

# CommConnect

FALL 2020

## IN THIS ISSUE



Welcome new faculty

• 2 •



Anti-Racism Task Force

• 4 •



Alumni News

• 7 •

## Exploring new territory

Faculty, students continue transitions in teaching, learning amidst a pandemic

Communication Studies faculty and students took on challenging transitions required for teaching and learning as the coronavirus pandemic continues.

Three Communication Studies faculty members were selected to help lead a special “online summer camp” for just under 900 of their faculty colleagues wanting to learn more about online teaching. Dr. **Kimberly Aguilar**, assistant professor, Dr. **Jacqueline Irwin**, professor, and **Timi Ross Poeppelman**, lecturer, joined other faculty in leading the three-week course.

Offered by the College for Continuing Education, Information and Resource Technologies and the Center for Teaching and Learning, it was funded by a \$1 million grant awarded to Sacramento State. During the camp, faculty received specific instruction about how to move elements of their regular in-class teaching to an online format.

“We were all required to move our work, including all classes, to the virtual world with only a few days’ notice,” said Dr. **Gerri Smith**, department chair. “I am so proud of the faculty for their creativity and perseverance in making the transition.”

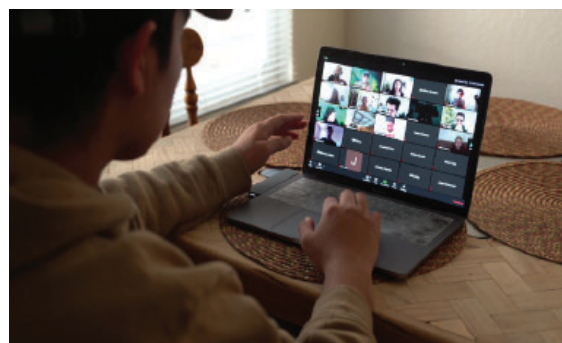
For Poeppelman, the arrival of the pandemic and the need to move to online teaching, was a moment where preparation met opportunity. “I have been teaching online for about five years now, and serving my department as well as working with the summer camp was a way for me to invest in my colleagues.”

The summer camp was the largest faculty training session ever offered by Sacramento State University. “I really enjoy teaching teachers,” Poeppelman said. “When we begin teaching, we are not given much training in the logistics of teaching, and it can make some teachers unwilling to look and see if there are other and/or better ways to teach.”

Irwin took an optimistic viewpoint to the process noting, “Good teaching is good teaching regardless of the mode of instruction. Organization and consistency is key so that your students have a predictable schedule from you. This can help both the professor and students feel secure and centered throughout the journey of a semester.”

Aguilar noted that her expertise in instructional communication cyberpedagogy compelled her to get involved. “I thought I could

• continued on page 6



# Grad program grows

**T**he graduate program in Communication Studies continues to grow, with 38 students currently completing their master's degrees.

Applications for the Fall 2021 cohort are being accepted until Jan. 15, 2021, according to Dr. **Shawna Malvini-Redden**, graduate program coordinator.

Our new Fall 2020 cohort included the following students:

- **Alondra Botello**
- **Keeley Cicarelli**
- **Nickolas Crabtree**
- **Kat LaGrande**
- **Ilde Mora**
- **Trish Pilas**
- **Cassandra Quinonez**
- **Trenton Sanders**
- **Louise Thao**

MA student **Robert Moon** was elected Graduate Director for Associated Students Inc., while recent MA grad **Erik Ramirez** led two breakout sessions during the Fall Convocation on Anti-Racism at Sacramento State.

To learn more about graduate students in Communication Studies at Sacramento State, click on: [www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/communication-studies/graduate-study-communications.html](http://www.csus.edu/college/arts-letters/communication-studies/graduate-study-communications.html)

# Welcome new faculty

## Communication Studies welcomes new professors in Public Relations and Rhetoric

**T**hree new professors joined the Department of Communication Studies faculty this fall.

Dr. **Carlos Flores** joins Sacramento State as an assistant professor of rhetoric from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. A first-generation college graduate, Flores earned his Ph.D. in rhetorical theory and criticism from Arizona State University. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at California State University Northridge.

A native of Los Angeles, Flores' research interests include rhetorical theory and the public sphere, digital rhetoric and popular culture.

Dr. **Cheng Hong**, assistant professor in public relations, joins Sacramento State after serving as an assistant professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. She earned her Ph.D. in strategic communication and her M.A. from the University of Miami. She received her undergraduate degree from Peking University in Beijing, China.

Hong's research interests include brand activism, consumer boycott and boycott behaviors, controversial sociopolitical issues, corporate social advocacy, and social media.

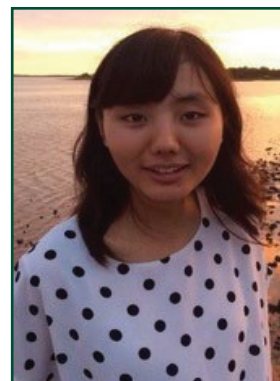
Dr. **Andrea Terry**, assistant professor in rhetoric, comes to Sacramento State from California Polytechnic State University. She holds a Ph.D. in rhetoric and public affairs from Texas A&M University. She earned her master's degree at Sacramento State, and her undergraduate degree at Cal Poly.

A rhetorical critic who studies the U.S. presidency, Terry is interested in the interaction between political and religious discourse, including the role of spiritual advisers in the presidency.

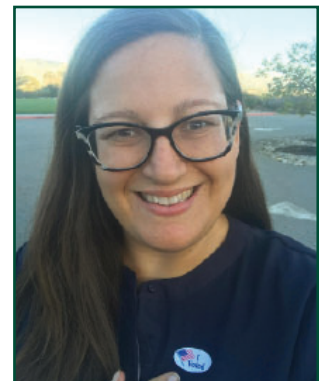
"We are truly excited and proud to have Drs. Flores, Hong and Terry on our faculty, and to see how you are already contributing to your fields and our community," said Dr. **Sheree Meyer**, dean of the College of Arts and Letters.



Dr. **CARLOS FLORES**



Dr. **CHENG HONG**



Dr. **ANDREA TERRY**



## REMEMBERING LINDA KAY TUCKER

Friends and colleagues were saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. **Linda Kay Tucker**, faculty emerita from the Department of Communication Studies.

Tucker died Sept. 11, 2020 in Folsom, CA, where she lived. She was a professor of organizational communication at Sacramento State for 30 years before retiring. During her tenure at Sac State, she also taught while on sabbatical at both Dublin City University in Ireland and Bangkok University in Thailand.

Active in her community, Tucker was a board member for the American Cancer Society, the Sacramento Health Council, and the board of trustees for the Stanford Home for Children.

She lent her expertise for more than 25 years leading communication training activities for hospice programs across Northern California, and led various grief and bereavement recovery groups.

"Vibrant is a great description of Linda," said Dr. **David Zuckerman**, professor. "She was a wonderful teacher. She will be missed."

Tucker was preceded in death by her husband, Dr. **William Tucker**. She is survived by her daughter **Michelle Ison**, and her son **Michael LaRue**, six grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and three siblings.



## Communication Studies faculty news

- Dr. **Kimberly Aguilar**, and **Phillip Reese**, assistant professors, represented the Department of Communication Studies at the "Fall in Love with Sac State" event (formerly known as "Future Hornets Day").

- **Sigrid Bathen**, emeritus faculty, moderated the panel discussion, "California in Crisis: COVID-19," sponsored by *Capitol Weekly* and *Open California*. She also recently published legislative wrap-up articles for *Capitol Weekly* on landmark legislation passed to address mental health issues in the state, as well as an article about how law enforcement officials respond to calls involving individuals struggling with mental illness. Bathen also conducted an online Q&A with Sacramento Mayor **Darrell Steinberg** (D) about the Mental Health Services Act that he authored while a member of the California State Senate.



are co-authors of a paper titled, "Frameless Cinema: Proposal for a Narrative Engagement Scale for Virtual Reality" published in *Electronic Yearbook of Studies in Social Communication Dissertations*, in Colombia. Bonilla is also the author of a prologue in Spanish titled "Challenges for the creation (and research) of complex narratives" for a new book, *Complex Narratives*, published by Ria Editorial in Portugal.

- Professor **Molly Dugan** was named the College of Arts & Letters representative on the Anchor University Advisory Council formed by Sacramento State University President **Robert S. Nelsen**.

- **Mark Herzig**, lecturer, produced "get out the vote" videos featuring current and former Sacramento State students which were posted to Vimeo prior to the November election.

- "The Flipper," the latest creative writing piece by Dr. **Elaine Gale**, professor, was recently published in the competitive nonfiction literary journal, *Hags on Fire*. Gale has also formed a new creative partnership with **Rod Lathim**, president of the Marjorie Luke Theater in Santa Barbara, CA, to launch a fully online TrueStory series, based on feature nonfiction stories from people all

### FACULTY NEWS

- Dr. **Diego Bonilla**, professor, is the subject of an essay in *Colloquia*, an academic journal of the Sorbonne University in Paris. The article, by Dr. **Hector Perea**, is titled "The Plots of the Plot in the Reconstruction of Time: Diego Bonilla's Unlimited Cinema." Bonilla and Dr. **Rodolfo Mata**, Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM), are co-authors of a new electronic anthology titled, "Tablada Hipertextual." The anthology is published by the Institute of Philological Research of the UNAM. The edition contains a prologue by Bonilla, in Spanish, titled "About the importance of computational thinking and literature." In addition, Bonilla and Dr. **Helena Galan**, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid,

# Conversations on race

**A**djunct instructor **Trinette Marquis** and **Natalie Nash**, director of Communications for the Crete-Monee School District, a suburban Chicago school district, moderated a panel, "Say What? Building a Positive Framework for Hard Conversations about Race, Equity and Culture" at the National School Public Relations Association Conference in July.

"We both felt that breaking through the discomfort of this issue was challenging people, but it was exactly what was needed in schools and communities throughout the country," explained Marquis. "We wanted to go beyond the idea of racial justice to practical considerations about how to facilitate productive conversations that lead to change."

Nash and Marquis developed a workshop focused on how to create a safe space for educational stakeholders to explore implicit/explicit biases and develop a plan on how to start a positive conversation. They also developed a framework for providing leadership, direction, and advocacy so that schools can continue to move systems to better serve all students and families.

## Faculty news —

- continued from page 3

over the country. Gale was invited by Dr. **Sara Safari**, director of development for the Empower Nepali Girls organization, to be a guest speaker for an audience in Katmandu, Nepal. Gale gave a talk about communication, writing and self-expression as well as her experience of being a woman in academia.

- **Dr. Cheng Hong**, assistant professor, has four publications in print in 2020, including as lead author on "An Examination of Information Behaviors Surrounding Controversial Sociopolitical Issues: Roles of Moral Emotions and Gender" for the *International Journal of Communication*. This paper was co-authored with three University of Miami scholars, **Weiting Tao** and **Wan-Hsiu Sunny Tsai**, and **Bo Ra Yook**, Fairfield University. She is also the lead author of "How to Turn Lurkers into Donors? A Study of Online Social Support Interaction Between Nonprofit Organizations and their Followers" for the *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*. Her co-author was **Cong Li**, University of Miami. Hong co-authored "Effects of Uniqueness, News Valence, and Liking on Personalization of Company News" for *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*. Her co-authors were Li, University of Miami, and **Zifei Fay Chen**, University of San Francisco. Hong is also one of four authors of "Echo Chambers and Social Mediators in Public Advocacy Issue Networks" for *Public Relations Review*. Her co-authors were Tsai, Tao and **Ching-Hua Chuan** from the University of Miami.

- "Flora My Dear," a film by **Dan Janos**, assistant professor, tied for Best Experimental Short in the Santa Fe Independent Film Festival, and is also an official selection of the Chicago Underground Film Festival.

• continued on page 5

## Department forms Anti-Racism and Social Justice Work Group

An Anti-Racism and Social Justice Work Group has been formed in the Department of Communication Studies.

"This work group will begin important conversations and action about how and in what ways we as a department will respond to racial injustices internationally, nationally, locally, as well as on our campus," said Dr. **Gerri Smith**, department chair.

Faculty members expressed enthusiastic support for the idea of an Anti-Racism and Social Justice Work Group, Smith said, and 19 full-time and adjunct faculty members and graduate students have volunteered to serve.

Members of the Anti-Racism and Social Justice Work Group are:

- **LeRoy Austin**
- **Sonia Borg-Thepot**
- **Dan DeVere**
- **Molly Dugan**
- **Elizabeth Earle**
- **Dr. Carlos Flores**
- **Dr. Elaine Gale**
- **Dr. Cheng Hong**
- **Kathryn Kasic**
- **Donna Knifong**
- **Trinette Marquis**
- **Dr. Kikuko Omori**
- **Patricia Pilas**
- **Dr. Gerri Smith**
- **Dr. Carmen Stitt**
- **Dr. Andrea Terry**
- **Andrea Yarletz**
- **Owen Young**
- **Cynthia Zeiden**

# Faculty news —

- continued from page 4

- **Kathy Kasic**, assistant professor, published an interview with artist **Jonathan Marquis** on cyanotype photography of melting glaciers within Glacier National Park, published in *Media + Environment* journal.

- **Dr. Shawna Malvini Redden**, associate professor, is the co-author of a new study, "Taking Responsibility: How Working-Class Youth Use a Rational, Responsibility-Oriented to Social Media Communication and Meaning-Making Online" for the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*. Her co-author was **Amy Way**, University of Villanova. She is also a listed author of "It's Hidden, After All: A Modified Delphi Study Exploring Faculty and Students' Perceptions of a Graduate Professional Seminar in Communication" for the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*. The other authors are **Krista Hoffmann-Longtin** and **Maria Brann** of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis and the Professional Seminar Delphi Working Group.

- **Dr. Rebecca LaVally**, lecturer, has been elected president of the board of directors for the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento. The nonprofit home provides key services to children suffering from abuse and neglect.

- **Dr. Fred Molitor**, lecturer, had a manuscript published in the *American Journal of Health Promotion*, titled "Dietary Behaviors and Obesity of Children from Low-Income Households by Gender of Caregiver and Child." In October, Molitor presented "Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Access to Healthful Foods, Intake of Sugar, and Obesity Among Mothers and Their Children Across California" for the annual conference of the American Public Health Association.

- **Dr. Barbara O'Connor**, emeritus professor, was a panelist for "Navigating November 3rd" considering the 2020 election. The panel was sponsored by the Placer and Hornets Policy & Politics Alumni chapter. O'Connor was also interviewed by *The San Jose Mercury News* for its coverage of the debate between Vice President **Mike Pence** (R) and U.S. Senator **Kamala Harris** (D-CA).

- **Dr. Kikuko Omori**, assistant professor, presented three papers at the National Communication Association 2020 conference as the first author.

Her papers, presented with Dr. **Hiroshi Ota**, Aichi Syukutoku University in Japan, and **Rachel Keiko Stark**, Sacramento State University, included "Standing at the Crossroads of Intergenerational Communication: Acculturation Orientation, Communicative Behavior, and Communication Satisfaction Among Japanese Americans," "Signposts at the Crossroads Where Age and Culture Meet: Group Salience and Intergenerational Communication Satisfaction Among Japanese Americans" and "The Ethnic Identity of Japanese Americans is at a Crossroads: Internment Camp Experience, Acculturation Orientation, and Code-Switching" (awarded the outstanding faculty paper award by the Japan-U.S. Communication Association). Omori also was a panelist at the NCA in two discussions, "Intercultural Communication Scholarship at the Crossroads: Critical Reflection on Generational Shifts in the Evolution of Japan-U.S. Communication Research" and "Scholars at the Crossroads: Mentoring, Networking, and Building Community as Asian/Pacific American Scholars."

- **Phillip Reese**, assistant professor, wrote an article about the impact of COVID-19 on mental health in California. Titled, "Feeling Anxious and Depressed? In California, You're Right at Home," the article appeared in *The Los Angeles Times* and *U.S. News and World Report*. Reese's story noted that by July 2020, more than 44

percent of California adults reported levels of anxiety and gloom typically associated with diagnoses of generalized anxiety disorder or major depressive disorder. Reese's story for Kaiser Health News, "California's Deadliest Spring in 20 Years Suggests COVID Undercount," was cited in recent reports appearing in both *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*.

- **Forrest Rule**, lecturer, is the co-author of "The Practice of Digital Religion" published the *Handbook of Social Practices and Digital Everyday Worlds*, March 2020. The study of digital religion examines the influence religion and new media have upon one another. His co-author was Dr. **Heidi A. Campbell**, Texas A&M University.

- **Dr. Andrew Stoner**, associate professor, is the author of a new true-crime book, *Courthouse Chaos: Famous & Infamous Trials, Mob Violence & Justice* from Blue River Press. He also recently appeared before *The Philadelphia Inquirer's* LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group, discussing his 2019 book, *The Journalist of Castro Street: The Life of Randy Shilts*. Stoner was a panelist during the 2020 convention of the Association for Education in

- continued on page 9

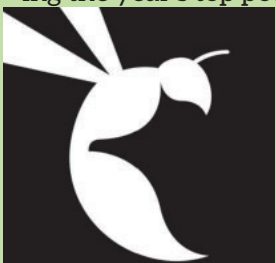
## FACULTY NEWS



## STATE HORNET SNARES AWARDS

The *State Hornet* was named a finalist for the Innovation Pacemaker Award at the ACP/CMA 2020 National College Media Convention.

In addition, *The Hornet* won six “best of show” prizes in the national competition, including the year’s top podcast.



National “best of show” recognition included a first and fourth place

### STUDENT NEWS

finish for podcasting; a fifth and seventh place finish for broadcast packages; and 10th place awards for both COVID-19 reporting and website (for universities of more than 10,000 students).

Three “honorable mention” awards were also captured, including Multimedia Story of the Year by **Khala Clarke**, **Kelly Kiernan** and **Leticia Sanchez**; Photo of the Year by **Eucario Calderon**; and Story of the Year by **Shiavon Chatman**.

Seventeen representatives of *The Hornet* attended the National College Media Convention conducted online in late October.

“This is an impressive showing for an organization that only launched podcast and broadcast teams a year ago,” said **Stu VanAirsdale**, faculty advisor to *The Hornet*.

## Faculty summer camp —

• continued from page 1

contribute to the overall goals of the team, and I had previously taken the Quality Learning and Teaching sessions so I felt comfortable and excited about leading colleagues through these aspects of virtual/online teaching and learning.”

Although the “rigor” of a working summer camp is over, Poeppelman and others continue to act as a resource for faculty for questions that come up as classes move along.

For now, the university has already announced that Spring 2021 classes will continue in an online format. As such, Poeppelman recommends professors and students keep an open mind. “All of us have to be willing to be vulnerable and have a can-do attitude,” she said.

In addition, Poeppelman thinks there may be some “silver linings” to the requirement to move classes online: “It really allows, or rather forces teachers to evaluate everything they were doing in the in-person classroom setting. It’s a painful time, but it can be important for our personal and professional growth.”

Faculty across the Communication Studies Department have shared amongst themselves the reality that if professors are bored, or irritated or unwilling to pivot to the requirements of an online teaching modality, students will be as well.

Aguilar said she advises fellow faculty to focus on patience “with both themselves and their students.” Patience includes taking time to test or play with available online tools and “above all, remember how to be a student again by asking questions and seeking. All of these approaches allow us to utilize technology in a way that complements our teaching.”

As Poeppelman put it, “I think our students are sponges and if we spend our time in class complaining about technology and how ‘being online sucks,’ then our students will adopt this same behavior as well.”



## U-Nite celebrates its eighth year

**E**ight years after it was started by Dr. **Elaine Gale**, professor, U-Nite continues to celebrate the creative achievements of Sacramento State faculty.

This year, Gale participated in a panel moderated by Dr. **Sheree Meyer**, dean of the College of Arts & Letters, about the formation of U-Nite. Also on the panel was Dr. **Michele Foss-Snowden**, professor, a former U-Nite coordinator.

Gale also presented a piece called “Sunset Moonrise” about seeing her mother, Dr. **Linda Lyman**, a retired

professor, who is now in a memory care facility surrounded by COVID-19 restrictions.

Also at U-Nite, Dr. **Edith LeFebvre**, professor, presented a discussion and review of her paintings in metaphor and abstract expressionism.

**Kathy Kasic**, assistant professor, screened a music video she made for **King Ropes’** rendition of the song, “Girls Like Us.”

Co-sponsors of U-Nite are Crocker Art Museum and the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission.



# Communication Studies alumni news

## ALUMNI NOTES

- **Dr. Aubrie S. Adams**, MA13, is an assistant professor at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.
- **Margherita Beale**, BA20, is an assistant editor at *Forbes* magazine, based in Sacramento.
- **Kayla Brown**, BA20, has been named a digital news producer for WHTM-TV, an ABC affiliate in Harrisburg, PA.
- **Casey Camacho**, BA19, won the Elly Award for Best Actor in a Musical for his portrayal of Jack Kelly in "Newsies" at the Woodland Opera House, Woodland, CA.
- **Shiavon Chatman**, BA20, is writing a chapter about The Notorious B.I.G. album, "Life After Death," as part of a book published by Halfway Books.
- **Will Coburn**, BA19, is a reporter for *The Rio Grande Sun* in Espanola, NM.
- Comm Studies alum **Courtney Dempsey** was recently honored for her 25 years of work in the Sacramento community and as anchor of the popular CBS 13 "Good Day Sacramento" television show.
- **Rob Fatal**, BA06, was recently accepted as one of the 2020 Sundance Film Institute Film Fellows. Fatal is a former lecturer in the Sac State film program.
- **Rebecca Gardner Moy**, BA99, an attorney at HMS Law Group, LLC, and adjunct faculty, was a speaker at the Sac State Career Buzz Event.
- **Rabbil Green**, BA06, an executive with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), was a speaker at the Sac State Career Buzz Event.
- **Fizza Khan**, BA19, has been named a Resource/Communication Associate for Mutual Housing, an organization focused on housing issues confronting the Sacramento and Davis communities.
- **Brenda Ledezma**, BA16, is a senior tour clerk at Warner Brothers Studios in Hollywood. She was recently featured in a Warner Bros. video celebrating Latnix Heritage Month.



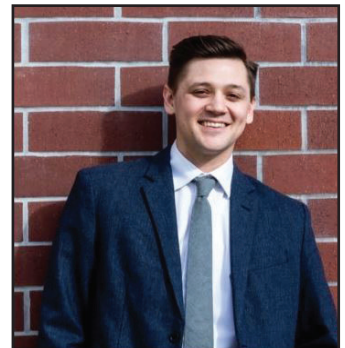
ADAMS



BEALE



BROWN



CAMACHO



CHATMAN



COBURN



DEMPSEY



FATAL



# Communication Studies alumni news

• continued from page 7

## ALUMNI NOTES

• Former student **Shelly Sharma** has been appointed to "Project Homekey," an emergency program formed to help protect the state's homeless population amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

• Former student **Dwight Turner** is the founder and director of Courageous Kitchen in Bangkok, Thailand, that serves homeless persons and families.

• **Monica Velez**, BA15, won the 2020 IRE Journalist of Color Investigative Fellowship. She is a reporter for *The Fresno Bee*.

• **Gary von Raesfeld**, BA00, has been named Associate Director of Athletics for St. Vincent de Paul High School in Petaluma, CA.

• **Adria Watson**, BA20, is an education and community affairs reporter for *The Connecticut Mirror* in Hartford, CT.

• **Kara L. Winkler**, BA09-MA11, is a lecturer in Communication Studies at the University of Houston, Downtown campus. She is completing her Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut.



GARDNER MOY



GREEN



KHAN



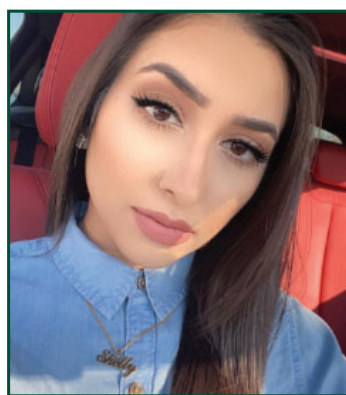
LEDEZMA



OWEN



von RAESFELD



SHARMA



TURNER



VELEZ



WATSON



WINKLER



## From humble roots, Diaz guides Latinx students to success

**I**nside a Bay Area migrant camp trailer where her family lived after arriving from Mexico, young **Viridiana Diaz** began dreaming of a different kind of future.

She wanted to learn English. She wanted a stable job with benefits. She wanted more opportunities than her mother, who labored in seasonal jobs in agricultural fields and canneries. "I didn't know I could dream bigger than that," she said.

But a few years later, while she was a student at McClatchy High School in Sacramento, a counselor from Sacramento State's College Assistance Migrant Program convinced her that larger goals were within her reach.

"Sac State completely transformed my life Every year, I

become a new version of myself, because the university has given me the opportunity for growth," Diaz said.

Diaz earned not one but four degrees from Sacramento State; a bachelor of arts in Communication Studies; a master of art in Spanish, a second masters of art in History and a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy.

Her career at Sac State has spanned nearly two decades. She currently is the university's associate vice president of

however, of tutoring, advising and mentoring programs. Those programs, and others across the campus, are now translating into higher graduation rates for Latinx students, and better outcomes for all students, she said.

— Cynthia Hubert

## Communication Studies senior supporting 'first-gen' students

**D**ominic Robey, a senior majoring in Communication Studies, is part of a special team of students selected to assist in guiding first-generation students arriving at Sacramento State University.

The Center for First-Generation Student Initi-atives is designed to help the more than one-third of Sac State students who are "first-gen" students, such as Robey. At any given time, more than 10,000 'first-gen' students are enrolled at Sac State.

"The center brings together faculty, staff, students and alumni to support 'first-gen' scholars through a variety of programs, workshops and other resources," said **Chao Vang** of Student Academic Services.



### ALUMNI NEWS

Strategic Student Support Programs, overseeing academic advising, counseling, tutoring, mentoring, and other support for first-generation migrant, undocumented, and other underserved students.

The programs are a bedrock of Sac State's efforts to recruit, retain and graduate Latinx students, culminating in its selection as a recipient of a coveted national Seal of Excelencia certification.

Diaz tries to translate her own experiences as a first-generation college student for every one of the students who come to her office seeking assistance. She particularly embodies the "relentless spirit" she experienced with Sac State's CAMP counselor (while she was still a high school student) to each student she helps today.

"As a first-generation student, I didn't know what it took to go to college," she said. "There wasn't an understanding of the benefits of college in my family."

When she first set foot on the Sac State campus, Diaz was insecure about her chances of succeeding. She took advantage,

### Faculty news — • continued from page 5

Journalism & Mass Communication (AEJMC). He was also a guest presenter for the Media and Communications Team at Harvard University.

- Dr. **Andrea Terry**, assistant professor, was a panelist for "Making Sense of an Election Like No Other" presented prior to the November election by Friends of the Library & Project for an Informed Electorate.

- A screenplay by **Cynthia Zeiden**, lecturer, titled "The Change," has been accepted at several film festivals, including Austin After Dark Film Festival, Fright Night Film Festival, Oregon Scream Week Horror Film Festival. In addition, both "The Change" and her TV pilot script, "Caravan," were honored by the Indie Horror Movie Awards.

## Sacramento State enrollment up to 31,510 students

Sacramento State University enrolled a record number of students this fall, bucking nationwide trends and exceeding expectations during an unsettling time for scholars and faculty.

The university enrolled 31,510 students for the Fall 2020 semester, 354 more than last year. The total marks a 1 percent increase, said Vice President for Student Affairs **Ed Mills**.

Sac State also retained at historic levels students moving from their freshman to sophomore years and documented significant gains in the number of credit hours that freshmen are taking per semester.

The improvements are especially notable at a time when most scholars are studying at home amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Mills said. The pivot to online learning has been stressful for many students and faculty, yet most are persevering, the data show.

In terms of enrollment, Sac State seems to be beating the odds during the pandemic. Preliminary data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center found that nationwide undergraduate fall enrollments are down 2.5 percent compared to last fall.

"Our professors have been very sensitive to the progress of students who are in difficult situations," said **James Dragna**, executive director of University Initiatives and Student Success. "They are offering more flexibility in an effort to help students progress."

# Distinguished Alumni

*Dr. Jamillah Moore finds satisfaction, purpose in guiding students*



From their "college on the hill" in Redwood City, **Jamillah Moore's (BA 92, MA 95)** students can glimpse Stanford University, a shining symbol of opportunity.

Moore is president of Cañada College, a public community college in the heart of Silicon Valley that serves students seeking to build better futures for themselves and their families.

"We are three freeway exits up from Stanford," Moore said. "It's a wonderful backdrop for our students. We transform lives here."

Moore, who holds two degrees from Sacramento State, is the recipient of a 2020 Distinguished Service Award from the University's Alumni Association.

"Sac State prepared me for life," she said. "I had so many mentors. I learned how to be a good student, a good citizen and most importantly a good human being."

A native Californian, Moore grew up in "a family of strong women" led by her mother, **Velma Lee Moore**, a nurse who raised six girls on her own. "Everything I do I dedicate to my mom," said Moore, who also holds a doctorate in International and Multicultural Education from the University of San Francisco.

"We didn't grow up with a lot, but her support and her tough love taught me to navigate that reality and to deal with whatever life brought my way," she added.

Moore, the first in her immediate family to attend college, lived on campus at Sac State and worked as a resident assistant. She took advantage of resources for underserved students, including the Educational Opportunity Program. She learned how to manage her time, studies and finances.

Moore originally dreamed of being a television journalist, but veered from that path after an internship at the State Capitol and later as a member of the California Senate Fellows program. She boarded a bus each day from Sac State to the statehouse, where she met power brokers and saw public policymakers working together to serve their constituents.

She later worked as a legislative staffer and consultant to the Senate Select Committee on Higher Education Admissions and Outreach, writing policy and advocating for students. During her time at the Capitol, Moore became known for her skills in tackling difficult issues within education, and for her passion and commitment to students.

Soon, the California Community Colleges system recruited her for a vice chancellor position. Later, when Compton College faced an accreditation crisis, Moore's name again surfaced. She became the school's interim superintendent president, helping it through financial difficulties.

Moore served in a variety of other leadership positions within the community college system before becoming Cañada's leader four years ago.



## NEWSLETTER OF DEPT. OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Sacramento State University  
5014 Mendocino Hall  
6000 J. St.  
Sacramento, CA 95819

**DEPT. CHAIR:** Gerri Smith

**OFFICE STAFF:** Katrina Roose,  
Vicenza Weeks, Aleah Fisher

### FULL-TIME FACULTY:

Kimberly Aguilar; Diego Bonilla; Steve Buss; Molly Dugan; Elizabeth Earle; Carlos Flores; Michele Foss-Snowden; Elaine Gale; Cheng Hong; Timothy Howard; Jacqueline Irwin; Dan Janos; Kathy Kasic; Edith LeFebvre; Mark Ludwig; Shawna Malvini Redden; Kikuko Omori; Phillip Reese; Gerri Smith; Jenny Stark; Carmen Stitt; Andrew Stoner; Don Taylor; Andrea Terry; Kristen Tudor; Stu VanAirsdale; John Williams; Mark Williams; David Zuckerman

### PART-TIME FACULTY:

Michael Althouse; Jared Anderson; Adam Austin; Alexandra Boyd; Sonia Borg; Nancy Caselli; Evan Clark; Miles Cochran; Rebecca Gardner; John Gilgun; Gordon Leland; Kristina Gorgevich; Patty Harris-Jenkinson; Sheryl Hurner; Samuel Johnson; Scott Kirchner; Donna Knifong; Becky LeVally; Mike Luery; Chris Maben; Trinet Marquis; Fred Molitor; Edward Ortiz; Chris Patterson; Timi Poepelman; Mark Powers; Ryan Pritchard; Alan Ray; Bob Reich; Chema Salinas; Pam Sanger; Joni Stead; Mark Stoner; Karen Vasquez; George Warren; Frances Winters; Walter Yost; Cynthia Zeiden

### GRADUATE TEACHING

#### ASSISTANTS:

Scott Ault; Annie Connelly; Bethany Davis; Ben Deci; Kevin Hendricks; Warren Jamison; Storm Sharar; Evelyn Villalobos; Ceridyn Wood; Andrea Yarletz; Owen Young

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR:

Andrew Stoner

### COPY EDITORS:

Molly Dugan, Mark Ludwig, Gerri Smith, Stu VanAirsdale

# Distinguished alumni —

• continued from page 10

One of her tasks has been to implement its facilities master plan, which allowed the college to open a new Science and Technology building. Another point of pride is the college's Working Adults Program, through which older students can obtain their associate degrees.

Moore co-chairs a Basic Needs Task Force for the San Mateo County Community College District and volunteers weekly at a drive-through local food bank, where she distributes boxes of goods to hungry people, some of them Cañada College students.

"I never imagined that we would see a time when students are sleeping in cars and don't have enough food," she said. "But it's a reality."

Moore's upbringing and her experience at Sac State, both as a graduate and as an adjunct professor, taught her that "you should always give back."

"My leadership is grounded in the belief that, as educators, we must engage our whole selves to bring about transformational teaching and learning opportunities for students," she said. "I have worked to honor that which my ancestors have taught me: build community, build authentic connections, and build capacity in people to love and fight for justice."

"It was the CSU system that prepared me for college, to do research, and later to teach," said Moore. "My experience at Sacramento State made me fall in love with the CSU."

Each year since 1972 the Sacramento State Alumni Association honors accomplished alumni and friends through the Distinguished Alumni Awards. The Distinguished Service Award is given in recognition of professional achievements, community service, prominence in their chosen field, and for bringing distinction to the university.

## '40 Under 40' honors two Comm Studies alumni

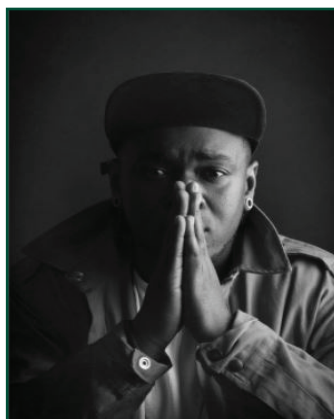
**T**wo alumni of Communication Studies are among the elite group of "40 Under 40" honored by *The Sacramento Business Journal* for 2020.

Recognized were

- **Roshaun L. Davis**, CEO of Unseen Heroes, an event and marketing agency based in Sacramento, and,
- **Kristy Prince**, senior program manager at Amazon.com.

According to the editors of *The Sacramento Business Journal*, annual winners for this honor are selected based on their professional achievements, leadership qualities and contributions to the community.

Final selection of honorees are made by a group of their peers — all former 40 Under 40 winners — and editorial team of *The Sacramento Business Journal*.



# Communication Studies considers police-community race relations

**C**ommunication Studies intersects with almost every issue of importance to a people or community.

That is especially so when considering ongoing issues arising between police departments and their communities, especially as related to race relations.

Sacramento, like many cities across the nation, experienced protests of various levels following the troubling case of **George Floyd, Jr.**, a 46-year-old Minneapolis man who died in police custody in May. Four Minneapolis police officers face a variety of felony charges, such as second-degree murder for Floyd's death and their handling of his arrest.

Protests in Sacramento related to police conduct are not new, however, as several demonstrations took place in the city in the weeks and months following the March 2018 fatal shooting of **Stephon Clark**, 22, by Sacramento police officers. Clark was later determined to be unarmed.

In September, student members of the Society of Professional Journalists organized a special panel, "Discussing Coverage of Back Lives Matter Protests," that featured **Sara Nevis**, multimedia editor of *The State Hornet*, former *State Hornet* reporter **Will Coburn**, and *Los Angeles Times* photojournalist **Molly Hennessy-Fiske**.

The SPJ panel was coordinated by **Camryn Dadey**, vice president of the chapter. The panel offered writers and photographers an opportunity to detail some of the experiences and strategies in covering police protests.

One Comm Studies alum, **Rick Braziel**, who completed both a BA and MA in Communication Studies and served as Chief of Police for the City of Sacramento from 2008-12, is still working on police-community relations.

Officials in Springfield, OR have contracted with Braziel to help investigate and study a clash between police and protestors there in July. Braziel will conduct critical incident reviews and assessments in communication, community policing and leadership from the incident.

Serving as vice chair of the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, Braziel is also an executive fellow at the National Police Foundation.

Braziel and Dr. **Virginia Kidd**, faculty emeritus from the Department of Communication Studies, are the authors of the well-received book, "*Cop Talk: Essential Communication Skills for Community Policing*," published in 1999 by Acada Books of San Francisco.

Braziel and Kidd's book is aimed at helping police officers improve their communication skills in the field, a powerful, effective and essential tool in policing.



**Above, photos by State Hornet multimedia editor Sara Nevis depicting recent police protests in Stockton and Sacramento.**



SACRAMENTO  
STATE



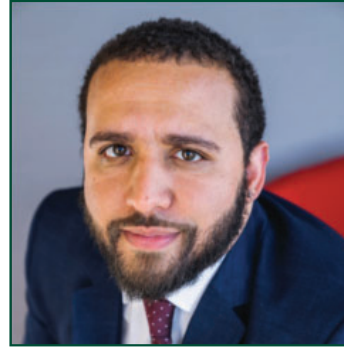
# State Hornet speaker series links students to award-winning journalists

**T**he State Hornet's speaker series provided valuable links between students and three award-winning journalists for the Fall term.

Although in-person interaction was not possible because of coronavirus restrictions, students and faculty conducted Zoom-based meetings with journalists **Russ Buettner**, **Wesley Lowery** and **Brian M. Rosenthal**.



BUETTNER



LOWERY



ROSENTHAL

Buettner, a Sac State Communication Studies alum and former reporter for *The State Hornet*, discussed his current exclusive reporting via *The New York Times* regarding the still-to-date not disclosed tax returns of President **Donald Trump**.

*The Times* made national headlines when Buettner, along with colleagues **Susanne Craig** and **Mike McIntire**, began reporting on more than two decades worth of federal tax returns Trump has refused to disclose. Trump is the first major presidential candidate (or sitting President) in decades to refuse to release his personal financial information publicly.

As *The Times* reported, "The returns are some of the most sought-after, and speculated-about, records in recent memory. In Mr. Trump's nearly four years in office — and across his endlessly hyped decades in the public eye — journalists, prosecutors, opposition politicians and conspiracists have, with limited success, sought to excavate the enigmas of his finances."

Lawyers representing the president have said the returns and resulting stories based on them are false. Regardless, Buettner, Craig and McIntire reported on several groundbreaking revelations contained in the tax returns.

The new 2020 reporting by Buettner and others is just the latest journalistic coup he has been a part of. Buettner was a part of a 2019 *Times*' reporting team awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Explanatory Reporting for previous exclusive reports about the financial and business empire of Trump prior to entering politics. He was previously nominated for a Pulitzer in 2012 for his reporting on gaps in the system of care for people with developmental disabilities.

Students also heard from Lowery, a CBS News journalist and 2016 Pulitzer Prize winner for National

Reporting for his work writing *The Washington Post*'s landmark "fatal force" series that provided a comprehensive review of police-related shootings across the U.S. He is also the author of a *New York Times* best-selling book, *"They Can't Kill Us All: Ferguson, Baltimore, and a New Era in America's Racial Justice Movement."*

Rosenthal, an investigative reporter with *The New York Times*, and formerly a reporter for *The Houston Chronicle* and *The Seattle Times*, also spoke to a Sac State audience online. Rosenthal won a Pulitzer prize in 2020, and is a board member of the respected Investigative Reporters & Editors organization. He was previously nominated for Pulitzer Prizes for reporting in both 2015 and 2017.

## Debate Team goes online

**T**he Sac State Debate Team has competed in five online tournaments this fall, a new format for certain, but one allowing the team to enter contests all over the country.

Several awards were won this fall, including:

- **NCFCA Tournament** — **Ayyah Al-jibouri**, first place in Open Division
- **Alexis Elliott Round Robin** — Al-jibouri was invited as one of the top 14 debaters in the U.S., and finished in the top half of the field.
- **Lafayette College (PA)** — **Tony Escalante** was an octofinialist, and third place overall Sweepstakes Honors went to Sacramento State.
- **Lewis & Clark College (WA)** — **Mahala Rogers** won first place in the Novice Division, while Al-jibouri was an octofinialist.

## Communication Studies students host mental health project for senior project

A team of six graduating Sacramento State communication studies majors are dedicating their senior seminar project to their “Mental Health and Wellness Talk” in November via Zoom, which focused on providing mental health resources.

The goal of the event was to invite students and Sacramento community members to a 30-minute session that provided stress relief techniques, breathing exercises and advice such as encouraging everyone to look at the bigger picture, said group member **Cara Shuman**.

“I hope what people can get out of it is a bit of perspective,” Shuman said. “It feels like a break from everything going on.”

Shuman said the group decided to work with **Ronald Lutz**, director of counseling and psychological services at Sac State, to help facilitate the mental health and wellness talk.

The group was aware of many mental health resources available on campus, but wanted to streamline the information in one place, said group member **Heidi Woods**.

“For the six of us, we all had in mind to do mental health awareness and to share resources about food, housing, financial resources,” Shuman said. “Even with school, stress relief in general is the aspect we wanted to focus on.”

**Pamela Sanger**, adjunct faculty, who teaches the COMS 181 class, said the project centers on community service and students had free rein to decide their senior project topic.

“They can dictate what the project is,” Sanger said. “Each project is unique because it reflects the people and what they’re passionate about and what they want to do with it. They haven’t needed much help.”

Group member **Sabrina Saechao**, said she has also been struggling with her mental health and shelter-at-home fatigue, which has encouraged her to reach out to others.

To further their reach, the group also created their own chapter of Strength In Numbers on Facebook in hopes of spreading information about campus resources and their events. Strength in Numbers refers to a Facebook community where people bond over mental health. Not only does the Facebook page share



resources, it also posts songs of the week to help uplift people during the pandemic, Saechao said.

“We’re all in this pandemic, we’re all feeling down,” said group member **Cindy Delgado**. “The only way you can get your information out there is through the internet.”

Delgado said she has struggled with her own mental health during the pandemic and has learned a lot by hearing others’ testimonies during this project. She said she often recalls Lutz’s advice to enjoy small victories that are important in daily life such as hobbies, habits and routines that are helpful to relieve your mind, body and soul.

### STUDENT NEWS

Communicating with others helps make mental illness less of an individual

problem, Woods said.

Woods said she has an invisible disability herself and knows the stigma surrounding mental health.

“It’s really difficult for people who don’t deal with this kind of thing to be able to empathize in some way, it’s not something you can see,” Woods said. “We want to be known for what we’re good at, not from what we suffer from.”

Woods said the group’s Zoom event will be a space for people to talk about their feelings and receive help, or even gain understanding by silently observing.

“By us talking about it, it allows for other people to also talk about it,” said group member **Kaylin Moua**.

— State Hornet story by **Estefany Nunez**,  
graphic by **Mercy Sosa**.