



President's Message



Deanna Hanson

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

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Renaissance Website:

<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

Key Dates

Open Now: Membership
for Spring Semester only
\$70 (through June 30,
2026)

November 24, 25

ASI Food Pantry Friends-
giving Meals

November 26-30

Campus & Renaissance
Office Closed

December 5

Last Day of Classes

December 5,

Holiday Gala Dinner, 4:15,
Engrained Restaurant
across from Round Table
Pizza in the Student Union

December 22 - January 3

Renaissance Office Closed

THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

California State University, Sacramento

Lifelong Learning Since 1986

HOLIDAYS: Families, Friends, Celebrations, Religious Services, Shopping, Parties.....

Are these a part of your holidays? For many of us they are, but perhaps not for all of us. Some of us are recuperating from surgeries or illnesses and can't celebrate as we would like. Some of us are thinking about missing loved ones who are no longer here to share celebrations. Some of us are new to Sacramento and don't yet have a group of friends to share celebrations. Loneliness is often a bigger factor during the holidays and Renaissance members can make a difference.

Some of us are volunteering to help others enjoy the season – and there are so many ways and places in our communities to do that. Some of us can and do give generously to the many organizations who help seniors, children, those who are ill or unable to go out, to the far too many homeless and needy families, to schools, arts, churches, etc., etc. Many, many Renaissance members do all of this and much more and not just during the holidays. **THANK YOU ALL!**

For those of us who are fortunate to have family and friends near, I'm sure we all realize how lucky we are! If you can add one or more to your holiday festivities, think about Renaissance members who may not have a place to celebrate. Perhaps they can join you?

In case you are looking for gifts, here are just a few ideas: Give a Renaissance Membership to a friend or family member and offer to drive that person to Friday classes or social celebrations. Donate to the RS Scholarship fund. Donate to the ASI Food Pantry or the Basic Needs Center. Donate food, clothing, furniture, electronic goods or cash to any of the many wonderful Sacramento area donation sites. Buy gifts from local small businesses.

Thank you to those who joined us at the ASI Food Pantry Friendsgiving Feast for students who would not be able to go home for Thanksgiving.

Don't forget that the last day of classes is Friday, December 5. President Dr. Luke Wood has been invited to join us for the Forum. After the Forum, our Holiday celebration will be held at Engrained Restaurant in the Student Union. It is a time to celebrate, and I hope you can celebrate with us.

Hopefully, you have made your reservations – they always sell out quickly.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL.....

Joyfully,

A Spark of Courage: How Renaissance Support Changes Lives **ThanksGIVEday Feature Story**

by Mike Pidd

As we enter this season of gratitude, we are reminded that the heart of the Renaissance Society beats strongest through the quiet, transformative moments our community helps make possible. Recently, one of our student scholars shared a story that captures exactly why our ThanksGIVEday efforts matter so deeply.

This student came to the United States to begin a new chapter in life—balancing college classes, family responsibilities, and the challenges of adjusting to a new country. Like so many adult learners, she carried big dreams but also the weight of financial pressures, uncertainty about the future, and the daunting road ahead. As she approached the final semester of her undergraduate program, the thought of continuing toward a master's degree felt almost out of reach. Tuition, application fees, and the prospect of supporting her children through their own educational journeys made the next steps seem overwhelming. At one point, she admitted she nearly gave up. But, then something simple—and powerful—happened.

At a recent Renaissance donors' celebration, she met the people who believe in her: donors who give generously, program leaders who pour their hearts into students, and community members who show up purely to support the success of others. In her words, being surrounded by this encouragement “sparked courage” in her again. She left that evening reminded that she is not walking this road alone, and that the Renaissance community stands with her—believing in her potential and cheering her forward.

Her renewed faith in her own journey is exactly why ThanksGIVEday is so meaningful. Every gift, no matter the size, helps light the way for students who are striving to build better futures for themselves and their families. Our support can

be the difference between someone stepping back in fear or stepping forward with hope.

This season, as we reflect on all we are grateful for, may this student's story remind us of the profound impact we can have on one another. Your generosity does more than fund education—it restores courage, reaffirms purpose, and nurtures the belief that dreams are still possible.

Thank you for considering a gift during this year's ThanksGIVEday Drive. Together, we continue to uplift, inspire, and illuminate new paths for learners across our community.

<https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1894/19/home-hero.aspx?sid=1894&gid=2&pgid=418&cid=1063&bled-it=1&dids=214.526>

BEWARE OF SCAMMERS

Several members have recently received email requests that appeared to be from me but were not. The first request was to “talk to me” and the second request was to “buy gift cards”. A couple people did buy gift cards as requested but fortunately did not assign them to anyone.

This ploy has been used with at least two past Presidents as well as with me. It is easy to tell if it's a legit message if you check the “from email” which is not mine. I use only my personal email. In the past, the “from email” has been very similar to mine with the insertion of a period between my names. In any case, whether it looks like the email request is from me or from someone else you know, always check before complying.

We have scheduled a Forum speaker for spring semester who will talk about scams and frauds. Please be careful especially during this time of year!

Deanna Hanson

The Holiday Season

by Darryl Freeman

Historically in this country the calendar months of December and January were often referred to as the Christmas and New Year holidays. In contemporary times, changing religious identity and commercial interests in particular now often refer to this time of the year as the Holiday Season. This article identifies some factual information on what has influenced this evolution.

The United States Census Bureau does not collect information on the religious identity of the population during its decennial Census. For purposes of discussion for this article, statistical information has been gleaned from a Social Studies research report by the California University Berkeley (GSS) supported in part by PEW, Reuters, and Gallup research organizations.

This is a snapshot comparison summary by percentages of the religious identity of population of the United States in 1975 and fifty years later 2025.

1975 (General Social Survey — UC Berkeley Nov. 11, 2025)

- All Christians (total): 90% (Protestant: 62.6% and Catholic 27.4%)
- Religions other than Christianity: 2.6% (including Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim/other groups)
- Religiously unaffiliated: 7.4%.

2025 (Pew Research Center Religious Landscape Study, Feb 26, 2025)

- All Christians (total): 62% (Protestant 40% and Catholic 19% plus small shares for Latter-day Saints, Orthodox, etc.).
- Religions other than Christianity: 7.1% (Jewish 1.7%, Muslim 1.2%, Buddhist 1.1%, Hindu 0.9%, plus small other groups).
- Religiously unaffiliated: 29% (includes 5% atheist, 6% agnostic, 19% “nothing in particular”).
- The general summary conclusion is that the overall religious identity of the Christian population in 50 years fell from 90% in 1975 to about 62% in 2025. This long-term

decline was due largely to losses among Protestants. The largest shift is the rise in the population identifying as religiously unaffiliated from 7% in 1975 to 29% in 2024. Also, the non-Christian population more than tripled from 2.6% to 9% today (driven largely by immigration and demographic change)

As a result of this change in the population demographics there are many religious and non-religious celebrations practiced in the United States during this holiday season. The list below identifies numerous celebrations by different religious and non-religious affiliate groups during months of November, December and January. (In alphabetical order)

- **African American:** Kwanzaa - Between Christmas and New Year's celebrate African Ancestry
- **Buddhist:** Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) – Very widely observed in the U.S. honoring Buddha's enlightenment, Dec 8th
- **Christian:** Christmas Day - Celebrates the Birth of Jesus Christ, December 25th
- **Hindu:** Kartik Purnima - Festival of Lights marks the Full Moon November
- **Hmong:** Hmong New Year (Not Peb Caug) - marks the end of the harvest season, honors ancestors and spirits
- **Jewish:** Hanukkah - Festival of Eight Nights, rededication of the Second Temple, December
- **Latino:** Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe (Our Lady of Guadalupe - Celebrates the appearance of the Virgin Mary to Juan Diego in Mexico, December 12th
- **Muslim:** Mawlid al-Nabi - Prophet Muhammad's Birthday, November
- **Native American:** National Native American Heritage Month - November
- **Non-religious celebrations:** Thanksgiving Day, New Years Eve, Human Rights Day, winter festivals

Enjoy the holiday season.

YOU ARE A LEADER

Many of us have held significant leadership roles in our lives. Now, we would like to enjoy retirement, hobbies, Renaissance classes, travel and grandchildren. We are also involved with other organizations, our church, and perhaps we are serving on other boards of directors.

Renaissance members are busy – giving of themselves and sharing their time, treasures, talents. We know all this and even so, we are asking more!

The Renaissance Board of Directors consists of members who embody leadership attributes. The Board includes our President, Vice-President, Past President, Secretary, Controller, Assistant Controller and six Members-at-Large. Chairs for Communications & Marketing, Finance, Forum, Membership, Nominating, Program, Resource Development, Scholarship, Technology and Volunteer Committees are also on the board. Committee members are also extremely important

to continue planning, managing and keeping Renaissance Society viable and meaningful for all of us and for Sac State and our community.

We would really like YOU to apply for one of these positions. Be a part of the new plans and decisions that will be made over the next year. Also, this will be our 40th anniversary celebratory year and we hope you will want to be involved.

I'm sure you have questions about these roles. Responsibilities of each position and committee are outlined on our Website: <https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/renaissance-society/board-governance.html#board-and-committee-descriptions>

We are accepting applications now for 2026/2027. Please don't hesitate to contact me (916) 296-4131 or other current Board members. This is a great group of people, and you will enjoy being part of this very important leadership group.

Deanna Hanson



The Sunshine Group

A Renaissance Society Caring Connection.

Bringing warmth, comfort, and companionship to our members in need.

Life's challenges can touch us all — illness, loss, or simply a difficult season.

The **Sunshine Group**, formed within the **Renaissance Society**, reaches out to support ailing or struggling members with compassion, encouragement, and friendship.



Our Mission

To ensure that every Renaissance Society member feels remembered, valued, and cared for — especially during times of hardship.



What We Do

- *Send **cards and notes** of cheer and encouragement
- *Make friendly check-in calls or visits
- *Share **resources and referrals** for practical or emotional support
- *Offer a listening ear, warm smile, and caring connection



How You Can Help

- *Join our Sunshine Volunteer Team
- *Let us know if a Renaissance Society member could use a little sunshine



Get in Touch

*Please contact Marilea Wolf at (916) 792-0944

COMMITTEE NEWS

COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING:

The monthly *Recorder*, while still available as an eight-page printed publication for those who request it, now takes full advantage of its digital format by expanding beyond the eight-page limit when needed. This flexibility allows additional articles and content to be included.

The *Weekly Update* has also been refreshed with a more modern design featuring increased use of graphics—many of which link directly to the RS website and community partners.

In addition, a new trifold brochure has been created for distribution at selected events and for members to share with prospective new members.

MEMBERSHIP

If you haven't yet registered for the Holiday Party at Engrained after the Forum on December 5, 2025, please don't wait! Register [here](#).

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

There are a myriad of campus and community volunteer opportunities members may want to pursue. This link will direct you to the [Community Engagement Center's volunteer resource page](#).

It is time to begin planning for our January new member orientation and open house. Carol Barake will be compiling the list of volunteers for this event scheduled for January 16, 2026. Please let her know if you would like to be involved.

TECH COMMITTEE

Kevin Collins 508-344-2005, and Tom Nelson are compiling the list of volunteers for tech host positions. Please let them know if you are interested in being a tech host for Friday hybrid classes or weekday Zoom sessions.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Please talk with Deanna Hanson 916-296-4131, Ken Cross 916-995-8288, Deborah Seiler 916-704-5735, or Norv Wellsfry 916-718-6920, to apply for the 2026-2027 Board of Directors.

LEARN, CONNECT, SHARE

Do you know someone who could benefit from the Tuition Assistance Grant? Or, would you like to gift a friend or family member with a membership? This is a wonderful opportunity for someone you know who would like to continue learning and meet people.



The flyer for Renaissance Society Tuition Assistance Grants (T.A.G.) features a green header with a quill icon and the title. The main body is light green and contains the text: "We believe lifelong learning should be open to everyone." followed by a list of benefits: "✓ Covers the \$120 annual tuition", "✓ Available to new and returning members", "✓ Grants last one year", and "✓ Spring semester for \$70". A graduation cap icon is next to the second bullet. Below this is a photo of six diverse people standing outdoors, with the text "Don't let cost keep you from joining our community of lifelong learners." to the left. The footer is dark green and includes the Renaissance Society logo, the text "Apply today for a Tuition Assistance Grant (T.A.G.)", and contact information: "Contact our office for more information 916-758-5133".

Renaissance Society Tuition Assistance Grants (T.A.G.)

We believe lifelong learning should be open to everyone.

- ✓ Covers the \$120 annual tuition
- ✓ Available to new and returning members
- ✓ Grants last one year
- ✓ Spring semester for \$70

Don't let cost keep you from joining our community of lifelong learners.

Apply today for a Tuition Assistance Grant (T.A.G.)

Renaissance Society Contact our office for more information 916-758-5133

Click the link for the scholarship form:
<https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/renaissance-society/internal/documents/memscholarship.pdf>

CapRadio and Renaissance Society Partnership Update

As a community-funded resource that operates in service of our community, CapRadio continues to embrace partnerships that help our region thrive. Over the last year, we have developed more than a dozen high-impact collaborations with arts and culture organizations, community groups, neighborhood associations and other nonprofits in the Sacramento area.

We are now excited to add the Renaissance Society at Sacramento State to our list of community partners! With shared goals around community engagement and lifelong learning, we look forward to this collaboration and making an even bigger impact in the region together. Stay tuned for more information about a Forum presentation from CapRadio's Chris Bruno and Renaissance Society station tours and discussions with staff later this spring. We would like to thank Deanna Hanson and the entire team at Renaissance Society for helping us orchestrate this wonderful collaboration.

In the meantime, CapRadio has a few things to share that you don't want to miss out on. Starting this Thanksgiving, our much beloved *Sounds of the Season* five-week holiday programming special starts up on the music station ([view the schedule here](#)). If you're looking for hyperlocal reporting that covers all things Sacramento and offers moments of joy along the way, check out our [Sacramento Know newsletter here](#). And if you want to stay connected to CapRadio anywhere you are, [discover the all-new mobile app](#) that launched this summer.

We deeply appreciate all of our listeners and supporters at the Renaissance Society. If you would like to help sustain this 100% community-funded resource, you can always get a head start on year-end giving by [making a donation to CapRadio here](#).

Your Gift Makes a Lasting Impact

by Mike Pidd

The Renaissance Society is proud to announce the awarding of seven scholarships this year, bringing our total to 135 scholarships and \$311,000+ in support for Sacramento State students since 1993. Thanks to your generosity, our community continues to strengthen its commitment to lifelong learning and service.

As year-end approaches, consider making a charitable gift from your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) to benefit the Renaissance Society Scholarship and Endowment programs. A direct transfer from your IRA is a simple, tax-efficient way to support students in need.

To make a direct transfer, please share these details with your IRA provider:

- Legal Name: University Foundation at Sacramento State
- Designation 1: Renaissance Society Scholarship Endowment
- Designation 2: ASI Food Pantry (Renaissance Society contribution)
- Mailing Address:
The University Foundation at Sacramento State
PO Box 845004
Los Angeles, CA 90084-5004
- Tax ID: 94-3001359

Important: After initiating your gift, notify Rebekah Rabirotff at R.Rabirotff@csus.edu with the gift amount and the sending financial institution. This step ensures your donation is allocated according to your wishes, as many administrators do not inform charities of donor designations.

For questions about this giving option, please contact Mike Pidd at mikepidd@sbcglobal.net or Rebekah.

Thank you for your continued generosity and for empowering the next generation of Sacramento State students.

MAJOR DONOR EVENT

A beautiful event was graciously held at Deborah Seiler's home for Renaissance Society major donors. It was a wonderful event celebrating the generosity of our members.

(See photos on pages 8 & 9)

Helping Sac State Students Meet Their Basic Needs

Sac State's [Basic Needs Resource Center \(BNRC\)](#) is open on campus at The WELL, serving students Monday through Friday by appointment through their [Patient Portal](#). Some have wondered why the campus needs this in addition to the ASI Food Pantry. The short answer: both help students facing food insecurity, but they serve different needs.

The BNRC operates under [Student Health, Counseling, and Wellness Services](#), alongside the [CARES Office](#), allowing students to quickly connect to other resources like emergency housing, counseling, or financial assistance. Visits are by appointment to provide students a private, personalized shopping experience.

The BNRC gratefully accepts donations of food, clothing, and parenting supplies—especially **canned meats, nut butters, new or gently-used**

winter coats, toiletries, diapers, and formula. Only commercially packaged food can be accepted.

Monetary donations can be [made through the Sac State Foundation](#). Renaissance Society members with questions about donating or volunteering may contact bnrc@csus.edu.

The following are links to photographs of the Basic Needs Center open house and the services provided.

1. Basic Needs Resource Center
2025: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sacomms/albums/72177720328793881/>
2. The Basic Needs Resource Center Grand Opening: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/sacomms/albums/72177720329215975/>

Dining Together - December 2025

By Marge Tarbell

Dining Together will meet at **Thai Terrace**, 1596 Howe Ave at 5:30 p.m. on December 10. Cash only, no separate checks. Ample parking. The Chef asked that we keep the max at 35 as well as have the guests **pre-order from the [menu](#) before attending**. This will assure that all orders come out in a timely manner. Those interested in attending must respond by Dec. 7 to Marge Tarbell (mtarbell@sbcglobal.net).



RENAISSANCE RECORDER EDITOR

For Submissions, contact

Deanna Hanson

deannahanson@gmail.com

or

Rick Atkinson

rpamd@yahoo.com

January Submissions Due: 1/20/2026

RENAISSANCE SOCIETY

Administrative Office

Email: renaissa@csus.edu

Website: www.csus.edu/rensoc

Phone: (916) 758-5133

Office: 350 University Ave., Suite 108
Sacramento CA 95819



2025
Major

Donors
Event



2025 Major Donors Event

