was the product of a lot of people’s effort, people I know and people I don’t know.”
Robert Taylor
Molecular Toxicology

Robert Taylor’s Life in Science

began at Cosumnes River College in Sacramento when a “pretty young lady” invited him to join her in an Introduction to Chemistry class.

Not only the lady but also the science interested him. He was only 15 when a streak of gray hair showed up on his head, and after his mother told him it was inherited from his Native American great-great-grandmother, he thought he might like to study genetics. A good student, he had always figured he could study whatever he wanted.

Just what that was, however, didn’t become apparent until the community college chemistry class. “I really enjoyed it,” Robert says. “During that course, the light came on for me: Science is what I’m supposed to be doing.” He transferred to UC Davis as a biochemistry major, and two years later, he was at UCLA as a first-year student.
in ACCESS, a program that allows students to explore a number of alternatives in science before settling on an area of study.

For Robert, the decision came quickly. Professor Oliver Hankinson was just setting up an interdepartmental doctoral program in molecular toxicology, and Robert was the only ACCESS student that year to choose a rotation there. He found toxicology “very intriguing,” he was learning an array of different scientific techniques, and he enjoyed his interactions with Professor Hankinson. He had found his academic home.

Today, Robert is completing his dissertation on the mechanism by which certain environmental pollutants exert toxic effects in the body, among them cancer. Dioxin, for example, is a potent chemical that poisons people who burn trash that includes plastic or who eat too much contaminated fish and meat. The body possesses a number of genes encoding proteins that bind dioxin or other toxic chemicals; Robert studies the genes encoding cytochrome P450 enzymes. In the best scenario, the genes would modify the toxic chemical or compound “so we can excrete it and get rid of it,” Robert explains. Instead, with P450, “metabolism actually makes the parent compound into something much worse than it was when it entered the body.”

Robert’s goal is to describe the mechanism rather than to find practical applications for that knowledge. However, one of the P450 genes he’s working with is found only in cancerous tumors, making it of particular interest. Dr. Hankinson says that once the mechanism is understood, scientists might be able “to identify people who are more or less susceptible to these chemicals so they could be forewarned of their risk” and to find drugs or nutrients “that could ameliorate their risk.” For example, scientists know that eating broccoli helps the body get rid of some toxic chemicals.

While Robert works on his dissertation, supported in part by a Hortense Fishbaugh Memorial Scholarship, he has begun looking for a postdoctoral fellowship in industry or a government agency, with the long-range goal of becoming a board-certified toxicologist. Although he enjoyed his stint as a teaching assistant, his first love is research: “Working with the challenges you face every day—setting out your experimental goals and hypotheses and working them out—that’s what I enjoy. It’s one of those things that gets you up to go to work.”

Professor Hankinson describes Robert as “a very, very promising scientist” who is also an important contributor to the successful operation of his laboratory. In addition, Robert has been a student leader in the molecular toxicology program, organizing seminars and speeches and attending faculty meetings where “he’s a very effective conduit between faculty and students,” Professor Hankinson says.

Recently, Robert helped to found STEM-PLEDGE (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics: Providing Leadership and Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education). After attending a National Science Foundation-sponsored workshop where he met underrepresented researchers in post-doctoral careers, he was inspired. “I returned to UCLA determined to help other minority students through the process, as well.” STEM-PLEDGE is a graduate student group that sponsors guest speakers and provides peer counseling, but the support system may be its most important element.

Robert knows firsthand how important support can be, having gone through community college, UC Davis, and the first year in ACCESS side by side with his cousin, Charles Dobard. “The mantra is that it’s very difficult for transfer students to get adjusted and do well,” Robert says. That was not true for him, and having his cousin for a teammate was a key factor, along with the excellent preparation he received at each step in his education.

Besides their knowledge of science, Robert and Charles acquired at Cosumnes River College the skills required to succeed in a research university, Robert says. At UC Davis, “Charles and I sat right in the front of every lecture, and we weren’t embarrassed to ask questions,” Robert says. “We asked a ton of questions. I knew we only had two years to finish up. We didn’t have much time to waste.” Charles and Robert continued as a team in UCLA’s ACCESS program; Charles studied molecular pharmacology and completed his PhD in December.

As for the “pretty young lady” who turned him on to science, she also turned up at UCLA, an undergraduate in neuroscience when Robert arrived as a graduate student. They began to date, and Shonte is now his wife, and mother of three children, Uriel, Naomi, and Adam. Shonte teaches high school temporarily while she applies for medical school.

And there’s one more expression of teamwork in Robert’s life: He and his teammates have won UCLA’s intramural Flag Football championship three times—and they made up the only co-ed team to win an all men’s league. Their name: Toxic Substances.

Andrew Fung: (Co-author) “Transport of living cells with magnetically assembled nanowires.” Published in *Biomedical Microdevices*, vol. 8781, (online), November, 2006.


**BIOMEDICAL PHYSICS**


**CHEMISTRY & BIOCHEMISTRY**


**COMMUNITY HEALTH SCIENCES**


**COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**


**DESIGN | MEDIA ARTS**


**EARTH & SPACE SCIENCES**

**Melissa K. Giovanni:** [1] Accepted by the College of University Teaching Fellowships for 2006-2007. Her course, Geology and Politics of the Grand Canyon, will be offered during Spring Quarter 2007. www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf

**ECOLOGY & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY**


**ENGLISH**


**FILM, TELEVISION, & DIGITAL MEDIA**

**Erick S. Fefferman:** (Director, Film) “LIGHTS OUT.” Australian International Film Festival, Melbourne, Australia, October, 2006.


**Brian Scott Miller:** (Director, Film) “The Pink Conspiracy.” The First Annual Beverly Hills High Definition Film Festival, Beverly Hills, CA, December, 2006.

**LENGUISH**


**FRENCH & FRANCOPHONE STUDIES**

**Leslie C. Barnes:** “‘Linda Lé’s ‘Voix’ and the Crisis of Representation: Alienity and the Vietnamese Immigrant Writer in France.” Forthcoming in French Forum.


**EDUCATION**


**ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING**


**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

**Irene T. Miranda:** (Co-author) “Fishing-the-line near marine reserves in single species and multispecies fisheries.” Published in Ecological Applications, 2007.

**FILM, TELEVISION, & DIGITAL MEDIA**

**Erick S. Fefferman:** (Director, Film) “LIGHTS OUT.” Australian International Film Festival, Melbourne, Australia, October, 2006.


**Brian Scott Miller:** (Director, Film) “The Pink Conspiracy.” The First Annual Beverly Hills High Definition Film Festival, Beverly Hills, CA, December, 2006.


GEOGRAPHY

Tamarin M. Pavelsky: (First author) "Intercomparison of four global precipitation data sets and their correlation with increased Eurasian river discharge to the Arctic Ocean." Published in *Journal of Geophysical Research*, vol. 111, pp. D21112, November, 2006.


GERMANIC LANGUAGES


HEALTH SERVICES

Raul A. Sobero: (First author) "Tuberculosis control in Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Peru: why does incidence vary so much between neighbors?" Published in *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease*, vol. 10 (11), pp. 1292-1295, November, 2006.

HISTORY


INFORMATION STUDIES

Vijayagarhavan Bashyam: (First author) "Identifying Anatomical Phrases in Clinical Reports by Shallow Semantic Parsing Methods." IEEE Symposium on Computational Intelligence and Data Mining 2007, Honolulu, HI, April, 2007.

Nancy Beygijanian: "Electronic Government: Iran Reaching Out to the World." Presented at the Web cast with the University of Tehran, Library and Information Studies Department, December, 2006.


LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES


LINGUISTICS


MATERIALS SCIENCE & ENGINEERING


MUSICOLOGY


Ljubica Ilic: "Echo and Narcissus: Labyrinths of the Self." Presented at the Ninth Annual Meeting of the


NEAR EASTERN LANGUAGES & CULTURES


NEUROSCIENCE


PATHOLOGY & LABORATORY MEDICINE


Liming Pei: (First author) “NR4A orphan nuclear receptors are transcriptional regulators of hepatic glucose metabolism.” Published in Nature Medicine, vol. 12(9), pp. 1048, September, 2006.

PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY


PHYSIOLOGICAL SCIENCE


POLITICAL SCIENCE


PSYCHOLOGY


Jason M. Prenoveau: [1] (First author) “Repeated Exposure to 20% CO2 Challenge and Risk for Developing Panic Attacks: A Controlled 6 and 12-Month Follow-up in a Nonclinical Sample.”
SOCIOLOGY

Leisy J. Abrego: “I can’t go to college because I don’t have papers: Incorporation Patterns of Latino Undocumented Youth.” Published in *Latino Studies*, vol. 4, pp. 212–231, October, 2006.


Tara A. McKay: (Co-author) “Popularity, social acceptance, and aggression in adolescent peer groups: Links with academic performance and school attendance.” Published in *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 42, pp. 1116-1127, November, 2006.


THEATER


WOMEN’S STUDIES


WORLD ARTS AND CULTURES


Evangeline M Heiliger: (Participant) First ever Nanda Devi Women’s Trek, Indian Himalayas, October 2006. Consultant for a newly formed community-owned ecotourism venture, Mountain Shepherds. www.nandadevi.prayaga.org


PUBLIC HEALTH


SOCIAL WELFARE


Gabrielle J. Zhuang: (Co-author) “That never would have occurred to me: a qualitative study of medical students’ views of a cultural competence curriculum.” Published in *BMC Medical Education*, vol. 6, pp. 1-7, May, 2006.

Help Your Department! Submit an Accomplishment to the Graduate Quarterly

Have you made a presentation, published an article or premiered your original work recently? Help your department advertise its achievements to the university and beyond.

Submit your accomplishments online at:

www.gdnet.uc.edu/asis/accomplishments
Filing a Thesis or Dissertation?

_Policies and Procedures for Thesis and Dissertation Preparation and Filing_ is the official UCLA manuscript preparation guide that contains established criteria for uniformity in the physical format of theses and dissertations. The regulations included in it supersede any style manual instructions regarding format. Information on filing dates and procedures, microfilming, and registration of copyright are also included. It is available on the Graduate Division web site at www.gdnet.ucla.edu/gasaa/library/thesisintro.htm

**Thesis and Dissertation Meetings**

Staff from the University Archives and the UCLA Graduate Division present information on University regulations governing manuscript preparation and completion of degree requirements. Students who plan to file a thesis or dissertation during the quarter are encouraged to attend.

All meetings are in the West Electronic Classroom, Room 23167 Young Research Library.

**Master’s Thesis:**
- Thursday, April 12, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.
- Friday, April 13, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.
- Saturday, April 14, 2007 - 10:00 a.m.

**Doctoral Dissertation:**
- Thursday, April 12, 2007 - 11:00 a.m.
- Friday, April 13, 2007 - 11:00 a.m.
- Saturday, April 14, 2007 - 11:00 a.m.

Filing deadline for Spring 2007 is June 4, 2007.