RISING IN THE EAST
CAL STATE EAST BAY LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH A NEW CAMPAIGN

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President’s Message

The beginning of the academic year is always a watershed period in the life of our university — it marks a season of renewed optimism and exciting possibilities.

That is especially true this year. In September, we kicked off “Rising in the East” — our first-ever comprehensive campaign, with a goal of raising $60 million to take Cal State East Bay to the next level. At the same time, we launched a high-profile branding campaign with ads on billboards and AC transit buses, in BART stations and trains, in print and online.

“Rising in the East” evokes the dawn of a new day — and I believe it is a new day at Cal State East Bay. The theme speaks to the aspirations of our students, the accomplishments of our faculty, and our optimism for the future. And it sends a message to the broader community that these are exciting times on our side of the Bay.

In the pages of this magazine, you will see many of the reasons we are a university on the rise. It’s because we have students like Jumla Guerrero-Cantore, a tireless champion of education rights for the deaf, and Cal State East Bay’s first Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program recipient within the university’s Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice; faculty like Farhad Sabetan delivering online courses for Iranian students of the Bahá’í faith, who are banned from higher education and literally risking their lives to learn; and alumni like Randy Davis, who came here to achieve his dream of building an electronic DNA sequencing chip, and ended up building a biotech company that was acquired by the Swiss healthcare giant Roche.

The “Rising in the East” campaign is vital to the university’s future. Fresh funding will enable us to launch innovative programs, strengthen our faculty, offer more scholarships, and modernize and expand our facilities. Thanks to the efforts of our Foundation, friends, and alumni, we are already halfway to our goal.

We have a terrific story and it is time to tell it to the world. That is what “Rising in the East” is all about.

Go Pioneers!

Dr. Leroy M. Morishita
President

University Welcomes New Provost, Dr. Edward Inch

Following a nationwide search and appointment, Dr. Edward S. Inch became provost and vice president of Academic Affairs for Cal State East Bay on August 1.

“I am very pleased that Dr. Inch has agreed to serve as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Cal State East Bay,” President Leroy M. Morishita said. “He is a proven leader with a collaborative and team-oriented style, who will continue strengthening our academic programs and student success initiatives. Dr. Inch’s knowledge of the California State University system and breadth of experience provide a strong background that will serve Academic Affairs and the university well. He is an excellent addition to the Cal State East Bay leadership team and will help take us to new heights.”

Inch has served as the dean of the College of Arts and Letters at California State University, Sacramento since 2011. He previously served as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio, and has participated as an American Council on Education Fellow, and an accreditor for the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities. At Sacramento State, Inch led the initiative to double his college’s four-year graduation rates and improve retention rates, and served as a member of the university’s Strategic Planning Committee.

Inch said he is impressed with how Cal State East Bay students, staff, and faculty work together to improve opportunity, not just on campus, but across the region.

“What I think Cal State East Bay is really poised to do is to engage this region in very meaningful ways that give our students experiences that prepare them as civically engaged people,” Inch said. “I am most looking forward to hearing the insights of the people who work here, who understand the place, our students, and our community, and to think through with them the best strategies and direction for our university.”

Inch replaces Dr. Carolyn Nelson, who served as interim provost and vice president for Academic Affairs for the past year. Nelson resigned her position as dean of CSUEB’s College of Education and Allied Studies.

— Kimberly Tere-Hawkins

Cal State East Bay was recently named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, a first for the university. The honor roll, which started in 2006, is the highest federal recognition an institution can receive for its commitment to community, service learning, and civic engagement. A full list of recipients is available at nationalservice.gov/special-initiatives/honor-roll.

NATIONAL HONORS

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Cal State East Bay Foundation Receives $500,000 from AT&T for Hayward Promise Neighborhood

Due to the Cal State East Bay Educational Foundation’s success supporting and motivating underserved students in the Hayward Promise Neighborhood (HPN) program, it has been selected as one of 18 recipients nationwide that will share $10 million from AT&T through the Aspen Institute’s Success-Competition. The university has been awarded $500,000. Hundreds of organizations applied to the competition, which is part of AT&T’s Aspen Institute Connect to Success Competition. The program currently includes two specialists who work with high school administrators to support at-risk students. The new contribution from AT&T will support the specialists for the next two years, and an additional specialist will be added at Monta Vista High School part-time this fall.

“As one of the Hayward Promise Neighborhood initiative’s goals is its dedicated dropout-prevention specialists who are embedded in the high schools and engage with students every day,” said Dr. Camilla Nelson, Cal State East Bay’s dean of the College of Education and Allied Studies. “We’re preventing and stopping campus-level anchors.”

USGS Simulates Local Quakes with Help of CSUEB

As the sun set high above Lake Chabot in early September, several Cal State East Bay students drilled a 20-foot hole in the hard ground. The students were participating in an experiment with the US Geological Survey that will help characterize and map the underground geology of the Napa, Chabot, and Hayward faults.

It involves digging into the soil and setting off tiny “earthquakes” — tremors so small they might feel it within a few feet of their “epicenter.” Those tiny quakes are then tracked to see how the ground would respond to a larger shake. Once the information is gathered, scientists will be able to create a map that can help plan for the inevitable earthquakes of the future.

“We don’t yet understand what earthquake does once they go underground, how these faults connect, the complexity of the area... these faults are so close together, they’re very likely linked,” said Cal State East Bay Professor Luther Strayer.

Strayer first started involving students in his work in 2015 when he was asked to oversee the implosion of Cal State East Bay’s iconic Warren Hall building. “They [are] able to work alongside and be mentored by some of the best scientists in the world,” Strayer said. “It’s the beauty and wonderful thing about the relationship we have with the [USGS] that they mentor my students in geophysics and in techniques that allows us to find and study faults in the local geology.”

CSUEB graduate student Adrian McEvilly is on his way to just that. McEvilly said he had wanted to study chemistry, but realized he loved the hands-on nature of geology, particularly this current project with the USGS. He now teaches geology two days a week at the university and is a key part of the work being done in Hayward and Napa.

“There’s an entire world under our feet and we have no idea what it looks like,” McEvilly said. “This is going to help us do that.”

— Natalie Feulner
Friends of the Arts Select Four New Award Recipients

Creative and performing arts students were honored last spring at an annual luncheon in excellence for the fields of music, fine art, creative writing, and performing arts by Cal State East Bay’s Friends of the Arts (FOA), which honored 23 extraordinary individuals—according to its website. Fellows are selected each year by a faculty committee to recognize new artists who have shown “extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction,” according to its website. Fellows are selected based on three criteria: exceptional creativity, a track record of significant accomplishment, and potential for the fellowships to facilitate future creative work.

Recipients of the awards may be writers, scientists, artists, social scientists, humanists, teachers, or entrepreneurs. The foundation does not require or expect specific products or reports of the fellows and does not evaluate their creativity during the fellowship.

— Natalie Feulner

STUDENT DIVERSITY TOPS RANKINGS LISTS

Cal State East Bay’s diverse student population tops national rankings lists, including the Chronicle of Higher Education and U.S. News & World Report, which both listed CSUEB as the second-most diverse university in the country and first in the continental United States—and the university is being honored for the third year in a row by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine with a Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award. Cal State East Bay was also recently noted in five different categories in Diverse magazine’s 25th annual “Top 100” issue, which looks at the top degree-producing institutions for minority ethnicity. For undergraduate degrees, the university ranked No. 29 in Asian American graduates, No. 55 for Hispanics, and No. 55 overall. For master’s degrees, Cal State East Bay ranked No. 44 for Asian American graduates and No. 86 overall.

Cal State East Bay alumna and graphic novelist Gene Luen Yang (MS ’03, Education), was recently announced as the recipient of one of 23 $625,000 no-strings-attached MacArthur Foundation fellowships, often referred to as a “genius grant.”

Yang and the other fellows were awarded the grants for their exceptional creativity and potential for future contributions to their respective fields, according to the foundation. “While our communities, our nation, and our world face both historic and emerging challenges, these 23 extraordinary individuals give us ample reason for hope,” said Julia Stasch, MacArthur Foundation president. “They are breaking new ground and applying their achievements in ways that engage and encourage dialogue.”

Cal State East Bay President Leroy Morishita said the recognition is an extraordinary honor for Yang. “Receiving the MacArthur Foundation grant is a tremendous recognition for an artist such as Gene Yang who has been a trailblazer in his profession and an inspiration to his community,” Morishita said. “I have known Gene for many years and Yang has been impressed by his ability to approach challenging topics in creative ways that engage and encourage dialogue.”

The MacArthur program awards unrestricted fellowships to individuals who show “extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction,” according to its website. Fellows are selected based on three criteria: exceptional creativity, a track record of significant accomplishment, and potential for the fellowships to facilitate future creative work. Recipients of the awards may be writers, scientists, artists, social scientists, humanists, teachers, or entrepreneurs. The foundation does not require or expect specific products or reports of the fellows and does not evaluate their creativity during the fellowship.

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MacArthur Foundation ‘Genius Grant’ Awarded to Alumnus

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In addition to his work on DC Comic’s New Super-Man, alumna Gene Yang is the author of several graphic novels, including American Born Chinese, which won the Michael L. Printz Award in 2006. — JESSE CANTLEY
When she speaks, Jamila Guerrero-Cantor can’t help but move her hands. As an advocate, activist, and counselor in the deaf community for two decades, using sign language comes naturally to Cal State East Bay’s first-ever Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) student within the university’s Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. The CDIP is awarded annually to doctoral candidates who show promise in their proposed research and vested interest in competing for future tenure-track openings within the California State University system. CDIP participants can complete their degrees in any accredited doctoral program nationwide, and Guerrero-Cantor, who was also accepted at UCLA, chose Cal State East Bay.

As she explains why she left a coveted tenure-track position as a counselor for deaf students to study at CSUEB, she places one hand perpendicular to her chest, palm down, facing the floor. Then she takes her other hand, balls it into a fist, and punches up into the flat hand several times. “I was tapped out,” she says aloud while signing, almost as an afterthought. “I felt so frustrated, like I wanted to do so much more.”

While Guerrero-Cantor helped the deaf population grow from 19 to 90 students in just a few years in her former role, the more students she worked with, she explains, the more she wanted to do something that could help thousands, not just handfuls, at a time. The lifelong social justice advocate began wondering if other programs targeted toward at-risk populations could also be applied to deaf students — and if she could do the research to prove it.

“[The Puente Project] has a 98 percent success rate. I’d love to do that with deaf students.”

Last spring, while she was still considering programs, Guerrero-Cantor met with Professor Lettie Ramirez as well as the director of Cal State East Bay’s EdD program, Associate Professor Bradley Porfilio. “When I told them my vision, their response was ‘Oh, we can support you with that. You should come here.’ It was just this warmth and love. I saw the opportunity to do something practical while doing research, with a very supportive mentor, who has experience with the exact type of model I want to try.”

There was also another rare benefit Cal State East Bay offered Guerrero-Cantor: the chance to study alongside California School for the Deaf Fremont Principal Liann Osborne, who could add valuable insights and collaboration to her research. “As the EdD program’s first black, deaf student [Jamila and I have] discussed what we really want to see happens out there,” Osborne says. “We really want to set up a program where we can help first-generation families, communities that don’t value education as much … and we want to support deaf children and let them know that [higher education] is of value to them as well.”

While the framework of the research is still being defined, Guerrero-Cantor believes a model that brings more deaf students into the fold of higher education must include counselors who are deaf themselves and communicate in sign language, classes designed for deaf needs, as well as high-quality interpreter services.

“I believe we can learn so much from a community of people that have been so excluded,” she says. “The beauty and the potential of what they can teach us as a society are largely unknown because we haven’t supported a world where that has been possible. I’m really interested in getting deaf students to complete higher education degrees and then come back as leaders and lead these programs.”

BY KRISTA DOSSETTI PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

CAL STATE EAST BAY’S FIRST CHANCELLOR’S DOCTORAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM EdD STUDENT CHAMPIONS ACCESS TO DEAF EDUCATION

THE FIGHT TO BE HEARD CAL STATE EAST BAY MAGAZINE FALL 2016

BY KRISTA DOSSETTI PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

W hen she speaks, Jamila Guerrero-Cantor can’t help but move her hands. As an advocate, activist, and counselor in the deaf community for two decades, using sign language comes naturally to Cal State East Bay’s first-ever Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) student within the university’s Doctorate in Educational Leadership for Social Justice.

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“For example, Guerrero-Cantor, who is also a mentor with-in The Puente Project, a program that originated at Chabot College and targets disadvantaged students by building a sense of community among them, thought a similar frame-work could be used as a starting point for her own studies.

“It’s a no-brainer, it’s a recipe for success,” Guerrero-Cantor says. “You have a cohort of students, they become very bonded, [and] you connect teaching, counseling, and men-toring — those three components — and no wonder [The Puente Project has] a 98 percent success rate. I would love to do that with deaf students.”

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BY KRISTA DOSSETTI PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO
Professor Matt Johnson has been working in artificial intelligence since its beginnings. He began studying computer science at Xavier University at age 15, dug into AI during his master’s work at Michigan State, and was one of the first PhD graduates in computer science from William & Mary. Since then, he’s worked on in-flight pilot automation for NASA, air-traffic control strategies, military surveillance, and more. Here, amidst fears of the technology evolving beyond human control, Johnson answers questions about what he believes are the real concerns with AI. Hint: It isn’t robots falling from the sky.

Ideas about the power and consequences of AI span the gamut — Stephen Hawking has said it could be the end of humanity. Where do you stand?

People are afraid of AI, largely because of how it’s portrayed in science fiction and the movies — that it’s going to take over the world and giant robots are going to come out of the sky. At a cocktail party when someone hears I work in AI, the first question is always about Skynet (laughs). No, I’m not afraid of that.

There is a contingent of people, however, well-known people, who believe in what’s called “strong AI,” which is about getting the computer to actually be intelligent — as opposed to just seeming intelligent because it performs the task correctly or gets the right answer.
There's no harm in researching [strong AI] and doing things with it in my opinion, but trying to [get computers to] act human isn't the right approach. We should be continuing to come up with systems that make the best decisions given the information that they know. That's not necessarily about being self-aware or conscious or philosophical, it’s just a program solving one particular task. So AI isn't about trying to recreate or mimic the way human brains work?

No, it’s not about trying to build your thinking, feeling artificial friend. And it’s not even about understanding how the human brain works. To me, that’s a cognitive science. And, it’s also incredibly arro-
gnant — humans [don’t possess] the only kind of intelligence. It is, though, about trying to solve problems that are hard and complex, and that are inefficient for humans to solve by their nature.

Your specialty is machine learning?

Yes. Machine learning, which is the design and construction of al-
gorithms that can learn new behaviors from and make predictions out your knowledge or ability to control it is ethically disconcerting.

What can AI do by itself isn’t the issue, though, it’s what’s done with it that’s the problem: people gathering information about you with-
out your knowledge or ability to control it is ethically disconcerting.

Artificial intelligence is being hailed as the fourth industrial revo-
lution — a recent study by the World Economic Forum estimates a net loss of five million jobs due to AI in the next 20 years.

It’s a real challenge, and I think it will happen a lot in China soon because they’re investing so much in robotics for manufacturing. When people make decisions about whether to automate some-
thing, they’re focusing on a personal or business bottom line, not what happens to the workers. As a society, the more we automate, the more we have to realize people are getting pushed out of the workforce, and that can’t be the end of the discussion — there needs to be an effort to educate people in the skills that are needed.

And how is Cal State East Bay handling that education?

Well, it’s been pretty well publicized that the number of women and minorities working in Silicon Valley is pathetic. And it’s even more of an issue when you look at the demographics of the region, which are incredibly diverse. These may or may not be people whose jobs could be eliminated by AI in the future, but they're people who ar-

So with all this growth that’s expected, what are your predictions for where AI is headed next?

I think the surge in AI startups will continue happening as giants like Facebook and Google invest more and more in AI technology, but as far as specifics, definitely drones. The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration has released regulations for registering drones and is testing technology that could help automate air traffic control — we should see that this year.

And the Internet of Things will continue to expand; all the physical objects, devices, buildings, etc. that are embedded with electronics. Devices will coordinate more, and therefore seem smarter. And this plays directly into more of what’s called affective computing. It’s becoming more and more important for users to feel personally connected to their devices, especially cell phones. Many AI students study psychology, too, and there’s a big thrust in the field to cre-
ate programs that understand a user’s mood and desires. You can do that through gathering data on things like what emojis are being used, and even the strength of a person’s keystroke. Happy people type differently than angry ones. And then maybe you have a re-

What excites me the most is work on autonomous agents, but not
driverless cars. I think real applications are still years and years away. Smart homes, maybe? My house is remarkably dumb. Or personal assistants. I could really see that — but not one automatically pred-
icated on a female voice. 

“...What AI can do by itself isn’t the issue ... it’s what’s done with it that’s the problem.”
It’s 9:30 a.m. on an overcast summer morning at Cal State East Bay, and approximately 100 soon-to-be eighth- and ninth-grade girls are gathered for roll call outside the College of Science. They’re members of Girls Inc. of Alameda County, the largest affiliate of a national nonprofit dedicated to empowering young women to go to college, and each year, they descend on the university’s Hayward campus to get a taste of higher education.

Standing at about 5’6” and wearing a hoodie and jeans with fashionable rips at the knees, Shayna Whitley (MA ’16, Economics) easily blends in with the middle schoolers — a fact, they say, that helps them think of her as a big sister. But there’s no mistaking her authority, or the respect she commands from the young women. As program coordinator at Girls Inc. of Alameda County, Whitley designed the camp’s curriculum, arranges the weekly field trips, oversees the instructors, and reinforces — at every opportunity — the STEM-based lessons that are at the heart of the experience.

She quickly calls out changes in the schedule (a group leader is out sick and she’ll be taking over pool duty), and true to her warning, gives the information only once. When Whitley asks, “Are we clear?” dozens of young voices answer back with a resounding “Yes!” The group is dismissed and she heads for lifeguard duty with the first of the girls to swim for the day. Many of them, she notes, had never been in a pool before coming to Cal State East Bay.

En route, she confiscates a piece of cheesecake (it’s against Girls Inc.’s nutrition policy) and responds to exaggerations about frostbite by asking a group of “rookies” — eighth-graders — at what temperature water freezes. When one says it’s so cold she’s sure she’ll get pneumonia, Whitley is again on cue, inquiring, “Really? Does that make sense? How do you contract pneumonia?” (Virus transmission is on the list of course topics this summer.)

Later, as she tells her own story — she grew up in Washington, DC (her parents both work government tech jobs), got a bachelor’s degree in biology at Hampton University, and started with Girls Inc. in Virginia before following an opportunity with the organization to California — an interesting reciprocal pattern between the young women she’s shepherding toward college and what led her to the master’s in economics program at Cal State East Bay.

ALUMNA SAYS YOUNG WOMEN ARE INTIMIDATED BY ECONOMICS, BUT UNDERSTANDING IT IS KEY TO THEIR FUTURE

BY KRISTA DOSSETTI PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

Alumna Shayna Whitley was recently hired as a business finance associate analyst at PG&E.
“I noticed there was a deficit with the girls just understanding the way the world works,” Whitley says. “And with science — I love science — but when you try to talk about biology and cells, the girls can’t see cells, so they really don’t care.

“Girls care about money,” she continues. “And literally anything and everything we do has some type of economic component to it, so I really thought about that — and I started developing lessons for the girls [on economics] in a way that made sense to them.”

However, after a good running start with talks about family finances, material goods, and the cost of college, Whitley soon came up against her own limitations. “I started researching economic literacy, and I started realizing how much I liked it — and how much I needed to know. I needed to know the mechanics of it,” she explains.

Whitley began looking for master’s degree programs locally, and it wasn’t long before she was filling out an application for Cal State East Bay. “When I turn on CNN, Bloomberg, CNBC, there’s not a lot of people of color — at least not enough,” she says. “It’s a culture thing and maybe it’s a community thing — my family was well off and we still didn’t talk about money. I want to see more people of color take the reins, if you will, to understand their power. We could change the world, “ she emphasizes, “if everyone understood the economic principles, foundations, and repercussions of all the decisions that they make.”

And she isn’t wasting any time putting her knowledge to use: She’s been sharing it with young women from throughout the East Bay, whom she calls “our future,” and she recently took on a new role as a business finance analyst at PG&E.

“I learned that everything has a cost, but also to use what I have, and to think outside the box on how to use what I have creatively.” — Kayla Jones, 13

“I know I’ll use economics when I’m in college — when I’m on my own and trying to figure out life for myself … you can’t just go around spending money on things you don’t need.” — Alexis Guzman, 13

“I’ve had a lot of role models who are showing me the benefits of saving. Money is scarce. We need to learn how to think towards the future and what could be useful for times beyond right now.” — Michelle Ohwobete, 14

“Before [Girls Inc.], I was really confused about what economics was. Now I know we can use it to save our planet by not using too many things that are limited, like fossil fuels, plastic, and petroleum.” — Tatiana Le, 13

“So I worked a component into every lesson that they do. It’s not necessarily hidden, and it’s there in a way that makes sense to them, but they wouldn’t say, ‘Oh, this is economics.’”

“The greatest thing that [Shayna] offers is that she knows how to make everything relevant to a girl’s life,” says Odette Nemes, senior director of development for Girls Inc. of Alameda County. “Whether it’s economics, if it’s science, if it’s media literacy — she can always tie it in. She can get girls excited to learn about anything.”

For example, in a lesson on the function of the eye that culminates in making eyeglasses, Girls Inc. educator Corali Scimenes — also an East Bay alumna (BA ’16, International Studies) — begins by playing an infomercial on glasses that correct colorblindness. After the girls watch people see, for the first time, the full spectrum of color in a sunset or their child’s artwork, Scimenes asks them what they think of the product. Tentatively, an eighth-grader questions if it’s fair to let people try on the glasses without letting them keep them, and how much they cost. More questions are raised about the role of the sponsor, a paint company, and what it gets out of advertising glasses.

Scimenes continues with a group quiz that lets the girls amass “money” that will be used to “buy” the materials they need to build their glasses, with any leftover funds counting as their “pay.” “The price of materials also fluctuates throughout the lesson, providing a basis for the girls to understand markets.”

Whitley says it’s a point about resource scarcity that re-surfaces across several lessons, while Scimenes notes that setting up the experiments in this way frequently leads to some interesting outcomes. “The girls who didn’t do well [in the quiz] will go out during the break and study so they can come back and make more money. But the girls who have the most money … they don’t always have the...
As both a first-generation American and the first in her family to go to college, Cal State East Bay alumna Leona Tang (BS ’91, Business Administration) is familiar with narrow expectations for women. “My own grandmother would always say, ‘You’re going to be a doctor,’” Tang recalls. So, when she was accepted at UC Davis, young Leona indeed began preparing for a life in medicine. “I nearly flunked out of college!” she laughs today. “When I transferred to Cal State Hayward, I started studying accounting because that’s what I was interested in, and I loved it.”

It’s a lesson Tang, who is former head of internal auditing at Charles Schwab and a repeat name on the SF Business Times’s annual Most Influential Women in Business list, has been sharing with young women through Girls Inc. for 15 years. She’s passionate about showing the young women their full potential outside professions they might be more familiar with (lawyer, doctor, teacher), as well as achieving greater equality for professional women everywhere. “I did hiring in my previous position and women are doing well actually, but there are few ethnic minorities,” Tang says. “And like myself, they might be the first one in their household to go to college, so no one is telling them how to pick majors.”

“I spend my time trying to help advance women, and girls in particular,” Tang adds, “because I hope one day we don’t have the most influential women list, it will just be person. But to get there, we need to see more women — especially minority women — in leadership roles. The more girls can see women doing things they’re not used to seeing women doing, it’s helpful for them to know they can aspire to be that as well.”

Model Success

Alumna shares her passion for Girls Inc.

"To have eighth-grade girls in that space [at Cal State East Bay], starting that young, when they’re going to be the first in their families to go to college ... to have them own it and feel like they belong there is really important," Nemes says.

For Whitley, there’s also a clear symmetry in presenting Cal State East Bay as a real possibility for “my girls,” as she calls them.

"The master’s in economics program has changed my life," she says. "It opened up a whole perspective that I didn’t know existed, a whole world — I had a learning curve coming from a bachelor’s degree in science ... and I just see the growth in me through this program. I’m just so thankful and appreciative because I don’t know how many people would have taken this chance on me."
The car that Tesla Motors founder and CEO Elon Musk drives is unlike any other. It may appear to be a normal Tesla Model X on the outside, but look closely at the car’s 259-horsepower front motor (762 combined) and you’ll find the initials ‘SP’ hastily written with a Sharpie pen.

Scott Pallesen (BS ’14, Physics) was working as an engineering technician in the dynamometer lab at the Tesla headquarters in Palo Alto when a spark of excitement flew through the department. The team learned that the motor they were testing would soon be installed in the famed entrepreneur’s car. Pallesen, caught up in the excitement, couldn’t help himself.

“As I’m uninstalling the unit after a test, I signed the motor,” he says with a twinkle in his eye. “It’s actually still in the car. Elon’s driving it, and I tested it.”

Pallesen’s route from Cal State East Bay’s College of Science to Tesla’s dyno labs has been fast and exciting — not unlike the cars themselves. And similar to Tesla’s built-to-last electric vehicles, Pallesen is looking forward to a long ride in the car business. But it wasn’t always that way.

IGNITION SPARK

Pallesen graduated in 2014 with a physics degree and an uncertain future. He was working at an athletic shoe store in Livermore and considering applying for grad school or a job at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Then one day his father, who does high-end custom metal fabrication, invited him along to install stainless steel staircases and handrails at the Tesla Motors headquarters in Palo Alto.

“I saw a bunch of people on computers doing what looked like AutoCAD (2D and 3D design) and modeling,” Pallesen recalls. He has never considered himself a stereotypical “car guy,” but he has a mechanical and technical aptitude — from years at his father’s elbow — and the work looked appealing, so he submitted an application.
Pallesen’s timing was perfect; just a few hours later his phone rang. After a three-part interview (a sit-down conversation, a mechanical skills test, and an assessment of his ability to read technical drawings), he was hired as a production associate — basically an assembly line worker — in the fall of 2014.

MOUNTING SPEED

The labor Pallesen began doing on the shop floor was a far cry from the design work in sleek offices that had inspired him to apply.

He began with a physically demanding 12-hour swing shift — 5 p.m. to 5 a.m., five nights a week — building doors for the Tesla Model S, the brand’s flagship electric car. Over the course of several months he got to know the equipment engineers who maintained the assembly-line robots (the plant is renowned for its cutting-edge automation) and, intrigued by their work, asked if he could learn from them — on his own time.

The engineers and Pallesen’s supervisor agreed, and soon he was working an additional 12-hour shift on the weekends, repairing and maintaining the factory’s robots.

After nine stimulating but exhausting months, he was primed for another challenge.

“I went to my supervisor and said, ‘I’ve got experience doing all this other stuff,’” Pallesen says. “And he said, ‘We need to get you out of here. I’ve been looking at other positions for you already.’” Pallesen embarked on another series of interviews, one of which included a geometry problem on a whiteboard. (He aced it.)

“The manager was looking for critical thinking — could I break down the problem?” Pallesen notes. “Then he took me on a tour of the lab. I was like, ‘What did I just get into?’ Because it’s loud, things are spinning, and I [had] never touched equipment like [that] before.”

But in June 2015, Pallesen indeed began testing motors on those loud, spinning machines — they’re called dynamometers, and they measure force, torque, and power.

“It was a lot of fast-paced work,” Pallesen says. “Engineers would bring their motors down, and we tested them. The tests ran for two hours, then we’d take the motor off the dynamometer and put another one on it. It’s a very tight schedule.”

In spite of the breakneck pace, Pallesen once again found time for side projects.

The motors, weighing between 200 and 350 pounds apiece, are kept on tall racks and retrieved using a forklift. Some 40 motors are on the racks at any given time waiting to be tested, and retrieving the next one in the queue used to take technicians 20 minutes or more. But thanks to a database application Pallesen developed, which tracks...
the motors by serial number and uses a scanner to identify each one, the retrieval time dropped to under a minute. “All the departments were impressed,” he says with a slight grin. “They all wanted the code for the application.”

Pallesen’s willingness to do more than expected doesn’t surprise Cal State East Bay Associate Professor and Department of Physics Chair Erik Helgren. Helgren recalls an upper-division physics class Pallesen took with him that covered the Compton generator — a device invented by Arthur Holly Compton to detect the Coriolis force (a principle of physics that explains the motion of objects relative to a rotating frame of reference). Helgren assigned a related homework project and, the professor recalls, “I half-jokingly said that I’d be impressed if someone built one over the weekend.”

“Sure enough, on Monday morning Scott came walking in with a homemade Compton generator,” he continues. The class was able to spend much of the next session reproducing Compton’s experiments using Pallesen’s device. “Scott did his best work in lab-based activities, whether it was in a lab class or the research lab,” Helgren says.

BUILT TO LAST

Within four months of starting work in Tesla’s Palo Alto dyno lab, Pallesen was promoted to a different lab — this one in Sunnyvale — to perform long-term tests that simulate actual driving conditions. (Tesla founder Musk has set a goal that his cars last a million miles or more, and these long tests are key to meeting that goal.) Here, Pallesen is one of just two people conducting tests that can run for weeks or even months on end, generating up to 300 channels of data.

Although his current assignment at Tesla is less physically demanding than the 72-hour weeks he spent building Model S doors on the shop floor, his drive for excellence is just as intense. Case in point: A single long-term test produces at least 10 gigabytes of data, and Pallesen strives to deliver those results as cleanly as possible.

“I’m very particular, and I want the tests to be run perfectly,” he says. “There’s hundreds of data columns, and my job — depending on the test — is to put [the data] on a big graph and analyze it. I look at the highs, the lows, the averages. This is what the senior engineers want to see. I want to get as much data as I can to the engineers, because I don’t want to hear that [a] part I tested is suddenly failing. Because then I can’t be proud of what I did.”

Pallesen clearly feels a sense of belonging to — even ownership of — Tesla and its vehicles. And when he talks about his work, it’s with phrases such as, “I want you to have your car forever.”

He attributes his attitude to Tesla’s culture, which seems more akin to that of a technology company than an automaker. Team-building exercises include video-game marathons, trips to the Tesla battery-manufacturing “giga-factory” in Nevada, and even an outing to watch one of Musk’s rockets launch into space.

Through it all, Pallesen says his habit of asking for (and finding) more work has only been encouraged, and he takes little credit for how he’s pushed himself at every turn to get ahead: “This just kind of happened, but it’s been really cool, so I don’t think I’m ever leaving.”

ALUMNI AT WORK

Who: Regina Robideaux (BS ’81, Physical Education)
What: Team Lead, Plastics Injection Molding
Why: I work in the area that handles the molds for different parts of the car, specifically the skin that goes over the bumper. I’m also the go-to person for breakdowns, training, and documentation on the machines that create the molds.

“I remember …” Playing intercollegiate sports (softball). We would travel to other colleges and vice versa, and it was an opportunity to see areas of California that I hadn’t been to. Plus I love a good, long drive — still do!

Who: Miguel Sales (BS ’12, Business Administration)
What: Material Planner
Why: My job is to support the materials needs for Tesla’s [vehicle] production and other departments, which directly affects the bottom line and cash flow of the company.

“I remember …” The ease with which students [could] approach their professors … [and] some of the pivotal classes that taught me core competencies. In particular, I’m grateful for Professor (Brian) McKenzie’s and Professor (Zinovy) Radovilsky’s classes.
Rising in the East

Cal State East Bay announces a $60 million comprehensive campaign in honor of its 60th anniversary

Under sparkling lights and a setting sun, more than 400 Cal State East Bay faculty and staff, students, alumni, and supporters of the university mingled and listened to inspirational speeches to celebrate the public announcement of a $60 million comprehensive campaign, Rising in the East: The Campaign for Cal State East Bay.

As the university approaches its 60th anniversary, it is rising to the challenge of educating the most diverse student population in the 23-campus CSU system, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.

"Each of us has a journey that led to Cal State East Bay, where the journey continues, fueled by a fresh infusion of energy, ideas, and inspiration," President Leroy M. Morishita said at the event in September.

To date, CSUEB has raised more than half its goal, which will continue the university’s prominence as a leader in K-12 STEM education, and has extended the reach of programs like Hayward Promise Neighborhood.

"The goal of the campaign is simple — it’s about people, place, and purpose," said Jack Acosta, chair of the Cal State East Bay Educational Foundation. "Students come to Cal State East Bay as one person and leave as another — their time here is sacred. Giving provides the scholarships, faculty support, modernized spaces, and programs that fuel their learning during this transformation."

The September 24 gala featured prominent speakers such as Golden State Warrior’s co-owner and entertainment executive Peter Guber and California State University Chancellor Timothy P. White (MS ’72, Kinesiology). Guber is considered a pioneer in the...
entertainment industry for his success starting Columbia Pictures, Polygram Records, and producing iconic films such as Taxi Driver, Batman, and The Color Purple. Guber shared some of his marketing secrets and strategies with the gala audience, giving them an easy acronym to remember when thinking about how to get their audiences or customers to invest and care: MAGIC (Motivate, Audience, Goal, Interactivity, Content).

Eight-time Emmy award-winning comedy writer J.R. Havlan (BS ’87, Business Administration) emceed the evening and regularly had the massive tent of supporters laughing at his antics and video clips of his own fundraising attempts on campus, including selling lemonade for $50 a glass and giving students piggyback rides to class. Speakers and campaign materials from the night highlighted the university’s ability to fulfill its promise to the communities and region it serves through three key initiatives: people, place, and purpose. The university hopes each initiative will empower students from diverse backgrounds to reach their full potential and use the transformative power of knowledge to serve the public good.

To illustrate the campaign’s goals, President Morishita made several exciting announcements, detailing how the initiatives will be brought to life through donor support. Under “People,” the president announced the university would continue to focus on securing student scholarships and paid internships, create a student emergency fund, establish distinguished professors of practice, and enhance staff expertise.

For “Place,” Morishita spoke about a new “Innovation Corridor” at the heart of the Hayward campus that will envision collaborative learning spaces of the future. New and renovated spaces will provide open gathering areas for students and faculty; encourage entrepreneurial and inquiry-based discovery; and feature technology-enhanced learning tools and a library for the new millennium.

“Our journey must lead us here — to creating a collaborative learning center that inspires new ways of thinking, teaching, and problem-solving,” said Lonny Brooks, associate professor of organizational strategic communication. “This is the path to the future.”

And finally, for “Purpose,” Morishita announced Cal State East Bay will continue to promote excellence and diversity in STEM education and work to solve the important issues of the community while developing future professional leaders with the critical thinking skills to do the same. “[Purpose is] responsible leadership that makes a difference, solving the issues that matter to our communities and the region, and cultivating the next generation to carry on the cause,” a memento from the event read. Of the money raised so far, Acosta and his wife, Susan, have funded two endowed professorships and a faculty excellence fund during the first half of the campaign. Additional donors also provided funds for faculty, departmental, and library excellence, as well as renovations for professional development space for STEM educators in the College of Education and Allied Studies, and applied research in the College of Science.

Others supporters have funded opportunities for programs that support hands-on problem-solving such as Game Jam and We Care Solar, and state-of-the-art equipment across campus. “We are rising to meet the challenges of educating our motivated students, most of whom are the first in their family to attend college,” said Tanja Hausk, vice president for University Advancement. “The vast majority of Cal State East Bay graduates will also enter the Bay Area workforce as skilled employees dedicated to succeeding in their chosen fields.”

According to Morishita, with strong philanthropic support, the university will continue making a dramatic difference in the lives of tens of thousands of students, who
will then make a difference in the places they work and the communities where they live.

This point was exemplified throughout the evening by featuring the “journeys” of several current students, alumni, and faculty, who both spoke at the event and were highlighted in videos. “Together, we can honor the journeys that brought us here, while ensuring that succeeding generations of students, faculty, and alumni record their own remarkable journeys for years to come,” Morishita said. “With generous philanthropic support, Cal State East Bay will continue to rise.”

James Monroe Iglehart (BA ’98, Theatre), the Tony award-winning Broadway actor and singer, shared his experience of growing up in Hayward and finally deciding to pursue a theater degree at Cal State East Bay. “My journey led me from a church choir in Hayward to the Broadway stage and my dream role in Aladdin,” Iglehart said. “I was blessed to have a lot of good people guiding me along the way.” Iglehart also confessed that he still hears the stage-direction commands of the late Professor Emeritus Edgardo de la Cruz in his head when he performs each night, and reminded the audience how influential the faculty is on the students at Cal State East Bay.

Other highlights included student Roberto Granados, 17, and his brother Ernesto, 12, musical virtuosos. The siblings performed an original flamenco piece and received a standing ovation. “Our journey calls for a very special suitcase, packed with the power to bring light to dark corners of the world, and to teach our students about technology, sustainable energy, and social justice,” Garbesi said. Morishita and his wife Barbara Hedani-Morishita closed the evening by presenting Havlan with the special gift of his very own letterman jacket, which they joked they hope he will wear when he accepts his ninth Emmy. The Morishitas then thanked the attendees for their continued support, wishing them well wherever their respective journeys lead.

“These are the reasons we are a university on the rise: people with a passion to pursue a purpose, in a place that makes it possible.”

At the end of the evening, Cal State East Bay revealed the faces of its new ad campaign — the diverse students whom the university is preparing to be tomorrow’s leaders.

Student and musical virtuoso Roberto Granados, age 17, entertained the audience with an original flamenco piece, played alongside his brother Ernesto, 12, (that pictured) on the cajon.

Clockwise from top left: (Left to right) Barbara Hedani-Morishita, Jerry H. Tokofsky, Karen L. Oliver (BA ’74, Art), President Leroy M. Morishita, Chancellor Timothy P. White (MS ’72, Kinesiology), and Karen N. White gathered for a snapshot; Cal State East Bay students helped present the university’s Solar Suitcase program; a memento booklet, “The Journey to Here,” featuring the stories of the evening’s participants was given to each guest.
On any given night, after he completes a full day of teaching at Cal State East Bay, College of Business and Economics Lecturer Farhad Sabetan opens his computer, logs into an online classroom, and begins his lessons all over again. His web students are eager, and depending on the course, they learn more or less the same principles as the students he sees face to face. But there’s a distinct difference: the online students are studying in secret, halfway around the world.

Sabetan has been teaching for the Bahá’í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) for several years, volunteering his time to help students who, because of their faith, are banned from attending universities in Iran. Instead of filling lecture halls, the students at BIHE gather secretly in living rooms and basements or log in to secure chat rooms, knowing full well that if they are caught going to college, it could mean years of imprisonment.

Sabetan, a Bahá’í, left Iran in 1976 before the Islamic Revolution. Because of his involvement in the Bahá’í community and human rights activities, he has never returned. But his love of his faith and desire to help the next generation of Bahá’í learners permeate nearly every facet of his life.

“It’s not paid work, but the students are eager ... I’ve met quite a few of them and they are amazing and driven,” he says. “They are really thirsty to be among their peers and engage in intellectual discourse.”

While not recognized formally by the Iranian government, BIHE has 700 faculty members like Sabetan, many of whom were once teachers at government-run universities in Iran but who lost their jobs due to their affiliation with the Bahá’í faith. The school currently offers more than 1,050 classes ranging from Persian literature to applied chemistry, and accepts 450 out of roughly 1,000 applicants each year.

“[BIHE] asks its instructors to apply the same conditions and standards as they apply to their own courses in the universities in which they teach,” Sabetan says. “It is important because BIHE strives to achieve the highest possible academic standard in the face of the limitations it has.”

Students of the Bahá’í faith are banned from education in Iran — but that doesn’t stop Lecturer Farhad Sabetan from teaching them.

By Natalie Feulner
Sometimes there would be a man sitting outside on a chair pretending to read the newspaper, just like in the [spy] movies."

THE PRICE OF LEARNING

When asked why students don’t just lie about their faith on the documents required to attend other colleges in Iran, Vance explains, "Honesty is a very important, basic spiritual trait in the Bahá’í faith, and therefore to lie about anything is inappropriate, but to lie about one’s fundamental belief (in) and relationship with God would be particularly inappropriate."

Aftahi is one of about 50,000 students who have studied at BIHE since its inception in 1987.

"I knew it would be difficult [to hide my education], but the whole time you’re in school, and you are planning for your university education ... you’re thinking, ‘This is the last year of depriving Bahá’ís from entering university, and hopefully the educational discrimination is going to end, and I can enter university with all my high school friends,’" she says. "From an early age, you’re always thinking and wondering if the university door will open."

"The risk is always there because the government knows about [BIHE] ... at any moment if they wanted to arrest these students they could," Sabetan adds.

Instead of fearing that possibility, though, he says it drives them.

"I see that these students are so eager, they themselves are going out of their way to pursue an education. They’re sacrificing a lot to learn — it’s the very least I can [do] to teach them for an hour here or there. There’s often a mix of feelings — it’s sad and absolutely joyful at the same time.

Government overreach also requires teachers like Sabetan to get creative with what and how they teach, and for students to play catch-up with major international events or ideas.

"At East Bay, I have to keep myself current with the literature, economic trends, and latest findings and applications," Sabetan said. "This is tremendously helpful to BIHE students, who are hardly getting any unbiased news in Iran ... of course as they learn of the latest developments, they need to catch up with a lot of background information, which is not easily accessible to them."

But teachers are dedicated to making sure students are learning on par or above their peers at traditional universities both in Iran and beyond. Many have gone on to pursue graduate or doctoral degrees at universities worldwide.

"We have now 69 higher education institutions, including Yale, Boston University, and UC Berkeley that count BIHE graduates among their students."

After Aftahi graduated from BIHE in 2010, she applied for graduate school in the United States. Initially, she was challenged in trying to explain why she graduated from a nontraditional university. However, she was accepted at UC Berkeley and started school in 2012, graduating with her master’s degree in 2014.

"Unusually BIHE students struggle to introduce their school here. You have to explain the whole story of...

UNDER FIRE

Adherents to the Bahá’í faith are the largest non-Muslim religious minority group in Iran. While Bahá’ís have been persecuted for the past 150 years, followers have been targeted more intensely since 1979 when Islam became the country’s national religion. Since that time, Bahá’ís have been banned from everything from seeking an education to owning a business.

According to Anthony Vance, director of public affairs for the Bahá’ís of the United States, a memorandum published in 1991 promoted restrictions to be placed on the Bahá’í and was approved by Iran’s supreme leader. Though there is no formal published “law” against the Bahá’í — at least not in the way that is typical of Western governments — this action spurred years of persecution.

Documents issued after the 1991 memorandum outlined the various ways in which progress should be blocked for all Bahá’ís living in Iran, including denial of admission to universities and expulsion in the case of mistaken admittance.

"Usually BIHE students struggle to introduce their school here. You have to explain the whole story of...

Former BIHE student Níná Aftahi, 30, who now lives in Berkeley, remembers being kicked out of libraries because she was required to show an identification card that indicated she was Bahá’í. Sabetan says other Bahá’ís have been killed or threatened.

When Aftahi was studying at BIHE, where she was accepted at her own risk rather than opting not to go to college, the university had a small architecture studio. But students knew they were being watched and after a couple years, the learning space was shut down by the government.

"Sometimes there would be a man sitting outside on a chair pretending to read the newspaper, just like in the [spy] movies," Aftahi says.

Similarly, Sabetan shares that interrupted or stalled communications while he’s teaching classes online is typical.

One day, he recalls, an "11th student" showed up in his 10-person virtual class and he and his students figured it was a government official listening in.

"The risk is always there because the government knows about [BIHE] ... at any moment if they wanted to arrest these students they could," Sabetan adds.

Instead of fearing that possibility, though, he says it drives them.

"I see that these students are so eager, they themselves are going out of their way to pursue an education. They’re sacrificing a lot to learn — it’s the very least I can [do] to teach them for an hour here or there. There’s often a mix of feelings — it’s sad and absolutely joyful at the same time.

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"Unusually BIHE students struggle to introduce their school here. You have to explain the whole story of...)
Founded by Bahá’u’lláh in 19th-century Persia, the Bahá’í world community has more than five million followers and is established in 191 countries. It is a monotheistic religion emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind. Teachings and doctrine are based on three core principles: the unity of God, the unity of religion, and the unity of humanity. Other values include equality between men and women; independent investigation of truth; and spiritual solutions to economic problems.

However, since 1991, when a memorandum was approved by Iran’s supreme leader, thousands of Bahá’ís have faced extreme persecution under the Islamic Republic.

“It’s really part of an overall plan to marginalize the Bahá’í community by impoverishing it and keeping it under-educated,” says Anthony Vance, director of public affairs for the Bahá’ís of the United States.

According to the NGO Bahá’í International Community (BIC), more than 200 Bahá’ís have been killed and hundreds more have been imprisoned and tortured in the past 40 years. Tens of thousands have lost their jobs, access to education, and other rights. Government-led attacks on the Bahá’ís have intensified in the past decade, and according to the BIC, more than 7,000 pieces of anti-Bahá’í propaganda have been issued through Iran’s state-run media since 2013. 

Source: bahai.org

“As much as I am happy and grateful for the opportunity that I have now ... I would love to be able to go back to Iran.”

Niknaz Aftahi (right) and her husband, Fares Hedayati, are both graduates of BIHE and currently teach courses online to help more Bahá’í students obtain their degrees.

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Like Sabetan, Aftahi was involved with several human rights activities that prevent her from returning to Iran (or else risk arrest), but she is hopeful, nonetheless, of returning to teach there someday.

“I would love to go back in the long run, especially for teaching and practicing architecture in my own country,” Aftahi says. “As much as I am happy and grateful for the opportunity that I have now to advance in my profession in the U.S. and contribute to my community, I would love to be able to go back to Iran, and contribute to the welfare and life of my country. One-on-one communication with the students and having physical classes makes it much easier to communicate ideas in architecture, so hopefully if things change, I can go back in [the] near future.

For now, she’s resolved to helping BIHE, however she can. She currently teaches classes online alongside her husband, also a former BIHE student, in addition to her work at ELS Architecture & Design — a top-ranking architecture firm in the U.S.

She says the couple’s connection to the school and understanding of what students sacrifice to study are what inspire them to volunteer to teach.

“I think especially the experience that we went through, all the challenges that we’ve experienced, have allowed us to know how the students feel,” Aftahi says. “I know how frustrating it is to need a book, and being banned from it, even though what you’re doing is not wrong — in fact it’s good and positive.”

In the coming months, Sabetan is hoping to help the school beef up its graduate programs. The advanced programs are not as easy to start and support since graduate and doctoral students need access to more research materials, which is difficult to come by considering the ban on public libraries for Bahá’ís. Currently, BIHE offers graduate degrees in sociology, psychology, civil engineering, and computer science.

Sabetan says he’s also interested in doing what he can to inform the world about the persecution of the Bahá’í, particularly surrounding education.

“Iran has one of the biggest brain drains in the world,” he explains. “Education is not a crime — I’m not saying it should be free, but at least it shouldn’t be illegal.”

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Like Sabetan, Aftahi was involved with several human rights activities that prevent her from returning to Iran (or else risk arrest), but she is hopeful, nonetheless, of returning to teach there someday.

“I would love to go back in the long run, especially for teaching and practicing architecture in my own country,” Aftahi says. “As much as I am happy and grateful for the opportunity that I have now to advance in my profession in the U.S. and contribute to my community, I would love to be able to go back to Iran, and contribute to the welfare and life of my country. One-on-one communication with the students and having physical classes makes it much easier to communicate ideas in architecture, so hopefully if things change, I can go back in [the] near future.”

For now, she’s resolved to helping BIHE, however she can. She currently teaches classes online alongside her husband, also a former BIHE student, in addition to her work at ELS Architecture & Design — a top-ranking architecture firm in the U.S.

She says the couple’s connection to the school and understanding of what students sacrifice to study are what inspire them to volunteer to teach.

“I think especially the experience that we went through, all the challenges that we’ve experienced, have allowed us to know how the students feel,” Aftahi says. “I know how frustrating it is to need a book, and being banned from it, even though what you’re doing is not wrong — in fact it’s good and positive.”

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The House of Báb in Shiraz, Iran, one of the holiest sites of the Bahá’í Faith, was demolished by the Iranian government.

COURTESY OF BAHÁ’Í MEDIA BANK

Understanding Bahá’í Persecution: A Brief History

Founded by Bahá’u’lláh in 19th-century Persia, the Bahá’í world community has more than five million followers and is established in 191 countries. It is a monotheistic religion emphasizing the spiritual unity of all humankind.

Teachings and doctrine are based on three core principles: the unity of God, the unity of religion, and the unity of humanity. Other values include equality between men and women; independent investigation of truth; and spiritual solutions to economic problems.

However, since 1991, when a memorandum was approved by Iran’s supreme leader, thousands of Bahá’ís have faced extreme persecution under the Islamic Republic.

“It’s really part of an overall plan to marginalize the Bahá’í community by impoverishing it and keeping it under-educated,” says Anthony Vance, director of public affairs for the Bahá’ís of the United States.

According to the NGO Bahá’í International Community (BIC), more than 200 Bahá’ís have been killed and hundreds more have been imprisoned and tortured in the past 40 years. Tens of thousands have lost their jobs, access to education, and other rights. Government-led attacks on the Bahá’ís have intensified in the past decade, and according to the BIC, more than 7,000 pieces of anti-Bahá’í propaganda have been issued through Iran’s state-run media since 2013.

Source: bahai.org
Gabby Delgado was seven years old when a single event made her aware, for the first time, of the two challenges that would shape her life: She couldn’t speak English, and her family was at risk of being deported.

Her mother was away, attending the funeral of Gabby’s grandmother in Mexico, when she was prevented from returning to the United States because she didn’t have citizenship papers. Delgado’s father, a construction worker, couldn’t care for Gabby and her sister alone, so he sent them to stay with family in Southern California until the documentation could be sorted out.

It was there that Gabby’s aunt began taking her to preschool classes alongside her younger sister, just to quickly get her into some type of school. Over the course of a month’s time, as she learned alongside children half her age, her trouble with English became painstakingly clear.

“I didn’t even know the days of the week. That’s how bad it was,” Delgado recalls. She also remembers overhearing the adults in her life wonder at how she had gone under their radar for so long. “My aunt noticed and told my mom, ‘She doesn’t know much. I don’t understand why these children in preschool know more than her.’”

Today, at the beginning of her sophomore year at Cal State East Bay, as she reflects on a journey that began with repeating the second grade, on how she’s never been to the beach, or gone camping, or seen snow (“I guess because my father didn’t have a license we couldn’t risk it”), Delgado seems determined not to show any shame, quick to assure that it’s fine to talk about it — though she rushes through the hard parts.

She lives minutes from the university’s Hayward campus, just blocks from Harder Elementary where her younger brother, eight, now attends, and a little farther from Tennyson High.

The numbers are in — more students like Gabby Delgado are going to college, thanks to Hayward Promise Neighborhood.

“Made of Hayward” by Krista Dossett Photography Garvin Tso
School, where she graduated from and one of her sisters is now a senior. Delgado’s other sister, 12, is at nearby Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School.

The neighborhood the Delgados live in is known as Hayward’s Jackson Triangle — where families struggle with poverty, a high rate of single-income, female-headed households, and nearly twice the state average of English as a Second Language speakers (see By the Numbers).

It’s also where an initiative called Hayward Promise Neighborhood, now closing in on the end of its fifth and final year of grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education, targets the students in those homes — kids whose financial and family circumstances just happen to make it easy for their educations to derail.

Delgado was first introduced to HPN as a junior in high school, when Cal State East Bay students began circulating as tutors in a common lounge area at Tennyson High School, and where she, motivated by another deportation scare, was seeking help with pre-calculus.

“Towards the end of my sophomore year, my dad lost his job because he didn’t have papers,” she says. “It was like, ‘Gabby, you need to wake up and you need to start working, and you need to get good grades because if you don’t, how are you going to go to school?’” Her voice breaks ever so slightly over the last few words but quickly firms up again. “I got a job at Panda Express … and in my junior year, I was just like, ‘I’m going to work and I’m going to take AP classes and I’m going to make it.’”

“These are students who aren’t entitled,” says Carolyn Nelson, dean of the College of Education and Allied Studies at Cal State East Bay and principal investigator on the HPN grant. “And it’s fun to show them, through the opportunities that HPN provides, that they are — they are entitled to a college education, a career of their choice, and all the same success as their peers.”

Nelson is referring to the web of programs that HPN supports (see What Makes a Promise Neighborhood).

What Makes a Promise Neighborhood

The Harlem Children’s Zone (HCZ) in Harlem, New York, is the model for the nearly two dozen Promise Neighborhoods throughout the United States today. HCZ has existed since 1970, but in the late ’90s, under the leadership of children’s advocate Geoffrey Canada, a different approach to supporting at-risk youth began to form. Take all the interventions available within a community and offer them via a single pipeline that supports kids at every stage of life.

“Children can have challenges at any stage of their development, so it’s necessary to have programs in place over the long-term to make sure a temporary crisis does not have life-altering consequences,” says Anne Williams-Isom, current CEO of HCZ (Canada retired as CEO in 2014 but maintains his role as president). “In order to break the cycle of poverty for an underserved community, we need to guarantee all children have the supports they need when they need them.”

Since its inception, HCZ had garnered national and international attention, and has been featured in the New York Times, on the Oprah Winfrey Show, and in the controversial documentary Waiting for Superman, among many others.

In 2010, based on the success of HCZ (which reported a 93 percent college acceptance rate across its high school programs in 2015 alone), President Barack Obama announced the spread of the “Promise Neighborhood” model throughout the country. In 2011, Hayward was one of the first full grant awardees to receive $25 million, spread across five years.
“Even though their parents might tell them or their teachers [that they can go to college], it’s easier for them to connect with people who look like them.”

provided through a variety of Hayward community partners and funding administered by Cal State East Bay. The focus is on creating a pipeline that supports children from infancy through college, with family services added in that make it easier for parents to focus on their children — free prenatal care, a community food bank, access to computers and technology training, and more.

And it’s working. Over the past four years of data capture, a spike of 149 percent has been seen in the cumulative enrollment from Tennyson and Hayward High Schools into Cal State East Bay. On campus today, this includes not only first-time freshmen, but also students who are persisting with their degrees through their sophomore and junior years.

Just ask Roxana Cruz, who used to be the UC Berkeley early academic outreach advisor in Tennyson High’s college and career center, where she first met Delgado.

“My job was to collaborate with staff on campus to build a college and career-going culture. I encountered great people wanting to help with that goal, but [there wasn’t] enough of us to really create the impact that we wanted to have,” Cruz says.

According to Cruz, who left that position to cast a wider net as HPN’s outreach coordinator for service learning at CSUEB, it’s the interns — formally called service-learning students — who are helping turn the tide. Cruz says the interns were invaluable when it came to coordinating events and marketing them to Tennyson, which enabled her to focus more on the high schools. But, she adds, there are additional benefits to bringing Cal State East Bay students to the local high school campuses as well.

“It was fortunate to get two interns [from Cal State East Bay’s HPN program] during my time as coordinator at Tennyson, and they are really able to help the younger students see themselves as college-going,” she says. Even though their parents might tell them or their teachers [that they can go to college], it’s easier for them to connect with people who look like them, who are similar in age, who are from their neighborhood — it helps them believe college is real for them.” Cruz adds that already about one-third of service-learning interns from Cal State East Bay are graduates from local schools, a number she hopes to keep growing.

Marisol Pena, for example, a sixth-year senior at Cal State East Bay (double majoring in Spanish and Health studies), works at Hayward High School. Through Pena wasn’t able to benefit from HPN programs during her time in high school, she knows firsthand the different obstacles local students face, including, at times, disengagement from attending college.

“He didn’t want me to go,” Pena admits of her father. “My dad would say, ‘You’re going to get married and have kids. Why spend all that money on school?’”

But when a cousin just a few years older than Marisol became a single mother and left college, her father began wondering how his own daughter would support herself in a similar situation — unless she had an education.

“So after that happened, my dad changed his mind,” she says. “[He] heard from his boss what a great school Cal State East Bay is and he said, ‘You’re going there. I don’t care if it takes you 20 years to graduate’.”

Pena is now indeed juggling three jobs, going to school, and living at home while helping out with her younger brother, whom she was able to drop off at Hayward High on the way to her internship at the school’s college advising center last quarter.

“The kids that came in [to the advising center] — it was split between somewhat knowing [about college] and not knowing at all,” Pena says. “And, if they thought college was a possibility, they didn’t consider a UC or CSU or a private college. You see every side of it. We went into the classrooms to talk about the deadlines and application process and a lot of them were like, ‘What is that? Where do I go?’ They don’t know what’s available to them with financial aid and how to apply.”

“The service-learning piece is huge in what [Cal State East Bay] students are giving back to our schools and our students,” said Delgado. “At least in Delgado’s case, it’s an easy connection to make. After taking Cruz up on her offer to apply for a service-learning position with HPN, she spent a year tutoring kids at Hunter Elementary with the HPN partner Super Stars Literacy program, and was then able to use that experience to obtain a job that paid double in fall 2016. But her eyes still well up when she describes what it was like working with the third-graders.

“I saw myself in them, I guess. I know I was one of them once, and I needed a lot of help back then. I was really patient, too, because I know that used to be me. And just talking to them — every single day you could see change. It makes me really happy to have been a part of that.”

“Ms. Cruz was like a second mom to me back in high school,” Delgado says. “She helped me with everything — Cal grants, scholarships, personal statements, CSU applications — she was really there for me. And when she came to work at Cal State East Bay, she sent me an email saying, ‘You were helped by HPN, you should work for us.’”

This, Delgado reports, after she chose Cal State East Bay from the five CSUs she was accepted to. She was settled on CSUEB because it gave her the best financial aid package.

“Some things are hard to capture in data,” Nelson adds. “There are these aspects of change in human lives that you can’t capture in numbers, but when you hear the stories universities will always give degrees. But we are re-envisioning the purpose of the degree in such a way that it is much more meaningful, a best practice that is tied to lifting up the community around the university — and teaching students the importance of giving back to it.”

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It was June 2014 when 58-year-old Randy Davis (BS ’02, Biological Sciences; MS ’06 Biological Sciences) got the news. Multinational Swiss healthcare company Roche was purchasing his electronic DNA sequencing chip to the tune of $125 million. And if the chip could meet certain targets in detecting and reading DNA over the next several years — not entirely proven at the time of Roche’s acquisition — Davis and his colleagues would receive an even bigger payout.

“His idea at the time, was, ‘Can we do DNA analysis on electronic, silicon chips as opposed to the optics that we’ve been doing?’” says Professor Chris Baysdorfer, Davis’s mentor and friend. “He had a long history in hardware technology … He just needed to learn the molecular biology.”

Although it would be years before Davis’s technology took off, he was admitted as an undergraduate student in 2000 and began, deep in the belly of Cal State East Bay’s BioCore Lab, the first tests for what would become an electronic DNA sequencing chip.

“Everywhere I went, no one would give me the time of day,” Davis recalls. “I left thinking, ‘This is it.’” But for the tech-minded entrepreneur and cofounder of Genia Technologies, it almost didn’t happen. And not because of the sleepless nights, failed hypotheses, and draining finances that characterize many great startups.

It was the late 1990s and HP was launching one of the early DNA microarray scanners. It was because after committing to the big risks — quitting a successful job and pursuing a discipline far removed from any prior experience — no university would admit him.

“Everywhere I went, no one would give me the time of day,” Davis recalls. “I don’t mind telling you I took myself out for a [drink] after that. I felt really, really low.”

Eventually, Davis would come home one day and ask his wife Pat what she thought of him giving up his career to start anew.

“‘You want to be a molecular biologist? Do you really want to do that?’” Pat notes today, reflecting on the years that followed — years filled with lab equipment and textbooks littered across their home and ultimately, the entire garage. “This was his passion.”

Fortunately, Davis made one last stop on his tour of colleges before throwing in the towel.

“I came here [to Cal State], and I went to the biology department, and there was a guy there — I found out later he was the department chair [Professor Emeritus Steve Benson] — and I told him I was interested in the program,” Davis recalls. “He took the time to answer my questions and he took me downstairs and showed me the lab. It was, oh, all of about 30 minutes and he didn’t make any promises and he said it wouldn’t be easy, but he gave me his time. I left thinking, ‘This is it.’”

Today, Davis, who obtained both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from CSUEB, and Pat are enabling current students to have access to the supplies they need for hands-on research.

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“I only found out after the fact that everyone had turned him down,” Baysdorfer continues. “And it makes me want to-strangle my [peers]. You see someone who is a mature guy, one had turned him down,” Baysdorfer continues. “And it makes me want to-strangle my [peers]. You see someone who is a mature guy, motivated, intelligent. He’s exactly the sort of person that second chances were meant for.”

“One of the things that Baysdorfer says about Davis is that he is more than just a scientist. He is also a generous and thoughtful person.”

“Everywhere I went, no one would give me the time of day,” Davis recalls. “I left thinking, ‘This is it.’”
1960s

BRIAN ARNOLD (BS '63, Education) is vice chairman of the Northern California Operational Support Force and a national guard veteran. His military career included tours of duty in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. After a military career spanning more than 30 years, he was director of human resources for a major health care provider. Arnold retired from the United States Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in 1993. He is currently an executive vice president of the California Community College Foundation, where he serves on the board of directors and is director of government relations and university support services.

ALUMNICALUMNI

BRADLEY MARTIN (BS '62, Physical Education) is a retired teacher of Los Lomas High School in Alhambra. He has coached cross country, track and field, and basketball. He has also served as a high school athletic director and has been a member of the Los Lomas Ex-Students Association. He is married to Mary Martin and has four children and eight grandchildren.

DENNIS KOONCE (BS '80, Business Administration) has served as the CEO of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce since 2012. Prior to joining the chamber, he served as vice president of Cushman & Wakefield, senior vice president of JLL, and regional vice president of PricewaterhouseCoopers. He has served on the boards of directors of several organizations, including the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, the Peninsula YMCA, and the Peninsula Community Foundation. He is married to Debbi Koonce and has two children.

JAMES “BUCK” KOONCE (BS '85, Business Administration) is senior vice president of the California Association of Realtors. He has been with the association for more than 25 years and serves on the executive committee. He also serves on the board of directors of the California Real Estate Council. He is a partner in the real estate firm of Koonce & Co., which he co-founded in 1980. He is married to Debbi Koonce and has two children.

MARCIA SOMERS (BA '85, French) is retiring from her role as city manager of Los Altos Hills, where she has served for 15 years. She has also served as the city manager of Los Altos and Los Gatos. She is a former mayor of Los Altos and served on the board of directors of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. She is married to Ron Somers and has two children.

PAUL SULLIVAN (BA '89, Journalism) is a senior vice president of North American operation of GWS Global Solutions, a wire and cable distributor company. He has been with the company for more than 20 years and has served in various leadership roles. He is married to Katie Sullivan and has two children.
and management corporation. Prior to joining CSUEB, she was the president of major account and GLOM account sales company at Acrole, a wire and communications company. Sullivan is passionate about Court Appointed Special Advocates, an organization that supports abused and neglected children.

**Steve Victorin** (BS '82, Physical Education; MS '86, Physical Education) is founder and owner of Symbfit, a health and fitness center that offers deep-water exercise, and author of The Champlain Way, a book based on his doctoral research at Boston University that defines the characteristics of a great coach. Victorin believes in giving individuals regain mobility after injury or disease. He has coached at NYU at every level of sport, including working with the U.S. ski team from 1987-1991 and during the 1988 Olympics.

**Scott Amyx** (BA '96, Economics) is founder and CEO of Anyar, an Internet of Things strategy and execution agency. Recently, the company’s data and analytics platform, AnyarIQ, won the Cloud and DevOps World Awards for the Most Innovative Startup of 2016. Amyx has also been named one of the 100 Global Speakers by讲话king.com and been featured in publications such as the New York Times, Wired, the Washington Post, and more.

**Stephanie Anello** (BA '99, English; MS '94, Educational Leadership) is the new superintendent of Antioch Unified School District. Previously, Anello was interim superintendent of the district and has also served as a teacher, vice principal, principal, director, and district-level position over the course of her career. She has lived in Antioch since 1993.

**Harold Leffall** (BA '90, Political Science) is executive director of Not In Our Town, a nonprofit dedicated to combating hate and bullying and building safe, inclusive communities. Previously, Leffall had leadership roles at the Atlanta and Sonoma’s Temple Foundation, and is the founder of two businesses: Leffall Employment Agency and First Step Staffing. Leffall Employment Agency, located in Oakland, has been recognized in Entrepreneur magazine and Black Enterprise.

**ViCl Picue** (BA '91, History) is the new director of Antioch Unified School District. Leffall has been teaching at Antioch since 1990. and associate superintendent for Oakland Unified School District since 1985. He has also participated in NASA’s Titan mission. During the same period, he will be on sabatical, which will include a three-month stint at UC San Diego and a five-week sabbatical at the University of Oxford. Leffall has also participated in NASA’s National Community College Program on diversity for students.

**John “Jack” Saramendi** (BA '04, Educational Leadership) is the new principal of District 3. California County. Saramendi was appointed as superintendent of District 3, Calaveras County, beginning January 2017. Saramendi is a fifth-generation native of Benicia, California who holds a master’s degree from CSU Sacramento and an associate’s degree in engineering technology, which led to an internship at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory’s Ignition Facility. Alcorn is a U.S. Army veteran who holds a master’s degree from CU Boulder and an associate’s degree in engineering technology, which led to an internship at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Alcorn has also participated in NASA’s National Community College Program on diversity for students.

**Jennifer Griffin** (BA '02, Counseling) is a wife, mother of four, and author of Understanding Your Child: A Spiritual Gift, which introduces a new theory on parenting. Griffin and her family live in Berkeley.

**Paul Keil** (MPA '05) has been named senior police chief of Bi 92.9 Carrr Radio for 13 years, serving in a variety of positions. His current post will include overseeing operations, goals, and budgeting.
New and existing members of Cal State East Bay’s Alumni Association Board of Directors and the university’s Alumni Association staff gathered for their annual retreat to lay the groundwork for the coming year. The group focused on alumni engagement efforts, events, communication, and other ways to support the university.  

**KATLYN RADTKE** (BA ’15, Ethnic Studies) is operations manager at P职能的, a company that provides support services to people with developmental disabilities. Radtke was driven to become a board member because of her respect for how Cal State East Bay serves its students and what it offers them.

**GUSTAVO AVANZINO** (BS ’12, Business Administration) is a financial manager with Alera Home Monitoring. Avanzino recently served on the College of Business Administration’s Economics and Finance big data team. He is planning on going back to Cal State East Bay by bridging gaps between alumni and the student body.

**JOE ROMAGNA** (MA ’14, Educational Leadership) has been appointed principal of John Bralin Elementary School in San Ramon, beginning in fall 2016. Romagna has served as principal of John Green Elementary School in Dublin since 2014 and was previously assistant principal at Qual Run Elementary and Lime Oak Elementary, both in San Ramon.

**LISA BOOKER** (BS ’84, Business Administration) is an asset management analyst with Siteworks and has served on the Cal State Alumni Board of Directors since 2009. Booker is involved in several aspects of campus life, including as service president of the African American Faculty and Staff Association. Her son, Michael J. Booker, graduated from CSUEB in June, and her husband Michael D. Booker obtained his master’s degree from the university too. “We are a family of alumni,” Booker says. 

**JOE CABAL (BS ’77, Business Administration)** is retired founder, CEO and board chair of the 100-percent employee-owned Charlesworth Publishers, one of the largest publishers of IT products for IT equipment rooms. Cabal will be celebrating his 50th graduation anniversary in 2020. As a student, he won a Cal State East Bay debate team and a member of two fraternities. He looks forward to assisting alumni in engaging with Cal State East Bay.

**KAREN WHITE** (MA ’12, Human Development; MPA ’16) is a senior personnel analyst at City College of San Francisco. White says that as a student who worked multiple jobs while obtaining her undergrad degree, and then pursued her graduate degree, she is looking forward to using her time on the alumni board to become more involved with her peers and to support current students.

**ANDREW YUNKER** (BS ’06, Computer Science) is a recent graduate of Cal State East Bay and current food server. He was president of the StartUp Club while on campus, which is focused on bringing students and professionals together to build startups. The club’s first single event was also a member of the student chapter at the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. He says he is motivated by the prospect of Cal State East Bay as an alumni board member.

**ROBERT BLACKBURN** (BA ’70, English), professor emeritus of the College of Business Administration and Allied Studies, died peacefully on September 10. Blackburn was a passionate social justice advocate, and as a student, he was on the Cal State East Bay chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

**LYLE EDMISON** (BS ’70, Business Administration) is retired personnel analyst at City College of Alameda County. He was the first person hired by the university’s first president, Fred Murphy. Edison retired with his wife, four children, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

**WALTER KURT SCHONHOLZ,** professor emeritus of the Department of Biological Sciences, died peacefully on March 18 at the age of 83. Schoenholz was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States as a refugee then Palestine, where he worked as a farmer and fought in Israel’s war for independence. He was an alum of UC Berkeley and went on to teach microbiology at Cal State Hayward from 1947 to 1988, where he also ran a medical technology program that helped countless students embark on their careers. Schoenholz is remembered as having loved to play chamber music, create special arrangements, and conduct his band, which was known for its “gentle soul” with a dry sense of humor and a vegetable garden that was well known where he lived in Walnut Creek.
CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White (MS ’72, Kinesiology) finds a quiet moment at Cal State East Bay’s Rising in the East gala to catch up on his alumni magazine. “When I read about the students, faculty, staff, and alumni, I am reminded of the quality of instruction I received as a student,” White says. “I’m filled with pride to see my alma mater leading in so many academic disciplines while graduating highly-prepared alumni who are shaping the region’s economy and society.”

Cal State East Bay thanks each of our sponsors for their generous support of the Rising in the East gala, enabling the university to announce its first-ever comprehensive campaign and ensure a future of opportunities for our students, faculty, and the region at large.
Rising in the East

THE CAMPAIGN FOR CAL STATE EAST BAY