

# Catalyst

FALL 2016



## How should we support bilingual students?

The passage of Proposition 58 in California reopens the conversation about how to nurture English learners' emerging bilingualism—and what's lost when we don't



## FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

PAUL D. HASTINGS

We recognize that the power of education to transform lives and be a catalyst for justice has never been more important in the School's history

The results of the 2016 presidential election surprised and distressed many members of our community. In light of the current political environment, the School's mission to confront and eliminate inequities through education and research is a powerful guiding light for our faculty, staff and alumni.

The mission and values of the School resonate with those of the University of California. I was proud to read the November 29th letter written to President-elect Donald Trump by the Presidents and Chancellors of the University of California, the California State University, and the California Community Colleges, urging him to continue the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which allows individuals who were brought to this country as minors to pursue their college educations. On November 30th, the UC also declared its continued commitment to admit, educate, support and graduate all students, regardless of status.

The School of Education stands in solidarity with these statements. We are committed to serving and supporting all of our students, and to protecting and promoting the right to a quality education for everyone, both here in California and across the country.

We recognize that the power of education to transform lives and be a catalyst for justice has never been more important in the School's history. I'm honored to be working with you as Interim Dean during this crucial year as we prepare for a new Dean and the next chapter of the School's vital work and continued growth.

# Catalyst

FALL 2016

## EDITOR

Eva Guralnick  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
eguralnick@ucdavis.edu  
(530) 752-4809

## COPYWRITING

Eva Guralnick  
Bob Rudy

## DESIGN

Mark Briggs Design

## PHOTOGRAPHY

TJ Ushing  
Eva Guralnick

## KEEP IN TOUCH

Alumni and friends, please let us know about your accomplishments and other news by sending us updates at [ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ed-alumni@ucdavis.edu).

## LEARN MORE

For links to additional material and event information, or to download a copy, visit [education.ucdavis.edu/fall16catalyst](http://education.ucdavis.edu/fall16catalyst).

## UC DAVIS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

### MISSION

The UC Davis School of Education marshals the knowledge and resources of the University of California, the world's pre-eminent public research university, to confront and eliminate inequities among people and communities through the generation of impactful knowledge and the promise of education.

### ADDRESS

One Shields Avenue  
Davis, CA 95616

### FIND US ONLINE

[education.ucdavis.edu](http://education.ucdavis.edu)  
[facebook.com/UCDavis.Education](https://www.facebook.com/UCDavis.Education)  
[twitter.com/UCDEducation](https://twitter.com/UCDEducation)  
[youtube.com/UCDSchoolofEducation](https://www.youtube.com/UCDSchoolofEducation)



## COVER STORY

### 10 The Value of Language

The passage of Proposition 58 is an opportunity to reframe the way we teach English to non-native speakers

## IN EACH ISSUE

- 2 News
- 6 Research
- 18 Alumni
- 21 Last Word

## FEATURES

### 8 A Study of Character

A love of literature and a career in psychology lead to a year as Interim Dean

### 13 Starting at the Top

Wheelhouse Center is building stronger community college leaders to support student success

### 14 Innovations in Teaching

A teacher-driven, classroom-tested approach bringing wonder back into math and science learning

### 16 Personal Impact

Donors and scholarship students share personal journeys and mutual inspiration

## COMMENTS

### PARENTS APPRECIATE RAD CENTER SERVICES

We were very pleased to see the School of Education's Reading and Academic Development (RAD) Center on the cover of the Spring issue of *Catalyst*.

We are very familiar with the RAD Center, which has been a wonderful resource for our son, who has struggled with learning to read.

We had tried several tutors and school reading specialists in the past, but our son did not make real progress until we came to the RAD Center. The initial assessment he received clearly described his learning issues in a comprehensive and understandable way that we had not seen before, despite multiple rounds of testing at our local school and with private tutors. This gave us confidence that our son was understood and would be supported so that he could make real progress.

We also have really appreciated the enthusiasm and dedication of the RAD Center tutors. They are well trained in the program's proven, research-driven methodology, and our son always likes to go to his tutoring sessions.

Thank you for providing this important service for the community.

KATE AND JEFF TWEDDALE



A mentor works with a student at the RAD Center.



Barbara Celli

## CELLI APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Barbara Celli** has been named the School of Education's Executive Director of Development and External Relations after serving as the part-time Interim Director since June. Celli brings 12 years of senior-level experience at UC Davis, where she has raised major and transformational gifts in support of student scholarships, research and outreach programs.

Celli has held leadership development positions in the World Food Center and Office of Research, where she fundraised for key societal issues including access to safe and healthy food, water and the environment.

"The School of Education's bold mission to provide the promise of education to all learners is inspiring," said Celli, "and this mission has certainly never been more timely. I'm excited to bring increased visibility to the School's transformative work and expand our community of support to help make this vision a reality."

## YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

The School of Education's Young Scholars Program is a high-impact summer residential program that brings 40 high school students to the UC Davis campus for a six-week immersive university research experience. Students live in campus dorms and work one-on-one with research faculty in the biological, environmental or agricultural sciences. Over the course of the program, they conduct a scientific research project, prepare a journal-quality paper, and deliver a symposium presentation on their work.

To be eligible for Summer 2017, students must be currently enrolled as sophomores or juniors in high school. The application period is open now and closes March 16, 2017. Visit [education.ucdavis.edu/ysp](http://education.ucdavis.edu/ysp) to apply.

## AUTHOR IN RESIDENCE NAOMI SHIHAB NYE



This year's Author in Residence is award-winning poet and author **Naomi Shihab Nye**. Her picture book *Sitti's Secrets* and young adult novel *Habibi* both won Jane Addams Children's Book Awards, and she has



YSP participant Chang Hwan (Bryan) Kwak from Seoul, South Korea, working in Dr. Kirill Kovnir's lab in the Department of Chemistry this summer.

also published many books of poetry for both children and adults. Nye, the daughter of a Palestinian refugee father and American mother of German and Swiss descent, draws on her experiences growing up in both San Antonio, Texas, and Jerusalem. As Author in Residence, she will work with School of Education teaching credential candidates, as well as directly with Sacramento-area students. The program is funded through a generous anonymous endowment.

## SOLARI TO SERVE ON CREDENTIAL WORK GROUP

**Professor Emily Solari** has been appointed by University of California President Janet Napolitano to serve as a UC representative on the 2016 Education Specialist Preliminary Credential Work Group of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. This is a great honor for Solari and recognition of her work at the School, and an important service role to the State of California.

## MARTINDALE RECEIVES MAJOR AG ED AWARD

**Agricultural Credential Lecturer and Supervisor Lynn Martindale** received the Don Wilson Memorial Award for Outstanding Agricultural Education Teacher from the California Agricultural Teachers'



Lynn Martindale

Association (CATA). Each year CATA gives this award to one outstanding California agricultural education teacher who has taught for at least 20 years. The award recognizes Martindale's outstanding participation and leadership in civic, community, agriculture, agribusiness and professional activities.



## PATTERSON IN WASHINGTON, D.C. WITH CAMPOS

Professor Alexis Patterson and other members of the Center for the Advancement of Multicultural Perspectives (CAMPOS) attended the Congressional Hispanic Caucus's annual conference in Washington, D.C. this September.

"Our trip had a dual purpose," said Patterson. "First, to attend the conference and learn about what's happening in health, education, technology, the sciences and more. And second, to meet with elected representatives who've advocated for the CAMPOS program. We gave them updates about the impact CAMPOS has on us as participating professors, and also on our students, and talked about our goals and aspirations."

The experience gave Patterson a new perspective on legislative advocacy. "It was an opportunity to gain a useful set of skills," she said. "We learned how to partner with policymakers and their staffs, and saw that we can come out and have an impact on policy and funding."



Maisha T. Winn

## WINN SPEAKS AT STANFORD

Professor Maisha T. Winn was the keynote speaker at the Race, Inequality, and Language in Education Preliminary Conference at Stanford University in October, where she spoke on "Agitating. Educating. Organizing. Toward a Theory of Black Literate Lives." The research conference focused on how race, inequality and language impact schools.

Winn also spoke in October on the panel of "Born Out of Struggle and Restorative Education: A Celebration and Conversation." The event was hosted by The People's Education Movement, Bay Area and San Francisco's Teachers for Social Justice.



CAMPOS delegates, including Alexis Patterson (second from right), meet with Congressman Rubén Hinojosa in Washington, D.C.

## MULTIPLYING EFFORTS FOR STEM-FOCUSED STUDENTS

It's a testament to the generosity and commitment of friends and alumni of the School of Education that donations to a recently established teaching credential award, the Sandi Redenbach and Ken Gelatt STEM Scholarship, exceeded the \$10,000 match, growing the \$25,000 gift to over \$70,000 in under three months.



Sandi Redenbach and Ken Gelatt with Dean Harold Levine, at left

Longtime School donors **Sandi Redenbach** ('72, Cred. '73) and **Ken Gelatt** ('67, Cred. '68) partnered with **Nancy** (BS '74, Cred. '75) and **Tom** (BS '74, MS '76) **Patten** to honor **Founding Dean Harold Levine** on his retirement through the Sandi Redenbach and Ken Gelatt STEM Scholarship. The fund supports teaching credential students who plan a career focus on STEM subjects in public schools. "Like Dean Levine, we believe that all students should have access to a high-quality education, regardless of income, first language, address, learning challenges or race," said Sandi and Ken.

The Pattens not only fully matched the fund, but offered to match additional donations as well. Dozens of donors responded with gifts that ranged from \$5 to \$500. Thanks to this collective generosity, the award will be available to support teaching credential students in fall 2017.

The Pattens established their own scholarship, the Next Generation STEM Teaching Award, in 2014. "Tom and I wanted to do something where we could have an impact," said Nancy. "Our goal was to leverage our resources



Nancy and Tom Patten

to bring other new funds into the School of Education," said Tom. **Hanna Moore**, this year's scholarship recipient, was so inspired by her experiences as a student teacher that her goal is to teach in an underserved middle or high school to address inequities in the public school system.

The Pattens are continuing to match additional gifts to the Next Generation STEM Teaching Award. "We couldn't think of any better way to make an impact than through education," said Nancy.

**Every gift counts. Join the Pattens and make a gift to the Next Generation STEM Teaching Award, and help make education accessible for all.** Your gift will be matched dollar for dollar, doubling your support for a future teacher. Visit [education.ucdavis.edu/patten](http://education.ucdavis.edu/patten) or contact Angela Reynolds at [acreynolds@ucdavis.edu](mailto:acreynolds@ucdavis.edu) or (530) 752-8053.



## MAJOR GRANTS FOR REED INCREASE IMPACT FOR STUDENTS

Resourcing Excellence in Education (REEd) has received two U.S. Department of Education awards: a \$2.5 million National Professional Development grant and a \$3.2 million Improving Teacher Quality grant.

Through the National Professional Development grant, REEd will build instructional capacity systemwide to meet the needs of young English learners (ELs). Over the five-year grant period, REEd will test the efficacy of a model of mentor and teacher support and develop online materials and tools to scale the model across California.

“We aim to answer several questions,” said **REEd Executive Director Susan O’Hara**. “What do effective teachers know? What goes on in the classrooms of effective teachers? How do we recognize this when we see it? How do we use this knowledge to support teachers professionally? By the end of the grant, we will see increased academic outcomes for all students, especially for our English learners.”

The Improving Teacher Quality grant is an augmentation award that will allow REEd to continue its efforts to ensure teacher support is an integral component of every professional growth system in California.



RAD Center tutors, staff, graduate students and postdoctoral researchers

## RAD CENTER PROVIDING READING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

Are reading problems a barrier to your child enjoying books and doing well in school? The Reading and Academic Development (RAD) Center is now serving children from 5-18 years old who have reading difficulties. The Center provides assessments to evaluate the causes of children’s reading issues and individually tailored programs to improve their reading skills. Services are based on research done by **Professor Emily Solari**, the RAD Center’s Director. The reading program can be adapted for children with autism or learning disabilities, and fees are on a sliding scale. Learn more at [education.ucdavis.edu/rad](http://education.ucdavis.edu/rad).

## REBECCA AMBROSE ON STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT DESIGN TEAM



Rebecca Ambrose

Teacher preparation programs are revising their curricula to meet new standards and teaching performance expectations issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and the Commission’s widely used California Teaching

Performance Assessment (CalTPA) also must be updated.

**Professor Rebecca Ambrose, Director of Teacher Education**, is serving on the CalTPA design team to help improve the assessment of credential candidates statewide.

“Our charge is to come up with an equitable instrument,” said Ambrose, “so that candidates who are in different kinds of placements or credential programs, and candidates of various ethnicities and language backgrounds, will all have an equal opportunity to be successful on this assessment. We also have a goal to

create a performance assessment that is more focused on the act of teaching than on writing about teaching.”

There are multiple challenges to assessing a credential candidate’s ability to teach. “One challenge is the inherent complexity of the demands of teaching,” said Ambrose. “Another is how to obtain a reliable and representative sample of their instruction. Some candidates can do very well for a single demonstration of their teaching, but can’t sustain that level day to day.”

Ambrose, the only University of California representative, was motivated to participate by her concerns about previous assessments. “These assessments are very high stakes,” she said, “and our candidates reported that the amount of time they spent on the test affected their ability to learn from their day-to-day experiences of student teaching. I wanted to see if I could influence the process so it could be more easily embedded into teaching programs. Teaching demands a problem-solving process in the moment of instruction. Those moments are the essence of teaching, and I’d like us to have an assessment that captures that.”

“

I'm going to look at what effect brief doses of yoga-based practices may have on children's ability to self-regulate.”

ROXANNE RASHEDI, PHD STUDENT

## Mind, Body and Student

Third-year PhD student Roxanne Rashedi wants to know if yoga-based practices can be used in classrooms to enhance young children's self-regulatory skills. “We know that self-regulation develops rapidly in young children,” she said. “I'm going to look at what effect brief doses of yoga-based practices may have on children's ability to self-regulate. How can we design a sustainable and feasible curriculum for teachers to use in school settings?”

Rashedi, who is also a yoga instructor for adults and children, sought teacher input and developed a series of yoga-based lessons for transitional kindergartners. She's recording those movements in brief videos that teachers and students will follow three times per week in their classrooms.

The next challenge will be to rigorously assess the impact of yoga on the children's behavior. “I'm examining their performances on direct assessments of executive functioning,” said Rashedi, “and also looking at parent and teacher rating scales of behavior.” Rashedi will collect video data on the behaviors of children before, during and after they participate in yoga and conduct interviews with a subset of parents and teachers to better understand their experiences.

Rashedi hopes to one day bring effective yoga practices to schools and communities where it might not otherwise be accessible. “My goal as both a researcher and a yogi,” she said, “is to help teachers provide children with the tools to cope with challenges so they not only survive but thrive in the classroom, on the playground and at home.” ■





Employees of Haiti’s Ministry of Agriculture with Lynn Martindale (second from left), Project Coordinator/UC Davis professor emeritus Steve Temple (fourth from right), Project Coordinator Suchet Loois (third from right), and Cary Trexler (far right).

## TREXLER AND TEAM ASSIST WITH NEW AG SCHOOL OPENING IN HAITI

The majority of food eaten in Haiti—one of the poorest nations in the world—comes from off the island, making its citizens highly dependent on other nations for survival.

“If they can start to feed themselves more, that will be transformative,” said **Cary Trexler, Professor of Agricultural Education** in the School of Education.

Trexler and his team, which includes **Ag Ed Program Supervisor Lynn Martindale** and retired UC Davis faculty members, are starting the fourth year of a professional development project in Haiti. In partnership with local farmers and the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, they recently helped re-open École Moyenne d’Agriculture de Dondon, an agricultural training school that had been closed for 35 years. The school opened in January and included women students for the first time in the school’s history.

Re-opening the school also meant helping to build a new approach to agricultural education. Vocational education programs are rare in Haiti, said Trexler, because students who attend middle school are usually bound for college, not careers in farming. “Right now the people who are trained in agriculture at a university have passed all kinds of entrance

tests but rarely have any hands-on skills to work with farmers,” he said. “The goal of this vocational school is to find people who do have hands-on skills and have them work together with the people who have the university degrees, helping them become technicians who can work directly with the farmers and transfer their knowledge.”

Because of the focus on technical skills, 70 percent of the curriculum will be based on outdoor, hands-on work and 30 percent based on academic learning. That’s a very novel approach in Haiti. “Our job has been to help develop a curriculum, train teachers, provide insight as to what kind of

materials and equipment are needed, and to help people learn in completely different ways,” said Trexler. The team has surveyed the farmer and business communities in Haiti to determine what they believe are the basic competencies that the curriculum should provide.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides a \$775,000 per year grant to support the team’s efforts. Harold V. Tarver, a specialist with the Department, works closely with Trexler’s team. “What stood out for me was that, under Cary’s leadership, they really conceptualized a program that responded not just at an academic level but at a visionary level whereby the students would really be impacted by working the land themselves,” he said.

## STUDY SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON COLLEGE READINESS

School of Education researchers are discovering a harsh reality: The classes that high school students are required to take in order to qualify for college admission don’t actually guarantee that they’re ready to succeed in college.

The School of Education has partnered with the California Department of Education to examine the course requirements—usually referred to as the A-G requirements—that are used to help indicate

“

California must do better than other states have at addressing the degree attainment gap as we roll out community college baccalaureate programs.”

PROFESSOR MARCELA CUELLAR on her report evaluating the effectiveness of other states’ community college four-year degree programs in preparing students for workforce readiness and providing greater equity of opportunity to complete a baccalaureate degree for underrepresented students.







“

A tool that lets a class interactively create and explore dynamic data sets together could really engage students who haven't succeeded in traditional math classes.”



PROFESSOR TOBIN WHITE on his research to develop a classroom network system that supports collaborative data modeling and statistics and can be easily accessed and implemented in classrooms worldwide.

eligibility for both the University of California and California State University systems.

“We tell these students that if they meet the A-G requirements, then they're ready for college, when in fact they're not,” said **Sherrie Reed, Project & Research Director** for the School of Education's Partnership for Research on College & Career Readiness. “Unfortunately these requirements are not a predictor of their college success. I'm hoping the findings really help impact the signals that we send to kids and schools.”

Project staff, led by **Professor Michal Kurlaender**, studied more than 500,000 high school graduates from 2011-12 in 2,881 California public schools. They merged data from the K-12 system with data from the California State University system. Their report concluded that the potential misalignment between college readiness indicators and higher education signals an important opportunity to reassess California's longstanding A-G pathway.

The study found that despite completing A-G requirements, 40 percent of students were unable to demonstrate college readiness in English and 44 percent were unable to demonstrate college readiness in math. In addition, the California State University system deemed 34 percent of students who met A-G requirements as needing remediation in English and at least 31 percent in math.

One huge hurdle for high school principals and district superintendents, Kurlaender said, is that secondary schools just don't have the information

they need. “K-12 has been pressured to try to improve college readiness but educators have no knowledge of how their students fare when they leave the K-12 system,” she said.

Reed said high school administrators need to know how their graduates perform in college, how many need remediation, what their GPAs are, and if they get degrees.

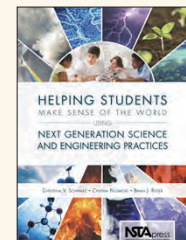
That's why the School of Education partnership with the Department of Education is both important and unique. “The whole partnership on its own is pretty unprecedented because in this state the K-12 and higher ed systems don't share data,” she said. “The ultimate goal is being able to see that students are getting a more rigorous school system that prepares them for the kinds of futures they face once they've graduated.”

## ABEDI RECEIVES SPENCER GRANT

**Professor Jamal Abedi** has received a Lyle Spencer Research Award from the Spencer Foundation for the four-year \$1 million project “Distinguishing Low Proficiency English Language Learners from Students with Disabilities: Developing a Valid Classification System for all English Language Learners.” The goal of the research is to ensure that English learners with and without disabilities are fairly assessed so that they can receive the educational services they need.

## PASSMORE PUBLISHES NEXTGEN GUIDE

**Professor Cynthia Passmore** has co-edited *Helping Students Make Sense of the World Using Next Generation Science and Engineering Practices*, available December 2016. This guide for K-12 science teachers, curriculum developers, teacher educators and administrators provides a wealth of real-world examples on practice-centered teaching and learning at all grade levels.



## JOINT APPOINTMENT FOR SPARAPANI AT MIND

**Professor Nicole Sparapani** has received a joint appointment to the MIND Institute, where she will conduct research and collaborate with faculty. Her study “Profiles of Foundational Learning Skills among First Graders” was published this summer in *Learning and Individual Differences*.

## WELSH IN REVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

**Professor Megan Welsh** served on a team of eight researchers who contributed the review “A Century of Grading Research: Meaning and Value in the Most Common Educational Measure” to AERA's *Review of Educational Research* this fall. This review synthesizes findings from five types of grading studies in order to provide a more comprehensive answer to the research question “What do grades mean?” *Review of Educational Research* is ranked No. 1 in education and educational research.

# A Study of Character

## HOW A LOVE OF LITERATURE LED TO A CAREER IN PSYCHOLOGY AND A YEAR AS INTERIM DEAN IN EDUCATION

When he took his first psychology class as an undergraduate student in Montreal, Paul D. Hastings set aside the idea of majoring in English. “What I love about literature is the way good authors create deeply complex characters,” he said. “You can understand human nature through literature. But in that class I realized I could study psychology as a scientific approach to what I loved about literature.”

Hastings declared as a psychology major, and the next year in a developmental psychology class he had another revelation. “I realized that what happens in a person’s childhood with their family, peers and teachers leads them to become the person they are,” he said. “And that set me on my path.”

Hastings ultimately earned his PhD in Applied Developmental Psychology at the University of Toronto and launched a research career that has spanned Canada and the United States, including a four-year stint as a visiting foreign fellow at the National Institute of Mental Health. He came to UC Davis in 2009 as an associate professor in the Department of Psychology and the Center for Mind & Brain, and was appointed Chair of the department in 2012.

As a developmental psychologist, Hastings seeks to answer questions about the factors that shape individuals. “I study children’s and adolescents’ emotions,” he said, “what they feel, how strongly and how they manage their feelings. This includes looking at their physiological functioning. I look at their social tendencies—who they like, how they get along with people—and their social relationships, especially their family and peer relationships. And I look at how the contexts in which they live can open doors or limit opportunities, to help us think about how we can change policies and practices to foster children’s positive development and encourage them to make good decisions about the course their lives will take.”

### Research that Helps Students Embrace School

Children spend a great deal of time in schools, and

their relationships with teachers and peers are critically important life experiences that they carry forward into adulthood. Because of this, Hastings has studied children in educational settings from preschool to elementary school. He looks at which characteristics of temperament, and experiences with parents, help them become better social partners with their peers and contribute to them doing well academically.

“Children who come into the school system without the social, emotional or cognitive skills they need, or who go to a school where the classroom environment communicates that they are different and don’t belong, are disadvantaged in being able to embrace school as part of their identity,” said Hastings. “A lot of my work points to ways in which teachers can more effectively support each child based on the child’s temperament or social and emotional tendencies. I want to help teachers better recognize what each child might need to feel safe and supported and to become engaged. There’s increased recognition now that scaffolding and supporting children’s social-emotional competence is a key component of effective preschool and K-6 education.”

### Social Justice through Research

While Hastings’ research with young children is centered on their relationships with others, examining educational and economic inequities also plays a large role in his work.

“If you’re studying the real worlds of children and their developmental trajectories, you can’t ignore that not every child comes into the world with equal





Interim Dean Paul D. Hastings at the UC Davis Center for Child and Family Studies.

“

I want to help teachers better recognize what each child might need to feel safe and supported and to become engaged.”

PAUL D. HASTINGS

opportunities,” he said. “The systemic experiences of marginalization and discrimination that minority communities have experienced, especially if they are economically disadvantaged, are barriers to children growing up healthy, secure, productive and engaged.”

Hastings addresses these issues in his research by working directly with marginalized communities to identify where they find sources of strength and opportunity and how they cope with adversity. “By documenting these effects,” he said, “my goal is to draw greater attention to where social policy needs to create greater equity and opportunity for all communities.”

### **Serving at the School of Education**

Hastings’ research in classroom settings and his work in educational equity made him a natural choice to serve as Interim Dean while the School of Education is seeking a successor to Founding Dean Harold Levine.

“The School has had a remarkable period of growth,” he said. “In only 15 years, it has rapidly gained national prominence. Now it really feels like it’s on the cusp of an exciting new direction in its own development. There are so many exciting initiatives that the faculty and staff are putting in place right now that I think the next five years are going to be transformative for the School.”

Hastings noted that an unexpected highlight of stepping into the role of Interim Dean has been meeting the School’s community of supporters. “I’ve been absolutely amazed by the generosity and commitment of these people,” he said. “They truly care about the School of Education. The Board of Advisors who give invaluable input into the School’s identity and activities, and the donors who give because they recognize the importance of the School’s teaching, research and service missions—they’ve been tremendous. And the alumni, who continue to be so engaged, are among our greatest assets. Deans, faculty and staff may come and go, but our alumni will be our alumni forever.” ■

# The Value of Language

## THE PASSAGE OF PROPOSITION 58 IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFRAME THE WAY WE TEACH BILINGUAL LEARNERS

When Proposition 227 was approved by California voters in 1998, it fast-tracked English-learner students into English-only classrooms on the theory that it was the best way to teach non-native speakers. The passage of Proposition 58 this year reopens the doors to evidence-based practices. We asked School of Education faculty and alumni what their research and personal experiences tell us about bilingual education—and where bilingual education should go from here.

Our national conversation about English learners in the classroom is centered on the assumption that being a monolingual English speaker is the norm. However, approximately 60 percent of the world's population speaks at least two languages. In California, 42 percent of public school students speak more than one language, and 22 percent are identified as English learners.

“Mainstream classrooms never really were homogenous, but they're far more heterogenous than ever before,” said Professor Kerry Enright. “We need to stop talking about ‘adapting for special populations’ like English learners and realize that these populations *are* the mainstream now.”

Even so, it's rare to hear any discussion of ways to nurture students' first language while they gain English skills. That's because, as a country, we don't value bilingualism for all children, according to Professor Danny Martinez. “Our goal has been to get rid of whatever language a student might already have in order to become proficient in English,” he said. “The attitude has been ‘Who cares about other languages?’ If we really thought about the ways people learn language, we would support the primary language in schools while developing the second language.”

The lack of such supportive practices stands in puzzling contrast to common requirements that students must take language classes such as French and Spanish in middle and high school, and in even starker contrast to highly popular dual-language programs designed to help English speakers become proficient in a second language starting in kindergarten. If we value the acquisition of a second language, why don't we fully support native speakers of other languages, since they are the students who are most likely to achieve full bilingualism?

The experience of Mayra Regalado (Cred. '16) is a case in point. Regalado teaches third grade in the dual-immersion English-Spanish program at Cesar Chavez Elementary School in Davis. Her first language was Spanish, which was not supported in her schools. “My relatives tell me that, when I was younger, I began

struggling to speak to them in Spanish,” she said. “It wasn't until I took Spanish classes in high school that I began to speak fluently again.”

“It's very interesting,” said Martinez. “We have to ask the question: Who is allowed to become bilingual? Even when schools offer dual-language programs, they frequently serve middle-class families whose primary language is English. Children who grow up speaking a language other than English at home have the potential to attain higher and more nuanced language skills, and yet the United States has actively discouraged their bilingualism because it was seen as interfering with learning English.”

Some of these conflicting approaches may be traced to the conventional wisdom that a second language holds children back from learning English. That wisdom has not held up under scrutiny, however.

“

If we really thought about the ways people learn language, we would support the primary language in schools while developing the second language.

PROFESSOR DANNY MARTINEZ

Ryan Grimm, PhD, a postdoctoral scholar in Professor Emily Solari's Reading and Academic Development Center, is working on a longitudinal dataset of nearly 300 Spanish-speaking second- and third-graders who attend Southern California public schools. The team is looking for the impact of bilingualism on reading skills.

"We found the highest-achieving student readers were those who were most proficient in Spanish, even though they were receiving English-only instruction," Grimm said. "Students who were more proficient in English than Spanish scored in the middle, and those who did not have a relatively greater proficiency in either language were the lowest-performing. The biggest takeaway was that the better their Spanish was, the better their achievement—their Spanish seemed to provide a great benefit in terms of overall reading achievement."

Grimm noted that he's aware of teachers who will tell their students' parents not to speak Spanish at home as it will confuse their children. "But this and other research upends the idea that you need to be monolingual to be successful," he said.

## The Cost of Neglecting First Languages

There are far-reaching impacts on students if their native languages aren't supported in classrooms, with language erosion or loss being the most obvious. If these students don't receive outside instruction, they may lose some or all of their first language, even if it's spoken in their home, according to Professor Joanna Wong (PhD '14) of the Department of Education and Leadership at Cal State Monterey Bay. Like Regalado, she also has personal experience with language loss. "I couldn't use my first language in school, and as much as my own family valued our language and wanted me to be fully bilingual, my ability to speak in my first language is greatly diminished," she said.

Wong has observed that this loss of language means some students eventually

are unable to communicate with relatives, especially grandparents. It also typically results in families losing their first languages within one or two generations. The impacts of these enormous linguistic, cultural and familial sacrifices have historically been ignored.

Proposition 227 and other English-only policies dismiss the cultural and linguistic resources that English learners bring to the classroom, according to Wong. "If students' culture and language aren't valued, and instead are seen as lacking, that really affects how their teachers frame them and how engaged they are," Wong said. "Research has found that students who don't see their identity reflected in the classroom don't find the material as relevant and don't make connections to it as easily."

Professor Yuuko Uchikoshi notes that English learners whose first language is not supported in the classroom are at risk for being inaccurately assessed, with potentially serious consequences. "Depending on the subject area it can be difficult to assess an English learner's knowledge," she said. "If you're testing them in English and their results are poor, it's hard to know if they have a speech or language delay, whereas if they were tested in their native language you might realize there is no delay. Consequently they get misdiagnosed or underdiagnosed, which can have long-term impacts."

This issue was so personally significant for Professor Jamal Abedi that he pursued an educational career in order to develop more accurate psychometric methods for assessing English learners. "I went into this field because of the pain I suffered when I came to this country as a bilingual student," he said.

One of Abedi's recent research projects was an exploratory study of which testing accommodations best help English learners demonstrate their true knowledge of mathematics. "The way that many assessments are currently constructed may actually hinder comprehension of the



**Prof. Jamal Abedi**  
School of Education



**Prof. Kerry Enright**  
School of Education



**Michele Fortes, PhD**  
School of Education



**Prof. Danny Martinez**  
School of Education



**Prof. Yuuko Uchikoshi**  
School of Education



**Ryan Grimm, PhD**  
Postdoctoral Scholar



**Mayra Regalado**  
Cred. '16, Teacher  
Cesar Chavez Elem.



**Prof. Joanna Wong**  
PhD '14, Cal State  
Monterey Bay

questions, even though students know how to do the math," he said. "We're looking at which accommodations work best based on students' linguistic and educational backgrounds."

## How Can Schools Best Serve Bilingual Students?

Proposition 227 passed in part because it posited that English learners would

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

do best if they were moved as quickly as possible into English-only classrooms. That approach does not take into account the nuances of language acquisition.

“Research shows it takes four to seven years to acquire an academic level of a second language,” said Lecturer and Supervisor Michele Fortes, PhD. “Prop 227 backers instead promoted the idea of something called ‘Structured English Immersion,’ which was not a teaching method. It required that students be in classrooms taught entirely in English—they were not bilingual classrooms and no language other than English was to be used. After one year, they were to move out of these classes into mainstream classrooms.”

Enright agrees that it takes time to master the uses of English required for success in most mainstream classrooms, but notes that many scholars now believe the real deficiency is in our current conceptions of academic language, not in the language proficiencies of bilingual learners.

“Bilingual children do sophisticated things with language, even with limited proficiency in English, for all kinds of learning outside of classrooms,” she said. “But the ways in which we design curricula and instruction make their skills invisible and irrelevant at school. My early research described the ‘hidden

“

Bilingual students have consistently been underserved generation after generation. We’ve been neglecting them for so long, and they have so much untapped potential.”

PROFESSOR KERRY ENRIGHT

literacies’ of adolescent bilinguals that were invisible to their teachers despite their deep commitment to them. My more recent study of classroom language across the curriculum exposed such narrow uses of academic language in some classrooms that it limited the depth of learning for students from all language backgrounds, including English.”

Enright notes that the best classrooms for all students, including bilingual learners, are linguistically rich, academically rigorous, and well supported. “Making space for bilingualism in the classroom is an obvious part of that formula,” she said.

### A New Chapter for Bilingual Education in California

Wong is encouraged by the passage in November of Proposition 58, which essentially ended the key elements of Proposition 227.

“Prop 58 is much more aligned with Common Core standards and the new California English Language Development standards,” Wong said. The new California standards also recognize metalinguistic awareness, which means understanding how language is used with different people in different contexts. Wong believes this could open the door for greater valuing of bilingual students for whom that type of dynamic usage is second nature.

“I’d also like to see a shift in how we identify students,” said Wong, “one in which we move away from calling them English learners, where their identity is based on whether or not they have a strong grasp of English, and moving toward bilingualism and a recognition of the ways their skills add value to the community.”

Enright also hopes for a reframing of the discussion. “We shouldn’t be focused on ‘fixing’ students who are developing their English skills,” she said. “Instead it should be about expanding and incorporating their skills.”

Enright believes that the much-discussed achievement gap for English learners places the problem of educational inequities on the students, when it should instead rest with schools, which need better teaching practices and curricula. “Bilingual students have consistently been underserved generation after generation,” she said. “We should start investing in these kids, who have the greatest likelihood of developing sophisticated bilingual and biliteracy skills. We’ve been neglecting them for so long, and they have so much untapped potential.” ■



Spanish-language materials in Mayra Regalado’s third-grade classroom at Cesar Chavez Elementary School.



The Sacramento City College campus at UC Davis.

## FEATURE

# Starting at the Top

## WHEELHOUSE CENTER IS IMPROVING STUDENT SUCCESS RATES BY BUILDING STRONGER LEADERS AND STRONGER COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The turnover rate for California Community College presidents is twice that of their counterparts in the California State University system at a time when more students than ever before count on community colleges.

Over 2.5 million students attend California Community Colleges each year at 113 campuses statewide. Leadership turnover erodes these colleges' momentum as they try to make systemic moves toward student success and increased equity.

Wheelhouse: The Center for Community College Leadership and Research, based in the School of Education, was founded this year to use academic research to strengthen the community college system. With the support of a \$500,000 grant from the California Community Colleges

Chancellor's Office, Wheelhouse will launch its first Leadership Institute in February. Each Institute will convene 25 community college leaders quarterly for a year of research-based leadership trainings.

The Institutes' curriculum makes extensive use of the case study method, which has traditionally been used in medical and business schools and is increasingly being used in leading educational leadership development.

"Case studies are useful for high-level professional development because they show the complexities of how a leader can handle a particular situation," said Professor Michal Kurlaender, Lead Researcher for Wheelhouse. "We want the Institutes to be a place for community college leaders to have higher-level discussions about critical issues. It's an opportunity to learn how they can support a college to maximize the kind of outcomes we care about, such as increasing student persistence and success."

As participants explore case studies collectively, they will build not only their leadership skills but their relationships with peers from across the state. "We want them to develop relationships that will sustain them after their Institute year is over," said Wheelhouse Managing Director Susanna Cooper. "They need to be able to pick up the phone and hear how a colleague has addressed a similar complex situation."

There's a lot on the line. The majority of Americans who attend higher education do so at community colleges, and California graduates the largest share of them. "These institutions are critically important for the strength of our opportunity structure, economy and labor force," said Kurlaender. "Through the Institutes, we're making an investment in the people we believe are critical to the success of these colleges and their students." ■

# Innovations in Teaching

## A TEACHER-DRIVEN, CLASSROOM-TESTED APPROACH TO BRINGING WONDER BACK INTO MATH AND SCIENCE LEARNING

Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core Standards call for teachers to leave behind rote memorization and instead engage their students in the reasoning practices of mathematicians and scientists—forming questions, investigating, analyzing data, developing models and arguing from evidence. A team of K-12 educators spent four years identifying exactly how to do that...and made it accessible for all.

“Teachers are being asked to overhaul their practices,” said Professor Cynthia Passmore. “We knew that if we wanted them to be successful, we needed exemplars, images of what that kind of teaching looks like—and we needed them to be developed by K-12 teachers.”

With a \$1.6 million grant from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Passmore, School of Education colleague Arthur Beauchamp, and Professors Rebecca Ambrose, Heidi Ballard and Tobin White launched Innovations in STEM Teaching,

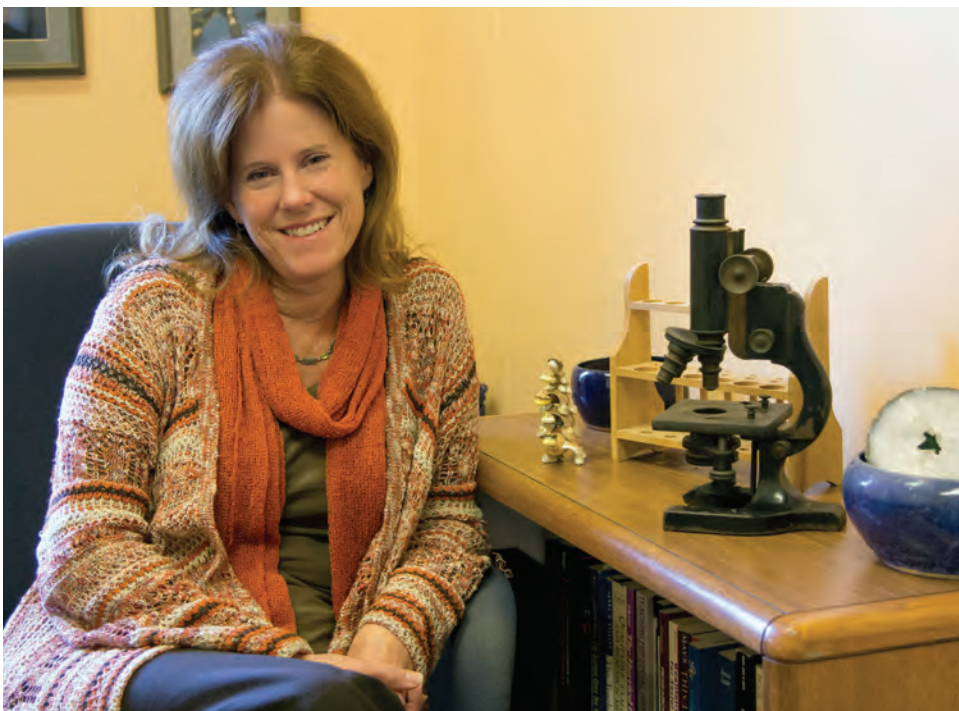
Achievement and Research (I-STAR). This four-year project brought together UC Davis faculty members and K-12 math and science teachers from the Davis and Dixon school districts on a mission to propose, test and re-test a whole new approach to math and science teaching.

“The funding from Bechtel Foundation allowed us to bring together a study and action group of amazing educators to explore what these reforms look like in the classroom and how they can help their students learn,” said Passmore.

### Mentoring and Advice from Teacher to Teacher

The results of this intensive work are available online under the name Practices Resource in Science and Math (PRISM) at [practices-resource.com](http://practices-resource.com), and reflect the deeply thoughtful and teacher-centered vision of the project. Calling this resource a website doesn't do it justice—it's more akin to walking into the classroom of an experienced and supportive teacher and being invited to watch and learn.

Participating teachers made videos explaining the practices they worked so hard to develop or showing the methods in action with their classes. “Each of the videos is a little glimpse into a real teacher's classroom and how their practices play out with students,” said Passmore. “You really get to see what it all looks like.”

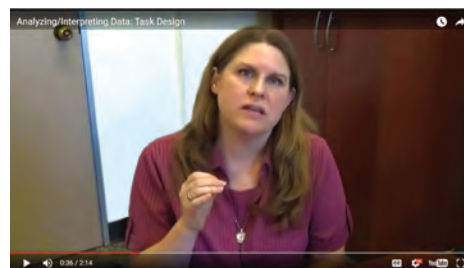


Professor Cynthia Passmore with her grandfather's microscope.

“  
This reform moment in science and math lends itself to cultivating that sense of wonder again.”

PROFESSOR CYNTHIA PASSMORE





Peggy Harte in her classroom, left. Above, Harte and one of her students appear in instruction and demonstration videos at [practices-resource.com](http://practices-resource.com).

For educators wondering how to make big changes to their teaching approach, the participants offer supportive advice on making small, incremental changes to gradually create an environment in which students are truly doing math and science reasoning. They also developed videos about strategies for addressing such topics as classroom norms, peer review and approaches to productive student interactions.

### A Transformative Experience for Participating Teachers

Fourth-grade teacher Peggy Harte participated in the project for the entire four years. “It was a lot of work,” she said. “I probably put in 30-40 hours per month on this project. But it was such a powerful experience that it kept us motivated.”

Harte particularly appreciated the time the project gave participants to develop and grow as teachers. “We were all in the same boat, and there was no discomfort or judgment,” she said. “We weren’t given a curriculum or mandated assessments. Instead, we were given the benefit of time to discover what we and our students were truly capable of. That’s something that

“  
We were given the benefit of time to discover what we and our students were truly capable of.”

PEGGY HARTE, FOURTH-GRADE TEACHER

almost all of us talked about and why this project was so powerful.”

It was a painstaking process of exploration and revision. “During the second year, we worked on teaching practices,” said Harte. “We wrote lesson plans, and one of us would teach them while the rest observed. We’d tweak them and a few weeks later try again with a new class until we had the essentials of the practice down.”

Harte felt that this framework for free exploration and discovery offered important insights for ways to change teaching practices. “It wasn’t theory for us because we’d experienced it ourselves,”

she said. “It was fantastic. We were so sad when the project was over.”

### Recapturing Scientific Wonder

Harte said she was motivated to volunteer for the project because of her concerns about science education. “Over the last 10 years, there’s been a movement away from true science education, especially at the elementary school level,” she said. “Because of budget cuts, many schools lost their science specialists. Science stopped being treated as a core subject. We’re doing our students such a disservice by not giving them a well-balanced education.”

Passmore and her colleagues developed the I-STAR project because of their core beliefs about math and science. “Science and math are powerful ways to understand our world,” she said. “We’re born with a strong sense of wonder, and so much of schooling drives that out of us. In part, this reform moment in science and math lends itself to cultivating that sense of wonder again and allowing students the opportunity to ask questions about the world and try to figure them out. If you can do that in math and science, you should be able to do that across your entire life.” ■



Sue Davis and Yesenia Martinez at the Dean's Leadership Circle luncheon in October 2016.

## FEATURE

# Personal Impact

## DONORS AND SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS MEET TO SHARE CLASSROOM STORIES, PERSONAL JOURNEYS AND MUTUAL INSPIRATION

Credential student Yesenia Martinez recently met the donors who fund her scholarships. “Now when I walk into the classroom where I’m student teaching and see those 26 faces looking up at me,” she said, “I think of the donors I met, and I know I have an additional two or three faces to inspire me while I’m teaching.”

Martinez met her donors at a School of Education luncheon for members of the Dean’s Leadership Circle. When she sat down to lunch with Sue Davis (’72, Cred. ’73), one of her scholarship donors, it was hard to say who came away more excited and inspired.

“Oh my gosh,” said Davis, “It was a delight to be able to sit with Yesenia and chat about education and what she hopes to do. She has such a remarkable story, and you can really see how she’s bloomed and flourished through difficult situations.”

Davis and her husband Rodney (’71) established the Davis Family Scholarship because her family believes in education. “I

can’t think of a better investment in a country’s future,” she said. “We believe education should be offered by the best possible teachers, and if we can do anything to make sure that we’re selecting and training the best people, then that’s going to be a benefit for our state and our country for many, many years. Listening to Yesenia, you just understand the importance of scholarships. She’s going to empower other people with her gifts and talents and reach a population that she’s passionate about. She’s going to do a magnificent job.”

Martinez said she really enjoyed the opportunity to have in-depth conversations with her donors. “We had donors and



## Our family believes in education. I can't think of a better investment in a country's future."

SUE DAVIS, SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDER AND DEAN'S LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBER

students sitting together at our table, and everyone was sharing stories about their experiences and why they became teachers," she said. "It was so inspiring. One of my donors had worked extensively with English-learner students, and she gave me ideas I can use in my class. And when I told her how I was hitting a wall with some issues, she gave me the advice that it's OK to be uncomfortable and experience some new things and not be able to solve them in the moment. She told me I need to push myself into the more uncomfortable areas because that's where we flourish."

Since 2000, School of Education students have received over \$1.2 million in scholarships from the School's supporters. The 28 different scholarships that currently support students each reflect the personal vision of their founders. One supports former foster youth, for example, while another was established for agricultural education students. Several other funds, including those of Sandi Redenbach, Ken Gelatt and Nancy and Tom Patten (see story on page 3) support students who want to teach STEM subjects.

Some donors choose to support students from a particular degree program. Anthony Barcellos (PhD '05) established the Anthony Barcellos Education Award for PhD students. He met his scholarship recipient Bahareh Abhari at the luncheon.

"I have a PhD from the School of Education and I concentrated on mathematics," he said. "I see the value of it, and I really love helping someone else who's following that same path."

Barcellos also established a scholarship in recognition of the changed financial environment faced by today's students. "When I was in college, CSUs and UCs still

had relatively low fees," he said. Barcellos was also supported by his family so he could attend full-time without having a job, which is not an option for many students.

Barcellos said that the luncheon gave donors a chance to see their gifts at work. "We got to see who it is we're nurturing, which was really rewarding for us," he said. "It made us feel good about our efforts to help the School and its students. As we went around the table, a common theme was that the donors established scholarships because they were giving back, or because they were pledged to the idea of a robust educational system."

PhD student Yanira Madrigal-Garcia was one of the student speakers who addressed the audience. She spoke about her research with teachers in Mexico, Oakland and Sacramento. "I'm just thankful that you're investing in me," she said, "and I want you to know I'm going to do my very best to make sure we have a more just world through education."

Sue Davis recalled that before she said goodbye to Yesenia Martinez, she applauded her for going into education. "I was a teacher for 37 years and it was a decision I never regretted," she said. "I told her that, to this day, I feel that having a teaching career was an opportunity to have a life well lived, and I hope it will offer the same thing for her." ❏



Jeanne Reaves speaks with a student.



Anthony Barcellos and student Bahareh Abhari.



Yanira Madrigal-Garcia addresses attendees.



INVEST IN OUR STUDENTS. BECOME A MEMBER OF THE DEAN'S LEADERSHIP CIRCLE AND JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS. VISIT [EDUCATION.UCDAVIS.EDU/DLC](http://EDUCATION.UCDAVIS.EDU/DLC)



## Speaking for Educators

Alumna's work informs statewide education policies

Kelsey Krausen, PhD ('16), decided to earn her doctorate in Education with an emphasis in policy because she wanted to give educators a legislative voice. She took a big step toward that goal even before passing her qualifying exams, when she was hired by California Attorney General Kamala Harris to join a research team that was reporting on elementary school truancy. This year she led the team as a Senior Education Research Fellow as they issued their fourth annual update.

The report, "In School and On Track: The Attorney General's 2016 Report on California's Elementary School Truancy and Absenteeism Crisis," focuses on elementary school students since these children's school absences are caused by factors outside

“

I can see the impact of my work and how it relates to what district and county leaders and educators are doing right now, and that's important to me.”

KELSEY KRAUSEN

their own control. “The range of challenges their parents face are huge,” Krausen said. “They include problems with logistics to severe mental health issues, homelessness, addiction and extreme poverty. Some issues are very hard for parents to overcome, and it's going to take more than a school or a district to address them.”

One of the main goals of the report is to raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and how much absences—including suspensions—can affect a child's education. “A lot of the children who face the greatest challenges are missing school due to suspensions, as well as absences,” Krausen said. “Some student groups are disproportionately impacted by chronic absenteeism and suspensions, particularly African-American students. It's very sad when you see the numbers—we're talking about little children, including kindergartners, who are being suspended.”

Over the four years that she's worked on the report, Krausen has seen changes in the education field. “It's really striking,” she said. “The data show that schools have started paying much more attention to chronic absences. The State Board of Education has made chronic absences a part of their accountability system, and the federal government is now having states track chronic absences and disproportionality in student discipline.”

Krausen balances her work for the Attorney General's office with a 25 percent postdoc position in the School of Education as well as serving as a Lecturer in the CANDEL program, where she teaches a class to help EdD students prepare for their qualifying exams and dissertations. Her own dissertation explored how district leaders and the school board in Oakland make and communicate their decisions about school closures, and the factors that impact those decisions, such as reduced school enrollment due to changing demographics and the proliferation of charter schools drawing enrollment out of traditional public schools.

“I'm really excited about my research and the projects I'm working on,” Krausen said. “I can see the impact of my work and how it relates to what district and county leaders and educators are doing right now, and that's important to me.” ■



# Tiny House, Big Lives

Hard-working middle-school science teachers hit the road every summer on big adventures



Melissa Amacher and Justin Smith traveling in India; giving a topo map reading lesson for young trekkers in their InspireOut backpacking program based in the Sierra Nevada; and posing on top of Mt. Whitney, highest point in the continental United States, during their 2,663-mile Pacific Crest Trail thru-hike. Their tiny house is at right.

We asked two married alumni, Justin Smith (Cred. '14, MA '15) and Melissa Amacher (Cred. '15, MA '16), to tell us how they balance their passions for teaching and travel—and how their very small house makes it all possible.

### How did you meet?

**MELISSA:** We were teaching at Outdoor Ed, a weeklong residential outdoor science camp for fifth graders and their teachers. Justin subbed for us one spring and I thought “Oh boy, there’s going to be trouble!” and here we are today.

**JUSTIN:** Outdoor Ed is phenomenal for students, but with only four days there isn’t time to build meaningful relationships with the students. So we left Outdoor Ed and went on some very big adventures across the world together and then came back to California to go to grad school.

### Why did you transition to teaching?

**JUSTIN:** I’d been leading 20-day canoe trips in Florida with Outward Bound. I thought I’d go into wilderness therapy. But being in Outdoor Ed made me realize I wanted to be a teacher.



There’s just a magic with teaching. There’s such a beauty to it, in how you can present and play with the material.”

MELISSA AMACHER (CRED. '15, MA '16)

**MELISSA:** I was on a medical school path—after Outdoor Ed I started a pre-med surgery internship at UC Davis and got a job as a substitute teacher in Dixon. That’s when I realized how much I loved teaching. Justin started the teaching credential program at UC Davis, and a year later I started there too. I absolutely fell in love. There’s just a magic with teaching. There’s such a beauty to it, in how you can present and play with the material—lesson planning is my absolute favorite. Grading on the other hand...

### Where are you teaching now?

**MELISSA:** We’re both single subject

science, and we both teach in middle schools. I teach eighth grade and Justin teaches seventh and eighth grades. But we’re in two very different worlds. I teach in El Dorado Hills. It’s very affluent.

**JUSTIN:** I teach in Rancho Cordova. We have 26 languages spoken at our school, we’re a Title I school, very low socio-economic status. Some of my students are facing things every day in their personal lives that I can hardly fathom. I want my science class to be a place for expression, creativity, problem-solving—the Next Gen Science Standards way of figuring things out. I also believe I can’t teach kids unless I’ve built relationships with them, so I keep snacks in my classroom, and I have kids who show up to watch me teach basketball at 6:45 each morning, then come to my classroom to have breakfast and hang out.

**MELISSA:** Justin started a bike club and over 45 students are participating. The police department donated bicycles.

**JUSTIN:** I want to make learning fun. When they get excited about something, they’re all in. In Bicycle Club, we spend three hours and ride 15 miles down the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

trail by the river. We have a 27-kid pileup when they see a deer. Our school is a half-mile from the bike trail, and some of these kids have never been on it. It blows me away. Last year I did a STEM camp and took 60 kids to the mountains. Melissa was one of the chaperones.

**MELISSA:** At my school, I did astronomy night last year, and I have a mountain bike club, a garden club and an adventure club. I try to get the kids outside to connect to things they don't have experience with. I'm battling a lot of mental health issues with my students. They can feel alone and separated and unable to connect.

#### Why did you start InspireOut?

**MELISSA:** We've run a backpacking program called InspireOut since 2010, when we hiked from Mexico to Canada on the Pacific Crest Trail and raised \$5,000 so low-income kids could attend Outdoor Ed. It was an absolutely amazing, life-changing experience. I'd do it again in a heartbeat. We decided to keep going with InspireOut and use it to get kids into the backcountry. What they get out of the backcountry experience they bring to the front country,



Amacher and Smith relax in their 180-square-foot home.

and it's great to see the passion and confidence that stay with them. I say it's like a trophy in their heart.

#### What's the connection between a tiny house and big summer adventures?

**MELISSA:** We'd always wanted to build a yurt—we still probably will one day—and I had asked Justin what he thought about having a house that's moveable, since we don't know where we'll end up teaching. We applied to be on Tiny House Nation and, a year later, when we were both in school, we built our 180-square-foot home

with the show in eight days. We absolutely love living tiny. We say, for us, this is a mansion because for the first years of our life together we lived out of our backpacks exploring the world. It works for us.

**JUSTIN:** It's in line with our value of having a small carbon footprint, and we get so much freedom that I've embraced it completely. We don't have a mortgage. We just bought tickets to Sweden and Norway for a kayaking trip next summer. Last summer we went to the Himalayas.

**MELISSA:** We rode our bicycles to Alaska the summer before that. We can continue doing the big adventures we love to do. My mother is a corporate lawyer, and she can't leave her clients to do this stuff. We have our "clients" for 180 days during the school year and then have time to reset.

#### What do you wish people knew about teaching?

**MELISSA:** Society has no idea how much teachers do. The amount of multitasking you train your brain to do is astronomical. When I was new, I was just exhausted by how many quick decisions I had to make all day.

#### What did you love about your School of Education teaching programs?

**MELISSA:** Number one, we both love Rick Pomeroy.

**JUSTIN:** I did a good amount of research before I chose UC Davis for my credential. The thought that went into the philosophy of the School of Education was so attractive. The time that Rick puts into making perfect placements for his teachers based on personality and fit with school cultures is so wonderful. Both of our student teaching placements were stellar. I'm definitely proud to say I did my credential and master's at UC Davis. Everyone in the education arena knows what it means. ■

**One of a kind. Just like you.**

**JOIN** Pamela in supporting your alma mater, and receive amazing member benefits. A portion of your dues will go back to the School of Education when you join with code **SOE17**.

**BENEFITS**

- Discount on classes at UC Davis Extension
- In person library access at 10 UC campuses
- Members get UC Davis Magazine
- Discounts on Aggie Adventures travel

We have exciting itineraries for Israel, China, Indonesia, Cuba, Vietnam, Peru, Europe and more!

**PAMELA FAIR, '80**  
Jerry W. Fielder Memorial Award Winner at the 2014 Alumni Awards

Life Member,  
Cal Aggie Alumni Association

**UC DAVIS**  
CAL AGGIE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

**AGGIE ADVENTURES**

[alumni.ucdavis.edu](http://alumni.ucdavis.edu)  
(800) 242- 4723

## LAST WORD

KAOZONG MOUAVANGSOU (MA '16)

# Addressing My Miseducation

As a product of the U.S. educational system, I grew up being miseducated about my own culture and history. Although the school curriculum didn't explicitly teach me that my culture was inferior, the lack of Hmong history and culture in school made me believe this.

In high school I wanted to fit in—I didn't want to be seen as the “other,” and I didn't wear jewelry or clothing that identified me as Hmong. Now I'm proud to wear Hmong jewelry. A big part of that transformation happened during my undergraduate years when I began to recognize the importance of my culture and identity.

I earned a bachelor's degree in English and double minored in Asian American Studies and Education at UC Davis, and then earned my master's in Education because I wanted to research the impact of Hmong gender dynamics on education. My thesis advocates for a systematic educational change so that, for example, areas with large Hmong populations would be mandated to teach Hmong history and culture.

Now I'm working on my doctorate in Education. My dissertation research was inspired by seeing many of my Hmong classmates withdraw from the university. My hope is to provide Hmong students support to navigate the University of California. My experiences also led me to teach the first Hmong-American experiences course ever offered at UC Davis so I could share my knowledge and provide a space for students to learn about Hmong history.

During my decade here, I've seen a change in the Hmong students at UC Davis. Slowly but surely, they are carving a space for themselves. But my own work is not done. I need to remedy the aftermath of our miseducation by continuing to empower Hmong youth to become powerful advocates for our community and beyond. ■



## UPCOMING



**JANUARY 19, 2017**

**Transformative Justice in Education:  
Forbidden Trauma Project**

**School of Education Building, Room 174**  
Hear Roger Viet Chung speak on his work with incarcerated people at San Quentin State Prison. Register by January 9, 2017 at [education.ucdavis.edu/rchung](http://education.ucdavis.edu/rchung).



**JANUARY 29, 2017**

**Adventures in Enrichment  
UC Davis Conference Center**

It's STEM-tastic Sunday Sign-up! Meet our dynamic teachers, experience camp activities first-hand and sign up for summer camps at discounted rates. Learn more at [education.ucdavis.edu/summer-camps](http://education.ucdavis.edu/summer-camps).



**FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

**Words Take Wing  
Mondavi Center for the Arts**

Our 2017 Words Take Wing author will be award-winning Arab-American poet, novelist and songwriter Naomi Shihab Nye, who will present in multiple events on this date. Visit [education.ucdavis.edu/wtw](http://education.ucdavis.edu/wtw) for information.