Update: 2014 Envisioning California Conference

Moving On: Transforming Transportation in the California

This fall’s Envisioning California Conference, was a great success! Held on October 3rd at the Sacramento Public Library, Tsakopoulos Galleria, the 25th annual conference was titled Moving On: Transforming Transportation in California. The conference focused on the future of California’s transportation and infrastructure as well as a look back at our transportation history; and included four panels each with a group of distinguished panelists. The panels were titled: Paved with Good Intentions: California’s Transportation Infrastructure in the 21st Century; Trains, Planes, and (smarter) Automobiles: Transportation Policy for California’s Future; Transportation and the Environment: Reducing California’s Carbon Footprint; and Transportation and California’s Communities.

Other events of the day included the 20th annual California Journalism Awards, a lunch keynote address by Jeffrey L. Spencer of the Federal Transit Administration, and a lighthearted Afternoon Plenary titled: The Car: California’s Love Affair, Past & Future by Automotive Journalist, Jon Rosner. Six journalists were honored during the lunch hour presentation of the 20th annual California Journalism Awards. For the second year in a row, excellent catering service was provided by Beth Sogaard Catering. The California Automobile Museum and the Compadres Bomb Car Club of Sacramento provided classic cars to be enjoyed outside of the Library. To wrap it all up, information tables were provided by Heyday Books, California State Railroad Museum, High-Speed Rail Authority, Air Resources Board, and photos from the California State Library.

SACRED THE DATE: Friday, October 2, 2015 for the 26th annual Envisioning California Conference.

2014 California Journalism Awards

For Excellence in Print Reporting
Charles Piller, The Sacramento Bee, “Rusted Cables, Cracked Welds - Trouble on the Iconic Bay Bridge”

For Excellence in Blog Reporting
Jon Brooks, KQED, “Ride Sharing Insurance Gap”

For Excellence in Radio Reporting
Molly Samuel, KQED, “Crude by Rail in California”

For Excellence in TV Reporting
Wendy Fry, NBC 7 San Diego, “San Ysidro Sidewalk Series”

For Excellence in Photo Journalism
Jake Millie, Jake Millie Photography, “The Changing Face of Crude: Oil by Rail Shipments Across the US”

Katharine M. Macdonald Student Award
Executive Director Message

As I write this, the Center for California Studies shifts from situating our 2014-15 Fellows in their respective offices, to processing applications for the 2015-16 class of Fellows. The Capital Fellows Program is truly a year-round endeavor, and I appreciate all the good work of our staff and our partners in the California Senate, Assembly, Judicial branch, and Executive branch. I also want to thank all the generous contributors to the Timothy A. Hodson Capital Fellows Assistance Fund, which helps to ensure that fellowships are available to all qualified Californians, regardless of financial need.

We have several new projects coming up in 2015. One major event will be hosting the 2015 State Politics and Policy conference of the American Political Science Association in late May. The conference will focus on various aspects of state government reform, and researchers from around the country will have an opportunity to explore that topic here in Sacramento, which in recent years has enacted a number of innovative, far-reaching, and potentially paradigm-changing reforms.

We also are working on a symposium focused on the culture and history of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta region, a conference on the future of California’s higher education system, a new oral history project, and several new LegiSchool events. Keep an eye on our website (www.csus.edu/calst) for updates on these projects.

I’d also encourage you to block out your calendar for October 2, 2015, when we will be holding our next Envisioning California Conference in downtown Sacramento. We’re still working on the details, but this is already promising to be a fresh, exciting, and interactive exploration of California culture, trends, and policies. I guarantee that it will be worth your time.

Overall, 2015 promises to be a productive and exciting year for the Center for California Studies as it continues to promote experiential education, civic engagement, policy research, and a greater understanding of our great, complicated, unique, and ever-changing state. I invite you to engage with us in this worthy mission, and I wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year. ~ Steve Boilard

For more information on the Center for California Studies please visit: csus.edu/calst.html

2014-15 Outreach Update

A new class of Capital Fellows was welcomed to Sacramento this fall with orientations for each class taking place in September through November. The beginning of a new class of fellows is also the sign for the opening of the outreach season for the next class of fellows. To recruit for this 2015-16 class, a new program was launched, the Capital Fellows Alumni Ambassador Program. Alumni Ambassadors focus on outreach to a specific university campus or organization. Many of the Ambassadors live near or in the vicinity of the university or organization that they are focusing on. The following alumni have volunteered their time to give back to the fellowship programs.

ALUMNI AMBASSADORS: Jeff Caligiuri, Henry Castillo, Qiana Charles, Sean Connelly, Jennifer Cryer, Pat Egan, Nick Esquivel, Victoria Finkler Rome, Robert Gregg, Paula Gutierrez Baeza, Jessica Gunderson, Marguerite Hogan, Jenni Khuu Katzer, Miguel Lopez, Jeff Mankey, Brandon Marchy, Aram Nadjarian, Elizabeth Oseguera, Hai-Vu Phan, Dia Poole, Darcel Sanders, Cesar Tamondong, Kristen Torres Pawling, and David Vazquez

If you are interested in becoming a Capital Fellows Alumni Ambassador, contact Claire Bunch at bunchc@csus.edu or 916-278-6906.
Former Fellow Profile: Taryn Ravazzini, Judicial Administration Fellow 1997-98

As a member of the inaugural class of Judicial Administration Fellows, Ms. Ravazzini had the privilege of working for the Judicial Council Office of Governmental Affairs, coordinating legislation and negotiating issues between the State’s courts, counties and Legislature at a time when landmark state trial court funding policies were first being implemented. The Fellowship offered Ms. Ravazzini the opportunity to cultivate her strong interest in governmental advocacy. Following the Fellowship, she moved to Washington, DC, where she staffed United States Senator Barbara Boxer and was first introduced to California water issues. She then handled federal relations and regional coordination for the Association of California Water Agencies and eventually transitioned to the world of private consulting, where she continued to work on natural resource and local government issues.

Ms. Ravazzini, an attorney, was appointed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2013 to join the Delta Stewardship Council in the newly created position of Coordinator to help the Council establish and oversee a committee of agencies responsible for implementing the Delta Plan. Ms. Ravazzini’s focus is to improve internal and external agency coordination and program integration among those entities (over 220 state, local and federal agencies) with responsibilities in the Delta, with particular attention on the 17 state and federal agencies that make up the high-level Delta Plan Inter-agency Implementation Committee.

“The Capital Fellows Program provides invaluable access to, and opportunities for, learning from some of the most dedicated professionals in government. Each fellow has the chance to capitalize on their placement and set the course for their own professional trajectory. For me, the Fellowship was a unique education experience, where the gift of exposure to leaders, issues, and high-level debates established the ground rules of public service. I found the greatest value in the tools provided to me by my mentors. I had the privilege of learning from exceptional individuals, who are still my mentors today, about the value of integrity and commitment to the public good that paved the way for my professional choices and resulting successes. Such lessons cannot be taught in a classroom.”

The LegiSchool Project: Winter Writeup

LegiSchool started the school year with our October Town Hall, where students learned about the elections process, politics and political parties. At the end of the day we held a mock vote to see who students would elect if they were in charge. We unveiled the new format for our curriculum guides, meant to help teachers across the state incorporate current events and civic learning into their classrooms. See all our guides at www.csus.edu/calst/free_materials.html

In December, LegiSchool went on the road to bring the topic of High-Speed Rail to students in the heart of the debate, the Central Valley. Students from along the proposed rail line gathered together to hear from panelists both in favor of and opposed to the project. This engaging event ended with students expressing their own thoughts and opinions on High-Speed Rail.

LegiSchool’s annual contests are well underway. We just wrapped up our editorial cartoon contest, which inspired students to think critically and express themselves creatively on policy topics they care about. Check out the winners’ work on the KQED website. We are now accepting entries for our essay contest on the topic of climate change. Winners receive roundtrip travel to the capitol to meet lawmakers, talk to policy experts and much, much more! Details at www.csus.edu/calst/contests.html

For more information on the LegiSchool Project please visit: csus.edu/calst/legischool_project.html

Photos: (Top) October Town Hall participants learn about political party platforms and (Bottom) essay contest winner Mercedes Hawkins meets Assemblymember Rob Bonta
Hodson Assistance Fund News and Event

On December 10, 2014, Center friends, Capital Fellows and alumni came together at the Portofino Room in midtown Sacramento for a celebration of the Capital Fellows Programs and Timothy A. Hodson Capital Fellows Assistance Fund. This was the Center’s first holiday celebration honoring the many individuals who have helped to sustain the ongoing success of the Capital Fellows Programs. The event also highlighted the critical support the Hodson Assistance Fund offers incoming Capital Fellows each year as it provides financial-need based awards ranging from housing deposits to professional wardrobe.

Guests were greeted by welcome remarks from Center Executive Director, Steve Boilard, and the new Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies, Orn Bodvarsson. Award recipient and 2014-15 Senate Fellow, Bethany Renfree, shared her perspective as a single mother of five and how help from the Hodson Assistance Fund enabled her to maintain stability for her family while making the transition to life as a Capital Fellow in Sacramento. The festive gathering also provided the opportunity for many past award recipients and Fund supporters to meet one another.

The Timothy A. Hodson Capital Fellows Assistance Fund helps to ensure that financial challenges don’t prevent individuals like Bethany from participating in the Fellows Programs. To help build this fund to support future Capital Fellows, please consider donating at the link below:

For questions regarding the Hodson Assistance Fund, please contact Pam Chueh at chueh@csus.edu or 916.278.7541.

Photo (above): Bethany Renfree, 2014-15 Senate Fellow and Hodson Assistance Fund recipient and Pam Chueh, Center for California Studies

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