



CAL STATE

# East Bay

SPRING 2020

## RESILIENCE EMBODIED

---

CAL STATE EAST BAY  
STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF  
RISE TO THE CHALLENGES  
BROUGHT ON BY COVID-19

*EMERGENT DIMENSIONS (2017)*  
SEE INSIDE COVER

# CAL STATE East Bay

magazine is published by the Office of University Communications and Marketing, a department of the Division of University Advancement.

## President

Leroy M. Morishita

## University Advancement

Bill Johnson,  
Vice President

Holly Stanco,  
Associate Vice President,  
Development

Richard Watters '13,  
Executive Director, Alumni  
Engagement & Annual Giving

## Editor

Natalie Feulner

## Graphic Designers

Kent Kavasch  
Gus Yoo

## Contributing Writers

Natalie Feulner  
Michelle Geiger  
Kimberly Hawkins

## Photography and Illustration

Kent Kavasch  
Garvin Tso '07

## Contributing Copyeditor

Melanie Blake

## Inquiries

Send your letter to the editor, submit a class note or update your address/subscription preferences, including the option to receive Cal State East Bay magazine electronically, by contacting:

[natalie.feulner@csueastbay.edu](mailto:natalie.feulner@csueastbay.edu)

Or mail to:  
Cal State East Bay  
SA 4800  
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd.  
Hayward, CA 94542

\*Please note: Letters will be printed at the discretion of Cal State East Bay and may be edited for publication.

**COVER:** Cal State East Bay's Emergent Dimensions statue was erected in 2017 and dedicated to the university's first-generation students who embody the meaning of what it is to be a Pioneer. They are resilient and bold, paving a new path for themselves and future generations.  GARVIN TSO

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and California's subsequent shelter-in-place orders, commencement ceremonies for the Cal State East Bay Class of 2020 have been postponed. In the meantime, the university is celebrating their accomplishments in new and unique ways, such as this mosaic (continued on page 45).

# CAL STATE EAST BAY





## FEATURES

**12**  
Redefining  
Resilience

**18**  
The Postponement  
of a Dream

**22**  
Empowering  
Female Leaders

**26**  
From the Frontlines

**32**  
Aspiring Pioneers

## DEPARTMENTS

**04** PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**05** UNIVERSITY NEWS

**10** APPLIED SCIENCES  
CENTER

**38** GIVING

**42** CLASS NOTES

**46** PARTING SHOT

---

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

---



May 2020

I have long known the resilience of our Pioneers. Resilience shines in the faces of our students as they cross the stage at commencement. Resilience emanates from our faculty as they search for research opportunities for their students. And resilience is embodied by our staff who work to ensure our students and faculty have access to the tools they need to survive and thrive, allowing the university to continue on a trajectory of success.

In the past few months, I have developed a new understanding of what it means to be a Pioneer. As the increasingly fast pace of the world paused in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so did our three Cal State East Bay campuses. After a tremendous effort by faculty, staff and students, within days, our three locations transitioned to a remote operation of online learning for the remainder of the semester.

From day one, our community has risen to meet this exceptional challenge. Our students, faculty and staff are Pioneers and true to that spirit, have exhibited creative problem solving and the critical nature of collaboration. Collectively, our campus, our alumni and our region have demonstrated we are stronger as a result of these challenges.

Although we were unable to hold our normal commencement ceremonies to honor our students and their loved ones, via technology, we developed personalized video commencement messages for more than 5,000 graduates. We hope to recognize our graduates formally at an in-person ceremony this fall or in spring of 2021.

I hope you will be inspired and proud of the stories of resilience, entrepreneurship and innovation in this spring's magazine. We have stories of women leaders transforming executive boards across California, of Cal State East Bay nurses working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, and of the perspective of an Olympic hopeful whose dreams and life are on hold.

As you may have heard, at the request of Chancellor Timothy White, I have deferred my retirement until the end of this calendar year. To be part of this tremendous campus community since 2011 and especially during this time has been my privilege. I know we will all remember this as a historic moment when we lifted one another up to make our university and the world a better place. For now, stay strong, well and safe.

Go, Pioneers!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leroy M. Morishita". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Leroy M. Morishita  
President

---

CAL STATE EAST BAY

# University News

---

## An Award for Leadership in Education

Cal State East Bay President Leroy M. Morishita was recently honored with the Council for Advancement and Support of Education District VII Chief Executive Officer Leadership Award. The nonprofit is an international association focused on educational advancement — alumni relations, communications, development, marketing and advancement services. According to CASE District VII, CEO award nominations are received from CASE members and universities, schools, colleges and community colleges. Morishita received his award at a luncheon held in San Francisco in early March.



## Cal State East Bay, U.S. Coast Guard announce new partnership



Cal State East Bay and the U.S. Coast Guard announced a new program this spring called the College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative, which will provide students with scholarship and research opportunities while also increasing the diversity of the agency's military officers.

During a ceremony at the university's Hayward campus, President Leroy M. Morishita signed a memorandum of agreement with Vice Admiral Linda L. Fagan, Coast Guard Pacific Area commander.

Cal State East Bay is now the third school in California to partner with the Coast Guard for the initiative.

Students accepted into the program will receive up to two years of tuition, living expenses and a salary while attending school and are guaranteed commission with the U.S. Coast Guard following graduation.

As part of the agreement, Cal State East Bay faculty will also have increased opportunities to work with the Coast Guard on projects of shared interest and wider scope,

such as marine biology and environmental science.

"Cal State East Bay is proud to join the U.S. Coast Guard's College Student Pre-Commissioning Initiative," Morishita said. "Our students will receive significant resources and real-world training, and our faculty can expand their research as a result of this agreement. We look forward to a collaboration that will have [a] lasting impact for the university."

The initiative began as an effort to increase the participation of historically black colleges and universities in federally-sponsored programs and has expanded to all designated minority-serving institutions.

"To meet the future needs of the nation, our Coast Guard workforce must be representative of the American public we serve," Fagan said. "Diversity is a top priority for the service, and we are excited about our partnership with Cal State East Bay and the shared opportunities the CSPI program will create."



GARVIN TSO

## A Holistic Approach to Advising

Cal State East Bay and nearby San Francisco State have received \$8 million to transform academic advising and create a clear path to graduation for students. A gift from the Stupski Foundation, the \$4 million allocated to CSUEB will support Graduation Initiative 2025 and the university's initiative to increase graduation rates for all students while closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

"Cal State East Bay is one of the most demographically diverse institutions of higher education in the United States, with the vast majority of its dynamic student body hailing from traditionally underserved commu-

nities," Jen Nguyen, director of postsecondary success for the Stupski Foundation, said in a statement. "This partnership is a great opportunity to aid Cal State East Bay in implementing its transformative vision of creating a comprehensive, student-centered advising network."

Currently, each freshman is assigned a single adviser, a change from years prior when a student might interact with multiple advisers and offices in one year, depending on their major. The new model will mean advisers will focus on both general education and major requirements.

In addition to streamlining the advis-

ing process, the new approach is holistic. It allows advisers to focus on peripheral issues such as housing costs and food insecurity that may have a direct effect on student success.

"Using predictive analytics and focused advising, we will be able to provide our students with a primary advisor to help them navigate their academic pathway and succeed in completing their degrees," said Cal State East Bay Provost Edward Inch. "By investing in our technological infrastructure, advising community, and much more, we're also making significant investments in our students and their success."

# Supporting Struggling CSUEB Students

As the world has changed in the past several months because of COVID-19, so have the needs of Cal State East Bay students. In response, the university is adjusting the way it helps students with challenges they face because of layoffs, remote classes and emergency needs.

While the university's physical food pantry sites have temporarily closed, Pioneers for H.O.P.E. Program Coordinator Darice Ingram said the program is fielding more calls than ever before. One student may need help making rent after losing shifts at work, another may inquire about food, while still others may need help paying for a home internet connection so they can continue learning remotely. Money to meet

these needs is provided through the Presidential Pioneers Emergency fund.

The fund was initially created to help students who experienced "unplanned emergencies" that would hinder graduation. It provided them a one-time grant of up to \$1,500 for situations such as unexpected medical bills, a stolen laptop, or lost wages due to a layoff.

"This fund is tremendous," Ingram said. "It means we can get support out to the students who need it the most ASAP."

Ingram recommends that students who need food visit local food pantries, or she can connect them with meal swipes for the university's Dining Commons, which remains open for students still living at the

residence halls. But sometimes students don't have a way to easily get to campus or their county's food pantry, so the H.O.P.E program is considering how it can pivot the emergency fund to support students during the current crisis.

Many students who were working in the service industry have lost hours, and others who may have made ends meet working for gig companies such as Uber and Lyft can no longer drive because of immunocompromised family members at home or responsibilities they didn't have before the pandemic began.

*To support students, donate to Cal State East Bay's Presidential Pioneers Emergency fund today: <https://csueb.tfaforms.net/4740737>.*



GARVIN TSO

## CORE Construction Begins

Construction for Cal State East Bay's newest building, CORE, began this spring impacting popular areas around campus including the RAW Plaza, the Upper Science ramp, the walkway along the Recreation and Wellness Center, Meiklejohn Hall, the Union courtyard and the library.

Once completed, CORE will give students access to cutting-edge forms of learning, creating, and multidisciplinary-team problem solving, all skills and experiences essential for becoming the next generation's workforce.

"This construction begins an exciting phase for the campus as we all see this great new facility emerge from the ground up," said Winnie Kwofie, associate vice president, facilities management.

CORE will be divided into three levels, each dedicated to serving different purposes for students. The first floor will house the Hub for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.



It will allow inventors, entrepreneurs, startups and venture capitalists to engage in opportunities that will propel the creative and innovative economy into the next generation and beyond.

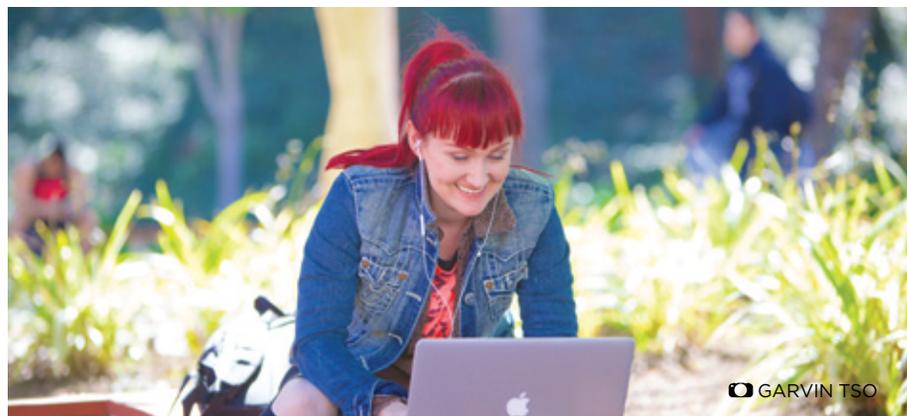
The second floor of CORE will serve as a 21st century library with a service and information desk, study and technology rooms, self-directed learning and workspaces for visitors, and an exterior roof deck

open for selected hours.

The Student Center for Academic Achievement will be relocated on the third floor of CORE. At the SCAA, students of all majors receive guidance and peer mentoring in writing, reading, math and other disciplines.

Visit [www.csueastbay.edu/core](http://www.csueastbay.edu/core) for more information and regular updates about ongoing construction.

## University Launches Courses for Causes



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cal State East Bay Continuing Education recently announced a selection of free online courses this summer through Courses for Causes, an initiative to support community members and provide professional development training and education for those looking to explore new career opportunities or new skillsets at this time.

"We are all in this together," said Brian Cook, associate vice president of University Extension at Cal State East Bay. "With so many in our region struggling to work, find work and provide for their families, we feel

it is imperative to be a resource for those sheltering in place."

With Courses for Causes, participants can enroll in introductory courses within select certificate programs without any costs to explore a new subject and take the first step toward earning a professional certificate if they decide it's right for them. Introductory courses offered include courses in human resources management, nonprofit management, paralegal studies, chemical dependency studies and construction management, with the first classes set to start in July.

"The certificate courses we offer can help someone match the skills they already have with specialized training so they can get a new job or a promotion," said Kate White, director of Continuing Education at CSUEB.

"For example, there may be someone who worked in the service or hospitality industry who can transfer their soft skills into a career in human resource management," White added. "By taking the free course, a person can learn some marketable skills and test out whether or not our full program is a good fit."

Cal State East Bay's Courses for Causes is part of a larger COVID-19 Courses for Causes Campaign initiative developed by California State University's Professional and Continuing Education program. The campaign is spread across the CSU network, which includes 23 campuses, and its goal is to provide select free courses in support of first responders, health care workers and all interested community members.

For more information, or to enroll in a free course, visit CSUEB's Courses for Causes website at <https://ce.csueastbay.edu/ce/courses-for-causes/>.

# Gift Funds New College Agile Network

Cal State East Bay is on a mission to generate a more educated, diverse East Bay with graduates prepared to meet the regional economy's challenges.

And thanks to a \$375,000 from San Francisco-based Koret Foundation, the university is developing a model network, entitled the East Bay College Agile Network, often referred to as "East Bay CAN," to help with the transformation. The

collaboration between CSUEB and the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District seeks to leverage and strengthen existing relationships and initiatives across the two systems to remove barriers to student success.

The partnership aims to increase transfer rates among the three East Bay Hispanic-serving institutions and increase degree completion and advanced equity for his-

torically underserved students.

Currently, the three colleges use different systems to advise students on pathways to graduation, which can sometimes cause confusion or delays for students looking to transfer or complete programs.

East Bay CAN will look into providing technology that would create a unified dashboard of progress toward degree completion at Cal State East Bay, whether students are enrolled at the university, Chabot College or Las Positas College.

The new system would create coordinated academic transfer and financial counseling across the institutions and allow students to remain on their "home" campus while still using the resources. It would also create shared analytics across campuses to equip advisors with the information needed to provide support and intervene when students veer off track.

In addition to the tech, the university plans to invest in advisors across the institutions to guide students in setting goals and proactively engage them in achieving key milestones toward those goals.



## Cal State East Bay Celebrates More Than 5,000 Graduates

Cal State East Bay recognized the accomplishments of 5,600 new graduates this spring through a variety of virtual celebrations.

Due to California's shelter-in-place orders, traditional commencement ceremonies were postponed. However, students were honored via personalized videos, stories featuring students from each college, social media, and on the inside covers of East Bay Magazine.

"The last few months have demonstrated



to me something I have known about you for a long time: You are a Pioneer," President Leroy M. Morishita said in a statement to the graduating class. "You have determination, grit and perseverance that you have exhibited throughout your entire educational journey, especially this last semester. Those will serve you well as you go forward into the future."

Feature stories about several graduates, including one who is looking to help

destigmatize mental health in her Pakistani-American community, and another who plans to use her degree to advocate for minority students, after overcoming decades of challenges herself. These are available at [www.ebtoday.com](http://www.ebtoday.com).

Meet 60 other students who shared some of their top highlights and accomplishments from their time at Cal State East Bay on the Commencement website, [www.csueastbay.edu/commencement/](http://www.csueastbay.edu/commencement/).

# A NEW PLACE FOR DISCOVERY

## A LOOK INSIDE CSUEB'S PROPOSED APPLIED SCIENCES CENTER

BY NATALIE FEULNER

Cal State East Bay has long been a place of discovery. To continue that legacy and increase opportunities for the faculty-mentored student research, now a hallmark of an education at Cal State East Bay, the university has plans to build an Applied Sciences Center.

The ASC will be a place where students develop the skills and knowledge to lead scientific discovery and innovation. We envision a place where budding scientists work alongside their professors in interdisciplinary, flexible laboratories.

The new \$30 million privately-funded building will expand these opportunities and accommodate the rapid growth in the number of students seeking to study STEM disciplines at Cal State East Bay. Once the center is fully funded and built, the university will be better positioned to meet the demands of the Bay Area innovation economy for local talent committed to staying in the region.

“We have had tremendous success raising more than \$24 million in private funds for this building and are grateful for our donors’ commitments to this project,” College of Science Dean Jason Singley said. “Their investment to-date encourages us greatly that we can raise the remaining \$6 million.”

Universities play a pivotal role in fostering the interests and skills of students in the sciences to intersect with industry and economic demand. Fifty-two percent of California’s bachelor’s degrees — and 37 percent of its STEM bachelor’s degrees — come from California State University campuses.

### TRAINING FUTURE STEM LEADERS

At Cal State East Bay, the College of Science is the university’s fastest growing college, with more than 5,500 students studying across 11 departments. Each program is focused on providing foundational disciplinary knowledge and tangible skills that will allow students to have an immediate impact once they enter the workforce. Faculty in these programs are leading international scientific collaborations in the areas of climate change, energy security and fundamental physics, through which East Bay students are able to develop up-to-date hard skills and scientific networks.

The college also houses career-specific programs, such as the Biotechnology Certificate program in cellular and molecular techniques, to prepare students for careers in biological research, development and production. Another, the Pre-Professional Health Academic Program, gives students a competitive edge in applying to health professional schools.

In addition, the College of Science collaborates with the university’s Institute for STEM Education to host multiple community-facing programs to build the pipeline into STEM from the K-12 level.

Collectively, across all four colleges, Cal State East Bay graduates are making solid contributions to the innovation economy and the field of allied health. Drawing students primarily from the San Francisco Bay Area, the university finds that more than 80 percent of graduates stay to work locally and fuel the region’s growth. Those from the College of Science reflect California’s broad demographics and fill the ranks of new businesses, inspiring products and innovation across the East Bay and Silicon Valley.

Two-thirds of the top 15 Bay Area employers of our graduates are in the STEM or allied health fields including Apple, Cisco, Genentech, Google, Kaiser Permanente, Oracle, Pacific Gas & Electric, Stanford Health Care, Tesla and Workday, with Facebook rapidly moving into this top list.

### A LOOK INSIDE

The Applied Sciences Center will create a bridge from where students are when they enter the university to the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to successfully compete in the regional high-tech economy. It will also meet the need for a larger physical footprint for the increasing number of students in the sciences.

The new 20,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility will house essential student services such as the STEM Lab, a community space for peer mentoring in critical introductory courses in science and mathematics that are the gateway to STEM majors. New classrooms will be designed to support 21st-century teaching practices that focus more on collaboration and problem solving than the recitation of facts and figures. Interdisciplinary research labs will provide an environment for students to apply their learning to critical problems facing society while working on faculty-mentored research projects.

The building will have two floors with a unified theme of providing spaces for students to actively engage in their learning — whether in the classroom or research laboratory — with up-to-date technology as a hallmark of each lab and learning space. Externally focused projects to build the pipeline into STEM among high school and middle school students will use these spaces as well, inspiring young people to study science. **EE**

*To learn more about the forthcoming Applied Sciences Center, visit [csueastbay.edu/csi/applied-sciences-center](http://csueastbay.edu/csi/applied-sciences-center).*

## THE APPLIED SCIENCES CENTER WILL FEATURE:

- Cutting-edge research labs: Open concept laboratories will house multiple student and faculty teams working on priority research. These labs will be dedicated to:
  - The new flagship Green Biome Institute, dedicated to the study and conservation of California's endangered plants.
  - Biotechnology, with students in those labs receiving an excellent education in molecular biology and bioinformatics. Graduates will leave Cal State East Bay with in-demand skills, having worked extensively with four sequencers, including next-generation systems such as Ion PGM, Illumina MiSeq, and the Oxford Nanopore MinION.
    - ◆ Interdisciplinary research dedicated to computer science and computer engineering with faculty and students able to work in project teams.
- Technology Collaboration Center: A student-faculty research space will support interdisciplinary research into the applications of new technologies in multiple areas of study. This will be a computationally-focused center with space to work together, enhanced with visualization technologies.
- A STEM lab dedicated to supporting students as they move through their introductory science classes. This program — an expansion of the university's successful Math Lab model — is where more advanced students coach others in lower division coursework in biology, physics, chemistry and computer science classes, in addition to math courses. The benefits are twofold: the peer coach cements the knowledge they have gained through the experience of teaching the information; and for the students receiving the coaching, a pilot program showed a significant leap in success rates for passing gateway courses and exams.
- Flexible learning: Classrooms will be designed to encourage active learning and allow students to work in teams on focused projects. These spaces — functioning more like team offices — will easily allow space for students to leave their work and material in one place and allow for brainstorming and collaboration between community representatives, faculty and learners.



## THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE BY THE NUMBERS

- ACT, the Iowa-based college admissions testing company, found that California's 2016 high school graduates had greater interest in pursuing STEM-related college majors or career opportunities than the national average.
- College graduates with science degrees will earn an average of \$1 million more during their lifetimes than non-college graduates.
- By 2022, California is projected to have nearly 10 percent of the nation's STEM jobs. California labor trends predict job growth in health, biomedical and environmental industries by an average of 33 percent over a 10-year span.
- Drawing students primarily from the San Francisco Bay Area, Cal State East Bay finds more than 80 percent of graduates stay to work locally and fuel the region's growth.
- Computer engineering, computer science, construction management, health sciences, and statistics undergraduate majors at Cal State East Bay have more than doubled since 2010.
- More than 2,200 students from minority groups underrepresented in STEM are now pursuing a degree in the College of Science, an increase of 117 percent since 2010.
- Female undergraduate STEM majors have increased 57 percent since 2010 and now comprise 64 percent of the students filling Cal State East Bay classrooms and labs.



GARVIN TSO

---

# REDEFINING RESILIENCE

---

CAL STATE EAST BAY FACULTY  
REFLECT ON WHAT IT TAKES TO  
THRIVE DURING UNCERTAINTY

BY KIMBERLY HAWKINS

**H**UMANS ARE DESIGNED FOR RESILIENCE. It's in our nature. We wouldn't have survived this far if we weren't. But much of how and why we make it through times of adversity is a direct result of how we prepare.

"We are the descendants of people who have endured hardship, toil and difficulty," said Cal State East Bay Assistant Professor of Health Sciences Michael Stanton. "We too have the capacity and the ability to confront crises head on and emerge stronger."

Cal State East Bay's motto *per aspera ad astra* — "through adversity to the stars" — is more than a Latin phrase on the university's seal. It is a roadmap for how our students, faculty and staff navigate challenges and become stronger and more resilient on the other side.

East Bay Magazine asked several university faculty to offer a new definition of resilience in light of COVID-19 and the drastic changes our world has seen in the past several months. They offer insight into what it takes in various industries to not only make it through times of uncertainty, but to innovate and thrive. ▶



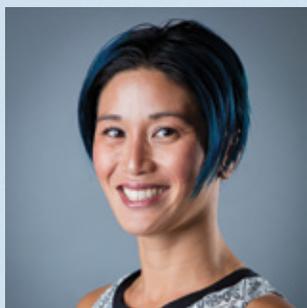
**AMY FURNISS**  
assistant professor of physics

“The societal and economic strain of the global COVID-19 pandemic is challenging our students as they work to obtain their college degree, a laudable goal under even the best of circumstances. Faculty are faced with a new and uncertain teaching platform that separates us from them. The staff is expected to reach out from home to support the university as it strains under rapid and unpredictable changes. Although I look forward to returning to some level of normalcy, able to engage with the university community less remotely, I realize that it is only under arduous conditions that we are able to truly discover and celebrate our resilience as educators and students. Let us take this as an opportunity to learn what aspects of the unique education that happens at Cal State East Bay are the most important, and prepare to advance and benefit from these as soon as we possibly can.”



**NAZZY PAKPOUR**  
assistant professor of biological sciences

“What I have been the most touched by is the care and compassion that my students have shown towards me, so many have reached out to check on the health and safety of myself and my family. In this overwhelming time, when everyone’s lives are being upended and changed, it really highlights for me how exceptional our students are. Not only do they continue to be dedicated to their education, but they have maintained their capacity for compassion and kindness. It makes me want to be the very best professor I can be for them, regardless of circumstances, and it gives me hope for our future.”



**DANVY LE**  
assistant professor of political science

“Resilience is often seen as an individual attribute, but the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the spotlight to the community’s role in resilience. In order to flatten the curve, it is dependent on the community to protect one another by self-isolating and sheltering in place. Technology has taken the blame for a fractured society, but this culprit is now our tool to build community and stay connected. Over the past decade, and more so in the past four years, our society has become increasingly divided. The pandemic has helped bridge these divisions to remind us everyone — no matter race, religion, class — is vulnerable; the only way to build resilience during time is by doing so together. In less than a week, communities formed to create mutual aid networks, donate supplies and resources, and help support local economies. Even in this time of isolation, we managed to build community and make new connections. We need to continue to work together to address the systemic problems COVID-19 has exposed, such as inequities in access to health care, food insecurity, and housing affordability. Together, we rise up. Together, we are resilient.”



**ROBERT PHELPS**  
executive director, Concord campus

“Faculty who’ve never taught an online class, staff who’ve never had to deal with a paperless routine, and students who’ve never had to learn remotely, have all been forced to dramatically alter their work, school and parenting routines; and I’m awestruck by how quickly members of our community have been able to adapt, fulfilling their responsibilities and achieving their goals with determination and humor. I’m absolutely convinced that this will be our finest hour, and one day, if all goes well, our grandchildren will beg us to stop reminding them of what we achieved.”



**CHRISTOPHER MOREMAN**  
**professor of philosophy and religious studies**

“When I’m asked to think about resilience, my mind goes first to religion. Not because I’m a religious person (I’m not), but because there is wisdom there worth considering. Two figures in particular, from opposite ends of the Earth, come to mind.

Laozi, the great teacher of ancient China, teaches how best to adapt to any situation. The mighty oak, he notes, standing rigid against the storm, breaks. The lowly grass, though, bends with the wind but does not break. It goes with the flow, takes what comes, and persists. There is a strength that comes with the capacity to change unlike any other.

The Hebrew character Job stands as another testament to the human capacity to bounce back from tragedy. Job sees himself tested by the loss of family, home, and health. When he finally demands to know the answer to the age-old question of why bad things happen to good people, he is reminded, in no uncertain terms, that his own suffering is not special, it is not personal, and it is not worse than that of anyone else. He learns to recognize that suffering is simply a part of life, and that it is as important to be true to one’s self through suffering as it is in happiness.

“We don’t know what trials the future holds, though we can be certain there will be more. We do know that humans are remarkably adaptable beings, though. Ancient wisdom from religions across the world remind us that by being flexible, we cannot break, and by maintaining a perspective beyond our individual selves, we stay strong.”



**SCOTT FUNG**  
**professor of accounting and finance**

“The 2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic has created great uncertainties and unforeseen challenges that impact the whole ecosystem from individuals to businesses, industries, communities, global economies, among others. In the financial markets, the CBOE Volatility Index, also known as the “investor fear gauge,” closed at a record high in March 2020. The pandemic has changed our priorities, our daily living, and our ways of interacting and work with each other. However, it has also taught us about the importance of resilience — to bring out the best in us in the face of adversity, to carry on our responsibilities, to adapt to new environments, and to find new solutions to overcome challenges. Another lesson learned during these challenging times is that resilience is not an individual effort — resilience can be strengthened by our compassion and ability to help and support each other.”



**MICHELLE RIPPY**  
**assistant professor of criminal justice**

“As an educator, I have seen our students, staff and faculty balance a new reality that they did not think would have been possible. The work completed by our students has been humbling amidst job loss, an increase of responsibilities, and concerns about the future. Criminal justice personnel, deemed as essential employees, continue to put their lives on the line daily to provide service and assistance to our community. Resilience training is provided to law enforcement and correction employees for survival in critical situations as well as in situations of vicarious trauma. However, our essential employees in grocery, warehouse, and delivery positions likely have not had the same training. We must practice empathy, kindness, and compassion for others in this challenging time.

Carrying forward, we are stronger from the challenges we have faced and navigating problems that have arisen. We must remember to take care of ourselves, physically, mentally, and emotionally, for us to be available to help others. When we transition back to social gatherings and some normalcy, we need to remember that we have been in this together and continue to be kind to each other.”



**RITA LIBERTI**  
**professor of kinesiology**

“My students remind me daily what it is to be resilient in the face of this virus crisis. From my conversations with them, it’s clear that, for many, this virus has wreaked havoc on their worlds — impacting corners of it I cannot even imagine. For some, this crisis exacerbated already precarious housing, labor and food insecurity realities for our students. Others are dealing with the stress of familial responsibilities — taking care of themselves and their loved ones (young and old) as the ground shifts beneath their feet in the midst of the pandemic.

And yet, they face this new (hopefully temporary) reality in a straight-up, head-on way. I see it in their interactions with classmates and with me. They fully understand and recognize what’s before them; there’s no denying that. I’ve watched as many students employ strategies that I know will better enable them to endure this time. They seek out connections with peers and with me — sometimes just a quick email check-in or just a few lines to let me know what’s going on in the spaces they occupy. But there has always been a kind of tenacity about Cal State East Bay students. While COVID-19 has intensely complicated an already complicated world for them, they are, in my view, some of the best at showing us all what persistence looks like and how best to lay a path forward when one doesn’t seem self-evident or secure.”



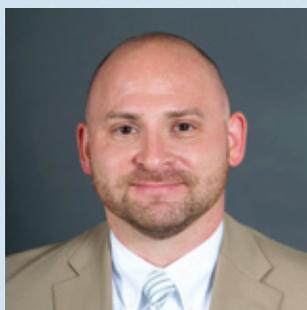
**TONI E. FOGARTY**  
**assistant professor of public affairs and administration**

“We can’t always change the things that happen to us in life, but we can change the way we view them. Reframing is the ability to look at a situation or circumstance in a new way, giving it a more positive or insightful spin. Research shows that those who reframe difficult situations positively will achieve much more success than those who frame, or look at it, negatively. Reframing the situation may help develop the ability to focus time and energy on changing the things over which we actually have control, instead of focusing on what can’t be controlled.”



**MARY D’ALLEVA**  
**director for the CSUEB Center for Community Engagement; lecturer of English**

“This moment in time is highlighting the intersection of personal and community resilience, how our individual actions and choices affect others. As we educate our students through and around the challenges facing our communities, it’s imperative we help them to understand that resilience is not about ‘bouncing back,’ but about ‘bouncing forward.’ How do we build upon the lessons we are learning about inequity, health and social responsibility? How do we enable a learning environment that, instead of feeling like a temporary measure, propels students forward as adaptable, critical and creative thinkers? More than ever, we have the opportunity to inhabit education as a living force and ‘own’ the mission of the California State University to enrich and serve our communities.”



**THOMAS PADRON**  
**assistant professor of hospitality, recreation and tourism**

“Our current situation is a test, a test of our toughness, whether it be mental, physical, spiritual, etc. This specific test, though unique on its own, brings out our human grit, whether we believe we have it or not. Coping with the restrictions that can break us down emotionally, even when we try to hide or suppress them, helps to build our strength, our inner strength. I have an adage that I use, ‘the strongest steel bends.’ It is in times like these that we bend with the current but always remain strong.”



**KEVIN KENNEY**  
Oakland Center manager

“I am inspired by the flexibility and resilience that Cal State East Bay has displayed in reaction to this pandemic. The university has made major changes to daily operations under the most rapid of circumstances and has demonstrated great unity as a collective body along the way. Not only did the faculty, students, and staff convert from online to remote learning in mid-semester, but several significant adjustments to the spring and summer 2020 grading policy were conceived, proposed, and approved in a matter of weeks in light of these changes. Many administrative procedures have also been quickly modified and redesigned to accommodate our remote work environment. In addition, the announcement of the university’s collaboration with the City of Hayward to provide one of our Hayward campus parking lots as a COVID-19 testing center demonstrates the difference we can make in our immediate community. These achievements bode well for our future as we continue to navigate an uncertain terrain and demonstrate that we have extensive resources that we can quickly bring to bear to help our campus communities and the greater East Bay region we serve adjust and recover from this setback.”



**AMARA MILLER**  
assistant professor of sociology

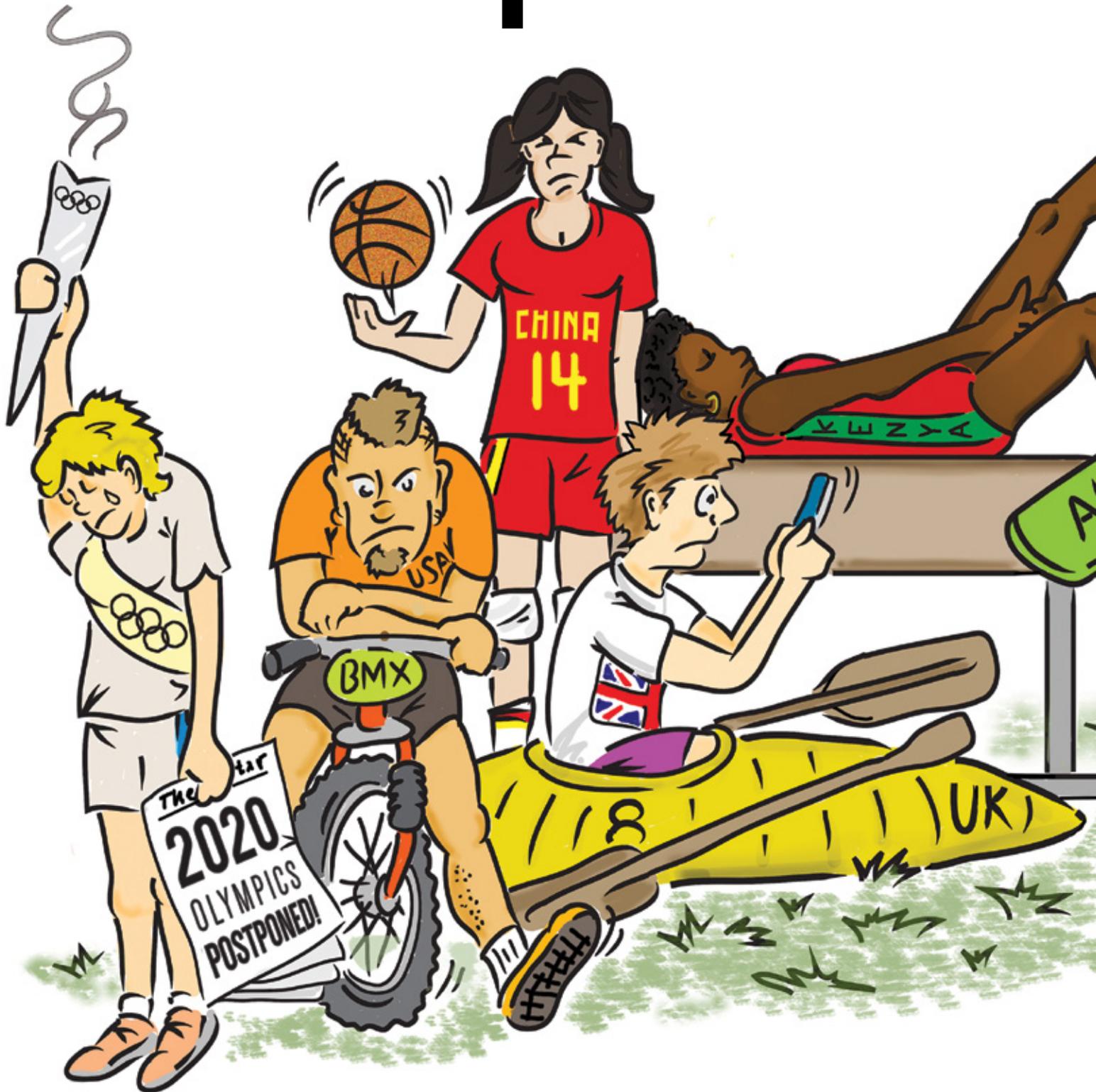
“For me, the COVID-19 emergency has highlighted how building resiliency is often connected to activities that have been historically devalued because of their association with femininity, particularly care work, community service, as well as crafting or domestic activities that support our physical and mental health both individually and collectively. It’s also worth noting many of those essential activities that are at the root of individual and community resilience have also been devalued due to their associations with people of color, for example, agriculture and food systems. Often we turn to more masculine traits of bravado, violence, aggression with the assumption that these are what save us or protect us. But in times of crisis, it’s our empathy, emotional literacy, and emotional labor that provide us with the strength to organize collectively for our survival and for change. Developing resilience also entails extending these forms of care work to a macro level in the form of political policies that provide broad social support, particularly for those who are most vulnerable or impacted, something I think the recent bipartisan support for the coronavirus aid package has demonstrated (although how effective efforts by the government will be is still unclear.)”



**G.T. REYES**  
assistant professor of educational leadership

“I know it’s been hard. I know people are not only fighting for their right to struggle through these times as holistic humans but also fighting for their lives. And I know that many of you have been prioritizing life — helping your children, your family, your students, your community. Many of you have been resisting the neoliberal push to be as ‘productive’ as you were before. But we do have to stop wishing to ‘go back to normal,’ because who said that ‘normal’ was good for us in the first place? Right now, we are in a historical moment where our Earth is forcing us to take pause and rethink our existence and sustainability in this world. Right now, we are in an opportunity to not take for granted the ways that being in the physical presence of other humans is and always has been a sacred space to cultivate a culture where everyone is seen as important and valued; where everyone believes they can grow and thrive, as well as work towards healing from the social wounds they have accumulated over time, especially through the project of schooling. We are in a moment of pause. So let us do that with grace and remember that resiliency is not merely ‘getting through this,’ but learning and emerging stronger through this.”

# The Postponement



# of a DREAM



✎ KENT KAVASCH

Cal State East Bay assistant swim coach, alumna Claire Beaty among thousands of elite athletes now grappling with Tokyo Olympics postponement

BY NATALIE FEULNER

**C**LAIRE BEATY WASN'T QUITE READY TO HANG UP HER GOGGLES. The Cal State East Bay swimmer and graduate student had a good career and once considered retiring from the sport in 2018, but only briefly. In recent years she was named All-American five times, held two school records, and hadn't spent more than a month out of the water since she first jumped into the sport competitively at age 9.

Until now.

Beaty, who was set to compete in the 2020 Olympic trials in Omaha, Nebraska, in June, has now spent several months out of the water. She is joined by thousands of other Olympic hopefuls who have had to wrap their heads around the March announcement that the 2020 Tokyo Olympics will be postponed until July 2021 due to COVID-19.

"We'd already been out of the pool for two weeks, and everyone had the inkling something was coming, but it was still big news and definitely not what you want to hear," Beaty said. "Everyone is upset, but you can't risk peoples' lives and health for games, even the Olympic Games." ▶



## A LIFE OF RESILIENCE

In her 23 years, Beaty has had her fair share of big news nobody wants to hear.

As a senior in high school, the swimmer lost her father. A few years later, when she was a junior at Cal State East Bay, her mother died as well.

Through it all, Beaty continued swimming.

“Sometimes in life, you don’t think you can do things, but all of a sudden, you’re faced with it, and you have to,” she said.

That sort of mindset is crucial for athletes, especially at the Olympic level, Professor of Kinesiology Dr. Jeff Simons said. Simons, who has worked as a sports psychologist and trained elite athletes for every summer Olympics since the 1980s, said while many athletes are resilient — bouncing back from devastating losses or injuries all the time — this blow may feel particularly painful.

“For some sports like gymnastics, they have a very narrow window of being able to compete at [the Olympic] level,” Simons said. “For virtually everybody who isn’t an absolute superstar, this news can range from ‘OMG, this is brilliant, I have another year’ to ‘I barely made it this time, and I don’t know if I’ll luck out again.’ You’ve got this huge variation with what’s happening in each person’s life; there’s no one way they’re feeling.”

Add to that a training regime that is often planned down to the hour of the big day. Coaches and athletes preparing for the Olympic Games have planned their training — from tapers to peaks, to the types of qualifying events they’ll attend — for years.

“This is a huge disruption, and the very first thing that happens to human beings when there’s a disruption is throws everything into confusion, all that certainty you were having becomes unpredictable and ambiguous,” Simons said. “Human beings like certainty and performers in particular really like certainty. We don’t like disruption, and the biggest thing we feel when it happens is a sense of loss of control.”

And while age may be a factor for some, others may not be able to afford to keep training. Although some countries pay stipends to their athletes for competing in the Games, that is not the norm, which means another year of paying for everything from equipment to trainers, coaches and physical therapists.

Beaty, who graduates from Cal State East Bay in December 2020 but is also currently employed by the university as an assistant swim coach and operations intern for the Athletics Department, said she recognizes the privilege she has right now to keep training. Plus, she said, preparation for the Olympics has in some ways been more fun than training during her years as a Pioneer.

“As a college athlete, it’s not always fun, this has been more of doing and focusing on what I wanted to be doing, and I feel a larger internal motivation,” she said. “I’m in a position to [keep training], I’ll be staying here a little longer than I intended to but right now, I don’t see anything else that’s drawing me away.”

## A NEW KIND OF TRAINING

But, Beaty said, with pools shuttered and mandatory shelter-in-place orders in effect through May, one of her first conversations with her coach Shane Pelton was how to pivot her training. Together they settled on a combination of running and resistance training. And while she’s felt herself growing stronger and enjoying hitting her stride in a similar way to how she feels swimming, feeling more flow recently on her runs, Beaty said it’s not the same.

“The motivation is kind of weird,” she said. “With the previous breaks, you want to relax, but this break is a forced break, so I’m still trying to stay in shape.”

Beaty is not alone in having to now find different ways to train.

Simons said he’s heard from many athletes who are training in their backyards, on treadmills in the basement, or just about however they can.

“For some sports, it’s really easy to go off by yourself and practice, but for others, like team sports, it’s not,” Simons said. “You have to try to stay fit, watch videos, do lots of imagery work, use this time to work through what-if scenarios.”

## FOCUSING ON THE ‘NOW’

So how should an athlete navigate the next few weeks or even months?

The first step, Simons said, is to step back and recognize that there may be stages to processing, similar to the well-known stages of grief.

“Have a cry, talk about what you’re worried about and then figure out ‘now what do we do,’” Simons said. “Think about what you need to do today, and even though you have a long-term goal, look honestly at where you are now and how you can find short-term balance.”

And, remember perspective.

“Take a breath and realize, we are taking care of each other, not worrying more about lap splits than humanity,” he said.

Next up — stay focused on the ‘now.’

“It’s important to get away from all the non-answerable questions like ‘why this happened, why me, is this punishment for something,’” Simons said. “If you’re going to move forward, you have to get beyond that, beyond the fantasies of what could have been, beyond the denial, the stages of grief, you’ve got to get through it. The solution always is, turning to where you are right now, what can be done right now.”

As for Beaty, she’s still hopeful an Olympic Games are in her future. So for now, she’ll keep training on land.

“I just want to see it all the way through; you can’t give up when you’re that close,” she said.

And to all athletes (and even those who aren’t training for the Olympics), Simons offers a final piece of advice.

“We become so much more resilient when we can embrace what is now and how we can move forward,” Simons said. “Resilience is not about bad things not happening, but what we can do in the face of the bad.” **EE**

# NATIONALS CANCELED



ALLIE KLINGER



TORI ZUKERAN



PEYTON WAYMENT

Three Cal State East Bay swimmers, two in their final seasons with the university, were forced to leave short of completing their dreams of competing in the NCAA Division II National Championships for swimming.

Allie Klinger, 21, a health sciences major; Tori Zukeran, 21, a biology major and junior Peyton Wayment, were all at day two of the national competition when the university called and told them they were no longer allowed to compete due to coronavirus concerns. An hour later, the event was canceled entirely.

“Nationals would have been my last swim meet ever,” Klinger said, adding she was able to swim two preliminary races before the event was canceled, although, at that point, the only people allowed on the pool deck were swimmers and coaches.

Despite the disappointment, Klinger said she’s glad she went and feels good about how her final season with East Bay went overall. “For me personally, it was a lot of mixed emotions,” she said. “When I went to [the NCAA Championships], I felt like I had achieved every goal I set for myself that season. We ended up winning Conference [Championships] as a team, so I saw Nationals as a bonus.”

Zukeran, whose entire family flew into Ohio from Hawaii to see her race, only to have to turn right back around and fly home, said she’s glad she had the opportunity — her first in a 15-year swimming career.

“Of course I would’ve loved to swim at Nationals and had that opportunity, I’m happy that I made it,” she said. “But I’m even happier that I was given the opportunity to even compete in college; it was a great experience.”

# EMPOWERING F



# WOMEN LEADERS

## NEW CAL STATE EAST BAY PROGRAM AIMS TO PREPARE WOMEN TO SERVE ON LEADERSHIP BOARDS, FOLLOWING NEW STATE LAW

BY MICHELLE GEIGER



**W**OMEN ON LEADERSHIP BOARDS MAKE FOR BETTER BUSINESS. But it wasn't until California passed Senate Bill 826 that the state became the first to require publicly held corporations have at least one female director by December 2019.

Now, Cal State East Bay is rising to the challenge of preparing its students to fill those positions.

"It's aggressive, it gave the issue visibility," said Professor Asha Rao, associate chair of the Cal State East Bay Department of Management.

Gender equity in the workplace, particularly in top leadership roles, is hardly a new issue.

Rao has been teaching classes on leadership for 20 years, and her work examines the role of women in leadership. She said the California legislation is one potential way to address this issue but noted there are other opportunities to develop women leaders at multiple levels. She argues it is important to focus on ways to reach women earlier, at a time when they can choose to make the investment in the skills, training and experience they need to assume leadership roles later.

And Cal State East Bay is at the forefront of this charge. ▶

✍ KENT KAVASCH



**“The idea is that we aren’t going to bring about change by only looking at the executive suite. We need to look at younger students to give them a boost now to make change through the pipeline.”**

**— Professor Asha Rao, associate chair,  
Department of Management**

Rao developed a course, Women in Leadership, as an elective for Cal State East Bay’s graduate business programs. The course is an academic and industry collaboration co-taught by Rao and industry leader Chitra Nayak, an accomplished senior executive with experience as a tech advisor and board member.

Offered for the first time in the 2018-2019 academic year, the course received positive student feedback — from men and women alike — and its success prompted Rao to think about what more could be done. She developed a proposal for a fellowship, which was approved for a pilot program by Dean George Low in the College of Business and Economics. The pilot is scheduled to start this year.

The Women in Leadership Fellowship has three main components: the academic course, Women in Leadership; a social entrepreneurship leadership project undertaken by each fellow; and the pairing of each fellow with an industry mentor. This combination of theory, practice and support is what Rao hopes will give the fellows in the program the confidence to step outside their comfort zones and develop as leaders.

## ACADEMICS AND INDUSTRY

With its focus on leadership studies and management models, the Women in Leadership course pairs an academic grounding with practical industry insights. Throughout the course, successful leaders from a range of roles and industries are invited to share their experiences with the class. The course highlights the current state of women in leadership in various industries and provides opportunities for students to hone their skills in communication, negotiation and leading teams.

Nayak points out that the course structure focuses on what can be done, and what women can do themselves, to bring about gender parity in corporate leadership. She said that while there are challenges imposed on women by the environment, such as unconscious bias or unfair promotion, there are also those driven by women themselves, including being less likely to advocate for

themselves and being afraid to ask for a promotion.

“There are many things you can take into your own hands that you can affect,” Nayak said. “We emphasize this in the class.”

## FROM CONCEPT TO EXECUTION

While the course gives students tools to help them succeed as leaders and exposes them to the current business landscape, the fellowship’s social entrepreneurship leadership project puts their lessons into practice. Each fellow selects a project and can receive a stipend of up to \$1,000 to support the work.

“The fellowship challenges students to find a project or initiative that will add value from a social impact perspective,” said Nayak. “It is a way to operationalize leadership skills.”

Rose Cásarez, a fellow in the program and an MBA student, identified her project based on her professional experience with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the Regional Center of the East Bay.

She’s developing easy-to-understand animated videos to help individuals and their families learn how earned income interacts with Social Security benefits. It’s a system that can be enormously complex, she said, but she hopes the videos will make it easier for individuals with disabilities to make more informed decisions about employment.

“Jobs are a major part of identity,” said Cásarez. “The feeling of social capital, having independence and contributing; it’s so much more than just income. My passion is for people with disabilities to have access to that.”

Another fellow, Sonal Chandna, is working with Neythri, a professional women’s network in the Bay Area that is building a community for South Asian women to help them succeed in their careers. Chandna interviews women leaders each week about their leadership journeys and how their South Asian heritage has impacted their leadership styles so that these insights can be shared with others.

Rao noted that the projects are a way for fellows to experiment



**“Women today are more supportive of each other. I see more women with great amounts of experience ready and able to share their experience with other women or develop a colleague.”**

**— Jenny Linton (MBA, '12)**

with leadership and try out the techniques they learn. Through the fellowship, they can take chances and learn from challenges, building resilience and learning what they can do to succeed.

## MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT

The industry mentors paired with each fellow include executive vice presidents, founders and senior directors in technology, finance and healthcare; those involved in social impact efforts within their companies; and those who are pioneers as women serving on corporate boards. Many are Cal State East Bay alumnae, and all are accomplished individuals who have embraced this initiative.

“This strikes a chord for a lot of people,” said Rao. “These executives are very successful and are at the stage where they are able to mentor someone younger at a time when it can make a difference.”

Jenny Linton is one such enthusiastic mentor who earned her MBA at Cal State East Bay. As the past president of the privately held company OSISOFT and a board member for the Special Olympics of Northern California, Linton was a perfect match for Cásarez and has been able to offer insights and guidance on her fellowship project.

Linton recalled that as an undergraduate in engineering, and as a young professional, she was often one of only a few women. She sees the fellowship as a way to support younger professional women, and she’s glad to be able to share her experiences.

Wenli Wang, a partner in charge of the San Francisco and Walnut Creek offices at Moss Adams and a member of several boards, was also eager to support her alma mater. She has been a guest speaker in the Women in Leadership course, and this year she is also mentoring one of the fellows.

“I have always been grateful that Cal State East Bay provided me the tools and knowledge to get started with my public accounting career,” Wang said. “I have been mentoring and coaching younger professionals within our firm and externally for years, so when the opportunity came to become a mentor here, I was very excited to get involved.”

For the fellows, the mentors offer a sounding board, help them to frame problems differently, and share personal experiences to guide the mentees.

“The mentors have numerous experiences and know so much about leading and inspiring others,” said Chandna. “It’s not just helping someone professionally, but also personal development. Working with a mentor makes you widen your scope of thinking as you take in their feedback.”

## BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Both the fellowship and the Women in Leadership course are open to all graduate business students, regardless of gender. Rao stresses that leadership lessons are open to anyone, and that learning how corporate teams can support women and how to work toward a more equitable workplace are topics relevant to all business leaders. In fact, data shows that developing women leaders isn’t just good for women. Nayak cites many studies showing the value of women in leadership, including those that show board diversity has a correlation to return on investment.

Though COVID-19 has impacted some students’ ability to participate as originally planned, Rao and Nayak are working through the challenges as they plan for the future and hope to expand the program. The fellows are already seeing the growth potential for themselves and others through the fellowship.

“How to use leadership skills, anticipate the impressions you leave on others, and how to present ourselves as leaders has been very impactful for me,” said Cásarez.

The value of the fellowship is not only felt now; the knowledge and skills development have the potential to continue influencing the fellows into the future.

“The relationships we are building are beyond just the fellowship program,” said Chandna. “Having these people in my life, learning from them and working with them is an incredible opportunity. It’s been an honor that I’ll carry with me all my life.” 

# *FRO*



# FROM THE NTLINES

*CAL STATE EAST BAY ALUMNI, STUDENTS LEAD COVID-19  
RESPONSE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES, THE REGION*

BY NATALIE FEULNER

**R**UBY BRIN-MAGPOC ('18, NURSING) heard her patient's emergency alarm buzz and immediately stepped into the small room to find the man on the bathroom floor, unable to make it back to bed

He looked up at her with pleading eyes and asked the one question she knew she couldn't answer.

"Am I dying?"

"I had to hide it, all I could say was 'Your vitals are OK, so far you're still here, you still have hope,' Brin-Magpoc, a nurse in San Joaquin General Hospital's COVID-19 unit said.

The 41-year-old alumna is just one of many Cal State East Bay students and alumni at the forefront of the region's, state's and country's responses to COVID-19.

They are nurses, educators, researchers, federal bankers and more, all playing a role in fighting the biggest crisis the world has faced in decades. ►

## MORE THAN A JOB

Matthew Rufin, 24, is a Cal State East Bay nursing student and sergeant in the U.S. Army. Halfway through the spring semester, he was called back to service, one of the dozens of Pioneers who, along with their title of student are also active duty, reserve or veteran military personnel.

Days after receiving his notice, Rufin was in Philadelphia at the Liacouras Center, home to COVID-19 patients transported there to make room at local hospitals for intensive care patients. Two weeks later, he was again moved, this time to a medical-surgical floor as a primary nurse, where almost every patient had tested positive for the virus.

Rufin said each day was a reminder of why he is choosing to go into nursing.

“Given that the last pandemic was about 100 years ago, it made me more proud to help with this crisis,” he said. “Seeing the extensive workload of nurses and the results of patients recovering from COVID-19 gave me more reason why I chose nursing as a profession.”

Brin-Magpoc’s sentiment was similar. The mother of three attended Cal State East Bay with the support of the Elsie Sanderson Nursing Scholarship and had known since she lost a baby to premature birth years before in Manila, Philippines, that she was meant to be a nurse.

“Some moms need to go shopping to help with life balance ... I just go to school,” she said. “As a nurse, a big part of what I do is making sure the patient feels like they’re not alone. Especially right now, they’re away from their families, and it’s heartbreaking to see.”

As a parent, Brin-Magpoc is also experiencing the isolating effects of COVID-19, albeit in a different way from her patients. Each day when she gets home from a 12-hour overnight shift, she makes sure to change clothes in a separate bathroom before going into the main house, and if she’s been with a patient who has tested positive, she’ll avoid her children and sleep in a different room from her husband.

“Nurses and doctors are dying, and I have a lot of fear,” she said. “I kind of realized I have to find a way to cope with the situation, I believe I have a purpose, and this is more than a job for me.”

## FINDING A WAY TO STAY STRONG

For Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District Superintendent Kelly Bowers (M.S. ’02, Educational Leadership), a key part of addressing COVID-19 is making sure not only basic needs like food and shelter are met, but also that her students have access to the social and emotional support they need.

Bowers said that while administrators initially focused the district’s pandemic response on increased cleaning and encouraging hygiene, everything changed on March 16 when the district moved to distance learning.

“That was a really hard decision, but it was the socially responsible thing to do,” she said.

Pre-COVID-19, LVJUSD already had an emphasis on mental health. Bowers said the district has received national recognition and several federal grants. But that work has become even more important in recent months.

“You can’t separate physical health, mental health and academics,” she said. “If you’re struggling in one area, you’re struggling in another.”

The school district set up an anonymous support line to connect both students and community members to critical resources and is facilitating direct connections for financial assistance to those who need access to care beyond what the district can provide.

“We have students who have struggled with mental health prior to COVID-19, but we have some who have never struggled like this,” Bowers said. “They are missing out on a lot, but we’ve noticed more than anything they want to connect.”

In addition to the helplines, district teachers and staff have done motorcade parades past students’ homes and even brought along Bowers’ husband, wearing a school mascot costume.

“We went to neighborhoods, and we all felt connected, it wasn’t just students who came out, other people who had been housebound did too, to say ‘thank you,’ it was really nice.”

For the 1,100 or so students in the graduating class, Bowers said communication and involving them in decisions about everything

---

**“We have students who have struggled with mental health prior to COVID-19, but we have some who have never struggled like this. They are missing out on a lot, but we’ve noticed more than anything they want to connect.”**

**—Kelly Bowers, Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District superintendent**



Teachers and administrators from Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District have held motorcades to connect with students during shelter-in-place orders.  COURTESY OF KELLY BOWERS

from senior awards presentations to the modified graduation ceremony, has been key.

“They know it’s not just them, that this is happening nationally and internationally, but it is still heartbreaking,” Bowers said. “We want them to be a part of creating something that will be different than what they expected, but special.”

And Bowers isn’t the only one focused on staying mentally strong. Rufin said when he first found out he’d have to report to duty, he was scared, but tapped back into his training.

“This isn’t something that I can read in my nursing textbooks and prepare for,” he said. “Fortunately, with the unit I was assigned to, we were provided with excellent training that prepared us for the task at hand. [And], I feel that all the professors at Cal State East Bay have better prepared me for this crisis.”

## A SMALL PART OF SOMETHING BIG

For alumna Tracy Basinger, executive vice president of financial institution supervision and credit at the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco, being on the frontlines of COVID-19 has meant focusing on helping businesses stay afloat.

“The Fed has taken a number of actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure financial markets continue to function properly,” she said. “Smoothly functioning markets are important because they provide fuel to the U.S. economy.”

Basinger’s team is supporting many of the new programs the federal government has developed, including the Paycheck Protection Program Liquidity Facility and the Main Street Lending Facility, which are designed to help small and mid-sized businesses with federal lending.

“For my team in bank supervision, we are working with financial institutions to help them responsibly provide assistance to struggling consumers and businesses in the wake of the economic shutdown,” she said.

Meanwhile, for Bowers, California’s shelter-in-place orders have helped her connect and partner with other members of the Livermore community. Since 26 percent of students in the school district qualify for free or reduced lunch programs, it was essential, Bowers said, to make sure they and their families had enough food.

Staff set up four no-contact stations on school campuses throughout Livermore, which provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks, including two which provide supper. But what sprung from a simple food distribution effort has become a bustling all-inclusive support program for families in need.

Community partners, including the local food bank, Fertile Groundworks, the Rotary Club of Livermore, the Taylor Foundation, See’s Candies, Girl Scout troops, and others, have joined the distributions and handed out everything from cookies to thermometers, fresh produce, rotisserie chickens and gift cards.

“It became this one-stop place ... and now families know where to come, it fills my heart knowing that we are doing good and can be the bright spot in so many people’s lives,” Bowers said. ▶

# MEET THE CAL STATE EAST BAY NURSES

Each year, Cal State East Bay graduates around 200 nursing students. They work in hospitals around the region and throughout California. Many have come face-to-face treating coronavirus patients in the past six months, but remain committed to the profession and grateful for their training. We asked them what it is like working as a nurse during a global pandemic and what keeps them motivated.



**JOHN LY '15**  
**UC Davis Medical Center, Emergency Department**  
**Sacramento, California**

“Luckily, the Sacramento region has had small intermittent surges of SARS-CoV-2, short of what we were expecting in the worst-case scenario, comparable to New York City. However, despite decreased patient census, acuity has certainly seen a significant bump, and patients that present to the hospital now tend to be sicker than before.

As a nurse on the frontlines of this pandemic, I feel proud and honored to be a part of a great team to step up and face this challenge head-on in the name of our community.” Although, this doesn’t mean that I’m immune to other feelings that everyone seems to be sharing nowadays: uncertainty about when the lockdown will end and fear about catching the virus and becoming deathly ill.

[For me], the best part of being a nurse is knowing that I’ve made a difference in someone’s life and getting to be the communication hub for the entire team. Nurses help relay and guide care for the patient, making sure to advocate for the patient’s wishes and best interests, which can sometimes be difficult if those goals don’t align with what the family wants. It’s not an easy job and definitely not for everyone. We regularly deal with death, disability, long shifts, difficult assignments that require the utmost attention to the tiniest details, and much more ... all in the name of delivering the best care possible to our patients. I personally couldn’t see myself doing anything other than this and feel blessed that I’ve found my calling in life.”



**MARC SALCEDO '15**  
**Kaiser, Intensive Care Unit**  
**San Leandro, California**

“Working during the COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful. At the beginning, it was frightening because there was not a lot of information about how the disease worked and spread. As more research has been done, I feel more empowered to treat the disease head-on. The anxiety still lingers, particularly in somehow getting exposed and unknowingly spreading it to family and friends. And, it does not help that due to the nationwide shortage of personal protective equipment, health care systems had to ration out the PPE, and we have to reuse single-use equipment.

Given the circumstances, I try my best to be extremely careful at work, and when I get home. Due to the shelter in place, visitation to the hospital is limited. We do our best to figure out ways that families can talk to their loved ones and update them about their condition.

Despite all [this] it has been heartwarming to feel the love and support of the community for us.

For me, the best part of being a nurse is being able to help the health care team in providing the best care for my patients; to be able to make a difference in their lives, being there for them at their worst. The hardest part ... has been the end of life. I do my best to help provide support to the patient and family, but despite seeing this frequently, it still affects me.

During this hard time, I feel everyone should work together and be patient. Let’s follow the latest guidelines and help support one another.”

---

# ***FIGHTING COVID-19*** ***ON THE FRONTLINES***

---



**IVANA CARBAJAL '16**  
Regional Medical Center, Emergency Department  
San Jose, California

“I work in Santa Clara County, which has the most positive cases in the San Francisco Bay Area. Frankly, it has been a trying time as a nurse in the frontlines of this pandemic, but thankfully, I work with a great, supportive team beside me. I can only imagine how it has been for the harder hit areas such as New York City and Italy.

I think one advantage we received during this time is having the ability to learn from the experiences of the states and countries affected prior to ours, and prepare for what’s to come. Personally, it gave me time to mentally prepare for the worst-case scenario and get into a mindset that would get me through my shift. [I now have] a mindset open to new ideas in managing patients with COVID-19 symptoms or in adapting patient throughput into and out of the department. [It] is flexible to meeting guidelines and policies that were ever so changing; and one that would be able to cope with difficult situations that would arise.

Through the swift actions of our governor and with the help of the community, the shelter-in-place has lessened the amount of patients seen in my emergency department, which has allowed us to focus our efforts in caring for the critically sick. Respiratory and COVID-19 emergencies aside, the pandemic surely has changed the way my department has approached even traditional medical emergencies — stroke, heart attack, altered mental status, unresponsiveness — by donning personal protective equipment and limiting the number of personnel into every medical emergency in order to minimize the risk of possible exposure.

Fortunately, I haven’t seen that great surge of patients that we prepared for, although we have seen many sick patients, and as much as I am prepared to provide care for any and all who walk through the emergency doors, I honestly don’t want to experience it. It’s important to know that we — as a community and nation — aren’t out of the woods yet with this pandemic, and we have the choice to decide what will come of this.”



**EVA RIOS DEL RIO '16**  
Highland Hospital, Step Down Unit  
Oakland, California

“Working as a nurse during COVID-19 has been what I describe as “weird.” I want to be hopeful and brave, but all while also being scared like I’ve never been before. It’s also been very sad to not see my family and friends like I used to, but even worse to see how lonely our patients are, COVID or not, because of the visitor restrictions.

The best part of being a nurse has been being able to see people recover and leave our unit and hospital after it was thought they would pass from their illness or injuries; knowing [which] I was a part of it feeds my soul. Second is advocating for our patients during the hardest time of their lives has been so fulfilling. 

# ASPIRING PIONEERS

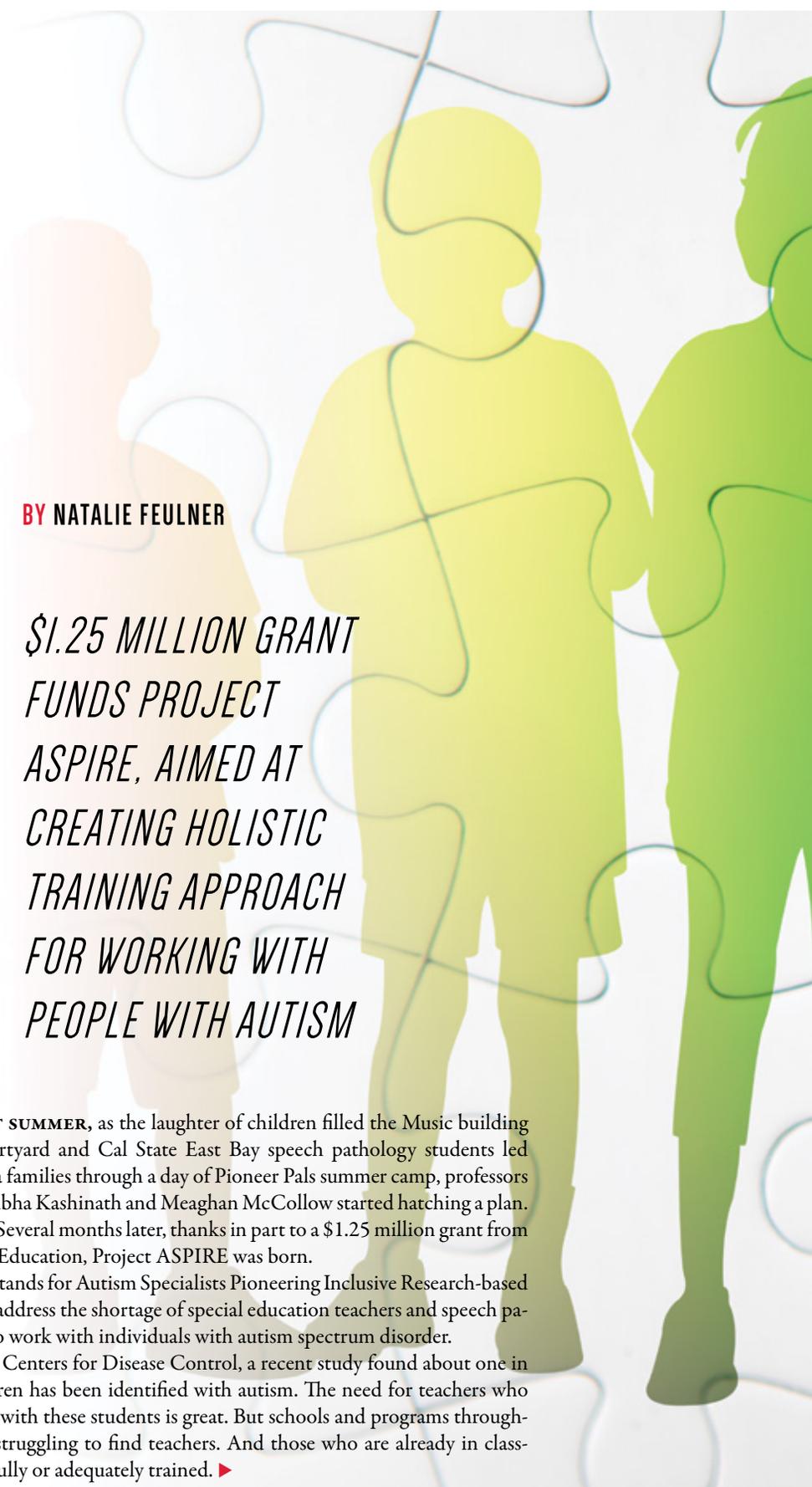
BY NATALIE FEULNER

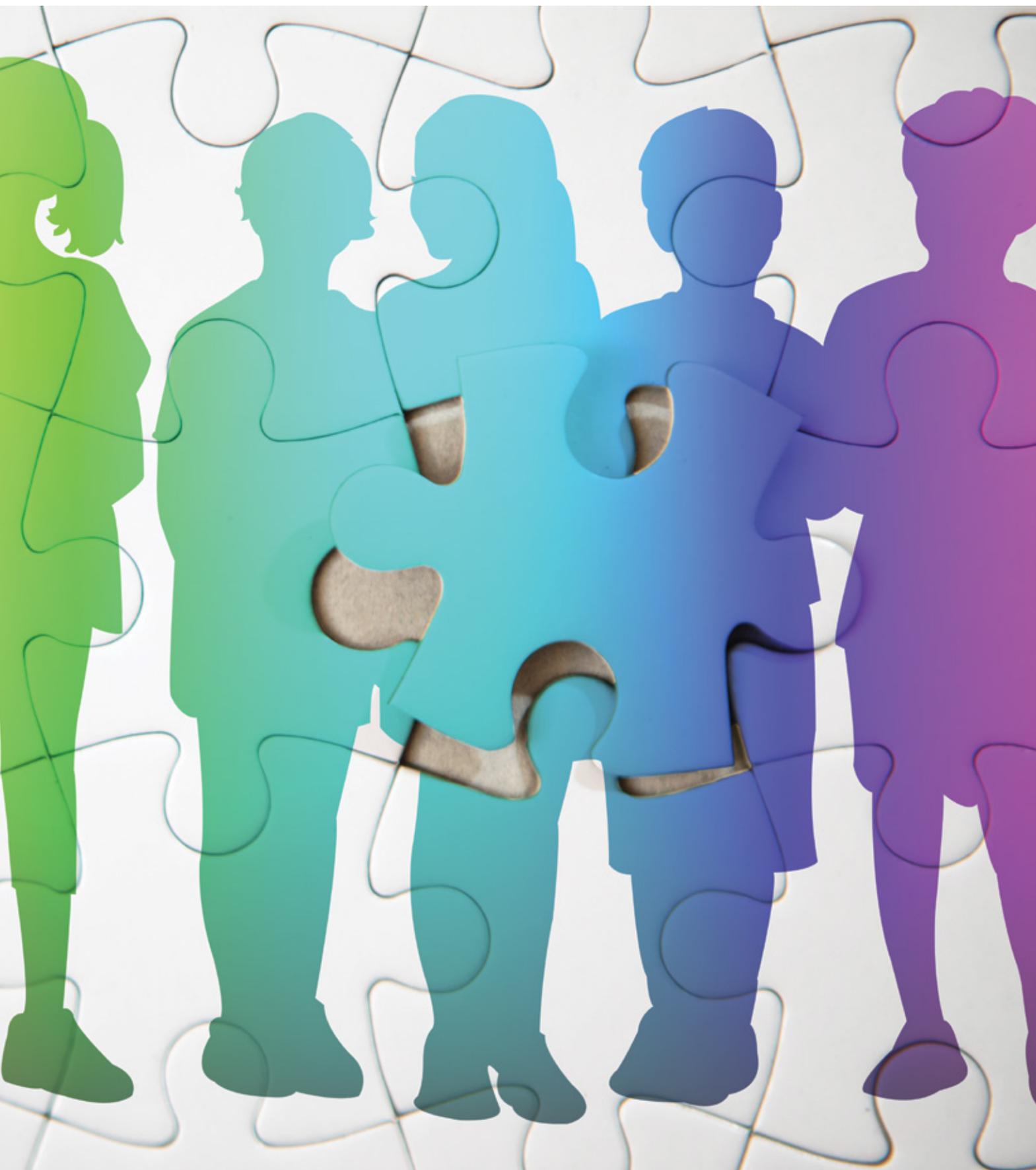
*\$1.25 MILLION GRANT FUNDS PROJECT ASPIRE, AIMED AT CREATING HOLISTIC TRAINING APPROACH FOR WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH AUTISM*

**L**AST SUMMER, as the laughter of children filled the Music building courtyard and Cal State East Bay speech pathology students led area families through a day of Pioneer Pals summer camp, professors Shubha Kashinath and Meaghan McCollow started hatching a plan. Several months later, thanks in part to a \$1.25 million grant from the Department of Education, Project ASPIRE was born.

ASPIRE, which stands for Autism Specialists Pioneering Inclusive Research-based Education, aims to address the shortage of special education teachers and speech pathologists trained to work with individuals with autism spectrum disorder.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, a recent study found about one in 54 8-year-old children has been identified with autism. The need for teachers who are trained to work with these students is great. But schools and programs throughout California are struggling to find teachers. And those who are already in classrooms may not be fully or adequately trained. ▶





In the past five years, according to data from the Learning Policy Institute, California districts have reported that two out of three new teachers begin the school year without having completed their credential, never mind having extra training specific to working with students with autism.

For example, in the 2017-18 school year, California issued 4,776 substandard special education credentials and permits such as intern credentials, provisional intern permits, limited assignment permits, short-term staff permits, and waivers.

Kashinath said there is also a severe shortage of qualified speech language pathologists to serve children with autism in school settings. To fill this gap, school districts often rely on temporary staffing agencies to provide specialized services such as speech therapy and occupational therapy. But this solution is not cost-effective, nor does it address the core issue of preparing permanent, qualified personnel to work with children in school settings.

## A NATURAL COLLABORATION

Seeing a need in both their graduate training programs to provide more resources to students looking to work with people with autism, Kashinath and McCollow began working on Project ASPIRE.

The training grant provides funding for 16 students a year (eight from special education and eight from speech pathology) to take additional courses, attend conferences, work in clinical settings, and participate in service-learning projects in the East Bay.

That final component is key, McCollow and Kashinath said. Whereas typically special education students would be working in a classroom, the goal for the service learning is to have them working in a different role or capacity. This could include accompanying a family to the farmer's market or serving as conversation partners to adults with autism as part of Cal State East Bay's College LINK program.

"We want to help students learn about and relate to individuals with autism in settings that they wouldn't normally see them," Kashinath said. "It allows them to appreciate the full lived experience of a family or an individual with autism. Seeing the individual as a whole can provide knowledge and perspective that can guide working with students with autism in classroom."

Taking a holistic approach to better help individuals with autism is not new, Kashinath said. However, it can be challenging to implement in graduate programs, where because of external factors such as time constraints or clinical rotation locations, students can be pigeonholed into a focus area or setting that might not have been their first choice.

Research shows focusing on an individual's lived experience is key to successfully supporting families of people with autism. A 2015 study published in "Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities" by Anne-Marie DePape and Sally Lindsay found that while secondhand accounts from parents suggest that autism affects many aspects of life, little is known from the first-person perspective. When synthesizing existing accounts of children, adolescents and adults with ASD, however, the pair found four themes emerged: perception of self, interactions with others, experiences at school, and factors related to employment.

The holistic approach, and encouragement for students to gain insight into the 'lived experience' of their clients, is exciting for graduate student Prema Polit, who serves as a graduate assistant on Project ASPIRE.

"One of the things that is really true, is autism is a spectrum," Polit said. "Every individual is very different and has different strengths and weaknesses and that in the process of learning more about how to support them, it's really important to listen, to listen to what their experiences are, and the ways we can better support them as professionals."



## COMBATING BURNOUT, BUILDING NETWORKS

Having students from different degree programs collaborate and take courses in each other's subject areas can break down silos and better replicate how students may work as professionals once they graduate.

"Typically special educators and speech pathologists would work together at schools, but in graduate programs, there are limited opportunities to learn how to work together as part of an interprofessional team unless there are combined coursework or training opportunities," Kashinath said. "This grant is pushing forward that interdisciplinary collaboration."

Another key component to the program is the opportunity to connect students to one another in an effort to combat the burnout facing special education teachers and professionals working with individuals with different needs.

Research from the Learning Policy Institute shows that during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, one in five teachers in special education left the profession, the state or their schools.

"Attrition of special education teachers is associated with inadequate preparation and professional development, challenging working conditions that include large caseloads, overwhelming workload and compliance obligations, inadequate support, and compensation that is too low to mitigate high costs of living and student debt loads," the report found.

Coinciding with that loss is a statewide increase of 13 percent in the number of students identified with disabilities.

"In California, we estimate the attrition from the profession — which has grown to about 9 percent annually — accounts for about 88 percent of annual demand and drives shortages across subject areas, particularly in high-need schools," the report stated.

Students considering entering the field are not unaware of the high turnover or the challenges they face. But many are driven by a passion for giving back to their communities or a personal connection to the field.

"I think people who go into this work are helpers," Polit said. "They are people who care a lot about other people."

She added one of the things that stood out to her about the first

cohort of the new ASPIRE program was that many people have connections to individuals with autism who may have given them "a kick onto this path."

"Others have just found that this is a way they can do some kind of good," she said.

McCollow and Kashinath are hopeful that by integrating the graduate students in the ASPIRE program, providing them with additional training, access to workshops and community-based clinical experience, they will not only gain experience, but they'll also form bonds and networks they can rely on throughout their careers.

"By building those connections now, we hope to ease the heartbreak of our candidates who feel strongly that this is something they want to do, but [the work] may be more than they thought it was going to be," McCollow said.

## LOOKING AHEAD

In the coming months, McCollow and Kashinath are hopeful their students will begin working with community partners and diving into the first year of Project ASPIRE. Some work has been postponed or is in the process of pivoting due to COVID-19 (for example, they aren't sure if the camp where they realized this partnership should happen will take place this summer), but the pair is confident they have an exciting year ahead.

"Of course, we would ideally have our students out in the community right now," McCollow said.

Some of the workshops students were scheduled to attend may be rescheduled or moved to a virtual format. And in the meantime, the group is eager and still able to meet on Zoom and begin understanding what it means to work on an interdisciplinary team.

"We are thrilled," Kashinath said. "The grant's goal aligns perfectly with the university's priorities of contributing to a qualified regional workforce as most of our trainees are already or will be employed in the East Bay and greater Bay Area region. Not only that, the grant will offer our diverse students opportunities to lead in their communities and reach underserved populations who need qualified educators. They will be leading in jobs where they are reflective of the individuals they are going to serve." **EE**



Madison Craig and her mother don masks made by Craig to support Native Americans living and working on reservations around the country.  COURTESY OF MADISON CRAIG



---

# RECLAMATION IN THE TIME OF CORONAVIRUS

BY NATALIE FEULNER

Madison Craig is on a mission to help indigenous people reclaim their bodies.

Three years ago, the health sciences major turned designer, launched a handmade lingerie company focused on empowering Native American men and women. And while that's taken a bit of a turn due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Craig is still using her passion (and her sewing machine) to make a difference for hundreds of people around the nation.

"We were planning our business launch and the pandemic hit," Craig said. "I really couldn't not sew and design ... especially when a lot of reservations are hurting right now."

So instead of underwear, Craig is sewing masks.

The Oakland-based alumna is an enrolled member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe. A few years ago, she and her sister Jordan started Shy Natives, a lingerie and apparel company aimed at changing the narrative around indigenous bodies and the over-sexualization and stereotyping of indigenous peoples.

"Our biggest motivation was to create a safe space for indigenous men and women to express themselves and feel sexy and safe," Craig said. "There's so much awful history about native women in terms of rape and abuse and ... there really hasn't been a safe brand or space for

Native American people to steer the conversation away from that."

To figure out where the need for masks was highest, Craig and her sister went to Instagram. Their account, featuring Native American people of all body shapes and sizes modeling Shy Native's products, has more than 17,000 followers. Those thousands put the pair in touch with hospital workers at tribes around the country, including Navajo Nation, which has the third-highest COVID-19 infection rate in the US, behind New York and New Jersey.

While they've sent upward of 600 masks to date, Craig said it's hard not to see how much more of a need exists. And there are challenges, namely securing fabric and mailing costs.

Craig said her mother, who often helps her sew, salvages fabric from a thrift store where she volunteers. They'll use anything, from fabric with cats printed on it, to bedsheets.

"It's hard because I feel like our capacity is very small, and we're making a small dent," Craig said. "It feels good, but at the same time, I wish we weren't in a pandemic sewing masks ... I didn't have the motivation to create and sew underwear but I needed to do something to help."

And while she knows there is more work to do, Craig said the past several years of finding ways to empower Native American people has helped her embrace her own indigenous identity.

"To me being indigenous is different than what it might mean for others," she said, explaining her mother was part of a wave of indigenous children adopted by the Catholic church and stripped of their culture as part of a federal Indian Adoption project.

"So for me, it's trying to find, fill and connect pieces together of my ancestors and where I'm from," Craig said. "We work with a bunch of other Native artists and models, and we lift each other up, give each other a voice and really shoot to display inclusivity and all Native bodies." ■



Medical staff at the Tucson Medical Center in Arizona wear masks created by alumna Madison Craig. ■ COURTESY OF MADISON CRAIG



(From top left) Mel and Leta Ramos in Cairo in the mid 1970s; Mel and Leta Ramos in Horta, Spain in 1978 renovating their "fixer-upper" vacation home; (center) Mel Ramos, Rochelle Leininger and Leta Ramos in Vienna, Austria; (bottom left) Mel and Leta Ramos in Vienna; (bottom right) Mel and Leta Ramos dressed as Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman at an Oakland Museum costume party. COURTESY OF ROCHELLE LEININGER



# AN Artistic LEGACY

## Family of former CSUEB professor, alumna fund program to bring arts education to Hayward schools

BY NATALIE FEULNER

When Rochelle Leininger was a child, her parents threw the liveliest of dinner parties. Professors, friends of her father, Mel Ramos, who taught at then-Cal State Hayward, would fill the table with loud, friendly banter, color and vibrancy. For everyone in attendance, surrounded by her parents' art collection of African tribal masks, a ceramic burping bowl, and a taxidermy lioness, the house was an eclectic space full of love.

"When I think about how I grew up, my life has been so full of diversity and passion and experiences that come with being exposed to art ... in some ways, it was the greatest gift ever," Leininger said.

When they weren't hosting dinners, the Ramos family, guided by the family matriarch, Lolita (Leta) Alice Ramos ('76, Art), spent their days perusing galleries or picking through junkyards for just the right item to complement Mel's latest painting or sculpture.

Mel Ramos was born in 1935 in Sacramento, California, to an immigrant Portuguese-Azores family. He began his life as an artist as an abstract painter, then as a figure painter, who became best known for his depictions of graphic portrayals of women and comic book heroes.

Exhibited in a group show in 1963 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art that included Andy Warhol, he became known as one of the founders of "Pop Art" in America. Over a 60-year career,

Mel Ramos exhibited in more than 120 group shows and solo exhibits around the world.

Leininger and other family members established the Mel and Leta Ramos Family Foundation in 2017 as a way to carry on the legacy of Mel and Leta's work as artists and art educators. The foundation funds arts education efforts through its Arts Education Initiative, which focuses on arts education as a primary need in underfunded urban neighborhoods and communities.

"If there [was] not a creative outlet for kids, the world would be a less interesting place," Leininger said. "We have to make sure the arts are taught in schools, and we have to support students in their advancement in arts education."

A recent gift by the Ramos family to Cal State East Bay is intended to do just that.

As part of its inaugural funding, the foundation created a paid opportunity for a need-based student in the university's art department to receive funding in exchange for a commitment to teaching art classes at one of the Hayward Promise Neighborhoods schools. HPNs is a collaborative partnership working to alleviate poverty and ensure educational success in two of Hayward's most distressed neighborhoods, the Jackson Triangle and South Hayward.

The pilot project was on track, and a student was selected for the spring semester when the COVID-19 pandemic put up a ▶

# BLACK CAT



---

A sampling of Mel Ramos' work, including "Black Cat" (p. 40); "Phantom Lady" (p. 41 top left) and "Catwoman" (p. 41 top right).  
COURTESY OF ROCHELLE LEININGER



roadblock. And while Hayward Unified School District has not announced whether students will return to physical classrooms in the fall, the foundation is working with the university to revamp the opportunity for the upcoming school year.

Leininger said partnering with Cal State East Bay for the inaugural Arts Education Initiative project was an easy decision. Having grown up visiting the university with her parents and attending art exhibitions or student shows, she knew both of them had fond connections to the students and faculty they met there.

“For my dad especially, he was so happy that he could actually earn a living doing what he loved,” Leininger said. “Not many people do a job that they don’t think of as a job ... some of his greatest lifelong friendships were students and professors at Cal State Hayward.”

She said she hopes the gift will not only alleviate an art student’s financial burden but that it will also inspire them to go on to become teachers themselves.

It’s a legacy that Mel Ramos (who died in October 2018) has already left, exemplified by one of his students from CSU Hayward, now working as an art professor at Ohlone College.

“I think about what would have happened if my dad had been discouraged when he wanted to be an artist ... he didn’t stop, and he loved every day of his life,” Leininger said. “Both of my parents did. They loved teaching.”

Ultimately, she hopes the gift to Cal State East Bay will not only create a legacy of her parents’ work and values but will also reinforce the importance of arts education for all. She also hopes it will play a small part in ensuring students have access to the creativity and experiences she so fondly remembers her parents fostering in their children.

“It can’t just be math and science,” says Leininger. “It’s also critical to have art, creative writing, music, foreign languages ... exercising creative expression is vital.”

*To learn more about the Mel and Leta Ramos Family Foundation, please contact Rochelle@MelRamos.com. To donate to the Ramos fund and further support a Cal State East Bay teaching artist/student contact Holly Stanco at holly.stanco@csueastbay.edu or (510) 885-3183.*

## IN MEMORIAM:

### LOLITA (LETA) ALICE RAMOS (B.A. '76, ART)

Lolita (Leta) Alice Ramos was 85 when she died peacefully on March 5, 2020, in her Oakland home. She was surrounded by her children, loving caretakers, and artwork created by her, her husband, Mel Ramos, and other dear artist friends.

Ramos was born in Auburn, California, on July 31, 1934, to Irene and Theodore Helmers. She began her modeling career early and would later become a lifelong model for her husband and the love of her life, Mel Ramos.

Leta earned her bachelor’s degree in education from Sacramento State and became an elementary school teacher.

In 1959 Leta had her first child, Bradley, who was born with Down syndrome. He was then followed by a second son, Skot, in 1960, and a daughter, Rochelle, in 1964.

The family moved to Oakland in 1968 when Mel took a teaching position at then-California State University in Hayward. A few years later, Leta returned to school, this time at CSU Hayward, where she earned a second bachelor’s degree in art.

While all of these activities brought her incredible joy, Leta’s real passion came from working and volunteering with disabled artists. She was introduced to Oakland’s nonprofit organization, Creative Growth Art Center, where she brought her son, Brad, to attend its adult art program. Leta helped the school grow as she invited well-known artists to come to mentor and work side-by-side with the students. This was the most rewarding work of her life and is evident in her own mixed-media portrait series she created of the artists.

Throughout Leta’s life, she and Mel traveled extensively and spent 46 summers in Spain, where the family purchased and renovated an old house in the village of Horta de Sant Joan.

The most important loves in her life were her husband and the family they made together. **EB**

# CLASS NOTES

## 1960s



**BRUCE ROBERTS** (B.A. '68, English) is Hayward's first Poet Laureate after Hayward Mayor Barbara Halliday bestowed the honor five years ago. He has been commissioned to write and present his poems for various community events, such as the dedication of the 9/11 Memorial and the groundbreaking for and opening of the new library. He's written one book, "Hayward Hometown Poetry," and is in the process of writing another titled "Images and Ironies."

## 1970s

**ROBERT GIFFIN** (B.A. '70, Political Science) After graduating with his bachelor's degree, Robert Griffin entered law school, earning a JD from the University of San Francisco and a Master of Laws degree from Golden Gate University. Giffin practiced law in California and Hawaii, with his primary location being Santa Rosa, California. He is now retired, and intends to devote more time to friends and family.

**GARY ZIMMERMAN** (B.A. '72, Economics; M.A. '79, Economics) retired in 2014 from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco,

where he was a senior economist. He was also a lecturer in the Graduate School of Business at Cal State East Bay from 1978 to 1995. Zimmerman has also been a visiting professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business in Vienna, Austria. And since 2012, he has been Northern California radio station KVMR's resident economist on the evening news.



**NETTIE CHASE BACKSTROM** (M.S. '76, Counseling) recently celebrated her 100th birthday, a feat few get to accomplish. Backstrom devoted 30 of her years to the Oakland Unified School District, a passion she shared with her daughter and fellow Pioneer alumna, who also retired from OUSD. Through all she has accomplished in her lifetime, Backstrom's crown jewel is being a lifetime, loving, caring and devoted member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc. for 80 years.

## 1980s

**GREG HIGGINS** (B.S. '80, Business Administration) is opening doors of opportunity. Higgins went from cleaning offices at night to pay for his education at Cal State East Bay to being the owner of his own construction company, G.A. Higgins Inc. The inspiration for G.A. Higgins emerged in the late 1970s after an entrepreneurial class sparked his interest in owning his own business.

**KELESHA MARTIN** (B.S. '81, Special Major-Health Care Administration) became a classroom teacher working for Stockton Unified School District. After she obtained her credential at California State University, Stanislaus, she took educational leave to complete a supplemental authorization in music. She completed her minor in music by taking band, conducting and vocal conducting at Cal State East Bay.

**DENA BAUCKMAN** (B.S. '84, Computer Science), is the vice president of product management at Zix, where she shares her insight and experience from being a leader in the tech space. Bauckman has more than 20 years of experience in product management/marketing of security, cloud and networking technology.



**PETER BAUER** (B.A. '85, History) has been involved in several emergency responses in his lifetime. Currently he works in Medicare and is involved in COVID-19 efforts, although over the years he has dealt with many local Medicare emergencies. For guidance during this uncertain time, he often refers to his time with the USDA and the Peace Corps when he worked with the Emergency Food Stamp Program and the Honduran Ministry of Agriculture's response to the African bee invasion. He feels being a Cal State East Bay history major gave him a nimble skill set to deal with emergency responses. This fall he received a Special Act Award from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in recognition of his support of the backbone of CMS, the traditional Medicare program.

**AUDREY BANKS** (B.S. '89, Criminal Justice) works with the Collaborative Court at the Juvenile Justice Center, Santa Rita Jail and Crisis Services. She has been able to follow her passion and serve mentally ill youth and adults of Alameda County. Banks said it has been a very rewarding career to serve a population that is criminalized, overlooked and invisible to society.



**CRAIG ZARAGOZA** (B.S. '89, Business Administration) was recently named Peace Officer of the Year for demonstrating what it means to be a California Highway Patrol officer through 24 years of hard work and dedication. He began with the Amador CHP office on August 1, 2003, and has served in many capacities, including as an officer in charge, field training officer, range officer and vehicle inspection officer.

## 1990s

**EDEL ROMAY** (M.S. '90, Education) was a bilingual immigrant teacher in the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). Since 1979, Edel has participated in various investigations conducted by the Office of Civil Rights, which determined that the OUSD was breaching its federal and state obligations to provide quality bilingual education.



**NINA TRAN** (B.S. '91, Business Administration) oversees Veritas' finance and accounting, people and culture, technology and business process improvement activities. She has more than 25 years of real estate and financial management experience in both private and public real estate

## 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](https://csueastbay.edu/alumni).

investment trusts. Formerly, she served as the CFO of Starwood Waypoint Residential Trust and spent 18 years at AMB Property Corporation (now Prologis Inc.), where she served as chief global process officer and chief accounting officer. She serves on the board of directors for Apartment Investment and Management Company, otherwise known as AIMCO.



**JIM KRUGER** (MBA '92) has been appointed as chief marketing officer for Veeam. He is an industry veteran and will take the reins of Veeam's marketing organization, bringing more than 25 years of experience to drive the company's growth in cloud data management.

**PAULA MERRIGAN** (B.S. '92, Business Administration) was named to Governor Gavin Newsom's Early Childhood Policy Council. Merrigan has been a teacher at the Castro Valley Unified School District since 2008. She is a member of the California Teachers Association.

**LESLIE RUBIN** (B.S. '93, Kinesiology) is an execution communications strategist working in multiple industries. Rubin works with C-level leaders within startups, Fortune 500 companies and nonprofit boards to help them amplify an organization's voice, increase visibility and maximize a corporate brand. As a published author, Rubin often speaks at leadership and corporate events on personal branding and executive presence.

**MARK PERRY** (B.S. '93, Sociology; MPA '96) became a full-time lecturer in the fall of 2019 for the Department of Criminal Justice at California State University, Stanislaus.

**PAMELA CULPEPPER** (MPA '94) is driving change for gender equity by being co-founder for Have Her Back (HHB) Consulting, an independent company. Culpepper is a 25-year-plus human resources, talent and culture leader, and brings deep expertise from her roles as chief global diversity officer at PepsiCo and Chief People Officer at Golin.

**AMY CUNNINGHAM** (MPA '95) was named as the new finance director for Novato. Cunningham has more than 20 years of local government finance experience working for the cities of Dublin, Moraga, Walnut Creek and Half Moon Bay.



**DIANE PETERSEN** (B.A. '96, Environmental Studies) is an EOP counselor at Cal State East Bay, and many students and alumni credit her for their success and graduation. She keeps in touch with some of her former students and loves to hear their success stories. She even stopped by last year's 40 Under 40 Awards because three of her former students were recognized, and she wanted to congratulate them. In her downtime, Peterson is a docent for East Bay Regional Parks.



**CHADWICK SPELL** (B.S. '99, Biological Science) is the chief operating officer of Wachira Wines. Wachira Wines is a woman-owned winemaker, distributor, importer and exporter with a tasting room slated to open soon in Alameda.



**TAMESA ROGERS** (M.S. '99, Counseling) has been included in Savoy's list of the most influential Black executives in America. Rogers has served as NETGEAR's senior vice president of human resources since July 2013. She began her NETGEAR career in 2003 as senior human resources manager and has risen through the ranks to her current position.

Under her direction, NETGEAR has instituted practices and processes to formalize recruiting, compensation, learning and development, performance management, leadership and succession planning. Her department's most recent undertakings include a focus on employee engagement, company culture and diversity and inclusion.

## 2000s



**JASON FISH** (B.S. '02, Business Administration) is the new student resource officer for Heritage High School. Fish spent five years in the United States Army before obtaining a degree from Cal State East Bay and launching his law enforcement career.



**MYRA NAWABI** (B.A. '02, Liberal Studies; M.S. '04, Educational Leadership) works for Lockheed Martin Space as a senior project engineer and will be a featured speaker for EBx, a TED-style event for the East Bay community.



**MUNE IWANAGA** (B.S. '03, Business Administration) is the vice president and head of internal audit for Asia Pacific Japan and Greater China for SAP SE, one of the world's largest enterprise software companies with more than 100,000 employees globally. Iwanaga was an international

student at Cal State East Bay and credited the university for giving him the practical foundation to prepare him for the professional world. While at CSUEB, Iwanaga interned at Deloitte, one of the Big 4 accounting firms, and was offered a full-time job upon graduation.

**CRAIG EICHER** (B.S. '04, Criminal Justice Administration) has been appointed as interim police chief for Pleasanton. Eicher began his career in law enforcement in 1989 as a volunteer Pleasanton reserve police officer. He's been a captain for eight years and currently oversees the department's operations division.



**ED BARBERINI** (MPA, '05) was chosen as the next police chief for San Mateo. Barberini, who was previously the San Bruno police chief, took over as San Mateo's top cop on February 3. San Mateo City Manager Drew Corbett said Barberini's law enforcement background and experience in the county made him the top pick following a months-long national search.



**CHARLES COLE III'S** (B.A. '05, Political Science) self-published dissertation "Beyond Grit & Resilience: How Black Men Impacted by the Crack Epidemic Succeeded Against the Odds and Obtained Doctoral Degrees" goes beyond the theory that Black males owe their academic success to grit and resilience.



**DONALD RUBIANO** (B.A. '05, Communications) is currently working in creative services at Kingston Technology. He recently stopped by the campus radio station at Cal State East Bay to talk about his experience in video production and working in Los Angeles.



**HEMANGA NATH** (MBA '06) is chief technology officer for Loved, an SEC-registered investment platform based in San Francisco described as "Next Generation Money." He also serves as advisor to Brightvision Partners and Socialbambi. His experience includes positions as CTO at YouTech (acquired by Inmar) and senior engineering manager at Apple.

**RODNEY CLEMENTE** (B.S. '08, Engineering) was promoted to senior vice president at Energy Recovery. A 20-year veteran of Energy Recovery, Clemente has deep experience in the water business and intimate knowledge of global desalination markets, both of which have been integral to the company's global market leadership.



**JORDAN FERRELL** (B.A. '09, Sociology), is the new Oakland Roots coach, breaking professional soccer color barriers. Ferrell will be one of only two African American head coaches among the 82 professional soccer teams taking the field this year in the United States.



**JANELLE MINTER** (B.S. '09, Biological Sciences), a Castro Valley native, is a physician for Kaiser Permanente and was recently selected as one of the 344 outstanding physicians in the Greater Sacramento Area. Minter spends her time navigating between two departments: palliative medicine and hospital medicine. She has been a physician for a little over a year at Kaiser, and while it is a challenging job that requires long days, it is incredibly satisfying and fulfilling for her.

## 2010s

**EMILY SANTIAGO** (M.S. '10, Educational Psychology) is the founder and director of the Center for Cognitive Diversity. While practicing as a school psychologist, Santiago witnessed the significant impact of trauma on students and educators. As a result, she founded CogDiv and created the Trauma Informed Specialist program in partnership with Cal State East Bay. The program is now in three countries and nine states and is building learning environments that heal and empower. She has been a speaker at UC Berkeley, SXSW EDU and various professional conferences.

**SUZANNE AMENDT** (MSW '10) worked in palliative care and hospice for 10 years while obtaining supervision to test to become a licensed clinical social worker. She passed the test with BBS in 2017 and is now privileged to be setting up a private practice in Walnut Creek, California.

**STEPHANIE CASTRO** (B.S. '17, Speech Pathology and Audiology) moved to Florida and attended graduate school, majoring in

Communication Sciences and Disorders. Her clinical experiences have filled her with a desire to work in an adult medical setting, particularly treating patients with neurogenic communication and swallowing disorders. When she wasn't in class or working the past two years, she was usually at Disney World.



**REINA ROBINSON** (B.A. '16, Ethnic Studies; M.A. '19, Communications) is a youth development services specialist for the Contra Costa County Office of Education. While she was studying for her master's degree at Cal State East Bay, she founded the Center for Urban Excellence, a nonprofit organization that supports youth affected by incarceration and violence.

## In Memoriam



**NANCY SUE SCHLUNTZ** (B.S. '79, Mass Communication) wrote three books: "Hand in Paw: A Journey of Trust and Discovery" (2014); "Animals on Reiki: Teachings on the Principles of Energy Healing" (2016); and "Leaves in My Hair: Insights and Poems Along the Way" (2017). Her work and education at then-Cal State Hayward were integral to her becoming a published author. Unfortunately, she was not able to finish the two additional books she was working on before she died of ovarian cancer.



This spring, Cal State East Bay awarded a posthumous degree in political science to **STEVEN LEWIS**, who died in late 2019. Danvy Le, an assistant professor of political science, presented Lewis's family with the degree certificate at his funeral.

Lewis was first diagnosed and treated for a rare type of cancer in 2016, but in 2018, the cancer returned. Despite urging from his doctor to quit school, Lewis was determined to complete his degree.

While at Cal State East Bay, Lewis joined the nonprofit My Other Brother, working as a volunteer at Oakland area schools.

While there, he served as a tutor and mentor to at-risk youth. He also took a job at the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center, becoming highly involved in civic duties, with a particular interest in voter registration.

His mother, Lisa Williams, shared Lewis' words written in his journal, "Graduating to me is symbolic of progress and struggle alike. It represents the trifecta of hard work, dedication and foresight. It's less walking the stage and more striving for greatness, for me."

"He wanted to become his best self and make his family proud," Williams said. "We already were."

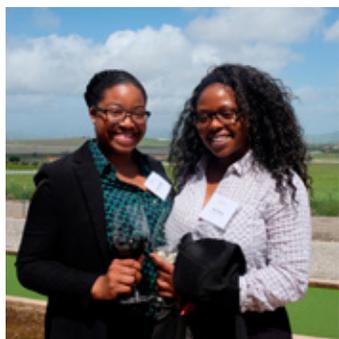
In 2018, Lewis gave students from Dominguez High School in Compton, California, a tour at Cal State East Bay and another nearby college at the request of the high school's Black Student Union.

"That is significant because everyone else they asked to help said no," Williams said. "The tour would have been canceled or postponed without his help. Many of those students had never set foot on a college campus."

The Steven Terrell Lewis Nia Scholarship has been created in Lewis' honor and will be given to a deserving Dominguez High School student each year.

# CAL STATE EAST BAY

A L U M N I



## 4 reasons to STAY CONNECTED

### 1 Career Support

Continued support to Pioneer graduates through alumni career events, and campus career & professional development resources.

### 2 Discounts & Resources

Access to select university facilities and discounts on insurance, entertainment, student performances, and more.

### 3 Networking

Connect with over 130,000 Pioneer alumni, a majority whom live and work in the Bay Area.

### 4 Volunteer Opportunities

Share your career experience and industry insight with students and fellow alumni or volunteer as an alumni ambassador at campus and community events.

[www.csueastbay.edu/alumni](http://www.csueastbay.edu/alumni)



---

# PARTING SHOT

---



CAL STATE  
EAST BAY

CLASS OF 2020



CAL STATE  
**EAST BAY**

California State University, East Bay  
University Advancement, SA 4800  
25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward, CA 94542

Non Profit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
California State  
University East Bay

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED