

CAL STATE

SPRING 2022

East Bay



INSPIRING
PERSPECTIVES

DIVERSITY TRANSFORMS
CHILDREN'S MEDIA

BLACK EXCELLENCE
PROJECT BUILDS SUCCESS

LEADERS CHANGE THE
BIAS NARRATIVE



CAL STATE East Bay

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COVER: In a Q&A story, Cal State East Bay Black Excellence Project co-creators Steven Cleveland and Sarah Aubert discuss the project's inspiration and impact.
GARVIN TSO

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Within a month of her arrival and based on input from the community, President Sandeen made the decision to create four success centers for students who identify as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), Black, Latinx and undocumented. Additionally, the Diversity and Inclusion Student Center (DISC) has been recently renovated as a more collaborative space.
GARVIN TSO

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello Cal State East Bay community,

Think of someone in your social or professional space who you admire. Now imagine some of their traits: They listen. They collaborate. They recognize what hasn't worked, what needs to be done and what is possible. They exhibit a growth mindset. They use their lived experiences to inform and to clear the way for those who follow.

The global events of the last two years have brought us to an inflection point, with transformation of how we learn, work and live. And rather than merely react to these changes, members of our Cal State East Bay community call for new ways of thinking and doing.

Even more remarkable — but certainly not surprising if you know any of our students, alumni, faculty or staff — these individuals have raised their hands to say, "Let's do it better." In this issue of "Cal State East Bay Magazine," we share the inspiration and outcomes of these new perspectives.

The pandemic laid bare existing disparities in our society, as Public Health Assistant Professor Michael Stanton notes, but profound challenges uncovered over the past two years are also leading toward innovative solutions for positive change. Children's media is at the forefront of the fight for an equal and accurate representation of all identities — and at least two Cal State East Bay authors are part of the movement toward inclusiveness and equality.

Alumnae like Hershie Collins and Makinya Ward are changemakers in how we care for one another. Sarah Aubert and Steven Cleveland are redirecting past narratives to celebrate Black graduates' success in the Black Excellence Project. Donors have stepped forward to support the first privately funded building on our campus — one that will put students from all backgrounds on a path toward the STEM careers essential to this region. East Bay faculty and students are assisting a local professional sports team advance sustainability goals by achieving climate neutrality.

We have large and overwhelming issues to solve in our society: hunger, mental health, gun violence, climate change, education and equity. However, as these pages reveal, we can be optimistic about Cal State East Bay's willingness to inspire new perspectives and take action within the university environment and beyond.

Thank you for your continued support of Cal State East Bay. Please enjoy this sampling of our exceptional, creative and caring community — especially our students — and join me in imagining how we all will reshape our future.

Sincerely,

Cathy Sandeen
President

CAL STATE EAST BAY University News

CSU Board's Vote Promotes Equity, Access



The California State University system's Board of Trustees voted to permanently remove SAT and ACT scores from its admissions requirements.

This vote permanently adopts a policy that was implemented on a temporary basis due to hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to mitigate harmful impacts for prospective applicants.

Moving forward, CSU will be a test-optional institution, which means students can submit SAT and ACT scores to help with math and English course placement, but scores are not required.

Students will need to continue to meet other admission requirements, such as being a high school graduate or equivalent; completing the 15-unit comprehensive pattern of college preparatory courses; and earning a qualifying grade point average based on their residency.

Moving away from standardized tests is in-step with other major university institutions. The University of California Regents, for example, voted in May 2020 to suspend SAT and ACT testing requirements through 2024 and eliminate them altogether for California students in 2025.

"I applaud the courage of the Board of Trustees [to permanently remove standardized testing]..." said Robert Williams, dean of the College of Education and Allied Studies at Cal State East Bay.

New Leadership Joins Cal State East Bay

Cal State East Bay welcomes three new vice presidents to the university, rounding out President Cathy Sandeen's divisional leadership team. The appointments follow nationwide searches this spring.



Myeshia Armstrong, Vice President, Administration & Finance, has more than 20 years of experience in public education administration and has managed a portfolio of institutional assets exceeding \$1 billion.



Evelyn Buchanan, Vice President for University Advancement, joins the

university from Chico State, where she served as associate vice president of development and campaign manager since 2018. She brings more than 25 years of experience from Carthage College and Franklin Pierce University, Colgate University, SUNY Empire State College, and the Culinary Institute of America.



Walt Jacobs, Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs, has served as the dean of the College of Social Services at San Jose State University since 2015, and was founding dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside.

"In recruiting these leaders, I wanted talented leaders with deep commitments to student success, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging," said President Sandeen. "Walt, Myeshia and Evelyn all have demonstrated success in their areas of expertise and collaborative, can-do leadership styles. The university is poised to elevate our support for students, academic excellence and community partnerships, and I am pleased to have these experienced professionals join us."

A Weekend to Celebrate

Cal State East Bay celebrated its 62nd Commencement Ceremonies May 12–15, honoring the classes of 2020, 2021 and 2022. More than 50,000 guests participated at the Hayward campus — one of the first in-person college graduation events in the region in two years. More than 176 staff and faculty worked at 19 ceremonies for more than 840 volunteer hours.



Applied Sciences Center Moves Forward with Fundraising Goals Complete



A state-of-the-art STEM facility will soon become reality at Cal State East Bay.

The university has successfully raised the private funds for the Applied Sciences Center, a 21,000-square foot building that will be situated adjacent to North Science, with plans to open in spring 2024.

“It has been a years-long process with faculty who imagined what flexible learning in STEM looks like, facilities’ envisioning of a new net-zero, sustainability-focused building, and the advancement efforts that matched these ideas with dedicated supporters,” said Cal State East Bay President Cathy Sandeen. “This collaboration exemplifies the work we do to help our students and community thrive, at

Cal State East Bay and beyond.”

The Applied Sciences Center will prepare Cal State East Bay students for careers in innovative and essential industries. It will also support the learning style that is at the heart of many of the university’s majors: peer-to-peer guidance in gateway courses that build strong foundations, interactive research with faculty working alongside undergraduate and graduate students, and cross-disciplinary, cutting-edge laboratory spaces.

The vision for the \$30-million Applied Sciences Center was launched with a challenge grant from a regional foundation. Countless alumni and community leaders came forward to support the project,

including Marvin and Susan Remmich, Randall and Patricia Davis, the Nancy P. and Richard K. Robbins Family Foundation, Robert Braddock and Cheryl Keemar.

“By investing in this infrastructure and technology today, we are investing in critical science education for our very diverse student body and the benefits will be felt both locally and around the world for years to come,” said the Davis family.

The university plans to break ground on the Applied Sciences Center later in 2022 with a celebration that will highlight the building’s features, the outcomes it will have on student learning and collaborative research, and the dedication of the donors who made the project possible.



New Faces in Children's Media

East Bay Leaders Promote Diverse Representations for Kids of Many Cultures

BY MAHA SANAD '22

CHILDREN'S MEDIA IS AT THE FOREFRONT of the fight for equal and accurate representation of all identities as the push continues for greater diversity in mainstream media — and at least two Cal State East Bay authors are part of the movement toward inclusiveness and equality.

Because childhood is a critical period of development, the media children consume greatly affects how they view themselves and the world around them. And while children's media is far from perfect as a diverse representation of cultures and identities, there are signs of progress.

"Children start to formulate opinions about where they fit in the world and what the world thinks of them through the media they consume," explains Thomishia Booker '06 (Sociology), an author of books written for Black children. "Children's media can impact how a child thinks about themselves, so it's important that the messaging be intentional."

Since children are particularly vulnerable to messages in the media, the underrepresentation and negative portrayals of certain identities, such as racial minorities, are especially detrimental.

According to psychologyinaction.org, a scientific website written by UCLA psychology graduate students, if they are exposed only to representation of majority identities such as white males, children who do not fit into the category can feel 'othered,' unimportant, and invisible. More than that, they can strive toward unattainable expectations and become disappointed when they realize they do not 'fit' into common media portrayals.

To ensure that children feel represented in the media they consume, authors and lecturers are increasingly including characters of all races, genders, socioeconomic statuses, shapes, sizes, and abilities in their work.

"Children's media is a mechanism for learning," Booker says. "It's important that the content in children's media reflect the diverse society we live in and for Black children to see accurate reflections of themselves. We want all children to be able to learn about experiences that differ from their own."

In the past decade, children's media has been embracing greater diversity. Recent examples of films, TV series, and books exhibiting diversity include: ▶



- “Hey Carter!” Booker’s book series, which depicts Black children positively.
- “American Born Chinese,” a comic book by Cal State East Bay alumnus Gene Luen Yang, that authentically portrays the Asian-American experience.
- “Encanto,” a current film with an almost entirely Latinx cast about a multigenerational Colombian family.
- “Turning Red,” a current film that authentically portrays growing up as Chinese-American and includes diverse representations of East Asian and Southeast Asian characters.
- “Coco,” a recent film with an all-Latinx cast that portrays Mexican culture.
- “Doc McStuffins,” a Disney Junior TV show that portrays a successful Black family, starring a young Black girl who aspires to become a doctor like her mother.
- “Sesame Street,” the long-running PBS show that includes diverse representations, including racial minorities, LGBTQIA+ characters,

neurodiversity, characters on the autistic spectrum, and more.

- “Molly of Denali,” PBS’s action-adventure comedy follows the adventures of resourceful 10-year-old Molly Mabray, an Alaska Native girl. It is the first nationally distributed children’s series in the U.S. to feature an Alaska Native lead character.

Cal State East Bay student Xitlali Chipres remembers feeling represented after watching “Encanto” with her three-year-old brother.

“I love the family aspect of the movie,” Chipres says, “and I’m very glad that my little brother is seeing representation of not only our culture in the media but of darker-skinned people within our race who are usually not shown or spoken about.”

Changing false narratives about Black children, particularly Black boys, motivated Booker to create her “Hey Carter!” books. “I noticed there were limited books with Black boys on the cover and I knew I had to change that. There are more children’s books with animals in them than there are books for Black children and that is unacceptable.”

Booker believes that if she had experienced more relatable stories and

characters while growing up, it would have changed her life’s trajectory.

“I would have felt seen and validated,” she says. “Growing up, I wasn’t always proud of being Black. I didn’t see the beauty in my hair, facial features, or skin color. I spent a lot of time trying to conform out of fear.

“I am happy that I have created a brand that will prevent children from going through what I experienced.”

Yang shared a similar childhood experience in a PBS interview. “Growing up, I did go through a period when I really struggled with my own ethnic heritage,” he recalls. “I think every kid goes through this period where you want to excise everything that makes you different.

“It took me a really long time to come to a place where I felt like I accepted myself as a Chinese-American,” he adds. “A lot of my work is about that.”

Diverse representation in media isn’t merely an attempt at inclusion, but affording underrepresented individuals equal opportunities to tell their stories. Still, when it comes to portraying more representation in mainstream children’s media, producers, authors, and other creatives face

an additional challenge — their work must make money, and that means it must appeal to widespread audiences.

Cal State East Bay’s Steven Cleveland, a lecturer in the ethnic studies and history departments, has faced this as a filmmaker and Black scholar. “I’ve had an uphill battle,” Cleveland says. “There is a monolithic view of what types of films that BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, and people of color] audiences will or will not support.”

As a result, Cleveland strives to provide his students with the tools they need to produce commercially successful films that provide equal representation for diverse audiences. “There is a need to diversify the notion of what BIPOC cinema is...I emphasize the importance of voting with your dollars for the types of media that you’d like to see more of.”

As part of the richly diverse Cal State East Bay community, Booker, Yang and Cleveland are pioneering diversity in children’s media to ensure positive, diverse characters and stories for the next generation of consumers. [EE](#)

A PLACE FOR DISCOVERY

BY STEPHANIE HAMMON

GARVIN TSO

WHEN IT OPENS ITS DOORS THIS FALL, Cal State East Bay's new CORE Building will serve as the new university library — and so much more.

In addition to a place where students can study, CORE will be a technologically advanced space designed for collaboration and innovation. Located in the center of campus between the science buildings and the university union, it will be home to the Student Center for Academic Achievement and Hub for Entrepreneurship. ▶

CORE Building Creates a Collaborative Space for Student Achievement





KYZYL FENNO-SMITH
LIBRARIAN

What makes the CORE Building unique?

The CORE is a next generation academic library that will offer students a technologically rich space in which to create, collaborate and study. There will be student spaces for different student needs including research, tutoring, knowledge production, affinity collabs, and reflection, among others. It is the library faculty's goal to ensure that the CORE reflects the lived experiences of East Bay students and their communities. The CORE I dream of is an inviting, warm, hospitable space for our students and the campus community.

What excites you most about the new space?

The opportunity to see students claim their library spaces and to co-facilitate their visions for using the CORE and its resources for their specific educational journeys. I look forward to learning from how students use the spaces and being awed by their creativity and agency.



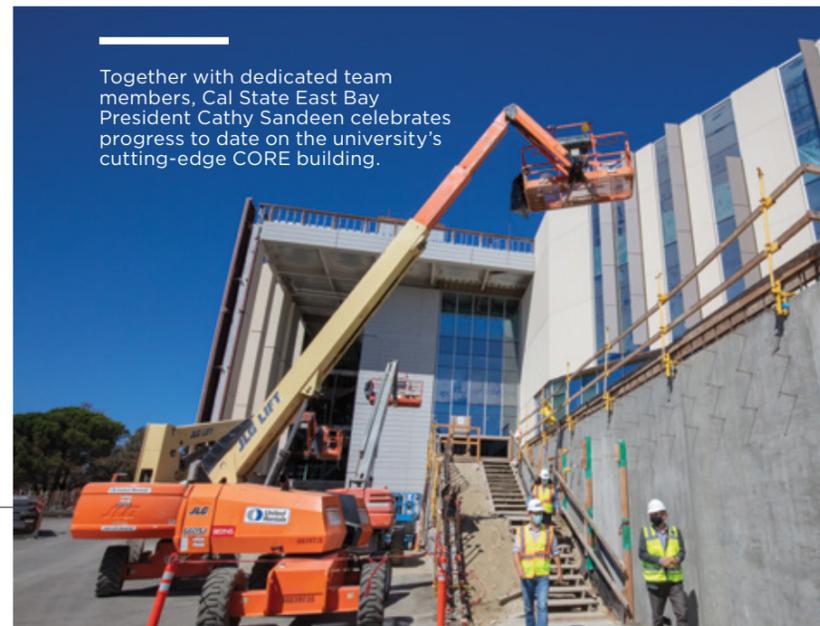
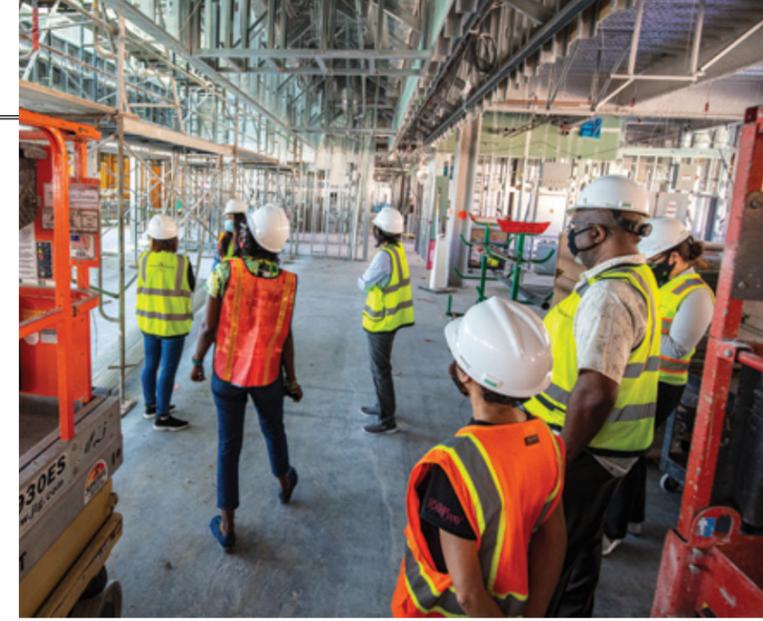
SARA SCHUPACK
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF THE SCAA

What makes the CORE Building unique?

Its look, its location, and the way it offers a range of spaces for a continuum of activities, from informal to formal, individual to collaborative.

What excites you most about the new space?

The library, and the SCAA as part of the library, offer students many lifelong skills, including self-efficacy and identifying and utilizing resources. The central location, along with the layout, with each floor offering a different approach to learning, will likely enhance our ability to provide such lasting skills. The spirit of innovation and collaboration embodied in the new building, its conception and design, could inspire SCAA and library staff to work together in new ways and encourage all visitors to explore, relax, inquire and learn in a comfortable and exciting setting. SCAA student staff are dedicated to student success and feel great pride in the work they do. I expect that the new building will only add to their positive experiences with us. 



Together with dedicated team members, Cal State East Bay President Cathy Sandeen celebrates progress to date on the university's cutting-edge CORE building.



BLACK EXCELLENCE PROJECT

ALUMNI INSPIRED TO REACH HIGHER

BY STEPHANIE HAMMON

WANT TO BE INSPIRED by stories of success and perseverance from Black Cal State East Bay graduates? Look no further than the Black Excellence Project. Though many face barriers that hinder their college completion, these students have reached the finish line. The Black Excellence Project highlights how they did it, using social media and film to bring attention to the institutional best practices that are crucial to Black student success.

Cal State East Bay magazine sat down with the project's co-creators, Ethnic Studies Lecturer Steven Cleveland and Assistant Director Sarah Aubert, to learn more about the inspiration behind the Black Excellence Project and the impact it's making.

CSUEB: How did the project come about? What inspired it?

Sarah Aubert: We participated in the CSU's Student Success Analytics Certificate Program, which gave us a chance to dig deep into student data surrounding equity gaps and graduation rates for the campus. When we looked at graduation rates for Black freshmen, we saw that less than 10 percent were graduating in four years, which obviously is not acceptable. The numbers were pretty dismal when it came to two-year transfer rates for Black students, too. So between that and our own connection to the data, having been first-generation Black college students, we knew there needed to be a different approach. Oftentimes, we take a deficit-based approach when we're looking at data and we need to dig out the issues and see why students aren't graduating. But it's not often that we ask What did work? Who did graduate and what helped them to get there? That's how the Black Excellence Project was birthed.

CSUEB: What makes the project unique?

Steven Cleveland: In the pilot at Cal State East Bay, the Black Excellence Project amplifies Black student voices via social media, which is where the students are. We're delivering this project where our students are at and we're not focusing on the deficits — we're reaching out and highlighting the stories of folks who have succeeded despite the barriers that come with being Black and on campus.

CSUEB: What do you hope to accomplish through the project?

SA: I think we could agree there are three main goals we are trying to achieve. First and foremost, just to affirm and amplify Black student voices, particularly our Black graduates. A lot of times when Black students graduate, it's despite the obstacles they face on campus and then they have no further contact with the campus. We wanted to make that connection and to let them know we're proud of them and to hear what worked for them. The next objective was to identify the campus best practices that helped them to reach their goal — what the campus is doing right, identifying those different markers and seeing how we can enhance those or how we can stop doing things that aren't working. And lastly, just going beyond the performative and providing a tangible resource that can be used to build a sustainable community of growth and support for Black students that will ultimately lead to successful college completion.

CSUEB: What impact has it made so far?

SC: We've been able to center 30 Black graduate stories over the course of the campaign. We've been invited to several conferences, including NCORE (the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity) and WASC ARC, to share the best practices we've learned through this experience from our students. We also have cultivated an active Instagram following that is amplifying these student voices.

What challenges have you faced?

SA: What's made it challenging is that it hadn't been done before, so there were not just the administrative process barriers to get through, but we also had to build trust with the students. We had to make sure that they know this is for them and about them and that we are supporting them — there are no hidden motives here.

What is the future of the project?

SC: We are talking with other CSU campuses about launching Black Excellence Projects in fall 2022. At East Bay, we are looking to start the implementation phase in the fall. Our intention is to ensure that the work goes beyond performative, which is a big deal to us. We will look at ways to feature our graduate cohorts by inviting them to talk with current students, appear on panels and be a part of university think tanks to offer their perspective on a number of student-related problems. Ultimately, we are working to facilitate the building of community around current students, because the most compelling truth that emerged from these stories is that community is the key to students' success. ▶

ALUMNI INSPIRED TO REACH HIGHER

PHOTOGRAPHY IME N. ETUK



STEPHANIE PARRISH

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE '21
HOMETOWN: SAN JOSE

“One of the biggest motivators for me to continue to graduate was my family. For none of them to have a degree or make it as far as I did, they really supported me. To have my brother’s little girls look at me and say ‘Auntie, wow, you’re a scientist!’ just really hit me hard that it’s not [just] about me, it’s about my family and the people who are watching me be successful.”

EDWARD HILL

LIBERAL ARTS '21
HOMETOWN: BERKELEY

“There was an African American woman meeting with the Sankofa (Scholars Program) folks and when she came to me, she referred to me as ‘Dr. Hill.’ When she said that I was like, ‘Wait a minute, that has a ring to it. I could be a doctor. I could pursue a PhD.’ That ignited something in me and made me reframe the way I saw myself.”

GRACIOUS HODGES

CRIMINAL JUSTICE '20
HOMETOWN: VALLEJO

“In certain classroom settings, you could be one of maybe three African American people in the class and it kind of messes with your head a little. There’s this imposter syndrome effect. Do I really deserve to be here? Do I know enough to maintain? It causes all these thoughts to go through your mind. For me it made me really have to dig deep within myself to say, ‘You know what, I do deserve to be here.’”

MARLO “THE MOTIVATOR” SPOONER

SOCIOLOGY '21
HOMETOWN: OAKLAND

“One thing I think we can work on is better assisting those who have been previously incarcerated. These individuals, like myself, come home with nothing. People don’t want to give you an opportunity and you can’t get certain grants because of your criminal history. When I tried to apply for financial assistance, I noticed we didn’t have any grants here for that population. We had a lot of grants for different populations but none for those who have been previously incarcerated.”

DRIVEN TO CHANGE THE BIAS NARRATIVE

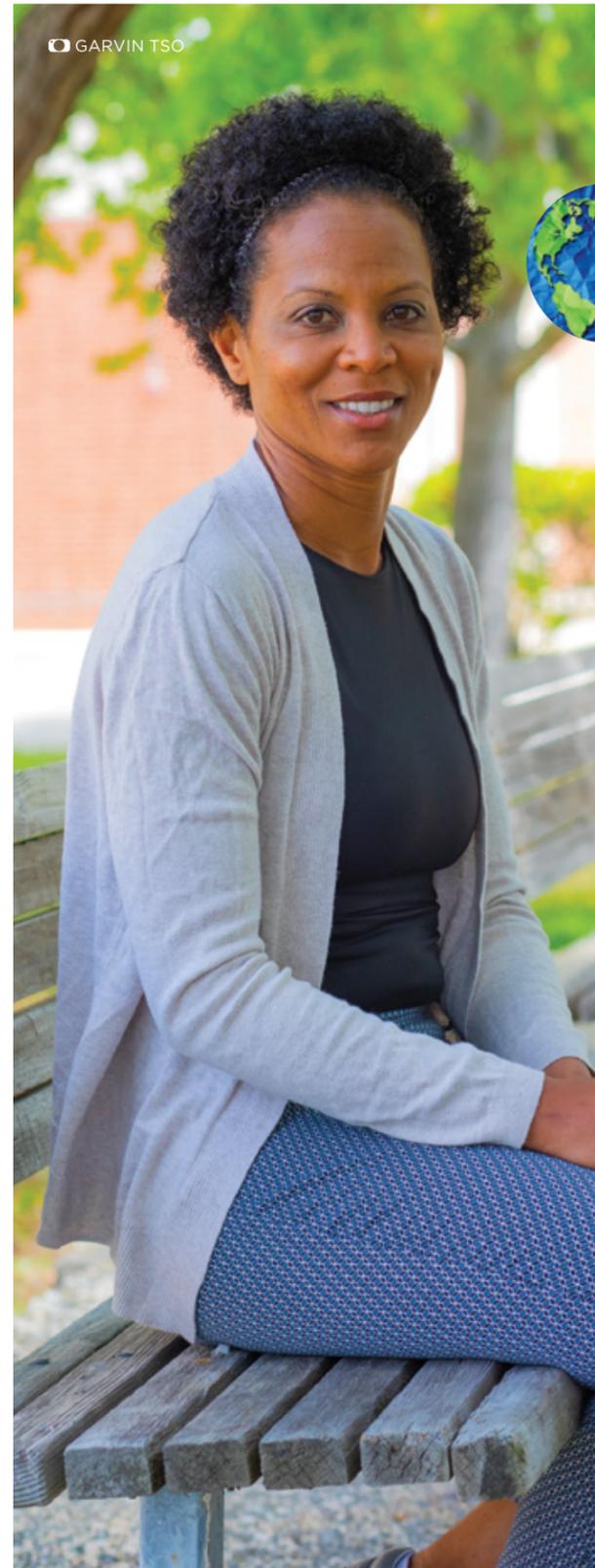
EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS STRIVE TO REDEFINE INCLUSIVITY

BY NATALIE FEULNER

CAL STATE EAST BAY IS A PLACE OF DOERS. A university where challenges present the opportunity for change. Where students in labs discover not only scientific breakthroughs but opportunities to improve their communities and the world.

After two years of living with constant change, spearheaded by a global pandemic — and, significantly, the rise of civil activism after hate against Asian Americans and the deaths of unarmed Black citizens — students, faculty and alumni are leading in areas of antiracist education, inclusivity, language development and social justice. As advocates at the local, state and national levels, they are re-educating educators and redefining the meaning of inclusive performance.

These are the changemakers of Cal State East Bay. ▶



GARVIN TSO

SELF-REFLECTION DRIVES CHANGE

Andrea Johnson is a coach and personal trainer. A professor and a student. A mother and an advocate. And that's never been more true than in the last two years since the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent email sent to families from her children's school.

"I responded to the principal sharing that I believed we needed more than that, we needed healing spaces," Johnson says. "We needed to give a voice to the Black community at our school, and we need to let that voice come out."

Soon after, the school came together on Zoom, and many students, teachers and families began sharing their experiences. Since then, Johnson's work with the school has grown to include professional development for teachers and supporting the equity team. Through her program, teachers have completed training around equity, bias, creating more inclusive policies, and incorporating what they're learning into their work in the classroom.

"We've continued on," Johnson says. "We went on to look at unconscious bias among white individuals and what the issues are that we need to be aware of."

Johnson's days are busy as a mother, a professor, and a student in Cal State East Bay's Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership for Social Justice. But she is buoyed by the knowledge that opportunities come from stepping out of her comfort zone.

"I started first with my own reflection and journey and began realizing that I needed to do more," Johnson says. "I think the key to transformative change is figuring out what piece you can play. Sometimes it can feel daunting, but you have to continue working, you have to be willing to take the steps, to do the hard work and to know that change isn't easy, but someone has to do it."

She says the work she's done with Oakland public schools has not only been transformative to her community but also intersects with her work at Cal State East Bay.

"Any time you work with people, you have to be aware of where they come from and be open-minded to seeing beyond your reality and your world," Johnson says. "Students come from all walks of life, and we have to meet them where they are and have conversations that show you're willing to see their side of things. No matter what your work is, you can't fully understand others unless you can look beyond yourself."

Asked to share her advice with people who are striving for a more equitable future, Johnson noted that it's a journey that starts from within.

"Self-reflection is first," she says. "You can't get anywhere if you refuse to look at yourself first. And get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Sit with that discomfort and then continue to change. Continue to look at things in a new light because that's when progress happens."



GARVIN TSO

FIGHTING CASTE DISCRIMINATION

Several years ago in his native Nepal, Cal State East Bay alumnus Prem Pariyar's family was brutally attacked. Pariyar and his family are Dalit, a group of people once known as "untouchables" in South Asia's caste hierarchy, which infiltrates everything from day-to-day life to politics.

Against the wishes of some, Pariyar '21 (MSW), an associate mental health clinician, went to the local authorities in a search for justice but instead found himself targeted and told to keep silent. "Every day, the marginalized in Nepal experienced discrimination, every day, so this was not new," he says. "But my dad, my mom and my sister, they were hospitalized. How could I remain silent?" he says.

Fortunately, Pariyar received a U.S. visa and moved to the Bay Area in 2015. When he arrived, he remembers thinking, "I'm in a safe place. People are aware of human rights, people are educated, so people must not discriminate based on caste identity."

He soon learned, however, that caste discrimination not only existed in the U.S., but it was also absent from the categories often included in anti-discrimination policies.

He recalls a friend from a dominant caste asking him to attend a house party, but after Pariyar shared his surname, the hosts grew noticeably uncomfortable. They refused to let him serve his own food or eat with the rest of the guests and continued to shun him.

"I was speechless and embarrassed, but I could not say anything because I was new here," Pariyar says. "At the time, I stayed quiet, but I had so many questions in my mind. These are people who are in the U.S. but their mindset is traditional. Their mindset has not changed."

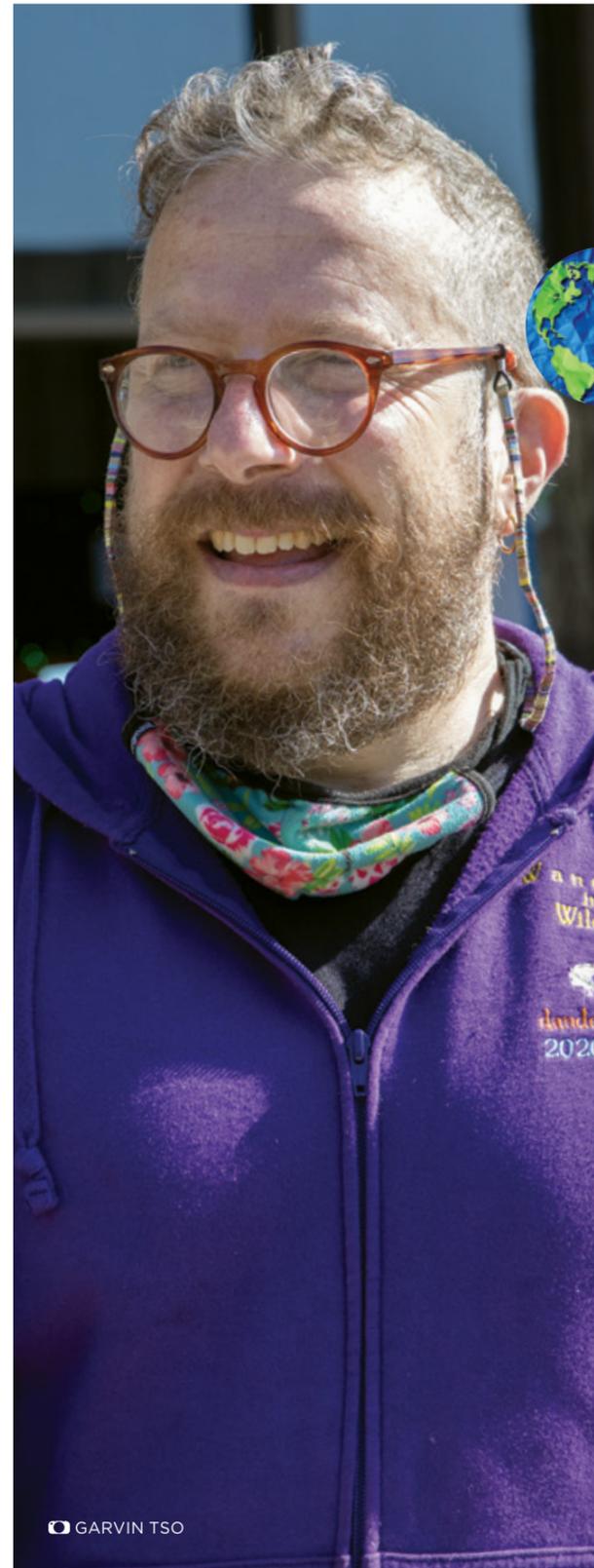
Since that fateful party, Pariyar has worked every day to advocate for others like him, a journey that ultimately led to the CSU system adding caste to its nondiscrimination policy, effectively prohibiting caste-based bias at all 23 campuses.

"I never found that word in anything we were learning, but this type of discrimination has the longest history, more than 1,000 years of history. Still, it wasn't in any textbook or conversation," he says. "I knew my classes were the right place to start talking about it because, as social workers, we are here to learn how to be fighters for justice."

Since Jan. 1, when the CSU adopted its new policy, Pariyar has toured the state and country, talking with other universities and nonprofits about including caste discrimination as a specific category in policies.

He says he's not stopping his work any time soon. "If we are going to fight for all kinds of 'isms,' then we need to understand caste, because of all of these social issues, of these types of social categories like gender, race and sexuality, their base is caste," he says. ▶





DANCE CHAIR PROMOTES INCLUSIVITY

For Cal State East Bay professor Eric Kupers, performance is an opportunity for the complexities of life to be explored. All of them — not merely what is beautiful and pleasing.

In Kupers' classroom, that means exploring and encouraging a world of dance where everyone can show up and share their story, celebrating our differences of race, gender, disability/ability, size, shape and neurotype. With that core value, the look and feel of every program is unpredictable and constantly evolving. Kupers calls it 'inclusive performance.'

"Inclusive performance for me is a way of approaching creativity and community in which we are always being very attentive to who is in the room and what are people's needs and what are people's gifts ... and there's this creative puzzle of how we get through it together," Kupers says.

Since starting at Cal State East Bay more than 20 years ago, Kupers has long attracted students with divergent ways of thinking, bodies and lived experiences. Their work has varied in form from a wheelchair ballroom dancing class to a Creativity Lab where neurodivergent participants explore visual art, music, storytelling and more.

During the past couple of years, Kupers says more and more people, students and community members alike, have wanted to incorporate social justice activism into all aspects of life, especially the arts.

"We see modern dance and performance as vehicles for social change," Kupers says.

And the pandemic, by nature, has provided an opportunity to explore adaptation, something central to all of Kupers' work long before COVID entered the collective lexicon.

"Part of my goal in our department has been to support projects and programs that are geared toward adaptation and flexibility," Kupers says. "We had to move to Zoom, but that's not any different from what we were doing in my classes before, even if it looks different from the physical forms we're used to seeing."

This fall, Kupers will bring back the university's second annual Inclusive Performance Festival. The program will take place during October and November and explore how different artists, teachers and thinkers connect with their ancestors and the spirit world.

Kupers hopes it is an opportunity to turn the idea of what a performance should be or look like on its head, whether that's moving portions to a virtual format or having the 'performance' take place during an everyday moment such as class.

"I think we need to ask for every project we do ... what is the form that most fits this, who is performing, and who do we want to see involved," Kupers says. "How can each thing we do have a clear intention and be serving us and our community at every stage so every rehearsal is a kind of performance and every performance is a kind of rehearsal."

GARVIN TSO

SCIENTIST DRIVES STEM FOR KIDS

Devin Baldwin is a serious Star Wars nerd.

But it's that passion, with a healthy dose of "LEGO mania," that has led him to pursue a degree in computer science and work to ensure that middle and high school students in the East Bay have every opportunity to do the same.

"I'm from LA but live in East Oakland and I play basketball at the parks and have met a lot of the kids of East Oakland," Baldwin says. "They need guidance, they need something to do. There's nothing else keeping them from doing the things that other people don't want them to do."

So, he teaches them.

In addition to being a full-time student and intern at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Baldwin is also a lead instructor at STEMTank, an organization working to prepare the next generation of technologists, innovators and entrepreneurs.

His classes are focused on WebXR, which stands for "Extended Reality." Think augmented and virtual worlds that only require a web browser and can be used for everything from gaming to creating simulation modules for training employees or testing operating systems.

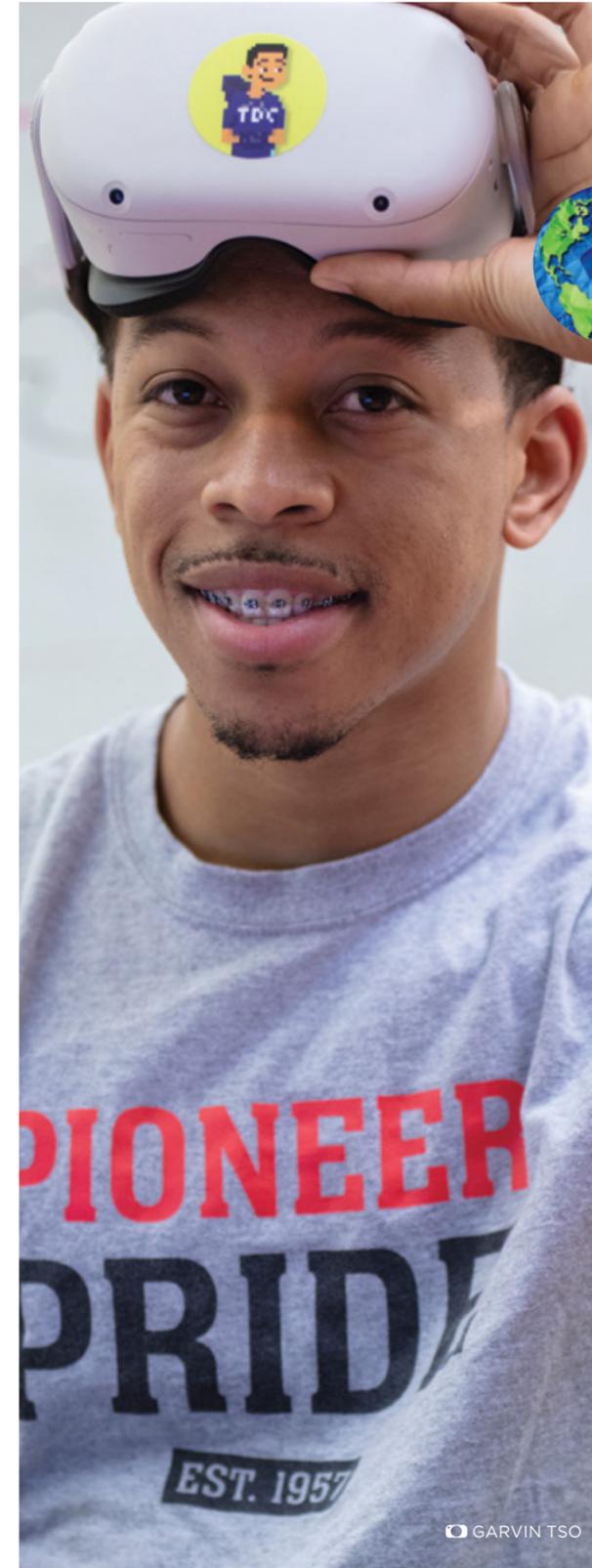
"I was contracted by STEMTank to build a WebXR curriculum and teach the students the material and it was my first experience as a lead instructor," Baldwin says. "But I grew up raising a lot of my younger siblings, so I know how to appeal to kids. I wasn't scared."

As an older student at Cal State East Bay — he's 27 — Baldwin also often finds himself in a mentorship role among peers. He took somewhat of a nontraditional route to higher education. He transferred to East Bay with his associate's degree in computer programming from Laney College and has held jobs at several Bay Area tech companies. But now, he says, he has a perspective that helps him in and outside the classroom.

"First, I like that East Bay actually takes the time to curate the courses that will reflect what you'll actually be doing in the field," Baldwin says. "But another thing I've noticed as an older student is that there's a benefit to me sharing my experience. They think there is this expectation of perfection and I just let them know to focus on what you can do and be yourself."

As for what's next, Baldwin has his eyes set on continuing to help students within his community find a role for themselves in tech and see a future they may not have even imagined for themselves.

"I'm welcoming them into a space where they have the opportunity to really change and augment their current reality," Baldwin says. "I tell them, 'Your current reality may not be the most ideal for you and I know that's a lot to deal with. But when you come here, you have the opportunity, the space and permission to be yourself and to create the reality you see for yourself.'" 



GARVIN TSO

Inspiring Perspectives

Pandemic's Challenges Provide Opportunities for Positive Change

BY CATHI DOUGLAS PHOTOGRAPHY GARVIN TSO

WHILE THE DARKEST DAYS of the coronavirus pandemic may lie behind us, its historic aftereffects live on. Profound challenges wrought by two years of isolation provide new perspectives on our world — and can lead to innovative solutions for positive change.

Every facet of American society today struggles to address issues highlighted by the pandemic, including healthcare disparities in diverse communities, unjust economic burdens on essential workers, and ongoing socioeconomic inequalities in underserved neighborhoods.

Amid the pandemic raged Black Lives Matter protests, where people demanded equal justice for all Americans and brought to the forefront critical socioeconomic, political, and humanitarian challenges.

"This pandemic laid bare all of the disparities in our society," notes Michael Stanton, Cal State East Bay assistant professor of health sciences. "It exposed health and information access and trust issues within the larger health care system. There were heartbreaking examples of how unequal we are, which made things really hard.

"For people who had resources, remote work was easy," Stanton continues. "Essential workers didn't have that luxury, and the pandemic exposed that disparity."

He hopes that the pandemic prompts empathy and respect for teachers, taxi drivers, food preparers, and those who collect our trash. "I'm hopeful that this experience helped us understand how important these people

are, and that their contribution to society is important.

"I'm hopeful that we understand and compensate these people fairly, and give them the opportunities to be successful in their lives."

Recent health science graduate Hershie Collins researched COVID-19's effects on underserved communities for a Cal State East Bay class and discovered that a disproportionate number of African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos were infected and died due to a lack of accessible health care and testing clinics, overcrowded housing or poverty.

"The pandemic hit people of color more than anyone else," she explains. "Realizing that is important for everyone so that our nation can address strategies to address the needs of communities of color."

Collins, who wants to become a registered nurse, works as a patient access representative at Stanford Hospital. One of 11 siblings raised in San Mateo by her grandmother, she is the first in her family to earn a bachelor's degree and says the lessons of the pandemic have inspired her to work toward improving access to health care for all — including mental health care.

"The pandemic took a toll on the health of many students," she says. "Doing school online and staying home all day during the pandemic created a lack of social skills; we were all accustomed to being inside, online, and not socializing with others.

"Now that schools are open and classes are in person, some students may have difficulties communicating with others."

For families, the pandemic meant either painful separations from ▶

one another or the opportunity to isolate together.

“In a crisis, families can either pull together or separate emotionally,” observes Robert Williams, dean of Cal State East Bay’s College of Education and Allied Studies.

“This pandemic crisis pulled some families together and they spent time as a team learning what their children were doing in school, and realizing the hard work that teachers do,” Williams says. “It also created separation in families, because some people felt more isolated even in the same home because of domestic violence and other issues.”

In many families, however, members adjusted in ways that were remarkable, he adds. “The more resourceful families found other resources to create bubbles and support or got creative with their own extended family networks of aunts, uncles, cousins and meemaws who helped out with child care and relief.

“We all found ways to cope with the sudden and unexpected transition.”

The COVID-19 pandemic gave individuals the unique opportunity to examine their work lives and living situations, Williams notes, and some families chose to move out of the Bay Area after assessing their careers and home lives.

“A lot of workers who had the chance to reexamine their lives and chose different fields and made new choices for their quality of life.”

The pandemic meant that Bay Area parents who provide essential services found themselves struggling to remain working while finding places for their children to receive early childhood education.

That burden challenged Cal State East Bay alumna Makinya Ward, who has operated Kids Konnect Infant Care and Preschool in five East Bay locations for two decades. The pandemic was “a life-and-death situation” and a tremendous burden for Ward as both an employer and provider of essential services.

Yet, Ward notes, it also provided an important opportunity for voices not usually heard to have center stage.

“There is a lot of pushback against the system that has failed women and people of color,” she says. “The good that came out of the pandemic was some change and the shining of light on injustices.”

Ward also serves as public policy co-chair of Californians for Quality

Early Learning, a nonprofit organization that provides professional development and support for California child care educators. She believes that COVID-19 is an eye-opener for families across the country.

“I think we understand more about how important preschool education is to early learning, and how important it is for our economy to function as parents join the workforce,” she says.

“I want to believe that child care is going to be pushed into a better place for enough space to be available for every child,” she adds, “but unless federal, state, local governments and businesses support it, child care won’t be available to every family.”

Williams is pleased that Cal State East Bay faculty and administrators are learning to be flexible and noble as university leaders in light of the pandemic’s lessons.

“I know at East Bay we are asking questions about the lens through which the social sciences, math, education, recreational tourism and hospitality are being taught,” he says. “We’re asking whose story is being told.”

He believes it is critical that the university and its teachers remember what their purpose is, and focus on that despite the “incredible divide in this country.

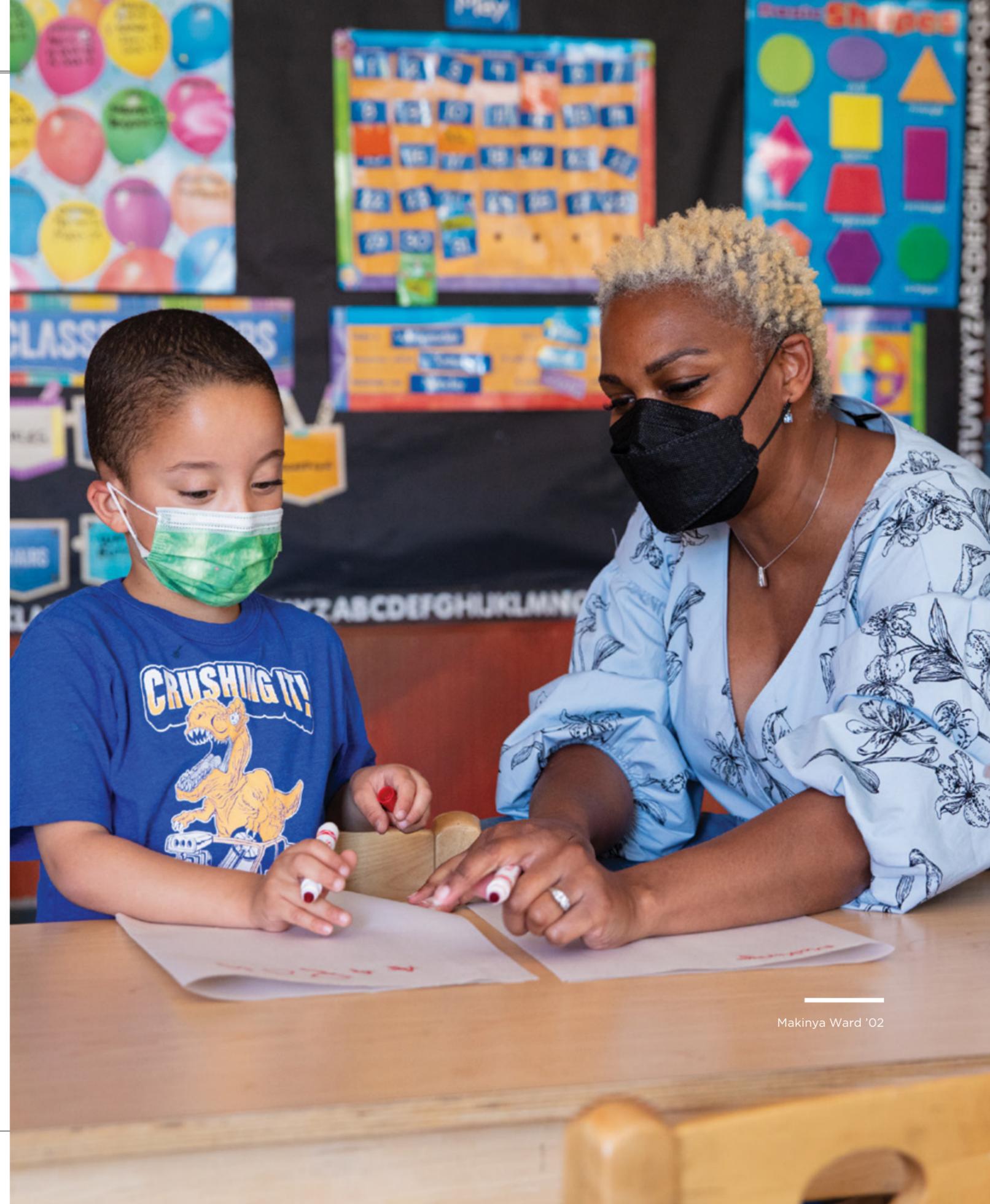
“Our future is fraught with divides this country hasn’t seen since the pre-1900s,” he notes. “We must focus on educating students and training them to improve the human condition, to be changemakers in our traditions, to lead with an eye toward social justice.”

While doing so, Stanton, who is often quoted on the pandemic’s health science issues, says it’s important to acknowledge that scientists “have done the impossible” in successfully creating an effective vaccine in a year’s time.

In addition, he adds, he is inspired by the way “national, state and local communities banded together to support each other in incredible ways.

“It has been amazing to see people get through what we’ve gone through, and to support each other,” he notes. “Given how hard we’ve worked to overcome the pandemic, we need to be empathetic to each other and to ourselves.

“We’ve been through a life-changing experience and that means more time to ourselves at the end of the day to appreciate our families, more sleep, and more exercise,” he says. “We need to be kind to ourselves.”



Makinya Ward '02

“We must focus on educating students and training them to improve the human condition, to be changemakers in our traditions, to lead with an eye toward social justice.”

— Robert Williams, Dean, College of Education and Allied Sciences

BY DAN FOST

Even now, all these years later, Don Chu lights up when thinking about the athletes he coached at Cal State East Bay back in the 1970s. His face opens up with a broad smile and the stories tumble forth.

How he managed to recruit Dave Haber and help mold him into an All-American track star. How athletes who could have competed in Division I instead came to Hayward for the legendary program that Chu and his fellow track coaches built. How he made his jumpers bound up the steps of the football stadium until their legs turned to jelly.

"They would hop up those steps, every other step, four times, bottom to top," Chu says over Zoom, laughing at the memory. "If your legs could tolerate that, we'd go to the next exercises. I remember Norm Alston, the first time, his legs were trembling so badly."

Alston — like Chu, a member of Cal State East Bay's Hall of Fame, and now a track coach himself at Merced College — confirms the story. "My legs buckled and I couldn't get up," Alston recalls. "That's how he was. He got us into shape."

From 1972 to 1984, Chu coached 50 All-Americans and 17 national champions in three events. Many of those athletes have stayed connected to Chu and to each other.

Don Chu wasn't much of a student in his first stab at college, dropping out of Fresno State after a year and, in what he calls a "self-actualizing moment," joined the Army to straighten out. He served four years, going to Vietnam before the war, then came back ready to learn.

He played defensive back on one of East Bay's first football teams in 1965. His roommate was a high jumper, but the program couldn't afford to send him to big meets. "One night, he said, 'I just don't have anybody to coach me,'" Chu recalls. "I said, 'If you don't mind, I'll read up on it.'"

The experience served Chu well as he continued his education. Chu earned a bachelor's in physical education and a master's in kinesiology from CSU East Bay. He then earned a doctorate in physical therapy from Stanford in 1974 — while coaching at East Bay, first in football and then in track. "I was a busy puppy in those days," he says.

The story of Haber, one of two national champions Chu coached, alongside John LeGrande in the triple jump, shows Chu's approach.

Chu heard of Haber's high jump exploits at Alameda High School. When he saw a student on the sideline at one of Cal State's meets he asked: "Do you know Dave Haber?" The student was Haber, and Chu promptly recruited him. Haber was a tremendous athlete, Chu said, but he kept tensing up at big moments, which blocked him from winning the big meets.

"He just wanted it so bad, he felt like he had to put more effort into the situation, when he really only had to focus on doing things correctly," Chu says. "When he came off the field at Sacramento State when he won the national championship as a freshman, he said, 'Chu, I'll never doubt you again.' I thought to myself: 'I got him!'"

"Half of coaching is, the athletes have to believe that you've got

the knowledge base to help them achieve their goals," Chu says. "If you tell them stuff that doesn't make sense to them, they're not going to listen to you."

"I considered the whole athlete in their physical and mental preparation," Chu adds. "I felt that they needed to have a balanced life. If they were balanced, they could compete well."

The other side of the mental approach was a swagger the Pioneers brought to their meets. "The one thing we really worked on was this aspect of mental toughness," Chu says. "We were not going to choke. Somebody was going to have to come up with a great performance in order to beat us."

The athletes bought in. "We were destroyers," Alston remembers. "Every time we walked through an invitational, we would hear other teams say, 'Oh crap, here comes Hayward.' Nobody liked us. That's how good we were."

Chu remembers one meet where Haber jumped 7 feet and turned to his rival from UC Davis and said: "It's on you."

"It was the greatest exhibition of psychological warfare you could ever imagine," Chu says. The competitor "just crumbled."

On the physical side, Chu pioneered some other novel methods. He learned about Soviet Olympians training with a technique that came to be known as plyometrics. (Because Chu wrote a best-selling book on the subject, some have called him the "father of plyometrics," but he doesn't accept the title.) While Americans focused on weight machines, Russians were using their body weight with leaps and jumps.

Part of the plan was to follow the body's cyclical patterns, so the athletes are in peak form when they need to compete. The Russians followed a quadrennial calendar, peaking at the Olympics; subsequently, Chu had his athletes on top of their sport at national competitions.

Chu ultimately left East Bay and hung out his shingle as a consultant. He's got a million stories from that era as well, from Coleen Rienstra Sommer — who missed the 1984 Olympics because she was pregnant, but still became a national champion and competed at Seoul in 1988 after giving birth — to Santa Clara's fabled Aquamaids synchronized swimming program, which has produced several Olympic medalists.

He's just as proud, however, of his athletes who've gone on to become doctors or engineers, or raise wonderful families.

Now 81 years old, Chu notes, "I've had both knees replaced myself. That has slowed me down. I don't jog anymore. I used to run a lot. Now I limit myself to walking the dog."

He scaled back his business during the pandemic and now considers himself retired. Each of his four children was an athlete of some sort, from equestrian sports to volleyball, and now his grandchildren are finding their way in athletics.

But the old coach never stops coaching. One grandson is a swimmer and last year, with Chu hectoring him in Zoom training sessions, "He finally started to make the connection between his improvement in swimming and his strength and conditioning." 

LEGENDARY LEADER

Track Coach Don Chu Helped Build Pioneers' Historic Program

BY KIMBERLY HAWKINS



Cal State East Bay students, faculty and alumni from kinesiology and public health are leading the charge to help the Oakland Roots Sports Club get climate positive. Team members include, left to right: MJ Jalago, public health senior; Michael Schmeltz, professor of public health; Luis Serrano, kinesiology student; Matthew Atencio, professor of kinesiology; and Ryan Booker, public health student. Not pictured is MaKenna Duda '21 (kinesiology), also a researcher on the project.  GARVIN TSO

EAST BAY ASSISTS ROOTS' SUSTAINABILITY GOAL

Oakland Roots Sports Club is tackling climate change head-on — becoming carbon-neutral as one of the first steps on its journey to sustainability.

This organizational effort goes beyond helping individuals score goals to achieve victory on the field, and instead reflects a collective purpose and commitment — a long-term strategy with a goal to lessen the region's carbon footprint.

“Individual changes in behavior are not going to change our current trajectory in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, it is collective actions like the one the Roots are taking that will secure lasting effects,” says Michael Schmeltz, Cal State East Bay assistant professor of public health.

Schmeltz and Matthew Atencio, professor of kinesiology, have teamed up to assist the Roots.

“The potential here is that sports can be used to benefit society and the Roots' vision to become climate positive in 2022 also links with our campus in terms of its sustainability focus,” says Atencio, who is also the co-director of the Center for Sport and Social Justice.

Students, faculty and alumni from kinesiology and public health are leading the charge to help the Roots get climate positive — searching for and analyzing case studies of where community-focused, grassroots and indigenous practices are being implemented to reduce carbon emissions.

“I am a firm believer that little steps towards a goal turn into big strides that can create a domino effect,” says MJ Jalago, a senior in public health who is working on the project.

A final report and presentation based on their analysis of carbon reduction and positivity practices will be given to the Oakland Roots team in May.

“As a purpose-driven organization our vision is to have a positive impact on the health, equity and happiness of the city of Oakland,” notes Mike Geddes, Roots' chief purpose officer. “We want to contribute to community health and environmental justice efforts and that starts with examining our own operations. Carbon-neutral is just our first goal and we're also examining every aspect of our business to see how we can adapt to be more sustainable — and to encourage others to do the same.”

“The support of Cal State East Bay students is hugely important for us as we put together a strategy which is informed by local best practice and opportunity.”

The hope is that the Oakland Roots will serve as a model for other sports teams on how to approach these issues in their hometown or the communities where they live and play.

“For an organization of the Roots' size to make such a large and comprehensive commitment to do their part in the climate fight shows that they truly do care and are not simply doing this for show,” says Ryan Booker, graduating senior in public health. “They will serve as an example and a blueprint to how other large organizations can play their part and have a true impact.”

As for their students, both professors want the interdisciplinary work to open the field of possibilities for them — illustrating the broad impact they can have on health and wellness in many different organizations and professions.

“Being able to work with such a cutting-edge pro sports organization is huge,” Atencio says. “They are directly part of shaping a new direction in the pro sports scene.” 



20 Years of Lifelong Learning

Cal State East Bay Concord Marks Milestone Hosting OLLI Courses for Seniors

BY ELIAS BARBOZA PHOTOGRAPHY ALLEN BIRNBACH



Steve Dubois, top left, and Jane Cambus, bottom right, recently participated in one of the Cal State East Bay Concord OLLI program, along with other students as shown. Concord's OLLI program has more than 1,100 members and is one of the country's largest such organizations.

At the age of 81, Concord resident Carole Woods spends most of her time at home. She enjoys knitting, staying informed on politics and maintaining her yard. Woods, a former reading specialist who retired 21 years ago, says courses from the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute keep her mind sharp.

"As a former teacher, I understand the value of learning, and I appreciate being able to continue to learn," says Woods, who particularly enjoys the history and literature lectures. "OLLI has shown me a variety of things, in depth, that I never knew about."

Since 2001, Cal State East Bay's Concord campus has provided OLLI learning opportunities for members and participants age 50 and over in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and online throughout the United States and Canada.

OLLI's mission is to provide a rich learning environment for mature learners which fosters creativity, self-discovery and peer education. The program offers approximately 120 courses and lectures per year in subjects that range from liberal arts to natural sciences. Each course is presented by CSUEB emeritus faculty and other subject matter experts.

"There's lots of research that shows keeping the mind active is important when we become older and that we stay younger by continuing to learn," says Carl Bellone, OLLI board of advisors member. "OLLI is a great way to keep learning and find out about things that you may not have had time in your professional career to study. It's a way to fill in the gaps of things you wanted to know but never had the time."

There are 170 OLLI programs offered around the United States, most of them affiliated with universities. In December, OLLI celebrated 20 years at CSUEB Concord, an important milestone, notes CSUEB Concord Campus Executive Director Robert Phelps.

"It is hard to imagine the Concord Campus without a strong OLLI program," Phelps says. "Our members bring more life to the campus, and it's rewarding to see learners from multiple generations walking campus grounds."

In the past, OLLI courses were hosted at CSUEB Concord by local lecturers and retired professors. The program was able to quickly transfer its lectures online during the pandemic and currently has more than 1,100 members. It's one of the largest OLLI programs in the country.

Cal State East Bay's program was one of only a half-dozen OLLI programs to have grown its membership during the pandemic. Much of that growth is attributed to the flexible strategy in regards to course delivery, compared to other OLLI sites. Since moving online, OLLI has thrived by inviting instructors from other parts of the country, including two from University of Maryland and Carnegie Mellon University. Expanding the courses online eliminated class size limits and also inspired more students outside the Bay Area to join, including one from New Zealand.

With the rising number of OLLI students, Phelps reflects on the importance of the Concord Campus continuing to host the program.

"I remember a few years ago seeing one of our undergraduates having coffee once a week with her grandmother in the Campus Union, the grandmother being an OLLI student," he recalls. "Cal State East Bay's OLLI program reaffirms the idea that learning is a lifelong endeavor."

For more information on the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at CSUEB Concord Campus, including how to join, visit the program website at www.csueastbay.edu/concord/olli.html. 



CLASS NOTES

1970s

RON FELDMAN (BS '72, Mass Communication; MS '74, Educational Psychology) is president of World Business Services, Inc., and was recognized by Who's Who in California and Who's Who In Lodging. Feldman has invented and patented transaction processing technology that has improved businesses and organizations since 1994.



JENNIFER TAYLOR, DVM (BS '88, Biology) attended the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, earning a doctor of veterinary medicine degree in 1995. Taylor opened Creature Comfort Holistic Veterinary Center in 2001. It is Oakland's first veterinary clinic dedicated to integrating traditional Western veterinary medicine and surgery with holistic modalities, including acupuncture, homeopathy, chiropractic, and herbal therapies for pets. Creature Comfort is celebrating its 21st anniversary on May 15.

1980s

PETER BAUER (BA '85, History) is the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) - San Francisco Liaison to the State Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Programs, the Senior Medicare Patrol and the Lead for the National Training Program. Bauer, a former Peace Corps Volunteer and beekeeper, was just recognized for his work on Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) workgroup that is leading the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' effort to maximize enrollment.

KATHLEEN HEININGE (CARRIGAN) (BA '87, MA '95, English) retired as an English professor at George Fox University in Oregon. She recently published her newest book, a memoir, titled, "Working in Mysterious Ways: My Life through the Rosary." Her current book succeeds her two other books, "Reflections: Virginia Woolf," and "Quaker Aunt, Caroline Stephen," as well as "Buffoonery in Irish Drama: Staging 20th Century Postcolonial Stereotypes."

1990s



GEOFFREY RODGERS (BS '90, Business Administration) is chief commercial officer at Monetize360, a Silicon Valley-based SaaS company focused on usage and consumption-based billing. After graduating from Cal State East Bay, Rodgers earned an MBA at Santa Clara University, where he met his wife, to whom he's been married for 29 years. He lives in Pleasanton, enjoys mentoring other business professionals, and serves as an adviser at several companies.

STEPHEN TAYLOR (BA '95, History) published his first book last August, "Your Cat Won't Do That!: Observations and Advice for Cat Companions from a Longtime Cat-Sitter," a volume sharing wisdom drawn from his decade of experience caring for his feline friends.



DEIDRE JOHNSON (BA '98, Liberal Studies) works with the Alameda County Probation Department and has been a lifelong learner since graduating. She has earned a doctrine certificate at the Rock School Ministry at the Well Community College and is completing a Certificate in Achievement in Accounting at Laney College.

2000s



DR. RHONDA FARRELL (MBA '00) is the CEO of Global Innovation Strategies and has been featured as a special guest on the Data Security and Privacy Podcast, hosted by Rebecca Herold, the Privacy Professor. Additionally, Farrell recently

spoke on Marcia Macomber's Morning show, KSVY in Northern California, on the power of entrepreneurs to drive increased value and success through realignment to their strategic North Star.

ANDREA MILLER (BA '00, Human Development) is now the controller for the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Previously, she served as finance director for the city of Pinole, assistant finance director for the city of Pleasanton, and budget administrator for the city of Richmond.

2010s

ERIN DAISLEY (HARE) (BS '11, Nursing) has been involved in public health services since graduating, working as a public health nurse in perinatal and pediatrics. After receiving her master's degree in nursing, she got a job with the public health department providing care to Contra Costa residents in the specialties of women's health, pediatrics, STD control, and school-based confidential services.



GARY SIMON YBARDOLAZA MANALANG (MS '13, Healthcare Administration) is a quality engineer at Abbott Laboratories. He credits his favorite science professors, Dr. Millerbrown, Dr. Morewitz and Dr. Fogarty, for giving him inspiration to work hard and analyze and solve tough problems.

CAL STATE EAST BAY ALUMNAE LEAD THEIR OWN BUSINESSES

University Celebrates Five High-Achieving Alumnae



Marci Bertuzzi

BS '20 Business Administration

BUSINESS: Petra IQ

ROLE: Managing Partner & Data Strategist

BUSINESS LOCATION: Headquartered in Los Angeles with remote offices in Austin, Houston and Atlanta

OVERVIEW: Petra IQ is a data strategy consulting firm that helps companies improve data quality, implement data governance controls and improve overall business operations by implementing sound risk management practices. Petra IQ plays a significant role in assisting clients to develop effective strategies for managing data assets under various regulatory contexts as well as providing them with the necessary tools to make informed decisions about how to best use these resources within their organization. By implementing an integrated approach, clients can maximize opportunities for success while minimizing potential pitfalls in this rapidly changing environment where regulations and technology are constantly evolving.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ANOTHER WOMAN CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS?

Owning a business is not for the faint-hearted. It is a hard road to

travel but is very rewarding. Stay true to yourself, and know your strengths and your weaknesses. Bring people into your circle that complement you in the areas where you are not as strong, so you have a well-rounded team surrounding you. Find a mentor. Ask questions, always seek improvement, and constantly work on your forward strategy. Where are you now? Where do you want to be? How do you get there? Update your strategy often. And just leap.

WHAT DID YOU TAKE FROM YOUR TIME AT CAL STATE EAST BAY/CAL STATE HAYWARD THAT HELPS YOU TODAY?

The team projects we were assigned in every class undoubtedly helped challenge me from a management perspective. I was challenged to learn new ways to motivate my teams and understand their strengths so I could delegate tasks effectively so we could all get that A we all wanted. I know that as I continue to grow my company the lessons I learned from CSUEB will help shape how I lead my teams and my company going forward.



Doleen Chand

BA '15 Sociology

BUSINESS: Memoria Sky

ROLE: Founder & Chief Executive Officer

BUSINESS LOCATION: San Francisco, CA

OVERVIEW: Memoria Sky simplifies funeral planning by helping people navigate the process of losing loved ones and memorializing them in meaningful ways. The current funeral planning experience is overwhelming, exhausting and outdated. Grieving the loss of loved ones takes countless hours of researching and planning a memorial when such time could be spent grieving with friends and family. These tools include Memoria Pages, a digital obituary, and Memoria Marketplace, a place where clients can browse and book services and products offered by empathetic local businesses. Doleen believes there are several factors that make the funeral process complex and challenging; planning and logistics should not be considerations. So, she created a digital funeral community of caring businesses to help make celebrating a loved one's legacy memorable and straightforward.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ANOTHER WOMAN CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS?

One obstacle some women face when starting a business is 'impostor syndrome,' which can be debilitating. Second-guessing decisions and feeling full of anxiety can affect their business idea's progress. Remember that no one, not even yourself, should stand in the way when you believe what you are doing is worthwhile.

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Always stay curious, never stop learning, and settle for nothing less than ongoing transformation.

Always focus on your potential instead of your limitations and enjoy the journey.



Christa G. Marting

BS '85 Geology

BUSINESS: ETIC (Environmental Technology International Corporation), an engineering, environmental consulting and construction firm.

ROLE: President/CEO/Owner

BUSINESS LOCATION: Pleasant Hill, CA

OVERVIEW: Since 1991, ETIC has provided environmental consulting, engineering, and turnkey services in remedial and clean construction. ETIC's areas of service include but are not limited to site assessment, UST services, stormwater and water quality compliance, biological services, environmental general contracting and field services, and environmental remediation. ETIC has successfully acted as a regulatory liaison for environmental remediation, compliance, property transfer, redevelopment, and construction projects. What separates ETIC from other firms is its size, professional expertise, and high-quality work.

CONTINUED ►

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.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ANOTHER WOMAN CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS?

You never get tired of what you're doing. Be confident in your authentic self and don't EVER give up!

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR YOUNGER SELF?

Always follow your intuition. Let your moral compass be your guide. There were times when I knew what the right thing to do was or the right decision was, but I let people talk me out of it. In these situations, it turned out I was right. I should have been more outspoken and adamant about convincing others to listen to me. I learned this later in my journey, but I wish I had started with the same confidence that I have now.



Elnaz Sarraf

BA '12 Art

BUSINESS: ROYBI

ROLE: Founder & CEO

BUSINESS LOCATION: San Jose, CA

OVERVIEW: Over 250 million children are at risk of not reaching their potential because the education system is one-size-fits-all. Technology can act as a supplement and become an extension of our teachers to travel and reach children anywhere in the world. It can also create a smarter link and collaboration between teachers, parents, and students. Products like ROYBI Robot, Time's Best Invention of 2019, are the next step in incorporating technology into

education. With this robot's AI technology, an interactive learning environment is created to provide children with smart assessments that can be utilized to set milestones and roadmaps for personalized learning.

WHAT IS THE MOST GRATIFYING PART ABOUT OWNING A BUSINESS?

I have always wanted to make a difference in this world, and enabling people to benefit from quality education has been a cause that's been very close to my heart. But obviously, there are other benefits of owning a business. I've been speaking with many entrepreneurs over the past few years about building a business; they often started their companies to control their financial outcomes or to gain financial freedom. Many entrepreneurs start their businesses to increase their income, reach their dreams and have a more significant and meaningful impact.

WHAT WOMAN DO YOU ADMIRE?

My mother has a significant role in raising me as a strong woman and teaching me that I can do anything I want in life as long as I work hard for it. I am lucky to have such a supportive family growing up, and even to this date, my mother is one of my biggest inspirations and supporters when it comes to the ups and downs of my startup journey. I admire her strong personality and dedication to our family and business.



Fern Stroud

BS '03 Business Administration

BUSINESS: Black Vines

ROLE: Principal/Owner

BUSINESS LOCATION: Oakland, CA

OVERVIEW: Over a decade ago, Stroud noticed that the access to Black wineries, Black wine labels, and other Black wine lovers within the community was slim, nearly nonexistent. After gaining more access to vintners of color, she realized that the wine community at large is

filled with invisible barriers that block access to luxury experiences and growth within the industry. Black Vines is the longest-standing Black wine festival in the country and California's preeminent curator of Black wine experiences and special events, celebrating culture, art, and wine education that brings together Black artists, Black musicians, Black winemakers and vintners. It was voted USA Today's #1 Wine Festival in the country.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ANOTHER WOMAN CONSIDERING STARTING A BUSINESS?

I would advise women to stop contemplating and take the leap into starting their business. You can only learn as there is no such thing as failure when you're learning along the way.

WHAT WOMAN DO YOU ADMIRE?

I admire all women who wake up every day to change the world and make it better than the day before.



PARTING SHOT

Dr. Amy Furniss, Cal State East Bay assistant professor of physics and gamma-ray astrophysicist, helped develop the prototype Schwarzschild-Couder Telescope, contributing the secondary mirrors for the telescope. An East Bay computer science student (now alumnus) contributed to the analysis software. The instrument was completed and unveiled at the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory near Tucson, Arizona, in early 2019.

📷 COURTESY OF AMY FURNISS

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