

## President's Message



**Deborah Seiler**  
President

The Renaissance Society  
of Sacramento  
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**Renaissance Website:**  
<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

### Key Dates

Friday, April 4  
**Spring Break  
Campus Closed**

Friday, April 11  
**2nd Friday Pizza**

Monday, April 7  
**Board of Directors  
meeting on Zoom**

Monday, April 14  
**Applications to Teach a  
Fall program distributed**

Friday, April 18  
**Committee Budgets are  
due**



## R for Isolation

If you missed Renaissance member Donna Apidone's Forum presentation on February 21, I highly recommend viewing it on our website,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fheh8snzKk>.

Donna described the negative health consequences of isolation. These include a 29% increased risk of heart disease, 32% increase of stroke, a 50% increase of dementia, and a 60% increase of premature death. How to overcome this? A participant in her TransForMission seminar gave a moving testament to the benefits of being a member of Renaissance. It was a reminder of our organization's ability to fulfill Donna's prescription for uncovering one's own purpose. Her formula is Empathy + Service + Action = Purpose.

I believe that everyone who reads this message begins with a feeling of Empathy. So much of our programming expounds on an enlightened view of history, the arts, social justice, economics and more. And there are many important ways to Serve.

- Contribute to our philanthropic efforts
- Mentor a Gerontology student
- Serve on one of our many committees
- Lead a seminar.

Possibilities are nearly endless. Make up your mind, take Action, and uncover your own Purpose.

Most striking to me, was the comparison Donna presented about isolation among students 18 to 24 and those of us "north" of 66. Studies indicate that 79% of students feel lonely compared to 41% of seniors. They are nearly twice as lonely as we are and the director who oversees several campus affinity centers such as the Dreamer, Pride, Women's and Serna centers concurs. She described the feelings of fear and uncertainty among students largely due to economic realities but also to current social trends.

I raised this with the Gerontology student I am mentoring this semester. She confirmed that so many students experienced isolation during COVID-19 but have not emerged from it due in large part to social media and technology. "*They communicate but they don't know how to talk face to face,*" she explained. During her part time work in a movie theater, she observes older people standing in line chatting with one another but not younger ones. Many need to develop these skills.

One of Donna's suggestions was to engage in intergenerational work, interacting with students in ways that also allow them to mentor us. We are the grandparents to most college-age students and we both can benefit from interaction.

In the last issue, I provided a list of campus affinity centers and urged members to drop by to say hello. In meeting with the executive in charge of retention and affinity centers, we considered a couple of ways to help. Please see Page 8 of this edition for more information.

Not on campus? You can also empathize, serve, and act by joining the new 'Sunshine' Subcommittee of the Membership Committee, which has been formed to send uplifting notes to members who may be ill or otherwise need a boost. See Page 7 for more information.

Start with Empathy, add in Service and Action, and find your Purpose.

Deborah



# Renaissance Returns to a “Show of Hands” Procedure to Elect New Board Members

When is an “Election” not an “Election”? When it is a “Ratification”

By Deborah Seiler

On December 2, 2024, the Board of Directors opted to return to a prior method of electing Board Officers and Members at Large (MALs) which entails a show of hands at the May general membership meeting. The reason is that the current email process, which started in 2020, is not well-understood by Renaissance members because it is not really an "election." Rather, it is a "ratification" of a single slate of candidates selected by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

The “election” procedure has evolved over time.

For many years, prior to the pandemic, elections were held at the May Annual Meeting (aka “general meeting”) at a hotel luncheon and occurred by a show of hands of those present. The luncheon drew fewer than 150 attendees and required members to pay for their lunch.

The off-campus location and the associated cost of lunch led some members to express concerns that the process seemed undemocratic.

In 2020, due to the pandemic, Renaissance Society shifted to email voting. Email voting required several reminder emails and the mailing of printed ballots in order to achieve the one-third member threshold of about 600 voting members. This email voting process takes about three weeks and has proved time-consuming for volunteers and staff.

Our current by-laws allow for either an email process or a show of hands process. The by-laws state, in part (emphasis added)

## **Article VI: Officers and Members-At-Large**

The elected officers shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Controller. There shall be six Members-at-Large elected by the membership to serve on the Board of Directors.

The officers and members-at-large shall be elected by ballot at the May general meeting of the membership. ***If a single slate is presented, and there are no nominations from the floor, voting may be by a show of hands.*** All elected officers shall assume their positions on the succeeding July 1.

***If deemed appropriate by the Board of Directors, voting on measures or candidates may be conducted by mail. Ballots must be returned by at least one-third of the membership to constitute a valid election.***

## **Article X: Membership Meetings**

The annual meeting of the general membership shall be held in May. ***One-fifth of the membership, or one hundred members, whichever is the smaller number, shall constitute a quorum for conducting business.***

As articulated in the by-laws, we have the option of voting by a show of hands during the Annual Meeting in May, or by email. The “show of hands” option requires participation by 100 members attending in-person or on Zoom. The email option requires participation by approximately 600 members and generally takes about three weeks and several reminders to meet the necessary threshold of votes.

Importantly, members are only permitted to vote yes or no for the slate of nominees presented. Candidates are selected by the Nominating Committee and do not compete against each other. Consequently, what we refer to as an “election” is effectively a ratification of a single slate of candidates selected by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

The “show of hands” approach is simpler and faster than the email approach. By conducting the meeting on campus in the same room as the Forum meeting, there is no requirement for members to go off campus or to purchase lunch to vote. This alleviates concerns about the democratic nature of the “show of hands” process.

This change does not necessitate alterations to our Election Procedures adopted in March 2023 or our by-laws.

I encourage you to attend the Annual Meeting on May 9 to support these dedicated volunteers.

If you have questions, please contact me:  
deborah.seiler2@gmail.com or 916.704.5735.

Thank you for your membership and your participation!



# Renaissance Society 2025-2026 Board of Directors Nominees

Our Nominating Committee is pleased to present, in accordance with Renaissance Society by-laws, the following slate of eligible candidates.

The Board of Directors agreed during its December 2, 2024 Board Meeting to follow the election guidelines established in Section VI.D of the Renaissance Society's by-laws which allow for a show of hands at the Annual Meeting (also described as the "general" meeting). At least 100 members must vote in person or on Zoom. (Please refer to a full explanation on Page 2 of this newsletter.)

**Voting will occur at the Annual Meeting on Friday, May 9.** Terms begin on July 1, 2025.

## President: Deanna Hanson



I have been proud to serve as both Vice-President and Chair of the Membership Committee for the past year. As a member of the Board of Directors for Renaissance, I have learned a great deal, and would be honored to help lead this wonderful organization as we grow and continue to improve learning

opportunities for our members.

After operating Hanson Consulting Group, a successful business and educational consulting practice, for over 35 years. My practice specialized in facilitating strategic planning and managing projects for many community-based organizations, foundations, associations, educational and corporate entities. I conducted organizational assessments and evaluations and provided executive coaching for management team members. I often assumed responsibility for leading projects and initiatives for clients.

I have been involved in work with public high schools and educational organizations that helped improve student outcomes—which is a personal passion. This has included work associated with high school restructure, charter school development, and creating employer partnerships to provide real work experience for students.

From 2019-2022, I proudly served as Foreperson of the Sacramento County Grand Jury leading major investigative work which initiated major changes within public institutions in the County. A few of the many organizations that I have served are: President of Soroptimist International of Metropolitan Sacramento and chaired the Boards of Directors of the American Red Cross, Sacramento Chapter; and Sacramento State University's Trust Foundation.

## Vice President: Ralph Paladino



I was born in Brooklyn, New York, graduated Archbishop Molloy High School in Jamaica, New York, served in the United States Army from 1966 until 1968 and was awarded the Air Medal for Meritorious Achievement during combat flight while

serving with the 119th Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam.

I received my undergraduate degree in Sociology/ Psychology at Southern Connecticut State University. I received a Master of Science in Education and a Doctorate of Education at the University of Bridgeport.

I have over twenty years of progressively responsible management experience with Fortune 500 companies and nineteen years of progressively responsible experience in education serving the underserved and less fortunate students in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I was the principal at Barnum School of Excellence from August, 2010 until my retirement in August, 2017. During my tenure I was responsible for the implementation and oversight of a CSDE \$1.5mm School Improvement Grant and the oversight of the University of Connecticut CommPACT school reform model.

Beginning in 2014, under the auspices of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, I guided the Barnum School of Excellence through the process as a Turnaround Arts School.

I recently returned to Barnum School and served as Interim Principal from January, 2024 through June, 2024.

I served as an Executive Board Member-at-Large and Grievance Co-Chairman, Bridgeport Council of Administrators and Supervisors. I also served as Treasurer, Lake Phipps Special Taxing District.

(more board candidates)

## **Controller: David Ferguson**



As the Renaissance Society's Controller this past year, I managed the financial activities of the Society and Foundation. This included overseeing disbursements and reporting financial results to the Board. I also negotiated a two-year extension on the Society's office lease, which avoided the disruption of a move.

I am a CPA (inactive) with over 40 years of accounting experience. After graduating with honors from California State University, Fullerton, I worked for an international accounting firm performing audits in multiple industries. I then moved to private industry, holding controllership positions in various companies, including construction, consulting, and electrical power. My most recent role was with SMUD, where I worked for over 15 years, handling the monthly operations statement and analysis.

My wife, Janet, and I have two children, Adam and Kelsie, and one grandchild, James. We enjoy traveling and spent two weeks last year visiting Washington D.C. and Virginia. We also cherish time with our grandchild and friends.

I joined The Renaissance Society in 2020-21, a year after retiring from SMUD. I have taken various classes in history, science, and current events, which I have greatly enjoyed.

## **Secretary: Susan Brackenhoff**



The Renaissance Society has monthly Board meetings with minutes that are available to all members and are kept in the Sac State Archives. This will be my second year serving as Board Secretary. I have served as

Renaissance Society Interim Vice-President, Board Secretary, Chair of the Nominating Committee, Chair of the Gerontology Committee, assisted with the fall and spring Open House and have been a presenter.

Renaissance Society has a special place in my heart since I joined in 2014. My husband, Ken, and I moved to Sacramento in 2014 and I retired at that time. I had been at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, Illinois for 26 years in an administrative role as Director of the Southern Region campus.

I served as an officer on the State of Illinois Community College Economic Development Council and was appointed to the Economic Development Board for the City of Litchfield. I spent many years serving on the St. Francis Hospital Foundation Board, president of the Litchfield Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Board. I have three adult children: Melissa in Salt Lake City, Utah; Megan in Cincinnati, Ohio; Michael in Madison, Wisconsin.

## **Member at Large: Bob Silva**



I retired from California state service after spending nearly 40 years in Information Technology with the Franchise Tax Board, Department of Justice and the California Lottery. After retiring from state service, I spent another 5 years with EDFUND, supporting the Student Aid Commission to provide student loans.

I have a Associate of Arts degree in Mathematics from Sacramento City College and a Bachelor of Arts and Science in Economics from California State University Sacramento. I am a native Sacramentan. I spent 3 years in the U.S. Army in the Air Defense Command.

My experience in State Government includes project management of several technology projects. I have managed procurement of large-scale computers in the development of Law Enforcement database systems. I have implemented real time communications with local agencies and the FBI's National Communications Information Center. I managed the procurement of equipment and the automation of the Department of Justice legal offices.

I was a volunteer with the Sacramento Police Department for 10 years and with the Sacramento District Attorney's Office for another 3 years. My wife and I assist with Loaves and Fishes and are volunteers at our Church. I assist with Renaissance Society presentations as a Tech Host and look forward to being able to contribute to the efforts of the Board.

(more board candidates)

## Member at Large: Marian Sheppard



Education has been my life focus: 39.5+ years included teaching 3rd grade through grad school; High School Vice Principal, Counselor, & Head of Counseling in Lodi; Assessment Center Director, Transfer Center Director, Professor at Sac City College.

I loved it!

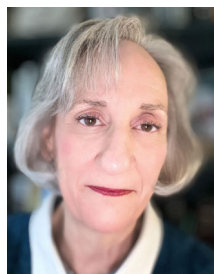
Human rights has been a focus of my life since childhood. Education seems to level the playing field. During my career, I was a member of many committees including the Budget Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Academic Senate.

Currently, I have a small Marriage and Family Counseling practice and care for my 93 year old disabled and feisty sister, and spend significant time with my 8 year old grandson.

Offices I have held recently: Board Member, of American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists of California; Chaplain of the new Rio Cosumnes Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Elk Grove; Chair, Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Centennial United Methodist Church.

My interests include singing (member, Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra), bridge, lively conversations re contemporary thinking, walking, nature, art, reading.

## Member at Large: Janet Heath



I have been a Renaissance Society member since 2015 attending many classes and forums, supporting courses and forums as a Zoom technical host, and working on the semiannual Renaissance Society survey. I like to travel and have planned three overseas trips in 2023.

My professional work included five years at Gavilan Community College (GCC), eight years at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) and retiring from UC Davis (UCD)

after 18 years. One of my projects at the UNC-CH Injury Prevention Research Center was a collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control on the first national teleconference for state and local health departments on injury prevention and control.

In 1998 I was hired by the UCD where I managed projects in three different departments over 18 years. I switched to the Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) where I supervised registered nurses, social workers and support staff on a Medi-Cal funded, long-term care coordination program for frail, low income older adults wishing to remain in their homes.

Rounding out my career, I managed the Office of Continuing Medical Education putting together conferences, one-hour Grand Rounds and online courses for medical professionals. I have served on many community task forces and planning committees advocating for older adults and persons with disabilities and their access to appropriate healthcare.

I look forward to my ongoing participation in Renaissance Society and working with its board and staff.



## Washington Commons Cohousing Open House

Northern California's newest cohousing community, invites Renaissance Society Members to a special open house to talk with Washington Commons members, tour their 4-story building, enjoy refreshments, and hear a panel discussion by Washington Commons members of what they have learned since moving there in the summer of 2024.

### Special Open House for Renaissance Society Members

**Wednesday, April 30th**

**3-5 p.m.**

**330 G Street**

**West Sacramento**

**RSVP – [Ageraghty@comcast.net](mailto:Ageraghty@comcast.net)**

Washington Commons grew from a Renaissance Society seminar offered in 2012 examining the principles of cohousing. This led to the formation of "Renaissance Village Homes" which in turn led to Washington Commons.



## April Forums

Forums are a special category of highly acclaimed, high-profile speakers addressing current topics of special interest to Renaissance members. All Forums occur on Friday afternoons in **Mariposa Hall 1000 from 3 to 4 p.m.** when no other Renaissance seminars, Shared Interest Groups, or presentations are offered.

April 11

### **DENNY MANGERS: Transitioning from a Heterosexual Relationship to a Homosexual Relationship in Adult Life**



One of Sacramento's most diverse and celebrated leaders, Comstock's Magazine says, "he is known for his unimpeachable credibility." After serving as a teacher and professional musician, Denny served two terms as a state assemblyman from Southern California. He was the principal lobbyist, senior

vice president, and California Cable & Telecommunications Association president. He was Mayor Darrell Steinberg's senior advisor in the state legislature. Dennis will be sharing his late life experiences transitioning from a heterosexual relationship to a homosexual relationship and lifestyle. For the past several years, he has mentored young men and women on a variety of career, emotional, and lifestyle choices.

April 18

### **DENNIS WARREN: I Could Be Wrong, But I Don't Think So — Memory, Happiness, Suffering**



Dennis Warren is the Founding Teacher of Sacramento Insight Meditation. His focus in working with individuals and groups is the direct, practical application of meditation and concentration practices to the challenges of everyday life, relationships, and decision-making. He was an

Adjunct Professor of Mindfulness for 11 years in the UC Davis Division of Pain Medicine. This presentation will explore the pivotal role memory plays in creating our understanding of the world and our identity and directly contributing to our happiness and suffering. Participants will be introduced to practices to work more skillfully with memory and the implications of failing memory.

April 25

### **AARON TANG: The Supreme Court in 2025**



The Supreme Court continues to exert an immense impact on American life. In this talk, Professor Aaron Tang will discuss the major cases of the 2024-25 Term and how they will affect a wide range of issues, from gun safety to reproductive justice and care for transgender youth to

protecting our democracy. Aaron Tang is a law professor at UC Davis and a former law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Tang frequently writes about the Supreme Court in popular media such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Slate, The Atlantic, and elsewhere.



## **Dining Together April**

*By Cheryl Nelson*

Dining Together will meet at  
**Al-Maidah Restaurant**  
11354 White Rock Rd, Rancho Cordova  
<https://almaidahrestaurantsacramento.com>  
at 5:30 PM on April 9, 2025.



Dining Together members who wish to attend should RSVP to Susan Wheeler (swheeler\_1@yahoo.com) no later than April 2nd.

Individual checks will be provided and free parking is available. Please bring cash (including small bills) – the restaurant will not accept individual credit cards for payment.



# New “Sunshine” Subcommittee Formed

Some already reaching out to severely injured member

*By Deborah Seiler*

At the March 5 meeting of the Membership Committee chaired by Susan Wheeler, committee members agreed to form a “Sunshine” subcommittee. The purpose is to uplift Renaissance members who may have suffered serious illness or injury, lost a spouse or other loved one, or who need support for other life incidents. The proposal was submitted by Allan Keown and Dolores Eitel and was unanimously approved by the full committee.

The idea is to send cards, make phone calls, or visit members in need.

One group has already begun to help a member who fell 30 feet in a snowshoeing accident and broke his neck, back, shoulder, and forearm, fractured his skull, and bruised three ribs. Upon hearing the news, several members rushed to visit him in the skilled nursing facility where he had spent six weeks, met with his case manager, brought him healthy, delicious food, arranged for a hospital bed and commode to be delivered to his home, cleaned his house prior to his return home, went grocery shopping, arranged a meal delivery team, and set times to visit. One member even offered to give him a haircut! Much needed after more than six weeks.

Our member is recovering remarkably well, and wrote this to his Renaissance support group upon his return home:

*“Dear Friends: I am home! With Jerome's help, I returned home yesterday around 3pm.”*

*“Thanks to Deborah and Sue who cleaned, rearranged furniture and decorated my condo, many of the essentials are now in place for my recovery. The hospital bed fits in nicely with my regular bed and the toilet commode provides necessary support in my bathroom. Cary brought my dinner today. Patrick will be coming every Monday, and Barbara every Wednesday to help. Some of you also signed up for meal deliveries. I slept the best last night since my accident.”*

*“Meditation on ‘Home’:*

*“Home is where my heart belongs*

*Where I long to return after a long absence*

*Yet, a place or location it is not*

*It is where compassion and love come together  
from those dear to me.”*

Not all responses need to be as heroic or complex. A simple card, phone call, or even a visit tells a member in need that Renaissance is “there” for them.

If you wish to help, please contact Allan Keown  
ahkeown@gmail.com or Dolores Eitel  
doloressurvived@icloud.com

You can make a difference!



## Give Sac State Day April 17 – 19

*By Mike Pidd, Chair, Resource Development Committee*

Mark your calendars! Each year, Renaissance Society members celebrate Give Sac State Day (GSSD), a special time when we join the Hornet Family to support students. It is an opportunity for members to give to our Renaissance scholarship fund as we strive to endow all seven of our student scholarships.

Last year, generous Renaissance members gave nearly \$11,000 on GSSD. Let's strive to surpass that achievement and create a more significant difference this year!

Student success is at the heart of everything our Resource Development and Scholarship committees do. With your support, Sac State students not only receive an education, but they are also empowered to become leaders in their professions throughout the community.

Remember, all donations are tax deductible. Watch for more information about how and when to donate. The Renaissance Society and Sac State students thank you.



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**RENAISSANCE RECORDER EDITOR**

For submissions, contact

***Jim Hodges***

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May Submissions Due: April 2

**RENAISSANCE SOCIETY**

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## **Help DREAMER CENTER Students**

### ***Dream Connections Support Group***

Dreamer Resource Center (DRC) Director  
Kimberly Gomez invites Renaissance members to  
Wednesday Dream Connections which is a student  
support group.

We are invited to attend the beginning portion from  
1 pm to 1:30 pm for a “meet and greet” on these  
dates:

March 26  
April 9  
April 16

DRC can cover parking costs if they know ahead of  
time to purchase and plan.

Contact deborah.seiler2@gmail.com to sign up.

### ***Dreamer Student Staff Meetings***

Another option we discussed is for Renaissance  
members to come in for 30 minutes on any Friday  
between 10am-12pm starting next week.

The purpose is to meet student staff and offer support,  
greetings, and share experiences. There are 10 DRC  
student staff.

Again, DRC can cover parking costs, though our  
member parking permits are valid on Friday.  
Contact deborah.seiler2@gmail.com to sign up.

### ***Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) Center***

Are you the Renaissance member who brought them  
cookies? Contact deborah.seiler2@gmail.com to  
receive their thanks!

