



THE RENAISSANCE RECORDER

California State University, Sacramento

Lifelong Learning Since 1986

President's Message



Deanna Hanson

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

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Renaissance Website:

<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

Key Dates

Friday, July 4th

Independence Day - Many
celebrations throughout
the area

Monday, July 7th

Joint Executive Committee and
RS Board Meeting
Clara Auditorium

Friday, July 11

Summer Series, Arts Without
Artists, Mendocino 1003

Friday, July 18

Summer Series, Behind the Stage
at B Street (sold out)

Friday, July 25

Summer Series, Midtown/
Downtown Murals Trot (sold out)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST IN ME

It is my absolute pleasure to address you as the incoming President of the Renaissance Society. This organization is built on a foundation of curiosity, intellectual engagement, sharing our knowledge and talents with others and building meaningful connections—values that I wholeheartedly support.

As we embark on this new chapter together, I want to emphasize my commitment to growing and strengthening our community. Increasing membership and welcoming anyone wanting to learn is a key priority. More varied voices bring fresh perspectives and enrich our collective experience and sustainability. Equally important is developing a deep bench of future leaders who are passionate about our mission and eager to help shape its future.

Growing membership requires a mix of outreach and engagement opportunities. We will continue to host events which include networking mixers to introduce potential members as well as exclusive member-only gatherings to showcase the benefits of belonging. We urge our members to encourage their friends to become members. We continue to look for ways to make membership in RS even more valued, to share testimonials from satisfied members and to develop even more partnerships with other organizations. Also, remember, we provide tuition assistance to those who may need help paying our membership fees. We want anyone interested in the Renaissance Society to be involved.

Building a strong leadership pipeline involves fostering engagement, mentorship, and skill development. It means offering opportunities for any member to take on a small leadership role and grow into a larger one. It means making leadership accessible by encouraging diverse voices to step up. It means celebrating accomplishments and thanking contributors.

My goal is for the Renaissance Society to remain a place of warmth and inclusiveness, where every member feels valued and heard. Your ideas, your feedback, and your unique experiences all contribute to the vibrancy of our group, and I am here to listen. Whether you have thoughts on new initiatives, ways to enhance our programs, or simply want to chat, please contact me.

Together, let's continue to explore, learn, and inspire one another. I look forward to connecting with each of you, working collaboratively to strengthen our community, and ensuring that the Renaissance Society remains a beacon of lifelong learning and camaraderie.

Warmly,

PARTNERSHIPS

The Renaissance Society is thrilled to announce partnerships with several esteemed theatres and music venues, offering our members exclusive opportunities to engage in the rich cultural scene that surrounds us.

Through these collaborations, we hope to promote the arts, culture and ultimately museums and sports to continue providing our members with access to a variety of quality productions and activities. Sacramento has so much to offer from dramatic stage productions, symphonies, intimate jazz performances, concerts, major league sports and Broadway musicals.

Our partners include a variety of venues, each offering unique programming and special promotions for Renaissance Society members. These discounts range from reduced ticket prices and subscription benefits to special experiences aligned with performances.

We now have agreements with the following venues:

- Capital Stage is offering a 30% discount on their upcoming production of King James and 16% off a subscription package for 2025/26 productions.
- The Sofia, Home of B Street Theatre is offering a 20% discount for their upcoming Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors.
- Harris Center at Folsom Lake College will be offering a variety of discounts and special events that will be announced later this summer with their new season, including an invitation to the Season Showcase and wine tasting at 6:30 on July 15th.
- Broadway Sacramento has again offered free tickets for the dress rehearsal of Hello Dolly which will be offered to new members.
- Sacramento Ballet offered discount tickets to Romeo and Juliet.
- Sacramento Choral Society and Orchestra provided discounted tickets to their production of Lerner & Loewe.
- And, thanks to the generosity of Clara Studios for the Performing Arts, the Renaissance Board of Directors has been donated space for our monthly board meetings.
- There are many more to come and if you have contacts, ideas or interests, please contact Deanna Hanson.

Be sure to read the Weekly Update and the Recorder newsletters for current offerings. For a full list of participating venues and details on how to redeem your member-exclusive benefits, please check our website. We will continue to add new partnership opportunities.



Our newest partner, **The Harris Center for the Arts at Folsom Lake College**, has invited Renaissance members to join them at the Season Showcase on July 15th at 6:30 pm. Enjoy some complimentary sparkling wine and a delicious dessert. The doors will open at 6:30 pm. This event is free, but parking passes are still required. Grab your parking pass at the link below when you RSVP. Click [here](#) for your free tickets.

DINING TOGETHER JULY 2025

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at
Veg Café, 2431 J St., 2nd Floor,
(<https://www.vegsacramento.com/>) at
5:30 PM on July 9, 2025.



Renaissance Society members who wish to attend should **RSVP** to [Susan Wheeler](mailto:swheeler_1@yahoo.com) (swheeler_1@yahoo.com) no later than July 3rd.

Street parking is available. Please bring cash (including small bills) – the restaurant will not accept individual credit cards for payment.

This dinner is limited to 20 people.

Note: This restaurant is on the second floor.

There is an elevator to get to the restaurant for anyone who needs it.

2025 RS Scholarship Recipients Bios and Photos

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. Each year, we collaborate with our recipients to gather bios, photos, and sometimes videos to share with our members—always with the students' consent. In light of today's standards for privacy and transparency, we introduced a formal consent form this year, developed in partnership with the Sacramento State Scholarship Team. Six of our recipients have enthusiastically shared their stories, while the seventh has chosen to remain anonymous. The Scholarship Committee is honored to work alongside our dedicated members, the Resource Development Committee, and our Sac State partners to provide these scholarships to deserving students. This year, we received 144 applications—a testament to the ongoing need and value of our program. Please see below for information about the six recipients who have chosen to share their stories. Click to view : [Scholarship Video](#)

Basira Halim

My name is Basira Halim, and I'm currently a nursing student at California State University, Sacramento. I was born and raised in Kabul, Afghanistan, and moved to California five years ago with my family in hopes of building a better future. The transition wasn't easy, but I've learned so much along the way, and I'm incredibly proud of how far I've come. I come from a big, loving family of ten, and they've been my biggest support system throughout this journey. Being one of the first in my family to attend university here in the U.S. has been both an honor and a responsibility I take seriously.



Before starting my nursing journey, I worked as a pharmacy technician, where I developed a love for helping others and saw firsthand the impact of compassionate care. These experiences have shaped my goal of becoming a nurse who not only pro-

vides medical care but also emotional support to patients and their families. Outside of school, I am actively involved in my community, particularly through volunteer work at my local mosque. I speak multiple languages, which allows me to connect with diverse groups of people and better understand their needs.

Receiving this scholarship is both an honor and a reminder of the hard work I've put in. It will allow me to continue pursuing my nursing education and eventually give back to my community in meaningful ways. I am truly grateful for this opportunity and look forward to making a difference as a nurse.

Mohammad Samir Saqib

I'm an immigrant student who has run into financial, professional and personal problems.

I believe that our struggles shape our strengths, so I held on to this throughout. I am studying to get my Bachelor of Computer Science degree at Sacramen-



to State. My goal is to create and use technological solutions to impact lives. This has allowed me to specialize in educational software, hardware, and health informatics.

Even though going to school full-time, I have worked in customer service, tech support, and tutoring. I became more patient and good at communication due to this experience. I speak four languages: Farsi, Pashto, English, and Dari. This helps me support different people.

Receiving the Renaissance Scholarship means more than financial support — it's a reminder that my story, my struggles, and my dreams matter. It gives me the strength to keep going, with the hope that one day, I can lift someone else the way this scholarship has lifted me.

A quotation that reflects my journey is, *"It always seems impossible until it's done."* – Nelson Mandela.

I am grateful for this opportunity and trust in scholars like me.

Bianca Esparza

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for the opportunity to further pursue my scholarly goals through your generous contribution. I am truly honored to be selected by such a distinguished community, one that not only supports lifelong learning for older adults but also fosters the growth of students like me.

As a 31-year-old doctoral student in Audiology and a first-generation college student, I have overcome many barriers surrounding higher education. I chose Audiology because I wanted to pursue a profession centered around helping others. As a highly empathetic person, I knew this field would allow me to provide compassionate care, especially to older adults who deserve understanding, kindness, and



dignity in their healthcare. Through my experience in our university's clinic, I've been deeply inspired by the resilience and self-advocacy demonstrated by our older adult patients. Their willingness to seek care and actively participate in their treatment

has fueled my desire to become a healthcare professional who offers the utmost care and resources needed to support their goals. Thanks to your support, I can continue this journey with confidence, knowing that I'm on the right path to making a meaningful difference in the lives of many.

Your contribution has eased the financial burden on me and my family, allowing me to focus more on my academic and professional growth. I hope to one day give back and support others who aspire to serve our older adult community.

Thank you once again for your generous support.

Argelia Jauregui

Argelia Jauregui is a first generation Mexican-American, non-traditional student. Returning to pursue a higher education as a mother of four is a testament to her resilience, perseverance, and unwavering determination. Having obtained a Bachelors of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSAD) and graduating Summa Cum Laude was a tremendous accomplishment. Argelia is continuing her education as a Graduate student also in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Argelia's goal is to become a Speech and Language Pathologist and work with the Hispanic community considering she is fluent in Spanish. Her goal is to help reduce the negative stigma surrounding therapy and be an advocate for the benefits that speech therapy can have on a person's life.



(Continued on next page.)

Deanna wants to hear from you:

- What do you most love about Renaissance?
- What could we improve?
- How would you like to share your interests and talents?

Reminder - Registration has begun and you might think about sending your friends the Weekly Update and Recorder to promote New Member signups.

Hanh Hua

My name is Hanh Hua. I am a first-generation Vietnamese American student currently in my second year at Sacramento State, majoring in Health Science and part of the General Education Honors Program.



My volunteer work at the Sacramento VA Medical Center has been a formative part of my academic journey, sparking a deep interest in caring for older adults. Supporting veterans and witnessing the

unique challenges faced by aging populations has inspired me to pursue a career in nursing.

I will begin my first semester in the nursing program at Sac State this fall, with the long-term goal of specializing in geriatric care after becoming a licensed registered nurse. I will be the first nurse in my family, and I hope to be a source of knowledge and guidance for my loved ones as they navigate their own health needs, supporting and uplifting those around me.

The financial realities of nursing school can be daunting, and I am sincerely grateful to the Renaissance Society for helping to ease this burden. This scholarship not only provides financial relief but also serves as a meaningful affirmation of my efforts and aspirations. I am deeply thankful to the faculty and staff at Sacramento State whose support has been instrumental in helping me pursue my goals. Their guidance, combined with the generosity of the Renaissance Society, continues to inspire me to give back through compassionate, community-centered care. I am honored to be a recipient of this scholarship. Thank you for believing in me.

Anya Timchenko

I am a Public Health major at Sacramento State University with a concentration in Administration. She also serves as a Student Services Technician for the Cal-WORKs program at Sierra College, supporting student-parents in accessing education, financial aid, and essential campus resources. With a strong interest in mental health and public service, Anya plans to pursue a master's degree in clinical psychology to provide therapy and advocacy for underserved communities.

Originally from Ukraine, Anya immigrated to the United States seeking safety and stability for her family. As a full-time student, full-time professional, and mother of four, she brings dedication, empathy, and resilience to her academic and career journey.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Anya co-created a volunteer project with a retired teacher to support immigrant families facing language and cultural barriers in education. Over the course of 1.5 years, the program helped 15 recently immigrated students improve their learning experiences while also giving older adult volunteers a renewed sense of purpose and connection during an isolating time.

Anya remains committed to bridging intergenerational and cultural gaps through inclusive programs that uplift both youth and older adults. She hopes to inspire others and lead by example in creating communities rooted in care, dignity, and purpose. Anya is honored to be a Renaissance Scholar and deeply grateful for the support that allows her to continue this work and pursue her goals.



Alan Wong Has Seen Much of the World

By Judy Lewis

Alan Wong was born and raised in Zhongshan, China, where he lived until the age of nine. He then moved with his mother to Macau, a former Portuguese colony, and later to Hong Kong. At age 15, Alan and his mom relocated to Honolulu, Hawaii, to live with his father. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Hawaii and a Master's degree in the same field from the University of Southern California.

After spending 33 years working in the aerospace industry in Southern California, Alan took an early retirement at 56. He then worked for Aerojet in Rancho Cordova for nine years, retiring fully in 2015.

Alan met his wife Amy, (also a Renaissance Society member), in Hong Kong, where their families were acquainted. The couple has five grandchildren—two from their son in Roseville and three from their son in France. Four years ago, Alan and Amy moved from Folsom to El Dorado Hills.

In spring of 2024, Alan joined the Renaissance Society Walkabout group and quickly became an active contributor. When the walking group's coordinator passed away unexpectedly, Alan stepped in, collaborating with the team to provide weekly flyers with route directions, location details, and lunch social information. He also serves as a tech host for seminar presenters.

Committed to staying active, Alan rides bicycles weekly with friends and participates in Folsom's "Walk and Talk" senior group on Tuesdays and Thursdays. As a seasoned docent, he leads school group tours at the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary, Folsom Powerhouse State Historic Park, and the American River Water Education Center.

This fall, Alan plans to host a Renaissance seminar series titled *Hidden Treasures of Folsom*, featuring local experts. Topics will include Northern California's Chinese Immigrant history, evolution of Folsom history, the Folsom Powerhouse, the



American history, watershed systems and riparian habitats, and the Folsom Zoo Sanctuary.

Alan and Amy love to travel and have explored overseas destinations "all over the map," most recently visiting several Scandinavian countries. Their next adventure? A trip to Iceland in August.

The RS Membership Committee has a "Sunshine Committee" which encourages members to send good wishes to Renaissance members who are ill. If you know a member who would be grateful to receive good wishes, please forward their contact information to [Dolores Eitel](#) or [Allan Keown](#) to be published in the Weekly Update. They will need to receive information for their Thursday deadline for the following week.

Cultural Transitions in America

By Darryl O Freeman

Many American journalists, cultural commentators, academics, and of course politicians speculate that the United States is experiencing for better or for worse, accelerated cultural change. The driving force behind this era of acceleration is what is known as the contemporary “Digital Revolution”. There are a variety of social, political and economic factors that influence this conjecture.

Our country’s historic “Industrial Revolution” transformed American society culturally by shifting people to cities, changing family life, encouraging new consumer habits, deepening class divides, and introducing legal waves of immigrants. This economic movement laid the foundation for a pluralistic modernization of American society. This country’s contemporary “Digital Revolution” has impacted American society in a similar manner. Rapid technological advances in the last few decades have created entirely new consumer purchasing habits by way of the internet that challenges traditional “brick and mortar” shopping. Additionally, the internet and social media activities have transformed how ideas, opinions, and cultural trends spread, making elements of societal change much faster, more visible, and more concerning for large segments of the population.

Subsequently, the U.S. population has become more diverse with younger generations being more multicultural and globally connected. Social-political identity movements since the 1960s have precipitated rapid progress (and backlash) on social and cultural issues. This “Age of Acceleration*”, influenced by advanced computer technology, has arguably impacted American society to the point that cultural divisions in the population have the appearance of being more divisive than ever, with political beliefs shaping how people consume media, talk about history, relate to their neighbors, and think about the future.

There’s a strong case that the U.S. is experiencing faster cultural shifts compared to previous decades.

However, it’s important to note that cultural change is often uneven — while some communities embrace change intensely, others may see it as less dramatic and/or even resist it.



The urban-rural divide in the U.S. is real and profound as evidenced by the geo-political rhetoric and geographical voter response in the last national elections. Urban communities tend to be more progressive, diverse, and accepting of rapid social changes. Rural communities tend to espouse traditional values, stronger religious faith, and tight-knit social communality. The MAGA movement articulates a challenge to “urban elitism,” perceived by populations in rural communities, who feel their way of life is devalued or misunderstood and governments have not been responsive to their needs. Urban areas have more exposure to global cultures and economic opportunities in technology, finance, and creative sectors. Rural areas are more tied to agriculture, manufacturing, or resource extraction and often feel economically suppressed.

Urban dwellers are more likely to be immersed in diverse media ecosystems that reinforce cosmopolitan values. Rural residents rely more on local news, faith-based networks, or conservative media outlets, leading to a different worldview than urban populations. These cultural divides are strongly reflected in political expressions. Rural areas lean conservative, while urban areas trend liberal, contributing to the perceived intense polarization.

This transition period of accelerated economic, political and cultural change is creating both opportunities (broader acceptance, diversity, innovation) and tensions (backlash, polarization, alienation). Bridging these divides requires understanding and respecting different lived experiences while working to address underlying economic and social inequalities.

*Phrase popularized by New York Times journalist Thomas L. Friedman

RS Summer Program Kick Off

The RS Summer Program kicked off June 6th with a wonderful presentation by Scott Klier, CEO of Broadway on Tour and Broadway at Music Circus. Following Scott's informative overview, he engaged the audience with a fabulous Q&A session.

The bar has been set very high for an amazing Summer Program season! Thank you to Jackie and her team for putting together such an incredible program for Member enrichment and to help recruit new members.



RENAISSANCE RECORDER EDITOR

For Submissions, contact

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August Submissions Due : July 2

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Do You Like to Write?

As the RS Recorder changes to allowing more pages, people with writing expertise would be an asset. The article can be on a topic of your choice within the theme of the RS Recorder.

Contact [Deanna](#) if you are interested.

Parking Permits

RS parking permits for the next school year 2025-2026 [can be purchased now](#). They accept payment Visa, Mastercard, Discover (NOT American Express) or check. The cost is now **\$44.00** up from \$41.00 current year.