

CAL STATE

WINTER 2023

# East Bay



**CORE: THE HEART  
OF INNOVATION**

**THE RISING VALUE  
OF AN EAST BAY  
DEGREE**

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
LEADS TO CSUEB'S  
FUTURE**



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COVER: Assistant Women's Basketball Coach Anthony Jackson and his son AJ visit the CORE building's small child study room where staff, faculty, students can conduct meetings and work alongside while supervising children. Nearby are librarian Diane Wakimoto and her daughter Lilith.  GARVIN TSO

The CORE building, pictured here, is Cal State East Bay's new center for learning, engagement and collaboration located at the heart of campus. The CORE's 21st-century academic library will teach students how to navigate the information age economy and become self-directed learners.  GARVIN TSO

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello Cal State East Bay community,

Welcome to the Cal State East Bay magazine!

I'm excited to share the details about Future Directions, Cal State East Bay's dynamic new strategic plan, in this issue. Based on visionary yet pragmatic input from myriad stakeholders, Future Directions offers a road map for the university now and in the years to come.

Also in this issue is University Photographer and Videographer Garvin Tso's beautifully photographed package on the university's extraordinary new CORE building. This facility includes our library but goes far beyond, offering the campus community practical and empowering resources.

A story on the Concord campus's new Cultural Garden details how it honors Indigenous peoples by growing foods traditionally used in Native recipes as well as the garden's dedication to eco-friendly cultivation.

Elsewhere in these pages, you'll be inspired by Gabriela Aguilar, a nontraditional student, mother and advocate who works tirelessly to ensure access to mental health resources for all. And there's more: You'll read about the increasing power and value of a Cal State East Bay degree and the progression of our new Applied Science Center, which recently broke ground.

Here's hoping you enjoy reading this issue. I hope to see you on campus soon.

With care,

Cathy Sandeen

# CAL STATE EAST BAY University News

## Business Student Receives CSU Trustee Emeritus Scholarship



Breana Lewis, an undergraduate student in business management, was one of 23 scholars to receive the 2022 Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement during the September 13 California State University trustees meeting. Lewis is the only recipient from Cal State East Bay. She received the Trustee Emeritus Peter Taylor Scholarship.

"I wasn't going to have a way to pay for school this year and I would have had to take out a loan," Lewis said. "I want to get through college debt-free so I don't have student loan payments on top of other living expenses after I graduate. This scholarship really means a lot to me because I'm able to take the time to experience school and learn."

The first in her family to attend college, Lewis chose Cal State East Bay because of

its smaller size, affordability and proximity to her hometown in Oakley. She transferred from Los Medanos College and commutes to the Hayward campus. She anticipates a May 2024 graduation and hopes to work in project management.

In addition to her studies, Lewis is an active volunteer with several organizations, including the Foundation for Suicide Prevention, where for the last six years she has applied her project management skills on the planning committee for its annual walk. She says her mother inspired her from a young age to volunteer in her community.

"Breana is very motivated about her education and has begun building toward her future career goals," wrote Academic Life Planning Counselor Taryn Vicente in her nomination letter. "Her self-

motivation extends to her academics at Cal State East Bay with the hours she puts into her classes and the assertiveness she has in prioritizing and reaching out to instructors and peers when she wants clarification to fully understand an assignment or project for class."

The CSU Trustees' Award is the university's highest recognition of student achievement. Each award provides a donor-funded scholarship to students who demonstrate superior academic performance, personal accomplishments, community service and inspirational goals for the future. The awardees have demonstrated commitment to making a positive impact on their generation, as well as those who come after them.

"These 23 remarkable scholars wonderfully exemplify the ideals of the California State University," said CSU Interim Chancellor Jolene Koester. "Their inspirational stories are connected by a common thread of intelligence, perseverance, resilience and the transformative power of higher education. Our communities, state and nation — indeed, our world — will long reap the benefits of their academic, professional and personal achievement."

More than 420 students have been honored with the Trustees' Award since the scholarship program was established in 1984 by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation. In 1999, the Hearst Foundation partnered with the CSU Board of Trustees to supplement the endowment with contributions from CSU Trustees, CSU Foundation board members and private donors. The 23 scholarships awarded this year will total more than \$180,000 in scholarship funds. Each student scholarship bears the name of a donor.



## Alumna Filmmaker Advocates for a More Accessible, Inclusive World



Cat Brewer '00, '22 is as surprised as anyone that she's now a successful documentary filmmaker focusing on the Deaf community. COURTESY OF CAT BREWER

Cat Brewer always knew she wanted to teach. What she didn't expect during her career as a college-level communications instructor was to create a documentary over the course of seven years with zero prior film experience.

Brewer's documentary on Deaf culture, access, and entertainment, "Sign the Show," screened at Cal State East Bay's Hayward campus on Sept. 15.

"It's really an honor for me to have spent my student career at CSUEB, then to come back and offer something to teach," Brewer says. While filming was a new experience, she sees the documentary as just another teaching platform.

Brewer graduated with bachelor's and master's degrees in Communication in 2000 and 2002 (when campus was known as Cal State Hayward). Having lived in the

Bay Area for 46 years before moving to the East Coast, her on-campus screening this fall was something of a homecoming.

The idea for "Sign the Show" occurred when Brewer attended what seemed like any other concert. Despite going to concerts since age 8, this was the first time she witnessed an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter at a music show. She learned how inaccessible live performances are to Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH) people after talking to the interpreter, something she'd never considered as a hearing person.

Brewer initially planned to write an article about it for newspapers published by the Bay Area community colleges where she worked. But with a friend's encouragement, Brewer instead purchased a camera — which she still owns despite her original intention to return it — and started the long process of creating the film.

Every encounter came as a surprise, she recalls, and a lack of funding often created major roadblocks. "I have experienced the highest of highs and lowest of lows in a five-minute period. But I wouldn't change it for the world."

Brewer hopes the hearing audience will recognize and understand their hearing privilege. "I hope they become more inclusive and that they become advocates in whatever way possible."

"Sign the Show"'s website has more information and resources about the ways hearing people can support the Deaf and HOH community.

Julie Rems-Smario, Ed.D., a Deaf film consultant and a CSUEB alumna, appears in the film. "We Deaf people have come a long way with access since the [Americans with Disabilities Act] was implemented in 1992," Rems-Smario says. "And we still have ways to go, which is beautifully and accurately captured in Cat Brewer's documentary."

Her film was screened on campus, with Brewer, Rems-Smario, and film executive producer Matt Maxey participating in a Q&A. It screened in September at the Oakland International Film Festival.

## College of Business and Economics Names Singh as New Dean

Gangaram Singh, Ph.D. — the former provost and executive vice president at National University — is the new dean of Cal State East Bay's College of Business & Economics.

Singh joined National University, a San Diego-based nonprofit institution with more than 70 undergraduate and graduate programs, in 2015. Prior to National University, Singh served for more than 15 years in several positions at San Diego State University, including as associate dean of the College of Business Administration.

Singh holds a doctorate and master's degree in industrial relations, as well as an MBA from the University of Toronto. He received his Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Windsor. His academic

areas of interest include aging workforce issues, innovations in collective bargaining and human resource management, and international and comparative employment relations. He published more than 70 articles in academic and practitioner journals worldwide. In addition, Singh is finalizing a book on sports philosophy about the interplay of behaviors, attitudes and values.

"Dr. Singh has demonstrated success implementing and growing programs to meet students' and employers' needs," said President Cathy Sandeen. "He is regarded for building a culture of trust, collaboration and engagement from within and in partnership with key stakeholders. I am confident that his leadership will create a



stronger connection between Cal State East Bay and the entire region."

## Kathleen Wong (Lau) Named University Diversity Officer

Following a nationwide search, Kathleen Wong (Lau) started her role as Cal State East Bay's new University Diversity Officer on January 17.

Wong joins Cal State East Bay from San José State, where she served as the chief diversity officer. She brings over 20 years of experience managing and developing diversity training in the sciences, humanities, public and community service and corporate settings at the University of Oklahoma, Western Michigan University and Arizona State University. She also served in a consulting capacity at Michigan State University, Purdue University and the University of Florida.

"I am excited to join Cal State East Bay as the University Diversity Officer," Wong said. "Everyone I met during the interview process demonstrated dedication and commitment to supporting sustained DEI and anti-racism strategies, research-based and community-informed practices that support systemic and cultural change."

The University Diversity Officer, a critical

position for the campus community, works to ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion are embedded and addressed as core values throughout the university.

"We are excited to have Dr. Wong Lau here," said President Cathy Sandeen. "She brings experience and tools to foster and support diversity, equity and inclusion which is woven through all aspects of our university."

"She lives in the East Bay (where, like me, she grew up) and has first-hand knowledge of the complexities of our local communities' issues of diversity, equity and inclusion."

President Sandeen says she appreciates that Wong is a Cal State East Bay (Hayward) alumna who received her bachelor's degree as an older returning first-generation student in speech communication and completed



graduate work and her Ph.D. in intercultural communication at Arizona State University.

Search committee members represented partners across the university, including: Bal Kumar, Rob Williams, Ashmita Ahluwalia, Andrea Arauza Rivera, James Carroll, Christina Chin-Newman, Sarah Dutchover, Tu Ngo and Asha Rao.



## Biology Alumna Ettling's IRA Gift Strengthens STEM Majors Experience

When a desire to help students meets the tax benefits of giving from an IRA for those over 72, the result can be long-lasting for Cal State East Bay students.

The endowment Gloria Ettling launched for the College of Science this year is just one example.

Gloria's husband, Conrad Ettling (B.S. '71, Biology), attended Cal State East Bay (then California State College at Hayward) after leaving the Air Force.

After graduating, Conrad Ettling used his degree to enjoy a long career as a medical lab technician at Brookside Hospital in San Pablo and later at the North Bay Medical Center. Meanwhile, Gloria Ettling worked in accounts receivable at the UC Press (now Princeton Press), at one point overseeing their transition to computerized systems.

Gloria and her husband briefly visited

Cal State East Bay a few times over the decades. The couple talked about giving back to the university before his passing in June 2018.

"When I had money available from my IRA, I realized I didn't need all of it and that I could do something different," said Gloria. "I started looking around at options, talked with my financial advisor, and remembered my conversations with Conrad."

During her discussions, she learned the benefit of an endowment to Cal State East Bay and its power, allowing the College of Science to plan ahead and for STEM students like Conrad to benefit from her gift in perpetuity.

Gloria used monthly contributions from her IRA to create the Conrad and Gloria Ettling Endowed Fund in the College of Science to support student and

faculty needs, such as student research assistants, scholarships, and faculty research necessities, which are often connected to student mentorship.

She recently visited Cal State East Bay, remarking that the university is "truly a gem on the hill" after visiting the biology labs and their state-of-the-art equipment, along with the new CORE building.

After her visit, College of Sciences Dean Jason Singley remarked, "Mrs. Ettling's generous gift will allow the college to strengthen several high-impact programs that build community and support student success in the sciences."

"Gifts like this have a direct impact on helping more students successfully earn their degree from Cal State East Bay."

## CSU Tech Program Provides Laptops, Tablets to New East Bay Students

Starting at a new school is exciting, overwhelming — and often expensive. But Cal State East Bay is helping incoming freshmen and transfer students make their first year easier by providing an iPad with a keyboard or a \$500 device voucher for selected laptops at the Pioneer Bookstore.

"We want our students to have success at the touch of their fingertips," said President Cathy Sandeen. "The challenge is that technology is expensive and that leaves some of our students having to make difficult choices about their educational resources. I am grateful Cal State East Bay students can be part of this program this fall."

The California State University's CSUCCESS (California State University Connectivity Contributing to Equity and Student Success) program addresses the technology equity gap and enhances

student achievement by providing iPads to the CSU student community. Cal State East Bay joins 14 other CSU campuses participating in the program and has coupled the iPad rollout with the university's existing device vouchers for other technology options.

Ana Oliva, a first-year student, received her new iPad this week.

"Honestly, as a first-generation student, receiving this iPad is a blessing," Oliva said. "It's one less thing to pay for. Instead I can use the money towards my tuition."

Technology is essential in any college program today, said Provost Walt Jacobs. "Whether it is access to the digital resources in our library or connecting with faculty and peers by Zoom, students must have reliable tools to be agile and successful in today's highly connected world."

Samantha DeLima, a transfer student and psychology major, believes that the iPad will enhance the ways she's able to study for her classes.

"Before the semester began I told my family I wanted an iPad to use for notes and studying like my classmates had, as it looked very useful," DeLima said. "Although, with all the other financial responsibilities at home and school (books, parking, gas), it was difficult to budget for an iPad. Shortly after that, I received an email to pick up this device."

Technology support is available for all incoming freshmen and transfer students who maintain full-time status (12 units or more) and are new to Cal State East Bay. Laptops and iPads will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis to up to 300 students who meet these conditions.



## Anonymous Donor Bequests New Black Student Success Center with Major Gift



Former East Bay student Ri Grim, left, alumna Stacia Echols and alumna Imani Davis — with Cookie Garrett, director of the Diversity and Inclusion and Affinity Centers — were members of the student group whose work led to the establishment of the Black Student Success Center. © GARVIN TSO

Shortly after the opening of the Black Student Success Center on campus, Cal State East Bay received its first major gift in support of the new space and the population it serves.

The \$150,000 pledge, which will go toward housing assistance, is part of a larger planned gift of \$600,000 from an anonymous alumni donor who was one of only a few Black students on campus when she attended over 50 years ago.

"When I was in high school, no one told me I could go to college," the donor recalls. "I came to what was then the California State College at Hayward as an older student and a mom. At that time, there weren't many Black students, nor parents like me and very little in the way of support systems."

When the donor came to a point in her life when she had more capacity to share her resources than she once realized, she wanted to use it to create a better on-campus experience for students like herself.

"I want today's students to have the support system Black students of my generation wish we could have had to help us navigate a four-year college," the donor says.

The donor's gift is the first major gift in support of any of the new affinity student

success centers, which opened in March 2022 and provide dedicated spaces on campus for students who identify as Black, undocumented, Latinx and AAPI.

Cookie Garrett, director of the Diversity and Inclusion and Affinity Centers, said the gift helps the center fulfill its mission of giving Black students a space to learn and grow in their personal identity as they engage in academia, celebrate their unique identities, and find their community.

"The generous donation from our anonymous donor will help the Black Student Success Center in our mission to support Black students holistically," Garrett said. "On behalf of the Black Student Success Center, we sincerely thank our donor for sowing this generous seed into our tribe so that we may continue to grow and produce the change we want to see."

The planned gift — which the university will receive after the donor passes away — will also provide significant resources to students in the form of scholarships, with \$300,000 allocated to kinesiology and STEM majors. Scholarship recipients must also be part of programs such as Sankofa Scholars that foster Black student success.

"The College of Science is broadening participation in STEM disciplines by

creating an inclusive and supportive environment that helps students develop a sense of belonging and purpose in their majors," says Dean Jason Singley. "These scholarships will allow students to spend more time on their studies and participating in academic support programs which will lead to greater academic success."

The \$450,000 gift dedicated to Black student success is the largest gift that Cal State East Bay has ever received for this purpose.

"Upon graduation, I had many opportunities that I might not have had, had I not been able to attend a university such as Cal State East Bay (Hayward). I am grateful for the ability to assist with the education of students who are where I once was," says the donor.

In addition, the donor was concerned about the struggle of unhoused students in an expensive housing market. Her gift will provide another \$150,000 to fund emergency housing assistance for students through the Pioneers for H.O.P.E. program. The fund will help unhoused students move into permanent housing with security deposits, first and last month's rent, moving costs, and supplies and furniture for their new homes.



# CORE

## The Heart of Innovation at Cal State East Bay

PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

**T**HE CORE IS A CENTER FOR LEARNING, ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION located at the heart of Cal State East Bay's hilltop campus. The CORE's 21st-century academic library teaches students how to navigate the information age economy and become self-directed learners. The Student Center for Academic Achievement, located on the top floor, focuses on providing the skills needed for student inquiry, development and research. And, its Hub for Entrepreneurship — prominently placed on the ground floor — will provide a nexus for students and faculty to explore innovations that will propel the creative economy into the next generation and beyond. ▶



(Top and right bottom) The CORE's 21st-century academic library teaches students how to navigate the information age economy and become self-directed learners. The Student Center for Academic Achievement, located on the top floor, focuses on providing the skills needed for student inquiry, development, and research.

(Left bottom) CORE puts the University Libraries at the heart of the campus, inspiring students, faculty, and staff to engage in the adventure of intellectual discovery and creations. CORE replaces the functions in the former library, which logs 1.2 million visits annually, making it one of the busiest libraries within the California State University system, and adds more space.







(Left) CORE's modern design inspires the innovative thinking and engaging collaboration inside. With broad windows and an outside terrace, the open concept invites connection.

(Right) The collaborations zone in the CORE hub — and, specifically, its Hub for Entrepreneurship — provide a nexus for students and faculty to explore innovations to propel the creative economy for the next generation and beyond.







(Left top) The CORE building is a destination for “high impact” learning that connects students’ aptitudes and abilities with the needs of employers and California. It provides a place where students have access to the tools and facilities to look outward and engage collaboratively.

(Left bottom) CORE is a LEED Gold facility with 100,000 square feet of zero-net energy ready space, designed with flexible seating and study rooms.

(Right) CORE’s reflects Cal State East Bay’s commitment to sustainability, using natural light and modular study spaces that adapt to students’ needs.



# Surviving and Thriving – and Moving Ahead

College Student, Mom and Latinx Community  
Leader Pursues East Bay Education

BY NATALIE FEULNER PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

**E**ACH MORNING, CAL STATE EAST BAY STUDENT, mother of three and mental health advocate Gabriela Aguilar awakens in the dark. The house is still quiet, her children asleep. She pours herself a coffee, takes a deep breath, and begins the day.

As a full-time student, full-time employee and devoted wife, Aguilar puts in a lot of long days. Her determination to change the narrative around mental health in the Latinx community keeps her going.

It's a lot, she admits. But the full schedule and the many to-dos on her daily list are what life requires right now.

"It doesn't matter how much you have on your plate, it's all manageable with the right mindset," Aguilar says. "Either you take everything you get and feel like it's a battle or you shift your mindset a bit and that takes you forward."

## A WINDING PATH

As a child, Aguilar had a challenging home life.

A single parent, her mom worked several jobs and did her best, but existence was often chaotic and unpredictable.

"I grew up in a traumatizing environment with an alcoholic parent and my mom doing her best to raise and parent me and my brothers," Aguilar recalls.

On top of that, she and her siblings are undocumented, which sometimes added to the sense of uncertainty in their life.

"I wanted to major in psychology because I've always been interested in how people think," Aguilar says. "But I felt like I wouldn't be able to practice or get licensed because of my status."

But a few years ago, at age 34, she started taking courses through Parent University, a program offered by the Hayward Unified School District that works to engage and empower families, students and the

community through education.

She then transferred to Chabot College, taking classes online and completing her associate's degree in fall 2021. Earlier this year, Aguilar was able to celebrate her degree and her next step as a transfer student with her family at Chabot's delayed commencement.

"My kids are used to seeing me as their supporter, but they knew the last few years have been stressful for all of us, and I'm sure it had an impact on them," Aguilar admits. "I wanted to celebrate, and it was important for them to see that hard work is worth it and that this was the result."

While she had several starts and stops over the years as she worked and raised her children, who range in age from 5 to 13, Aguilar says the COVID-19 pandemic helped her put things in perspective. The shift to remote work allowed her to take classes while working more convenient hours.

"I feel like the pandemic pushed me into the path of getting it over and done with," she says. "But also, with being a mother of three, all of us being in the same house and not having to do all the running back and forth and the flexibility in the schedule, I had time to study, and online work was easy for me."

## CHANGING GENERATIONS

Aguilar is dedicated to breaking down the stigma attached to mental health problems and barriers to receiving care. This is true for both the organization she works for — Alameda County Community College Mental Health Navigator — and in her personal life.

As a member of the Mental Health Navigator Program, she works to ensure that students who need care beyond campus services are able to navigate the referral process. More personally, as a proud Latina, she has grown up watching many women in her family and community push through their struggles for the sake of helping others. ▶

Gabriela Aguilar has taken a nontraditional path toward her education — and her life — but she is changing the game for herself and others regarding mental health issues in the Latinx community.



“Growing up, my mother was never allowed to say ‘I need help,’ and I want us to realize it’s OK to say ‘I am not OK, I need help,’” Aguilar says. “Especially for [Latinas], we’re expected to be the fixers and the doers. The family depends on us women to hold the fort down, but it’s exhausting.”

So, when she’s not focused on work, caregiving, parenting or studying, Aguilar has her own (sweet) way of decompressing and practicing what she preaches: Running her home-based cake business.

What once started as a way to make extra income has become a sort of meditation.

“Once I’m in the kitchen, and my headphones are in, or I have Netflix on in the background, it becomes an outlet for me,” she explains. “It’s not always easy for us to talk about mental health or coping strategies, but that is my meditation, 100 percent.”

Aguilar says she’s beginning to see the impact of opening up about mental health and the importance of self-care not only in the community but also in her own family.

“The biggest thing for me now is knowing I do have the time and space to ask for help or say I’m not feeling well, and I think that’s been empowering for my mother as well,” Aguilar says. “These are things that our culture normalizes, but it’s not normal for us to be so resilient that we drain our energy or forget who we are as women.”

Aguilar says she talks with her mom and other Latina women about asking for help and letting go of guilt — and it’s having a ripple effect.

She recently wrote a blog post in which she described feeling a knot in her stomach when asking her mom for help and emotional support. She writes that whenever she wanted to talk with her mother about something she was struggling with, she’d be reminded of the struggles her parents faced and how their approach was to just push through negative feelings and keep going.

“The unfortunate reality is that for many in the Hispanic community, there’s no such thing as mental health or constructs for healthy family dynamics,” Aguilar wrote.

“That was my reality growing up as a Hispanic undocumented girl in California, living between low and middle-class households, around abuse, alcoholism, and abandonment.”

During her last semester at Chabot College, she began working as an ambassador advocating for mental health services on college campuses. She joined a student advocacy committee and through a program called Active Minds which helps secure student access to the resources and tools they need to flourish.

“We help answer questions, do surveys and collect feedback with the goal of improving the availability of mental health support for students,” Aguilar says. “We see college students having a need and not just because of the pandemic, especially within the [Black, Indigenous and People of Color] community. I understand what they’re going through because I am impacted myself.”

Recently, she started a support group for single mothers who want to go to college. Through the meetings she helped dozens learn how to talk with counselors, how and where to enroll, and how to access financial aid information.

“I know how to navigate [the] system so I want to encourage families and help them realize it’s not shameful to seek an education at a later age,” Aguilar says.

### WHEN THE STUDENT BECOMES THE TEACHER

Aguilar is about halfway through her undergraduate work, and while the exact direction life will take after graduation is still in the works, she wants to continue helping women, families and children. That may take the form of a graduate program in marriage and family therapy, or perhaps a Ph.D. program.

But in the meantime, her embodiment of the East Bay spirit and commitment to making a difference even before graduation is having an impact on others in the campus community.

“What drives [Gabriela] is her passion; her community and her family both are a source of energy for her, and it’s amazing to see what she’s able to accomplish with the time we have,” says Gerardo Ureno, Aguilar’s GANAS advisor.

GANAS is an access and retention program at Cal State East Bay supporting freshmen and community college transfer students. Ureno has known Aguilar since she started at the university and says he often leaves conversations with her inspired, reflecting on his own life experience.

“It is inspirational to have experiences with a student like Gabriela, and it keeps us pushing forward,” Ureno observes. “Meeting students like her is what makes our job so fulfilling. It’s incredible all the work she does for the community, and I often feel like I’m the one learning from Gabriela, not the other way around.”

Ureno says while Aguilar is just one of many students he works with at East Bay, her drive, perseverance, and commitment to community are shared attributes — ones he wants administrators and supporters of the university to know more about.

“Gabriela is a great representation of the population we have at East Bay,” Ureno says. “Our students do so many incredible things outside of school ... so many of them are first-generation and don’t have the base knowledge, but I’m so glad there are students like Gabriela who are making their voices available to other students and our leadership to hear.”

Aguilar says she keeps going one day at a time and sometimes one conversation at a time, keeping her eye on the goal of graduation.

“Always remind yourself that you are the pillar and stay positive,” she says. “Positivity is key for sure. And know that there’s nothing you can’t fix.”

**“It is inspirational to have experiences with a student like Gabriela, and it keeps us pushing forward.”**

**— Gerardo Ureno, GANAS Advisor**







# Adding Up to Success

## *The Value of a Degree from Cal State East Bay Continues to Rise*

BY DAN FOST

**I**N TODAY'S ECONOMY, the value of a degree from a college like Cal State East Bay carries even more heft. The university's location at the edge of Silicon Valley and its diverse student body prepare graduates to work in teams in an increasingly global dynamic.

"Cal State East Bay plays many vital and often underappreciated roles in our communities and our region," said Stephen Baiter, executive director of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance (East Bay EDA). "As an institution, it supports local residents as they get the skills and degrees they need to be successful in today's economy and labor market."

Tech continues to play a vital role in the Bay Area's economy, as well as around the country and the world. And Cal State East Bay increasingly places its alumni in companies leading that revolution, from Facebook to Tesla, says Simon Edelhaus, who earned his East Bay MBA in 2018.

Edelhaus, vice president of software and validation engineering at Marvell, a Santa Clara-based company that makes cloud-optimized semiconductors, already had a successful career as an engineer when he returned to school in 2015. "[East Bay] offers a wonderful business education for a reasonable price," Edelhaus says. "I highly recommend it to everybody."

Thanks to his CSUEB connections, Edelhaus sponsors student projects, offering students the real-world experience of working side-by-side with engineers. It has paid off, as he hires at least one student yearly at Marvell, sometimes more.

Kyle Pjesky is one of those students. He delayed college for most of his 20s, and then his girlfriend convinced him to get his act together. Inspired by friends with good jobs as engineers, he studied computer engineering at Cal State East Bay, earning his degree last year. He had worked on one of Edelhaus's projects, so reached out and wound up with a job at Marvell as a hardware validation engineer.

Cal State "was good for me," Pjesky recalls. "Being an older student, I was focused and driven. You get out of it what you put into it."

He said the small engineering program worked to his advantage because he benefited from "a lot of one-on-one time with the professor." Edelhaus hopes to grow the program, bringing even more engineers into the workforce.

### THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Eikon Therapeutics, a biotech company based in Hayward focused on drug discovery and development, values its relationship with Cal State East Bay as it, like so many other employers, seeks to hire bright young talent.

"CSUEB has a rich history of supporting students, showcasing innovation and diversity of thought at all levels," Grant Weinberg, vice president of talent acquisition at Eikon, says in an email. "At Eikon, we are also big believers in problem-solving that can come from any level in the organization — from new ►



hires to interns, to seasoned leaders. We value the emphasis CSUEB imbues in its students to think outside of the box and deliver timely solutions to today's most pressing unmet needs."

Cal State East Bay President Cathy Sandeen recently met with Eikon Chief People Officer Barbara Howes. The company and the college found themselves aligned "in prioritizing interdisciplinary learning between science, engineering, computer science, and liberal arts education," says Shazia Khan, Eikon's head of employee experience. "CSUEB's academic approach mirrors Eikon's organization structure as we find our scientists, engineers, and business functions working shoulder-to-shoulder in advancing our pioneering science."

Eikon leaders particularly were thrilled to see Cal State East Bay's commitment to helping local schools. Khan says efforts like CSUEB's Student Transition and Retention program (STAR) help steer first-generation students toward careers in the STEM fields of science, technology, engineering and math.

### A CHANGING WORKFORCE

Baiter, at the Economic Alliance, says today's companies need well-rounded people in the workforce.

"As society and the world become increasingly complex, there is a greater need for people to have a combination of essential skills — what some people call "soft skills," such as good communication, the ability to work well in teams, having the ability to solve problems and navigate certain situations.

"You have to have all of that, and a robust evolving set of technical skills," Baiter continues. "Cal State East Bay understands that and is making more and more investments in that space."

Getting those jobs typically requires a college degree, and statistics show the cost of getting the degree nearly always pays off.

Nationally, the value of a college degree continues to rise, with college graduates out-earning high school grads by 65 percent, from \$42,000 per year to \$69,000 per year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Once in the workforce, the learning doesn't stop. "There is a growing emphasis and need for continued learning, skills-based learning, certificate programs, and hybrid work programs," says Eikon's Weinberg. And Khan adds: "Eikon was pleased to learn of CSUEB's numerous certificate programs and continuing education options that offer students the same type of flexibility and customization that Eikon provides to its employees."

### NAVIGATING THE REAL WORLD


Those sorts of skills and lifelong learning have long been hallmarks of Cal State East Bay. Ron Wetter knows, as he's familiar with the university from several angles. He earned his master's in public administration from CSUEB, went on to partner with the university as a government relations manager at Kaiser Permanente, and taught at CSUEB for seven years as adjunct faculty in its Master's in Health Administration program.

Wetter sees Cal State East Bay's diversity as one of its greatest strengths.

"It's an opportunity for students to meet and mix and learn from students from different backgrounds," Wetter says. "This is a reflection of their workforce. They are going to be working in diverse environments."

Wetter notes that workers are "more exposed to what the real world is like and what the real workforce is like going forward."

He says he loved quoting his students a line from, of all people, the old comedian Milton Berle: "If opportunity doesn't knock, build another door."

"Education allows you to build another door more readily than if you don't have a college degree," Wetter says. "Your college degree is an investment in yourself." 





# FUTURE DIRECTIONS

**COLLABORATION AND CREATIVITY  
ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN CAL STATE  
EAST BAY'S NEW STRATEGIC PLAN**

**BY CATHI DOUGLAS**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO**

**P**resident Cathy Sandeen envisions Cal State East Bay's new five-part strategic plan — Future Directions — as an aspirational road map to achievement that reflects the university community's extraordinary goals, values, and strengths.

"I'm optimistic that CSU East Bay can successfully implement the institution's first strategic plan in years in ways that are both dynamic and actionable," Sandeen says, "empowering student success and fostering faculty excellence while engaging stakeholders in the critical next steps of the process."

Provost Walt Jacobs agrees and thinks the strategic plan will enable the university to navigate better the challenges and opportunities posed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic by creating an appropriate balance of in-person, completely online, and hybrid classes.

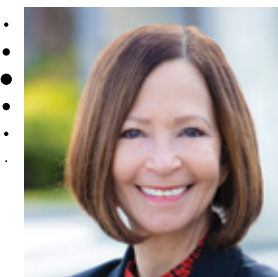
"Without a strong strategic plan to guide this and other processes," Jacobs notes, "a university is at risk of falling behind its competitors." The deep collaboration invested in Future Directions is important, he adds.

"The plan strongly embraces collaboration with both internal and external members to promote faculty excellence in their teaching, research, scholarly, and creative endeavors."

President Sandeen says the university's success depends on setting priorities and measuring success based on a solid, well-crafted plan of action like Future Directions.

"I am not interested in a complicated plan with layers and layers of objectives and lots of reports," Sandeen says. "It's also important to me that the plan is broad and inclusive and that it reflects the aspirations of the entire organization and external communities connected to it."

"I believe we have achieved that with Future Directions." ▶



**Cathy Sandeen**  
President, Cal State East Bay



**Walt Jacobs**  
Provost, Cal State East Bay





Some of East Bay's graduating class of 2022 enjoy commencement.



Students, alumni and faculty attended the Latinx Student Success center opening.

# PRIORITY # 1: STUDENT SUCCESS



**Cathy Sandeen**  
President, Cal State East Bay

"One outcome of Future Directions will be to scale up our career services so that every student, the majority of whom are first-generation college students, will get solid career preparation the moment they become a student at East Bay."



**Danika L. LeDuc**  
Associate Dean, College of Sciences

"Student success is explicitly named as one of the Future Directions priorities and approaches it from many different perspectives. It recognizes that "success" is more than graduation and building content knowledge, but the growth of the student as a person and preparation for a career, and contributions to one's community. My hope is that through more outreach to the community, alumni, and public and private institutions, the amazing potential of CSUEB students will be more widely recognized and seen as a positive return on investment."



**Michelle Rippy**  
Director, Forensic Science Research Center and Alumni Association President

"CSUEB is unique in being one of the most diverse institutions in the United States, with a majority of our students being the first-generation in their families to attend college and nearly half of our students being underrepresented minorities. Recognizing and prioritizing closing equity gaps will assist in improving student retention and graduation rates.

"Prioritizing the commonly unseen areas our students may be struggling with, such as food and housing insecurity and technology access, and ensuring our students are aware of the resources available are vital to their success."

# PRIORITY NO. 2: INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM



**Cathy Sandeen**  
President, Cal State East Bay

"I am particularly pleased to see our diversity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism values infused throughout the plan; this work is everyone's responsibility. I am convinced that seeing what we have accomplished will spur us on to even greater impact."



**Cookie Garrett**  
Director of the Diversity and Inclusion Student Resource and Affinity Centers

"It's critical to have equity, inclusion, and diversity as a key priority in Cal State East Bay's Strategic Plan. Students' ethnic and cultural identities and characteristics shape how they learn. As our faculty and staff become more culturally competent, we understand how students learn and retain knowledge, so we can offer support and tailor instruction accordingly.

"East Bay has a tradition of support for the Diversity and Inclusion Center and other spaces dedicated to students who identify as Black, Latinx, undocumented and Asian American Pacific Islander — and there's been a huge push from the administration for equity and inclusion because we have such a diverse population.

"Having very clear language in the plan about anti-racism is rare at any company, period, and exceptional in a university. That is one of the most refreshing parts for me — having these goals outlined with clear objectives, and measurable outcomes makes a major difference in the culture and success of East Bay. I'm proud to be part of this process." ▶



Participants cut the ribbon at the Diversity and Inclusion Center's reopening.



# PRIORITY NO. 3: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



**Chandra Khan**  
Associate Vice President, Office of Research and Support Programs

“This initiative will further catalyze new courses and/or hands-on experiential learning opportunities for our students. Learning by doing is essential for our students, especially our first-generation college-goers, and this initiative places a high priority on learning and innovation.”

“By calling for equity in support opportunities, CSU East Bay’s Strategic will provide opportunities for everyone in every discipline to contribute to RSCA and innovation.”



**Mary D’Alleva**  
Director, Center for Community Engagement

“Student success is explicitly named as one of the Future Directions priorities and approaches it from many different perspectives. It recognizes that “success” is more than graduation and building content knowledge, but the growth of the student as a person and preparation for a career, and contributions to one’s community. My hope is that through more outreach to the community, alumni, and public and private institutions, the amazing potential of CSUEB students will be more widely recognized and seen as a positive return on investment.”

# PRIORITY NO. 4: ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE, FINANCIAL STABILITY AND GROWTH



**Cathy Sandeen**  
President, Cal State East Bay  
“Consistent accountability throughout the organization over time is essential. Future Directions cannot be just nice words on a website. We need to make it real.”



**Myeshia Armstrong**  
Vice President for Administration and Finance  
“A capital campaign is necessary to increase or create new relationships, industry partnerships, and financial resources that support the growth and sustainability of the university in perpetuity. The benefits of a campaign to students, faculty, and staff are immeasurable.  
“The strategic plan is a powerful tool in a fundraising campaign as it provides potential donors insight into the goals of the university.”

# PRIORITY NO. 5: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



**Cathy Sandeen**  
President, Cal State East Bay

“Assuming we are successful — and we will be — this project will positively impact student recruitment, faculty and staff recruitment and retention, employers, alumni, and donors. We are not a typical or generic university.

“Our brand positioning should reflect the culture and strengths of the East Bay — our homegrown hustle — more than we do now.”



**Mary D’Alleva**  
Director, Center for Community Engagement

“The plan opens up avenues for everyone involved in outreach and engagement to be valued and heard and to establish a university identity guided by common principles of equity and reciprocity.

“It creates space for our alumni to be involved in many ways — to offer internships, mentor, job shadow, and promote the university within their businesses or organizations on their social media. The inspiring voices of our alums are important to integrate into the college experience for current students. External partnerships give depth and dimension to a student’s education.”



East Bay alumni enjoy the car show held during the Forever Pioneer Weekend.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

“I’m very excited about the very active implementation plan for Future Directions, which will ensure that it will be used,” Jacobs predicts. He believes higher education is both a science and an art, with decision-making and potential solutions going beyond a spreadsheet, tradition, changing financial realities and best practices.

“The Future Directions strategic plan will help Cal State East Bay solve problems, expand unit strengths, and advance co-created goals,” he observes.

Together, Sandeen says, the university community and its external stakeholders will work to make Future Directions a reality for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors — as well as individuals new to the Cal State East Bay community.

“I’ve asked every department to develop three to four concrete actions that they will commit to measuring over time,” Sandeen says, “actions that align with priorities and desired outcomes in the plan.”

LeDuc concurs. “With this intentionality in its creation and implementation, hopefully, everyone on campus finds a part or parts of the plan that deeply resonates with their values and passions and feels motivated to contribute to do what they can to see it succeed.”

“Collectively,” Sandeen concludes, “we will advance the entire plan.

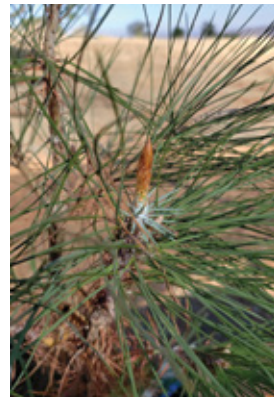
“I’m convinced that what we have accomplished will spur us on to even greater impact.”







## CONCORD BREAKS GROUND ON NEW ECOCULTURAL GARDEN HONORING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



BY ELIAS BARBOZA '13 PHOTOGRAPHY KATHY CUTTING

At the foot of the colossal Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County, a 386-acre area sits on a hill overlooking the northern East Bay. At night, crickets chirp loudly before the sun rises.

Birds, amphibians and reptiles roam this quiet location with their larger animal counterparts, such as deer, coyotes and bobcats, at all times of the day. Tall grass and trees of different shapes and sizes fill out the landscape.

For more than 30,000 years, this territory was home to Indigenous peoples, including the Ohlone and Bay Miwok tribes, who lived sustainably for generations.

This site also happens to be where Cal State East Bay's Concord Campus has flourished since 1992. The campus is establishing a 6,000 square foot ecocultural garden to acknowledge its Native past.

The Wolwonja Ecocultural Garden's mission will be to educate the public about Indigenous communities and their agricultural methods, and encourage visitors to get in touch with nature. It will be an accessible public space that showcases how to sustainably grow native foods, as well as medicinal and utilitarian plants. Those plants will be made available to local Indigenous communities for ceremonies, ancestral crafts and for revitalizing their ancestral food production. Everything grown in the garden will be grown in ways that benefit the garden's natural habitat.

"This garden is where people can honor nature on a spiritual level, and on a food level and understand the importance of land," says Kathy Cutting, Concord's administrative support coordinator who's in charge of the garden's design. Cutting has also gained significant support from local Ohlone tribe members. "This project is a bridge for our university to further connect with community members."

So far, development of the Wolwonja ecocultural garden (Wolwonja means "mountain" in Chochenyo, the language of the Bay Miwok) is running on schedule. Work began earlier in the year with the help of a grant, and the garden's date of completion will be determined by future potential financing.

Staff, students and Contra Costa community members have worked side by side at the garden since summer 2022, setting the foundation and rigging irrigation. Compost bins, planter areas and a shade structure also have been assembled. The garden will specialize in growing drought-tolerant plants and foods native to the Concord area, such as acorns, chia seeds and yampah. Plans for additional amenities include an accessible pathway, a slope leading to a meditation area, and Latin and English plant identification tags on every item. Each tag will also be written in Chochenyo.

Four students from the CSUEB humanities course, "Eating The Landscape," are assisting in building the garden's foundation. They're helping with planting, creating catch basins and building check

dams and terrace works. The course is taught by Ethnic Studies Professor Enrique Salmon, who encouraged his students to take part in the project. Along with Cutting, Salmon has connected with local Indigenous members, and took part in planning and designing the garden.

"It is possible to grow native California plants in a sustainable manner, and there are Indigenous Californians committed to maintaining their ancestral land management practices," says Salmon. "I would like CSUEB faculty, staff, and students to become familiar with the project and to figure out how to get involved."

Student Starrlisha Stewart has helped with the clean-up process and planting oak trees around the garden's edge. Stewart has kept a daily journal of her involvement with the Wolwonja Ecocultural Garden and said being a part of it has been a worthwhile learning experience.

"Being outside with my hands in the dirt gives me a sense of mental stability," Stewart says. "I've gained knowledge of different plants and trees. I'm helping to take care of the planet, and even if it's only one little thing I'm helping with, I want to be a part of that."

The garden has also formed a relationship with Cafe Ohlone, an Indigenous restaurant dedicated to culinary traditions of the Ohlone. The restaurant is located on the University of California, Berkeley, campus, and will use items grown from the ecocultural garden in its traditional Ohlone dishes.

"The garden is within our East Bay homeland, and we work to promote the restoration of all things native to the East Bay, including plant life," says Vincent Medina and Louis Trevino, co-founders of Cafe Ohlone. "Environmental justice and justice for our East Bay community are inextricably connected."

Several stakeholders took part in the planning grant for the Wolwonja Ecocultural Garden, including: Cafe Ohlone Co-Founders Medina and Trevino; Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's Chair Bette Felton; Save Mount Diablo's Land Manager Sean Burke; UC Master Gardeners Community Garden Lead Karen Maggio, and Ethnic Studies Professor and CSUEB Tribal Liaison Salmon.

Back at the Concord Campus, the crew of staff and students hang up their garden gloves, exhausted after spending the day hauling several hundred pounds of dirt and setting up structures. Garden tools, shovels and wheelbarrows come to rest as student Ana Rosario Ramirez gathers her belongings to go home. She's worked at the garden for several weeks, and said this has been her way of giving back to her community.

"This garden shows us the importance of preservation, because preserving these cultures and concepts is how future generations can learn from them," Ramirez says. "Let's be resilient and continue to give back and keep these cultures alive." ■

For more information about the Wolwonja Ecocultural Garden and how to get involved, contact: [kathryn.cutting@csueastbay.edu](mailto:kathryn.cutting@csueastbay.edu).



# ALUMNA LAUNCHES FIRST ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

**P**aving the way comes naturally to Veronica Collins (B.S. '19, Health Sciences), whether through philanthropy to her alma mater or in her life's work.

Collins is an Air Force veteran who came to Cal State East Bay as a first-generation nontraditional student, working as a surgical technician while obtaining her degree. Seeing patients arrive in the operating room for emergency surgery and hearing them express their concerns about not being able to afford the cost of the care they were receiving before their procedures had a profound effect on her.

"Patients should not have to worry about affordable health care, especially in an emergency," Collins said. "The lecture in class the next day resonated with me, and that was the moment I realized I wanted to learn more about public health and health policy."

Collins decided to change her educational direction to understand health policy and healthcare systems better. During her time at the university, she received a scholarship to attend the CSU Health Policy Conference in Sacramento. Her experience at the conference influenced her decision to pursue a master's degree with a specialization in health law from UC Hastings.

Today, Collins works as a policy associate at the Public Health Institute in the Center for Connected Health Policy (CCHP). The center researches and analyzes important telehealth policy issues and provides key telehealth policy resources nationwide. Collins tracks current and pending telehealth legislation in 50 states.

As a result of her dedication to public health and advocacy, she was awarded the 40 Under 40 award from Cal State East Bay in 2021. Recently she joined the Board of Directors of Cal State East Bay's Alumni Association.

Collins attributes a great deal of her success to the faculty of the Department of Public Health and said they continue to be great mentors and an inspiration to her.

Because of her positive experiences, Collins decided to support future students by creating the Veronica Collins Endowed Scholarship in Public Health, the university's first endowed scholarship to benefit the public health department.

"Often students, particularly those from underserved communities, have to make a difficult choice between their education and economic necessities," said Dr. Arnab Mukherjea, department chair.

"Scholarships such as this one allow the opportunity for some of our diverse students to focus more fully on their academics and professional development," Mukherjea added, "allowing them to become agents of change for the health of populations they represent in advancing an agenda of health and social equity."

The scholarship will be awarded to an undergraduate student who majors in health policy.

"There is a policy in every aspect of public health, and policies impact change. Being a scholarship recipient provided me with amazing opportunities. I know how life-changing they can be," said Collins.

"I hope that this scholarship inspires the recipient to pursue a meaningful career in public health. I am confident that the student receiving the scholarship will connect the area of public health they are interested in to the policies associated with it.

"It is my hope that the scholarship recipient will become a public health changemaker." **EE**

Veronica Collins '19 is an Air Force veteran, first-generation college graduate, and advocate who lobbies for health care policy changes to benefit underserved communities.  
GARVIN TSO



# DISTINGUISHED Alumni AWARDS

G A L A 2 0 2 2

BY KIMBERLY HAWKINS  
PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO



## MARVIN REMMICH

B.S. '69, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**M**arv Remmich loves people, community and business and according to those who know him best, he embodies Mark Twain's quote, "You'll never spend a day in your life working if you love what you do."

"Marv couples great business sense with a concern for integrity above all else — and has established an impeccable reputation because of it," said Rob Robinson, Remmich's attorney and longtime friend. "People are clamoring to work with him."

Marv's reach extends throughout the Bay Area, where he has built, bought and managed a variety of commercial, industrial and residential income properties. For more than 25 years, as the owner of RAM properties, Remmich has helped hundreds of people successfully sell and buy homes. He is also dedicated to the community, having served on multiple associations, committees and boards.

Remmich was a Cal State East Bay Distinguished Alumni honoree recognized at an awards ceremony on October 21.

Friends and colleagues agree that Remmich is one of the hardest-working people they know.

"He leads by example and demonstrates how you can be successful and yet modest," said longtime friend and golf buddy, Clarence Mou. "He donates generously and serves his community every opportunity he can."

Remmich has a long history with Cal State East Bay both as a student, having graduated in 1969 with a bachelor of science in business administration and as a member of the Cal State East Bay Educational Foundation Board of Trustees, which he has served on since 2005. He was board chair from 2017–2019.

"He leads by example," said Gary Sloan, Remmich's friend and colleague. "Marv is one of those people who pays it forward every day."

In 2019, Remmich and his wife, Susan, committed \$5 million toward creating the university's Applied Sciences Center. The gift is the largest ever given by an individual and ties as the second-largest private contribution ever received by the university. In 2011, he endowed a College of Business and Economics faculty award, which recognizes faculty excellence in research, teaching and service.

Management Professor Kaumudi Misra received the award for teaching in 2019.

"With this award, he is encouraging us and supporting the learning environment that Cal State stands for," said Misra. "He is so humble, not seeking attention, but only seeking to reinforce what he believes in. This is his legacy."

Friends and colleagues who know Remmich say his loyalty to Cal State East Bay runs deep. He considers the university a vital part of where he has been and what he is doing now.

Friends say they can't think of anyone more worthy of recognition for who he is, what he does and the community impact he has. They are impressed with how he treats people, noting that he is kind, generous and hard-working. They believe his Cal State East Bay experiences have something to do with his strong character.

## JOHN TOKI

B.A. '74, ART

**"I** think I found a place." John Toki remembers calling his mother after a real estate agent showed him a space suitable for an art studio in an industrial neighborhood in Richmond, California. It was 1974 and Toki was a student at then-Cal State Hayward.

Half a century later, this studio is still where Toki dreams, designs and creates his commissioned sculptures.

"Some friends come through my studio and say, 'It looks like chaos,' but it's just a process," Toki said.

Toki was honored as a Cal State East Bay Distinguished Alumni at an October 21 awards ceremony.

Born in the East Bay into a family that savored the rich Japanese tradition of ceramics, Toki knew in high school he could best express himself through painting and sculpting. While a college student, he would make a lifelong commitment to art.

"A really great professor has a huge impact on a student," he said. "They pour the Miracle-Gro onto students that helps them improve their art skills, while helping them develop their creative voice, eventually leading to contributing to the world of art."

Toki says it's his professors, such as Lynn Loudon, Joe Pugliese and Clayton Bailey, who helped him develop the tenacity to stay in an art career when so many others fail to succeed and thrive. He says he can still feel the sweat on his palms as Professor Emeritus Bailey, who taught ceramic sculpture from 1968 to 1996, walked up to critique his work.

As a young student, Toki developed the work ethic that was common among his mentors, who put in up to a hundred hours of work a week on projects, working twice as hard as anybody else.

"To make a life as an artist, you need to be extremely disciplined, always the first person to work and the last person to leave," he said. "Committing to building a sculpture that takes an average of four years to build requires a lot of sweat and tears. With the completion of a sculpture comes great joy and accomplishment."

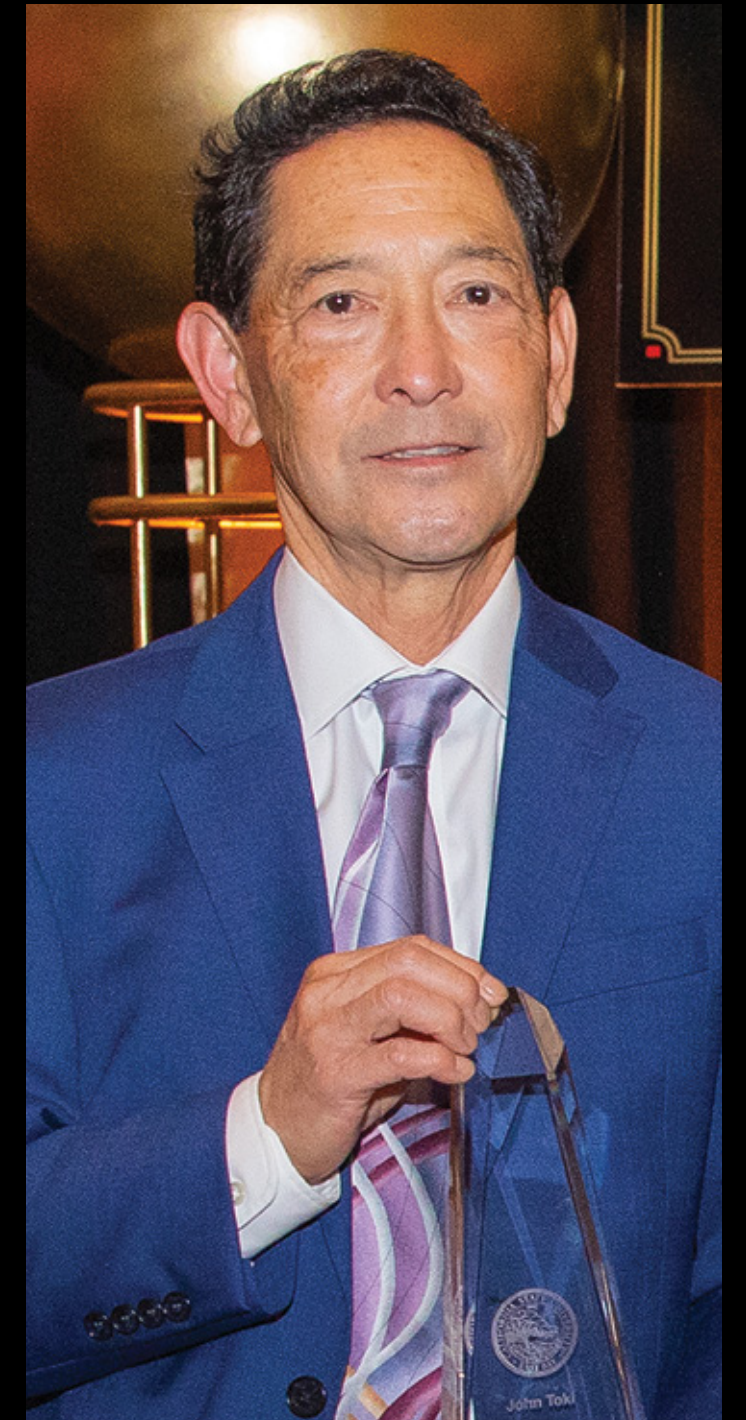
Toki's large-scale sculptures are inspired by objects in nature such as the mountains, water and sky. His work has been shown in the United States, the Netherlands and Japan.

He has completed public commissions and installations in Berkeley, Sacramento, San Francisco and Oakland. An educator for over 25 years, Toki retired as a faculty member from the California College of the Arts in 2007. In addition to his art practice, Toki writes textbooks and says both sculpting and writing have reinforced what he learned in college: that you will be judged by how you finish, not by how you start the process.

"Writing ceramic textbooks for 35 years is something I rolled into," he said. "The books provide me an opportunity to help the country and the world with my ceramic knowledge. When I am long gone, leaving something that is a mirror of my energy, creativity and vision, is to me, really important." ▶

# DISTINGUISHED Alumni AWARDS

G A L A 2 0 2 2



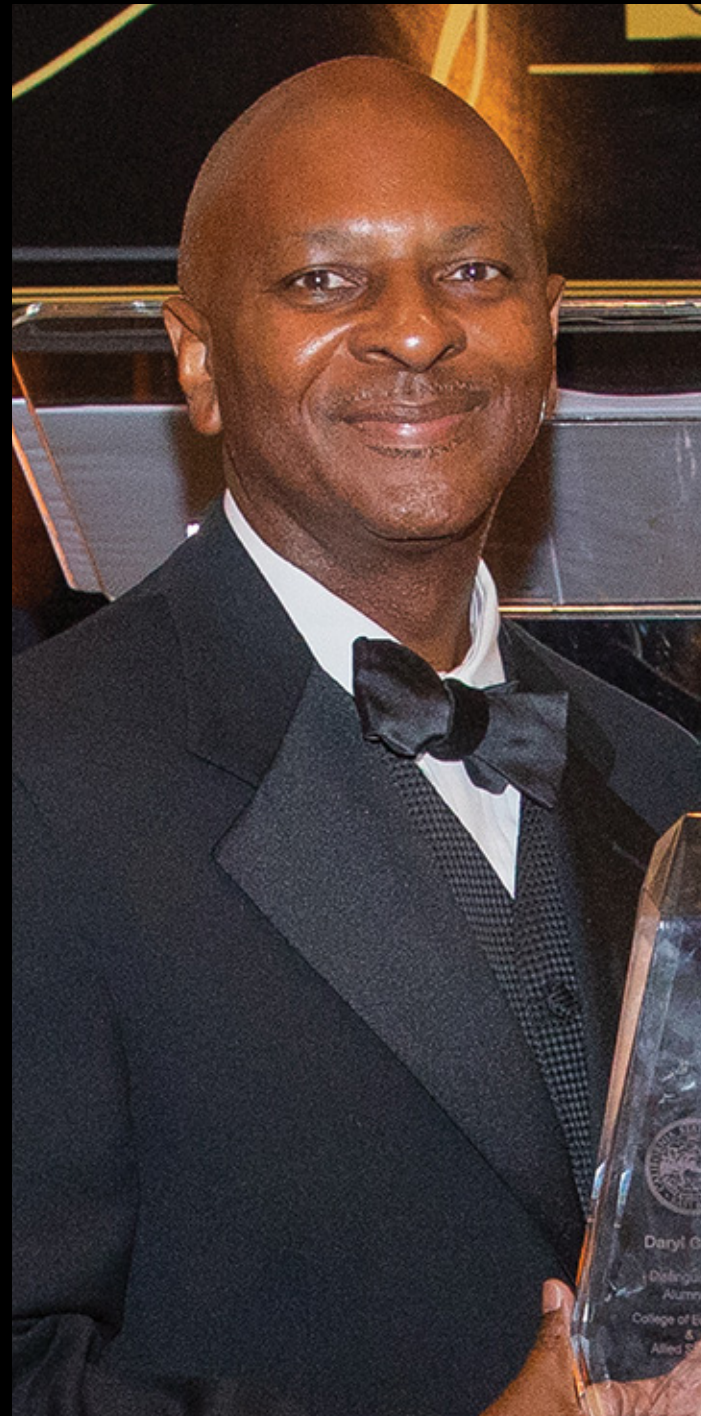


DISTINGUISHED

# Alumni

## AWARDS

G A L A 2 0 2 2



### DARYL CAMP

M.S. '01, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP,  
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CREDENTIAL '03

**D**aryl Camp has pursued his career as an educator across the state, but the pull toward the East Bay was always strong. In 2019, Camp became the San Lorenzo Unified School District's superintendent and returned "home."

"This is my fourth year serving the community in San Lorenzo, and I get excited every day I come to work," says Camp, who was born in San Francisco and raised in Oakland. "It's the people, the students, the staff and the overall community. I really feel it's a family. People come together to support each other and to support our kids."

Camp was honored with a Cal State East Bay Distinguished Alumni award at an October 21 ceremony.

One year into his tenure, COVID-19 changed everything. He says there is a greater emphasis on supporting social and emotional health as students and families return to in-person classes. In addition, with 93 percent of the families in the district identifying as people of color, Camp acknowledges that addressing race and equity is also imperative.

"We are unapologetic here about talking about the impacts of race and how that influences everything we do as educational leaders," Camp says. "In the San Lorenzo Unified School District, we expect all educators to bring race to the table and unapologetically normalize the discussion. That's what we need to do so that students are in a better position to influence their community."

The San Lorenzo School District serves 9,000 students with a mission to advance authentic knowledge, skills and attributes to ensure students are creative and critical thinkers, ready to participate fully in our changing community and world.

"The authenticity comes with how our students are going to make contributions to the local community and the world," he observes. "We want our students to not learn for the sake of passing tests. It's about what you can do to utilize skills and knowledge to benefit your community. We want our students to be local, regional and even global leaders."

As he earned his master's degree in educational leadership and administration at Cal State East Bay, his studies continued the mission that Morehouse College had instilled in him to be a transformational leader.

"My legacy will be held through students, and some of those students I will not have met face to face," he notes. "My job as superintendent is to set the conditions for students to excel and achieve. I would love to see our students be people of consequence. We have a tremendous opportunity here."

Camp worked full-time as a school administrator when he graduated from Cal State East Bay in 2001. He said his professors showed a drive to be change agents in the community. That, he says, had the most lasting impact on the way he approaches his profession.

DISTINGUISHED

# Alumni

## AWARDS

G A L A 2 0 2 2



### ANUPAMA ANANTHARAMAN

B.S. '93, COMPUTER SCIENCE

**A**nupama Anantharaman was at the right place at the right time, and her passion for technology and desire to create solutions were rewarded.

"We were at the cusp of a boom," Anantharaman recalls. "PCs were everywhere. Microsoft, IBM, Apple, Hewlett Packard — people looked up to these companies because they were pioneers."

"There were hundreds of start-ups. The environment was invigorating."

In 1991, Anantharaman enrolled at Cal State East Bay to pursue her goal of becoming an engineer. Three decades later, she still embodies the spirit of a pioneer, creating innovative, cutting-edge products for her customers at Interra Systems, where she is the vice president of product management.

"Science and technology are driving everything these days, from cars to mobile phones to small appliances," Anantharaman observes. "I get to talk to customers and experts in the industry and come up with ideas, develop products, and solve problems."

Anantharaman was honored October 21 with a Cal State East Bay Distinguished Alumni award at a ceremony in the Pioneer Ballroom on the Hayward campus.

Anantharaman developed a next-generation content monitoring product called ORION, which is recognized in the industry as one of the most advanced, in-depth solutions for video quality monitoring.

Having worked in the media industry for 15 years, Anantharaman was familiar with the challenges and frustrations of companies trying to keep an edge while grappling with new formats, delivery platforms, and explosive content volume.

Anantharaman says her time at Cal State East Bay fueled her curiosity and passion, paving the way to where she is now. She has learned that talent and hard work are what matter and that being a woman in a male-dominated industry has its benefits.

"Women have a unique ability to bring people together," she says. "We are very creative and collaborative by nature, and we want to find a solution that is best for everyone."

With science and technology going digital, Anantharaman notes that it's an exciting time that harkens back to the birth of Silicon Valley. She says we can all expect breakthroughs in video, including compression and machine learning.

"I am proud of the things I have accomplished, but there is more that I can do," she said. "The media industry is growing and there are so many new technologies coming up. I want to learn more and use these technologies to come up with better solutions for our clients."

"Many more ideas, much more to come." **EE**



# CLASS NOTES

## 1980s

**THOMAS A. WATTS** (B.S. '80 Physical Education), an auto mechanic for 37 years who owned his own business for 17 of those years, died in September 2021 at age 64, reports his wife, **MARY SULLIVAN WATTS** (B.S. '77, Physical Education '81) also an alumna. The Watts had four children and four grandchildren. "Tom was the delivering doctor as our firstborn was born at home with very fast labor," Mary remembers. "The next births were planned at home after that!" After marrying Tom in 1980, Mary became the first women's athletic trainer at UC Santa Barbara. She recalls serving as a student athletic trainer with her best friend, Ruth Pierroz (nee: Heffernan), under Coach Don Chu. "I met my husband during that time as he was on the football team and judo team when I was a student trainer."



**MELANIE J. DAVIS** (B.A. '82, Mass Communications) founded (Honest Exchange LLC) and is the OWL program manager for the Unitarian Universalist Association. Following a successful 25-year career as a freelance copywriter and journalist, Davis returned to school, earning a Ph.D. in Human Sexuality Education. She

was named the 2022 Sexuality Educator of the Year by the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists. She is a partner in the New Jersey Center for Sexual Wellness and is the manager of an internationally respected comprehensive sexuality education curriculum. She is the author of the first comprehensive sex ed curriculum for adults aged 50+: Our Whole Lives Sexuality Education for Older Adults. [www.melanieedavisphd.com](http://www.melanieedavisphd.com). She has fond memories of Dr. Mary Trapp, who was the adviser for the university newspaper while Davis was editor-in-chief. Working late nights with Barbara Chuck and Ross McKeon and others was exhausting but fun. "Several of us had rewarding media careers because of CSU Hayward [now Cal State East Bay]," she says.



**PATRICIA A. OHANIAN** (B.A. '82 Liberal Studies) recently retired after 38 years in education. Ohanian's career was a third-and-sixth-grade classroom teacher in both Suisun and San Jose, an art docent in Toronto, and a teacher-librarian in San Jose and Palo Alto. Many of her memories in college center around living in the Carlos Bee dormitory. "This was back in the day when this was the only

dormitory for CS Hayward," she writes. "Since we were the only students living near campus, we became a family. We all had fun activities in the dorm like pumpkin decorating contests, the roommate game, and dances!"



**PETER BAUER** (B.A. '85 History) is a program director of operations and local engagement at The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that administers the Medicare program. As part of the Medicare Savings Programs Local Outreach Team, Bauer was awarded a 2022 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Team Award for excellence in communicating the value of the Medicare savings programs to diverse stakeholders across the country. "I first learned and honed the necessary skills and abilities [for his position], as well as learning to work with diverse and community team members, when I was a history student at CSUEB in the early 1980s" he remembers.



**STEVEN MICHAEL DANZIGER** (MPA '85 Public Administration)

retired after 20 years as administrative services manager with the Oakland Fire Department. Danziger also held positions in the city manager's office and finance department. In 2018, he was elected to the Moraga Orinda Fire District Board of Directors. "I'm grateful for the guidance and support I received from Dr. Carl Bellone and alumni Avon Manning (in memoriam) during my time at Cal State and in securing my initial position with the city of Oakland," Danziger writes.

## 1990s

**JOHN MILLER** (B.S. '94 Business Administration) is chief of police at the Winters Police Department. Miller chose CSU East Bay specifically for the Business Administration, Personnel Administration and Industrial Relations program. Knowing that he wanted to hold a leadership role, he specifically chose to enroll in this program as it would benefit his aspirations. Miller served with four other California law enforcement agencies and before being selected as Winters' chief in 2016. "Sleep was a luxury" when he was a student working two jobs, Miller recalls. "I even wrote a paper about it for one of my creative writing classes." It was tough, he remembers, but he urges others considering higher education, "It can be done if you set your mind to it and persevere."

## 2010s

**CRAIG SIULINSKI** (M.S. '12 Education) is an IEP Administrator at Child Development Services. After graduation, Siulinski's career included higher leadership positions in education as an instructional coach, learning support

coordinator and administrator, and he started a small business, Sharing Legacies, in 2014. In 2017, he began teaching classes in online life story writing.



**SCOTT THOMPSON** (M.S. '13 Computer Science) is a software engineer at Lockheed Martin. After leaving CSU East Bay, Thompson worked for Dell Technologies and Flextronics prior to his current position. "I write software that will fly to and around the moon," Thompson says. "Callisto is flying around the moon as a payload on Artemis 1 and I will have the opportunity to sit, console and direct the payload in flight. Life is good!" he writes.



**BRAYA MONTEZ COX** (B.S. '15 Business Administration) is a client service manager at Philips. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, Braya lived and worked abroad in the UK and Czech Republic. Following graduation, she has found herself in a career that she loves. Cox says she loves that her job allows her to travel the world and do things that she originally could not do. "I found it great being exposed to a new way of life and making memories that I'll never forget," she says.

## 2020s



**MARIA DOLORES REVELES** (B.A. '21 Human Development) is a project manager at Self-Help Enterprises. Reveles says her CSUEB experience helped her gain valuable skills which in turn helped her become more competent in her career. Her recent achievements include working on projects promoting clean energy and energy equity for disadvantaged communities in California's San Joaquin Valley. "As an immigrant child, I was very apprehensive about attending a real university. This was mainly because COVID-19

pandemic shut the world down within weeks of my first semester," Reveles writes. "The anxiety faded away quickly as I was warmly welcomed (virtually) by a wonderful support system of peers, professors, and counselors. I will soon be applying for graduate school and have the excellent staff at CSU East Bay to thank."

## FOREVER PIONEER

This is where we celebrate life's moments from fellow Pioneers with the university community. Do you have career news, accomplishments, fond memories or life changes to share? We'd love to hear from you! Submit your class note online at [csueastbay.edu/alumni](http://csueastbay.edu/alumni).

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## PARTING SHOT

Cal State East Bay has broken ground on its newest building, the Applied Sciences Center, beginning construction on a 22,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility, entirely funded by private support, including a \$15-million challenge grant from a regional foundation and gifts from alumni and East Bay business leaders.  GARVIN TSO





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