WINTER 2023

CARL STATE

EastBay

CORE: THE HEART OF INNOVATION

THE RISING VALUE OF AN EAST BAY DEGREE

STRATEGIC PLAN LEADS TO CSUEB’S FUTURE
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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, 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

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 John Knowles. “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.
University of Florida.

She brings experience and develops diversity training in the sciences, business, and corporate settings at the University of San Diego, where she served as the chief diversity officer. She brings over 70 years of experience and embedded diversity, equity, and inclusion which is woven through all aspects of our university.

In addition, Singh has authored over 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.”
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 transfer students make their first year easier by providing an iPad with a keyboard or a $500 device voucher for selected laptop models through the Pioneer Bookstore.

“We want our students to have success at the university,” 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.”

The California State University’s CSU/UC/CSS (California State University, University of California, California Community Colleges) Tech 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 Olivera, a first-year student, received her new iPad this week.

“Honestly, as a first-generation student, receiving this iPad is a blessing,” Olivera 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 Dr. Will 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.”

From a donor who has supported CSU East Bay students, the first-year students will receive an iPad, with a keyboard and a screen protect, along with digital resources in the university’s library and the student’s assigned faculty for the fall.

Anonymous Donor Bequests New Black Student Success Center with Major Gift

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 program it serves.

The $300,000 pledge, which will go toward housing assistance, is part of a larger pledge of gift of $600,000 from an anonymous alumni donor who was one of the many Black students on campus when he attended over 50 years ago.

“W e want our students to have success at the university,” said Provost Dr. Will Jacobs. “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.”
The 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 creation. 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 reflects Cal State East Bay’s commitment to sustainability, using natural light and modular study spaces that adapt to students’ needs.
Each 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 want 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.

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 shift to remote work allowed her to study 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.

Surviving and Thriving – and Moving Ahead

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

BY NATALIE FEULNER  PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

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 strong, the ones that keep going.”

“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’s 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 something she was struggling with, she’d be reminded of the struggles.

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],” says Ureno, “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.”

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.”

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IN 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,” 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 professors.” 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 hallmark 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.”
President 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.”

Collaboration and Creativity
Engage Stakeholders in Cal State East Bay’s New Strategic Plan

By Cathi Douglas
Photography Garvin Tso
**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.”

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

“Students 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 investments.”

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**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 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.”

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**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.”

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**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.”

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Some of East Bay’s graduating class of 2022 enjoy commencement. Students, alumni and faculty attended the Latinx Student Success Center’s reopening. Participants cut the ribbon at the Diversion and Inclusion Center’s reopening.
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.”

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 practical solutions,” 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, 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.”

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.”

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“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.”

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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.”

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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.”

PRIORITY NO. 5: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT  
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  
“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.”

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.  
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At the foot of the colossal Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County, a 36-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 Wolvonja 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. These 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 Wolvonja Ecocultural garden (Wolvonja 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 June 2022, setting the foundation and rigging irrigation. Compost bins, planter areas and a shade structure have also been assembled. The garden will specialize in growing drought-resistant plants and foods native to the region. Cutting has worked at 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 plan on working with the Wolvonja 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 inseparably connected.”

Several stakeholders took part in the planning grant for the Wolvonja 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, hoses 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 Wolvonja Ecocultural Garden and how to get involved, contact: kathryn.cutting@csueb.edu.
Giving 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.

“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.”

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. © SARVIN TSIO

ALUMNA LAUNCHES FIRST ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

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. © SARVIN TSIO
**DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI**

**GALA 2022**

**BY KIMBERLY HAWKINS**

**PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO**

**MARVIN REMMICH**

B.S. ’69, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Marvin 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.”

“More springs 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 long-time 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, serving 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 put it forward every day.”

In 2018, Remmich and his wife, Susan, contributed $1 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 donation in the university’s history, exceeding only the $25 million in 2011 to establish the Marv Remmich Applied Sciences Foundation.

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

**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.

This is a rare case where the studio 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 to 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 give the Miracle-Gro to students that help 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 Lynne London, 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 urging on his palms as Professor Ermottius 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. Toki, an artist, said, “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.”

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 rilled into,” he said. “The books provide me an opportunity to help the country and the world with my ceramic knowledge. Even if I am long gone, leaving something that is a mirror of my energy, creativity and vision, is to me, really important.”

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**B.S. ’69, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

**B.A. ’74, ART**

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DARYL CAMP
M.S. ‘01, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES CREDENTIAL ’03

Daryl Camp has pursued his career as an educator across the state, but the pull toward the East Bay was always strong. In 2016, 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 “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 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 93 percent of the families in the district identifying as people of color, Camp acknowledges that addressing 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 is determined to set the conditions for students to excel and achieve.

“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.”

Camp emphasizes the need for 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.

As he earned his master’s degree in educational leadership and administration at Cal State East Bay, his studies continued the 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 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.”

Anantharaman acknowledges that addressing race and equity is also imperative.

“We are 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. There 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.

“I get to talk to customers and experts in the industry and come up with ideas, develop products, and solve problems.”

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 the most important attributes.

She says we can all expect breakthroughs in video, including compression and machine learning.

“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.”
The 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 fistborn was born at home with very fast labor,” Mary remembers. “The next births were planned at home with 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 Parrin (née Haffenman), under Coach Don Chu. “I met my husband during that time as he was on the football team and I was a student trainer.”

MELANIE J. DAVIS (B.A. ’82, Mass Communications) founded (Honest Exchange LLC) and is the OIG, 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.melaniejadays.com She has fond memories of Dr. Mary Fulmer, who was the adviser for the university newspaper while Davis was editor-in-chief. Working late nights with Barbara Chuck and Ross McLeod and others was exhausting but fun. “Several of us had rewarding media careers because of CSU Hayward (now Cal State East Bay),” she says.

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 Award for Excellence in Communications 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.

1990s

JOHN MILLER (B.S. ’94, Business Administration) is chief of police at the Writers 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 Writers’ 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

CRAD SULINSKI (M.S. ’12 Education) is an IEP Administrator at Child Development Services. After graduation, Sulinski’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. ’16, Computer Science) is a software engineer at Lockheed Martin. After leaving CSU East Bay, Thompson worked for Dell Technologies and Fastenics prior to his current position. “I write software that will fly to and around the moon,” Thompson says. “Galileo 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 MONTZ COX (B.S. ’15, Business Administration) is a client service manager at Philips. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, Brayá lived and worked abroad in the U.S. 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.

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.”

This is where we celebrate life’s momentous moments: our new 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 notes online at cseastbay.edu/alumni.

4 reasons to stay connected

1 Career Support
Connect with more than 150,000 Pioneer alumni, a majority whom live and work in the Bay Area.

2 Discounts & Resources
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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