



# Renaissance Society 2024-25 Annual Report

Prepared By: Deanna Hanson, Deborah Seiler, and Amber Korb



Learn. Connect. Share.

Renaissance Society of Sacramento  
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 (2024-2025)

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT  
 Renaissance Society of Sacramento: Fiscal Year 2024-2025



Deborah Seiler

Greetings!

This past year the Renaissance Society celebrated its 39th anniversary of learning, connecting, and sharing at Sacramento State.

Established in 1986 by faculty, staff, and community members, our Society is a premier life-long learning organization featuring a unique peer-to-peer model in which members teach and learn from one another. It has grown from about 40 founding members to 1,808 at the end of FY 2024-2025.

This Annual Report chronicles our many program offerings, the highly successful 2025 Summer Program, our record philanthropy, engagement with Sac State students, and many social activities to enrich the lives of our members.

Major Milestones:

- Fourth consecutive year winning the ASI Food Pantry's Golden Plate Award with over \$40,000 in donations throughout the year
- Seven \$3,000 scholarships bringing our cumulative total to \$311,000 for 135 scholarships since 1993
- Funding for four endowed scholarships, up from three last year
- New partnerships with local arts organizations such Capitol Stage, the B Street Theater (Sofia), and the Sacramento Ballet, among others

Other Highlights:

- 75 free tickets to the Music Circus's final dress rehearsal of *Hello Dolly!*
- 71 seminars, 133 single presentations, 46 Shared Interest Groups, 20 Community Presentations, and 26 Forums.
- Revised election procedures to streamline the manner of electing new board members.
- Ended the Fiscal Year with a small budget surplus
- Raised membership dues by only \$20, the first increase in six years.

A major challenge we confronted was to diversify our membership, programming, and leadership. While we made some progress, we know we have much farther to go. We look forward to major progress in expanding our membership.

Come join us for another great year, get involved, and help us pursue our goals!

Deborah Seiler, President  
 Renaissance Society of Sacramento



California State University, Sacramento  
President Dr. Luke Wood at our  
Fall Address

## RENAISSANCE HONORS UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

For over 39 years, the Renaissance Society has flourished under the gracious leadership of Sacramento State, beginning with then President Donald Gerth. Our Society treasures its ability to be on the beautiful campus on Fridays, interact with students, enjoy classroom space and parking privileges, as well as partake in many campus activities.

President Luke Wood has continued to welcome us with invitations to his Spring and Fall addresses and he has attended our Annual Meetings. He has shared the challenges he faces and informed us about his hopes and plans for the future. Most of all, we are inspired by his strength and commitment to Sac State students.

### Passing the Torch

Renaissance has a Memorandum of Understanding with the university which identifies the Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS) as our official liaison. We have been fortunate to have had truly exceptional leadership from Dean Dr. Dianne Hyson for several years. When Dean Hyson stepped down to pursue other campus endeavors in December 2024, we were pleased to welcome Interim Dean, Dr. Marya Endriga. We were familiar with Dr. Endriga as Associate Dean of SSIS and the transition was seamless.



Renaissance welcomes Dr. Endriga  
as Interim Dean

During this year, we continued our strong friendship with Vice President for Student Affairs Aniesha Mitchell. We enjoyed fine working relationships with University Enterprises, Inc., Information Resources & Technology, the College of Continuing Education, and new Vice President for University Advancement, Michael Reza who helped guide us as we award our student scholarships.

All have welcomed our Society and endeavored to better understand our mission as well as our contributions to Sac State students.

The Renaissance Society thanks President Wood and his cabinet for welcoming us.



Renaissance presents lifetime  
membership and memorial brick for the  
new Arts building to Dean Hyson

## OUR GRATITUDE

### Many Thanks to Sac State University Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

The Renaissance Society is an independent organization but we couldn't do what we do without the support of the administration and staff of the university.

We'd like to express our deep appreciation of our liasons, SSIS Dean Dianne Hyson, and now Interim Dean Marya Endriga.

We also cherish our relationships with the College of Continuing Education (CCE) who host our registration system, our fiscal sponsor University Enterprises, Inc (UEI), University Transportation & Parking Services (UTAPS), Space Management, University Union Events Services, Information Resources & Technology (IRT), University Print & Mail, and all the other departments that welcome us and make our operations possible.

Specific thanks go to:

- Ryan Choi, ASI Student Services Manager
- Jeff Dierking, Director, UTAPS
- Steve Grondin, Consultant Information Technology, CCE
- Mark Hendricks, Vice President & CIO, IRT
- Deborah Hunt, Chief Deputy Director, Organizational Excellence and Leadership, CCE
- Peggy Kay, Associate Vice President for Academic Technology and Deputy Chief Information Officer, IRT
- James Martin, Event Coordinator, University Union Dining Services
- Steve Morgan, PC Technician, Information Technology, UEI
- Jenni Murphy, Dean, CCE
- Rebekah Rabirotff, Director of Development, SSIS
- Michael Reza, Vice President of University Advancement
- Camellia Sahn, Director of Space Management, Administration & Business Affairs
- Robert Van Winkle, Info Tech Consultant Expert, IRT
- Ian Watts-Willis, Identity Management Analyst, IRT



Regular connections with Sac State students occur as part of the Gerontology mentoring, ushering, and physical therapy fitness events. This year, the Technology Committee and many program leaders wanted to meet and honor the young people from IRT who provide speedy, competent help when program leaders encounter difficulties navigating classroom technology. Renaissance was pleased to sponsor a pizza lunch for IRT leaders and their many student volunteers in a first-ever Meet and Greet.

## SEMINARS, LECTURES, AND SHARED INTEREST GROUPS

The original purpose of Renaissance was to enable adults to continue learning and teaching in later years by offering the mental stimulation and fellowship of a college environment. Now, 39 years later, our motto is Learn. Connect. Share. The quantity and quality of our offerings are unparalleled in the lifelong learning community and are the foundation of the Learn portion of our motto.



Thanks to our peer-to-peer teaching approach, our programs continue to be broad and ever-changing. Importantly, our programs are affordable to all. For six years, we resisted any increase in membership dues. Only this fiscal year, we added a \$20 annual increase. For an unlimited number of programs, including our Forum series with prominent outside speakers and unlimited attendance at social events, our dues are a mere \$120 per year.

Diligent members of our Program Committee and dedicated staff work hard to recruit and help train program leaders. As an organization, we welcome new ideas for seminars and single presentations.

Programs cover a wide range of subjects, including history, literature, economics, arts, and science. These are conducted on Zoom on Mondays through Thursdays. On Fridays, programs are on campus, with many also transmitted on Zoom and recorded for later enjoyment.

Shared Interest Groups engage members in small, in-person groups to play games, read books and magazines, speak a foreign language, or enjoy physical activity among others. Digital photography and book groups are popular examples.

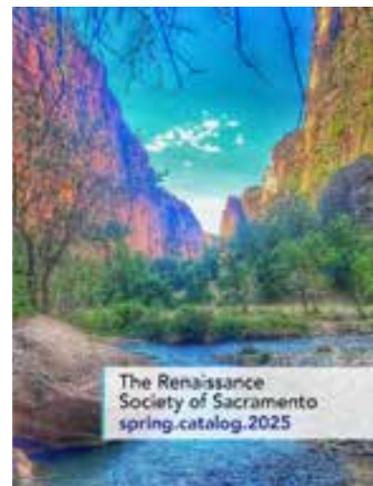
The Forum Committee works hard to bring outside speakers from a wide range of disciplines. This year we welcomed luminaries such as West Sacramento Mayor Martha Guerrero, artist Stan Padilla, and UC Davis Professor of Constitutional Law Aaron Tang.

Our program offerings for the 2024-25 year included:

- 71 Seminars
- 133 Single Presentations
- 46 Shared Interest Groups
- 20 Community Presentations
- 25 Forums

Longstanding efforts to bring some of our programming to the community after Covid finally came together. Working with local libraries, several of our program leaders reprised their lectures for members of the public to share knowledge and spread the word about our organization.

Renaissance is proud to continue its tradition of lifelong learning.



## 2025 SUMMER PROGRAM

### “Looking Behind the Scenes”



Renaissance does not take a long summer break from the Learn portion of its motto. Instead, this is a time to engage in less traditional programming and reach out to the broader community. Although Renaissance programs are inexpensive by lifelong learning standards, the summer program is free and open to the public.

The 2025 summer program was a creative departure from the classroom and ventured primarily into the realm of the arts with a brief dip into the area of Artificial Intelligence.

It began with an illuminating presentation by Professor Diego Bonilla who demonstrated the creative powers as well as the possible pitfalls of AI. During the presentation, Professor Bonilla used AI to create a video and an anthem for Renaissance simply by using the information from the website. Members were both awed and unsettled by the prospects of this emerging tool.

As curious people, Renaissance members and guests were delighted to explore venues in the community. Led by Vice President Deanna Hanson and Program Committee Chair Jackie Lamb, participants were treated to a behind-the-scenes peek at the Sacramento Ballet, Broadway on Tour, and Capital Stage Theater production companies. There was also a tour of Sacramento street murals.

In each case, hosts worked hard to explain and demonstrate the constraints, problems, and solutions they developed to give their audiences a great show. The Program Committee is already planning to build on this approach for the 2026 program.



## EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH SACRAMENTO STATE

Educational partnerships with Sac State are an important aspect of the Connect portion of our Learn. Connect. Share motto. These interactions are a source of joy and fulfillment for many Renaissance members and the students they serve.

### GERONTOLOGY DEPARTMENT

The Renaissance Society legacy of supporting this important program dates back to 1987. It now involves 90 Renaissance volunteer members per semester who mentor students enrolled in Strategies for Optimal Aging (Gerontology 121). Many Renaissance members have volunteered over the decades, and some are still in touch with their students which enriches the lives of both mentor and student.



### A New Format

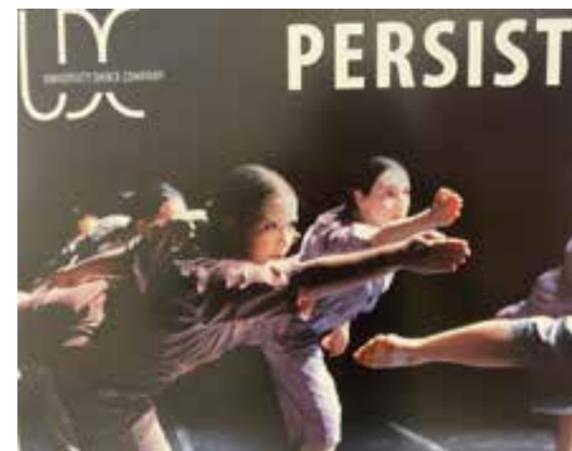
Beginning in the Spring of 2025, Gerontology students from various CSU campuses could earn their Bachelor of Science degree, minor degree, or graduate certificate online through Sac State. For the program's continued success, it was important to have the mentor program transition with the department by mentoring students both online and in person. Mentors have become a critical link to students as the course offerings moved online by providing personal, one-on-one experiential learning.

*"The Gerontology Department continues to be grateful for our long-standing partnership with the Renaissance Society. Renaissance members share their time and wisdom serving as mentors to our students. They also generously donate to scholarships and supportive programs on campus that are critical to student success. We look forward to continuing to work together to train and prepare gerontologists who will have positive impacts in the lives of older adults, caregivers, and others in our community."*

-Catheryn Koss, JD, PhD, Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Gerontology



### THEATER DEPARTMENT



Twenty-five Renaissance members assisted the Sac State Theater Department as ushers in theater and dance productions. A new online sign-up system was utilized by the department to efficiently coordinate Renaissance participation. Ushers served during the productions of University Dance Company, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime and House of Desires.

### PHYSICAL THERAPY

Fifty-four Renaissance Society members took part in an assessment by the Department of Physical Therapy. The doctoral students work under the supervision of Licensed Physical Therapists.

Members left with a personalized treatment and home exercise plan and a better understanding of the importance of maintaining physical flexibility and balance, especially throughout the aging process.



## THE RENAISSANCE SOCIETY TRADITION OF GENEROSITY

Renaissance Society members strive to fulfill the Share portion of our Learn. Connect. Share motto by contributing to Sac State Students as an investment in their success.

Beginning in 1993, Renaissance established a Scholarship Fund which has now grown to support seven \$3,000 scholarships annually. Since its inception, this effort has resulted in 138 scholarships totaling \$311,000. Recipients are dedicated to serving older adults in our community through a wide range of future endeavors.

Starting in 2022, Renaissance launched an effort to endow these seven scholarships to ensure the funds could be distributed in perpetuity. Thanks to the generosity of our members, the endowed funds are now sufficient to fund four of the seven scholarships. A fifth endowment is within reach, likely in Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

Led by the Resource Development Committee, Renaissance works with University Advancement and Associated Students, Inc. to plan the fundraising campaigns for scholarships and the ASI Food Pantry. These include Give Sac State Day and ThanksGIVEday during the holidays.

This committee also oversees fundraising for the Give Something Extra drive in which members contribute to the Renaissance general fund for operating expenses not covered by membership dues.

In addition to scholarships and the food pantry, Renaissance has partnered with Sac State arts and athletics departments and fostered community through picnics, tailgates, and member “fun-raisers.”

### Our Goals

- Support seven scholarships while building reserves
- Fully endow all seven scholarships
- Support additional scholarships when the seven are endowed

The generosity of these contributions reflects the enduring spirit of Renaissance.

## STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

In a spirit of goodwill, scholarship recipients are invited to share bios, photos, and sometimes videos to share with members. This promotes a feeling of connectedness with members, but it is only done with student consent. Considering today’s standards for privacy and transparency, a formal consent form was developed with the Sac State scholarship team to ensure student privacy. Six of our student recipients enthusiastically shared their stories, while the seventh has chosen to remain anonymous.



Mike Pidd, Chris Berger, Laurye Brownfield

The Scholarship Committee works with the Resource Development Committee and Sac State partners to award scholarships to deserving students. To make their selections, Scholarship Committee members reviewed 144 applications—a testament to the ongoing need of students in the current environment.

The Renaissance Society is proud to announce this year’s winners and their majors:

- Bianca Esparza - Audiology Doctorate Program
- Mohammad Samir Saqib- Computer Science
- Argelia Jauregui - Speech & Language Pathology
- Anya Timchenko - Public Health
- Basira Halim - Nursing
- Hanh Hua - Health Science
- Another student who preferred to remain anonymous



*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.*

-Bianca Esparza

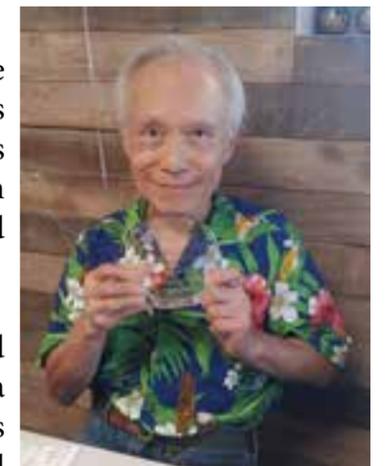
## THE WARREN BONTA DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARDS



Priscilla Ouchida, Deborah Seiler, Debbie Martinez, and Ginger Rutland

Ginger Rutland is an award-winning reporter in print, television, and radio. She has produced a production of her play, “When We Were Colored: A Mother’s Story”, for Renaissance as well as diversity-related seminars.

Priscilla Ouchida is the former Executive Director of the Japanese American Citizens League. Priscilla has presented numerous lectures and seminars at Renaissance on the history of Sacramento’s Japantown and the Japanese experience in California.



Phil Ho, 2025 Warren Bontal Diversity and Inclusion Award Winner

Phil Ho introduced diversity through several creative events he organized for Renaissance, including a concert by the Capitol Chinese Orchestra and a walk through Sacramento’s K Street corridor to discover “hidden” sculptures featuring Native American folklore. Phil was not able to attend the annual meeting but was delighted to receive the award at a later date.

## ASI FOOD PANTRY

Renaissance Society members make significant contributions to student well-being through their donations and volunteer work with the Associated Students, Inc (ASI) Food Pantry. Each week the ASI Food Pantry provides food and basic necessities to nearly 700 Sac State students with financial hardships and low food security. In addition to helping alleviate hunger within the student community, the ASI Food Pantry aims to decrease the negative impact that low food security has on the academic success of students.



2024 ASI Food Pantry Friendsgiving Feast

This year, Renaissance received its 4th consecutive Golden Plate Award for donating the most money during the Thanksgiving food drive.

Renaissance Society financial support for the ASI Food Pantry is ongoing with a special effort during the Thanksgiving Basket Donation Drive. First Friday donation envelopes are circulated in the classrooms, as well as on-line and cash donations from members throughout the academic year. Renaissance members also volunteer at the Food Pantry throughout the year, and at the Friendsgiving Feast at Thanksgiving.



2024 ASI Food Pantry Friendsgiving Feast Volunteers

## RENAISSANCE CONNECTS WITHIN AND WITHOUT

Part of the Renaissance motto, Learn. Connect. Share. involves connections among members to foster a spirit of community and belonging. This can be a challenge in an organization with over 1800 members, a large contingent of whom only participate by Zoom. In addition, on-campus classes are spread across the expansive Sac State campus.

Connections are fostered through on-campus activities including First Friday Pizza parties following the Friday afternoon Forums on the first Friday of the month during academic semesters. Each year, both Fall and Spring, social committee members organize an outdoor fest in a local park, and a holiday dinner marks the end of the Fall semester.

New Member functions are designed to welcome new members into this large organization and are a way to retain those who join. All members are encouraged to wear name badges to promote this objective, and special events serve as opportunities for long-term members to meet and interact with those who have joined only recently.

The Annual Meeting in May serves to bring members together to celebrate scholarship recipients, honor Diversity and Inclusion awardees, and sum up the year. This year, the meeting had a new function: to elect Board Officers and Members at Large by acclamation rather than a mail ballot election.



As classroom technology has enhanced the ability of program leaders to offer their classes simultaneously in person, on Zoom, and with a recorded version, the role of the Renaissance Technology Committee has taken on greater importance. A celebration of the many technology volunteers who support program leaders generated a tasty event with lots of good cheer.



Connections with the community are also fostered by participating in events such as the MLK Jr. walk each January and the MLK dinner hosted by Sac State.



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Renaissance participated in several community tabling events including Mather Grandparents Day, Lavendar Courtyard Mutual Housing, Elk Grove Senior Center Resource Day, Fair Oaks Horticulture Center Master Gardener Day and others.

Renaissance Society is a member of the Sacramento Area Aging and Disabilities Resource Connection which meets quarterly to discuss services available to this population. Renaissance also partners with ACC Senior Services.

Members made presentations at senior residential centers and offered community classes and lectures at Sacramento County Library locations.

The Membership Committee began developing partnerships with area performing arts venues. This provides members with opportunities to receive ticket discounts and invitations to special events from several community partners including Capital Stage, B Street Theatre, Sacramento Ballet, and Sacramento Philharmonic and Opera with more being developed. Broadway at the Music Circus has long offered dress rehearsal tickets to Renaissance members.



RS Volunteers at 2025 ACC Ohana Walk



## FINANCES

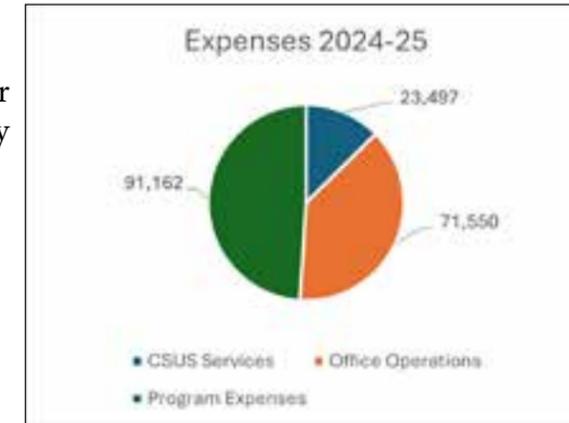
### Revenues

Total revenues were \$188,560. This is less than the budget of \$202,500 by \$13,940, or 7%. Membership revenues were \$167,090. "Give Something Extra" revenues were \$21,470.

### Expenses

Total expenses were \$186,209 for the fiscal year, which is lower than budget by \$31,528, or 14%. The lower expenses are primarily due to:

- Salaries and taxes were \$73,398, which is less than plan by \$14,499
- Contingency was not used, which saved \$5,000
- Consultants were \$7,000, which came in lower by \$4,000
- Project Expenses were \$27,464, which is down by \$2,536
- Rent was \$14,374, which is lower by \$1,491



### Financial Condition

For fiscal year 2024-25, the Renaissance Society had a small profit of \$2,351. This is better than the budget, which planned a deficit of \$15,237. This profit increased our cash position at year end.

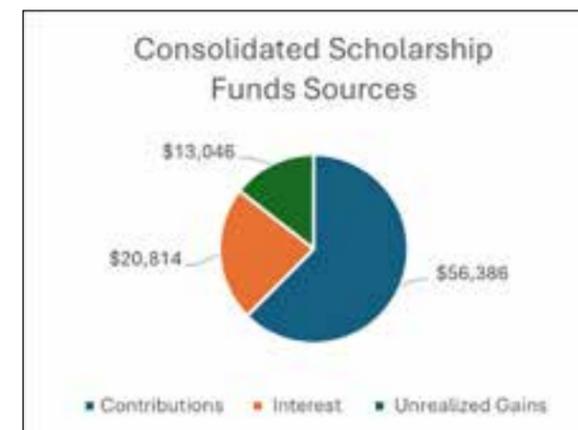
Renaissance Society has maintained a conservative cash balance to manage any financial deficit. We enter the new fiscal year with a cash balance of \$180,960. This is a strong financial position and lets the Renaissance Society continue its mission to learn, connect, and share.



### Scholarship Funds Results

The scholarship funds began the fiscal year with total assets of \$359,892. It ended the fiscal year with \$427,485 in assets. This is an increase of \$67,593, or 19%.

See the charts below for the sources and uses of the funds.





RENAISSANCE  
SOCIETY  
SACRAMENTO STATE

Learn. Connect. Share.

“The Renaissance Society, in partnership with California State University, Sacramento, provides innovative learning and community engagement for the older adult community.” (Mission Statement)

The Renaissance Society  
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Cover Art Courtesy of Renaissance Members Pat Turner, Ralph Paladino, Curtis Nelson (oak and poppy), Diane Salter, Esther Marcroft, Patrick Robinson, Irene Slavens, Scott Schaffner, & Niel Nielsen