Three Keys to Student Success
Why UCR is a national leader in black graduation rates

Understanding Insects to Help People
Professor Timothy Paine studies insect interactions for human benefit

Family Tree
John Chater fulfills his grandfather’s legacy through pomegranate research at UCR

Living the Promise: The Campaign for UC Riverside
A look back at the symposia series and more

Promoting Interdisciplinary Problem-solving
Teresa and Byron Pollitt have given $1.5 million to UCR

What’s New?
Watch videos, read online extras, and more at magazine.ucr.edu.

A family legacy in pomegranates
John Chater’s research at UCR

“Deceit and Other Possibilities”
Read an excerpt from the celebrated book by Vanessa Hua, M.F.A. ’09

UCR Athletics
Celebrating the 2017 UCR Hall of Fame Awardees

“America, I Sing You Back”
Allison Hedge Coke, distinguished professor of creative writing, performs her poem

UCR Gluck Fellows Program of the Arts
Watch a recap of the 20th Anniversary Gala
Off the Block is a free media literacy and video production workshop that teaches high school students how to make their own documentary films. The final productions will be shown at a special screening and reception in the Culver Center Screening Room at ARTSblock.

“Mundos Alternos” is a wide-ranging survey exhibition that brings together contemporary international artists from Latin America, and Latino artists from the United States, who have tapped into science fiction’s capacity to imagine new realities, both utopian and dystopian. Drawing on UCR’s strong faculty and collections in this area, ARTSblock will offer an account of the intersections among science fiction, techno-culture, and the visual arts. A reception will be held on Sept. 30, 6-8 p.m. Admission is free.

“Ex-Machina 3.0” is a performance by the group La Pocha Nostra, to be held at the Culver Center of the Arts. The performance will feature a nude cyborg-like body, acupunctured with tiny flags representing the most insidious tech companies. By requiring audience members to remove the needles, the performance asks the participant to liberate the human body from corporate domination. 7 p.m.

Alumni and friends are invited to receptions with campus leadership and faculty members. Connect with fellow alumni and hear about exciting developments at UCR. Events will be held on Oct. 10 in Culver City; Jan. 31, 2018, in Phoenix; Feb. 21, 2018, in Thousand Oaks; March 7, 2018, in San Francisco; March 20, 2018, in Sacramento; April 18, 2018, in the Inland Empire; and May 8, 2018, in Anaheim. Visit alumni.ucr.edu/regionalevents to register.
UCR: Truly a Team Effort

It has been another great year at UC Riverside. As we close out the school year, we particularly congratulate our most recent graduates, who join more than 100,000 Highlander alumni in every U.S. state and around the world. But in addition to the annual rite of graduation, each spring gives us an opportunity to consider what we have accomplished together over the past year.

This has truly been a year of milestones. Last fall, we welcomed the largest class of incoming students in UCR history. In October, we publicly launched “Living the Promise,” UCR’s first comprehensive fundraising campaign. In November, we began construction on a state-of-the-art research building that will expand our mission of creating new knowledge. In the spring, our departments of philosophy and entomology were recognized as world-leading programs in their fields. Our schools of medicine and public policy held their first commencements.

But as an institution known nationally for diversity and student success, two accolades stand out.

In October, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) announced that UCR had received the 2016 Project Degree Completion Award. The award honors one campus nationwide for innovation in boosting student success. As a national model for achieving parity in graduation rates across racial and socio-economic boundaries, UCR was recognized for the tremendous progress we’ve made as a university, including increasing four-year graduation rates by 11 percentage points and six-year graduation rates by 7 percentage points.

And in February, the Education Trust, a national nonprofit that advocates for academic success, included UCR among 18 institutions as the best in the nation in promoting African American student success. UCR was the only university west of Texas on the list. Compared with the most recent national data, UCR’s six-year graduation rate among African American students is 32 percentage points higher than the national average.

Both of these honors exemplify how UCR’s greatest achievements happen through collaboration. While students themselves deserve the most credit, their success wouldn’t be possible without all of UCR working together. Our faculty and staff’s commitment to students pervades the entire campus and is what sets UCR apart. This commitment also drives the collaboration essential to these achievements. In all we do, teamwork is critical to our mission.

The cover story of this edition of UCR Magazine recounts how researchers from across the university are working together to solve the most urgent issues in California and around the world. You will meet faculty from the Department of Biomedical Sciences and the Graduate School of Education working to better understand autism. You will see how the study of astronomy and media arts helps us better understand the universe. You will read about how our Cooperative Extension program is working with chemical engineers and entomologists to combat one of the world’s most dangerous citrus plant diseases.

While each school year is different, one thing will never change at UCR: that we work together to achieve our mission.

Sincerely,

Kim A. Wilcox
Chancellor
The Department of Entomology at UCR was ranked No. 2 worldwide by the Center for World University Rankings in April.

“This is a great honor and reflects the incredible work done by our faculty, staff, and students — graduate and undergraduate,” said Richard Redak, chairman of the entomology department.

The top entomology departments include the University of Florida, Cornell University, Kansas State University, UC Davis, Nanjing Agricultural University in China, and the University of São Paulo in Brazil, among others.

The study of entomology in Riverside began with the development of the Citrus Experiment Station in the city in the early 1900s. UCR opened in 1954; seven years later, undergraduate and graduate degree programs in entomology were started.

The department has become particularly well-known for research in biological control, insect behavior and chemical ecology, integrated pest management, and the biology of insect disease vectors.

Official enrollment data for Fall 2016 indicated record numbers, with 22,921 total students. Of these, 19,799 were undergraduates, of whom 6,592 were new students (made up of freshmen and transfer students). The university also hired a record number of new faculty members — 132 — for the fall quarter.

“It’s truly an exciting time at UCR,” said Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox. “Growth doesn’t come without its challenges, but I’m inspired by the effort across campus to make a UCR education available to more and more deserving students.” Of the total campus enrollment, 11,472 were first-generation college students.
Researchers at UCR have camels and llamas to thank for their development of a new cancer treatment that is highly selective in blocking the action of faulty matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs).

MMPs are a group of 26 closely related proteinases (enzymes that break down other proteins) that are essential in tissue regeneration and other normal cellular processes. However, when a tumor grows, certain MMPs are over-produced, allowing cancer cells to spread to other parts of the body.

In research published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Xin Ge, an assistant professor of chemical and environmental engineering in the Marlan and Rosemary Bourns College of Engineering, along with his colleagues, reveals antibody results that could lead to new treatments for a variety of cancers, and other diseases. The creation of these human antibodies was inspired by the antibodies in the camelid family, which includes camels and llamas.

Camels and Llamas Help Researchers Fight Cancer

Soon-to-be mothers have heard the warning — don’t drink while pregnant. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued numerous statements about the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy, as it can lead to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) in newborns.

A new study by Kelly Huffman, a psychology professor at UCR, spelled out a new reason why an expectant mother should put down that glass of wine: Drinking alcohol during pregnancy will not only affect her unborn child, but may also impact brain development and lead to adverse outcomes in her future grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.

Prenatal ethanol exposure (PrEE) from maternal consumption of alcohol was thought to solely impact directly exposed offspring, the embryo, or fetus in the womb. “However, we now have evidence that the effects of prenatal alcohol exposure could persist transgenerationally and negatively impact the next generations of offspring who were never exposed to alcohol,” Huffman said.

The study was published in the journal Cerebral Cortex.

Drinking Alcohol While Pregnant Could Have Transgenerational Effects
Improving Veterans’ Overall Health and Academic Success

About two-thirds of veterans using Veterans Affairs Department education benefits earn a degree or complete a certificate or training program. The remaining third drop out, however, overcome by challenges in transitioning from service member to student.

Now a study led by a health services researcher at UCR offers a solution: peer-led services, which, the researcher says, are ideal for connecting student veterans to resources and health care services.

“Engaging veterans, campus leaders, and community stakeholders in grassroots efforts to develop peer-led services and resources that are locally tailored to the needs of veterans can result in long-term collaborations and sustainable programs,” said Ann Cheney, an assistant professor in the Center for Healthy Communities in the School of Medicine and the lead author of the study that appears in the Fall 2016 issue of Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action.

“Supportive services can help veterans transition into higher education and potentially set them up for academic success. … This study leads us one step closer to understanding the value of peer-led services for our most recent generation of veterans.”

Study Explains How Western Diet Leads to Overeating and Obesity

More than 2 in 3 adults in the United States are considered overweight or obese, with substantial biomedical and clinical evidence suggesting that chronic overconsumption of a “Western diet” — foods high in sugars and fats — is a major cause of this epidemic.

New research by scientists at UCR now shows that chronic consumption of a Western diet leads to overeating and obesity due to elevations in peripheral endocannabinoid signaling.

“Our research shows that targeting cannabinoid receptors in the periphery with pharmacological inhibitors that do not reach the brain holds promise as a safe therapeutic approach for the treatment of overeating and diet-induced obesity,” said Nicholas V. DiPatrizio, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences in the School of Medicine, who led the research project. “This therapeutic approach to targeting the periphery has substantial advantages over traditional drugs that interact with the brain and cause psychiatric side effects.”

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Michele Renee Salzman, professor of history at UCR, has been appointed to serve on the American Academy in Rome’s Board of Trustees. She is the first University of California scholar to serve on the board. The academy, which was established by Congress in 1894, is the oldest American overseas center for independent study and advanced research in the arts and humanities.

“PBS NewsHour” featured Allison Hedge Coke, distinguished professor of creative writing at UCR, and her poem “America, I Sing You Back” on its website. The poem was borne out of concern for the greediness of politicians. “It was as if the government was acting like a child: ‘I want, I want, I want.’ And the indigenous people were just watching like worried parents without having any control over them,” Hedge Coke said. Watch the video on magazine.ucr.edu.

A.L.N. Rao, a professor of plant pathology and microbiology, is leading a team that will receive $300,000 over two years to study the life cycles of viruses that are harmful to humans and agricultural plants. The project is one of 15 funded by the University of California’s Multicampus Research and Programs Initiatives.

The National Minority Quality Forum has named Michael N. Nduati, M.D., the senior associate dean for clinical affairs and CEO of UCR Health, as one of the 2017 40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health. He said, “It is humbling to be identified as a role model for the next generation of minority health leaders, and I am thankful to all of my amazing mentors for pushing me to be my best and get to this point in my life and career.”

Anthea Kraut, associate professor and chair of the dance department, was honored with the 2015-16 Emory Elliott Book Award for her book, “Choreographing Copyright: Race, Gender, and Intellectual Property Rights in American Dance.” The book analyzes U.S. dance-makers’ investment in intellectual property rights; details efforts to win copyright protection for choreography; and shows how dancers have embraced intellectual property rights as a means to both consolidate and contest racial and gender power.

The Guardian Princesses series, created by Setsu Shigematsu, associate professor in the media and cultural studies department at UCR, just launched its fifth book, “Princess Leilani and the Lanu Tree.” The story is a response to the dominant media representation of ideal femininity as white and thin, and the epidemic of eating disorders among girls and women. Guardian Princess stories encourage environmental consciousness and feature diverse princesses who work together to protect people and the planet.
Researchers Crack Structure of Key Protein in Zika Virus

Zika virus (ZIKV), which causes Zika virus disease, is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected *Aedes aegypti* or *Aedes albopictus* mosquito. An infected pregnant woman can pass ZIKV to her fetus during pregnancy or around the time of birth. Sex is yet another way for infected persons to transmit ZIKV to others.

The genomic replication of the virus is made possible by its NS5 protein. This function of ZIKV NS5 is unique to the virus, making it an ideal target for anti-viral drug development. Currently, there is no vaccine or medicine to fight ZIKV infection.

In a research paper published in *Nature Communications*, UCR scientists, led by Jikui Song, an assistant professor of biochemistry, and Rong Hai, an assistant professor of plant pathology and microbiology, reported that they have determined the crystal structure of the entire ZIKV NS5 protein and demonstrated that NS5 is functional when purified in vitro.

“We started this work realizing that the full structure of ZIKV NS5 was missing,” Song said. Knowing the structure of ZIKV NS5 helps the researchers understand how ZIKV replicates itself.

Yes, Companies Can Groom their Next Generation of Star Designers

From the tips of your Apple earbuds to the soles of your Nike shoes, successful product designers turn everyday items into prized possessions. And that’s not their only legacy, according to a new study led by a researcher at UCR. In addition to making ordinary items sleek and indispensable, star product designers are also a pipeline for new design talent.

In his latest study on extreme performance in the workplace — performance that is well above the average — Haibo Liu, an assistant professor of management in UCR’s School of Business, and researchers from INSEAD business school have shown that product designers who collaborate with stars are more likely to emerge as stars themselves than designers who collaborate with nonstars. The findings may help companies groom their next generation of top talent, cultivate an environment of extreme performers, and gain a competitive edge.
Having Our Say
UCR FACULTY MEMBERS WEIGH IN ON THE ISSUES OF THE DAY VIA MEDIA OUTLETS AT HOME AND ABROAD

“We felt if we bred mice where we could get at the underlying genetics, we could learn something about that kind of thing. We've identified a few genes that have evolved in frequencies over the generations, some related to muscle, some related to the brain.”

Juan Felipe Herrera, professor emeritus of creative writing and former U.S. poet laureate, reciting from his book, ‘Notes on the Assemblage’ to discuss multiculturalism and social issues

“Poem by poem, we can end the violence every day after every other day.”

Christopher Thornberg, adjunct professor, economist, and director of the Center for Economic Forecasting at the School of Business, on President Donald Trump’s immigration policies and the labor force

“Such sexual fluidity — being attracted to whomever, regardless of gender — is rising in popularity, in part because those outspoken celebs have increased the acceptability of an ever-widening sexuality spectrum.”

Jane Ward, associate professor and co-chair of the gender and sexuality studies department, on the increasing discussion of fluidity in gender and sexuality

“Poem by poem, we can end the violence every day after every other day.”

Jim Adaskaveg, professor of plant pathology, on whether pesticides on lemons are dangerous if unwashed

“The risk of any poisoning is astronomically low compared to germs from handling.”

Brad Mullens, professor of entomology, discussing the sudden increase in lice outbreaks and the ways in which lice mutate

“To get to 2 to 3 million deportations] will mean a dramatic rewriting of who or what is a criminal, and rewriting that definition in a way that involves acts most Americans would not consider to be a crime.”

Karthick Ramakrishnan, professor and associate dean of the School of Public Policy, on possible future immigration laws

“We felt if we bred mice where we could get at the underlying genetics, we could learn something about that kind of thing. We've identified a few genes that have evolved in frequencies over the generations, some related to muscle, some related to the brain.”

THE GUARDIAN

“We would not like to live in a world where bees are replaced by plastic machines. Let’s focus on protecting the biodiversity we still have left.”

COSMOPOLITAN

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“Slowing or stopping the pace of immigration will ultimately slow labor force growth and, in turn, economic output growth.”

SAN BERNARDINO SUN

“Nature can play evil tricks on you. Without the dead specimens, we wouldn’t have known.”

THE NEW YORK TIMES

“If you pressure an animal hard enough, you’ll kill the susceptible individual. ... Then, before you know it, those resistant genes become more common.”

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

“It basically is a reaffirmation of our strength and our abilities. It indicates we’re on the path of doing things right. We’re providing significant information that people find useful.”

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THE NEW YORK TIMES
UNLOCKING PUZZLES OF THE WORLD TOGETHER

BY LILLEDESAN BOSE
Each day, UCR researchers and creative artists are in labs, classrooms, performance halls, and in the field, making new discoveries, inventions, and works of art.

Increasingly, though, creating new knowledge requires working not only within one’s own discipline, but also in collaboration with scholars and researchers from across campus.

“Many of the most important problems the world faces lie at the intersections between fields,” says Cynthia Larive, interim provost at UCR. “That makes cross-disciplinary collaboration critical to address those scientific questions.”

Collaboration, Larive says, is a way of developing synergies — among faculty members, students, researchers, and institutions. The benefits are myriad: Aside from innovation and efficiency, Larive says collaborating is fun, thus making research more productive. “It is a case where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.”

Here are a few examples that illustrate how collaboration by faculty members is today opening opportunities to take on difficult issues. As Larive says, “What we want to do is address compelling questions and problems in science, the arts, and society. The impact that scholars can have is often greater if they work as part of an interdisciplinary team.”

THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS, UCR FACULTY MEMBERS ARE FINDING SOLUTIONS TO REAL-WORLD PROBLEMS

UCR is ramping up research infrastructure to support new faculty collaborations. The five-story Multidisciplinary Research Building 1 — now under construction and expected to open in Fall 2018 — is set to house nearly 60 principal investigators and their teams. The space will include labs, facilities for specialized research and shared equipment, offices, seminar rooms, and more.
Cane certain aspects of autism be remediated?

At UCR, the research on understanding autism involves more than searching for its causes; it also means helping families manage the challenges of living with the condition.

The molecular neurobiologist

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) affects about 1 in 100 children with a range of communication, social, and behavioral impairments. People with fragile X syndrome (FXS) are at high risk for ASD, and Professor of Biomedical Sciences Iryna Ethell's research on the development of brain cells has led to an effective treatment for FXS. A few years ago, Ethell discovered that mouse models with FXS had altered cognitive behaviors and responses to sound.

The neurophysiologist

Ethell sought out Associate Professor of Psychology Khaleel Razak, an auditory neurophysiologist, to team up on ways to examine these responses and target an enzyme for drug development. “Our long-term goal is to develop novel pharmacological approaches to treat FXS symptoms and to identify the appropriate developmental time points for treatment. FXS provides a window to study autism spectrum disorders, so the treatments developed for FXS may also benefit children with autism,” says Razak.

The neuroscientist

Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences Devin Binder, M.D., joined the team to help identify how auditory responses can work as physiological biomarkers in mouse models, which will then help improve drug testing in clinical trials.

The trio’s collaboration has resulted in FXS research that wouldn’t have been possible otherwise. One such study was on alleviating auditory habituation-related symptoms in the FXS mouse model. Ethell provided the molecular expertise, Binder taught the team how to do EEG recordings, and Razak provided the auditory stimulation and system connection.
THE EDUCATOR

Distinguished Professor of Education Jan Blacher established the SEARCH Family Autism Resource Center in 2007 to help Inland-area families living with autism get more information about accurate diagnoses, proper treatment, and possible intervention options. Last year, the SEARCH Center partnered with the School of Medicine and First 5 Riverside to intensify its focus on helping families living with ASD.

THE MEDICAL STUDENT

Ana-Naomi Racataian, M.D. ’17, part of the School of Medicine's first graduating class, took part in a psychiatry rotation that involved a direct collaboration between psychiatrists, county clinics, school psychologists, and various evaluations and therapies. “Integrating so many different parts of social and mental health with social and county services [is crucial] because doctors can’t do it all. [Autism treatment] is about understanding all the moving parts and communicating it,” Racataian says.

THE MEDICAL DOCTOR

Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at the School of Medicine Gerald Maguire, M.D., says the School of Medicine’s collaboration with the SEARCH Center on education, research, and clinical care was important in establishing the Child Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship Training Program, which will welcome two fellows for 2017-2018. The benefits involve learning the evaluations for autism and collaboration on research opportunities. “It will also enhance the care of our community, which is our mission here at UCR Psychiatry and the School of Medicine,” Maguire says.
CAN WE PREVENT THE SPREAD OF DISEASE BY INSECTS?

Scientists at UCR are creating sophisticated algorithms designed to identify patterns and analyze massive amounts of data sets within various disciplines. This technology has been especially helpful in solving problems in medicine, anthropology, and entomology.

THE COMPUTER SCIENTIST

“As computer scientists, we have all these amazing tools and hardware that can solve problems. But we need data,” says Eamonn Keogh, a professor of computer science and engineering in UCR’s Marlan and Rosemary Bourns College of Engineering. Several years ago, Keogh started collaborating with other researchers on campus. They provided data sets, Keogh’s team mined the data, and problems were solved — together.

Most recently, Keogh collaborated with entomologists to find easy and inexpensive ways to stop mosquitoes that spread human diseases. These collaborations led to the creation of a graduate program in computational entomology, called National Science Foundation Research Traineeship in Integrated Computational Entomology, or NICE. The program aims to expand the understanding of insects, improve human health, and alleviate food waste. It will launch in the summer and fund at least 80 graduate students.

THE NEUROBIOLOGIST

Associate Professor Anandasankar Ray does olfactory research to control insects that transmit deadly diseases such as West Nile virus, malaria, and Huanglongbing. “Insects use the sense of smell to identify their hosts, so we can potentially disrupt this behavior by using cheap, environmentally friendly odors,” he says. In 2013, his lab designed computer software to find alternatives to the insect repellent popularly known as DEET. These are now being developed into a new generation of broad-spectrum insect repellents to protect from mosquitoes and crop pests at a startup he founded called SensoryGen. His previous research also led to odors that blocked mosquitoes’ ability to detect carbon dioxide, their primary means of finding blood.
HOW CAN ART HELP US SEE THE UNIVERSE DIFFERENTLY?

IT’S IMPORTANT TO GIVE STUDENTS MAJORING IN FIELDS SUCH AS SOCIAL SCIENCES, HUMANITIES, BUSINESS, AND ARTS A GATEWAY TO SCIENCE, SAYS POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER IN ASTROPHYSICS MARIO DE LEO-WINKLER. THROUGH THESE COLLABORATIONS, STUDENTS GET A CHANCE TO DEVELOP CRITICAL THINKING AND LEARN ABOUT THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

THE ASTRONOMER

As a child, the nursery rhyme “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” meant something real to Professor of Physics and Astronomy Gabriela Canalizo. “I just loved looking at the stars,” she says. Today, she teaches a course that capitalizes on students’ wonder at the universe. Along with Mario De Leo-Winkler (profiled below) and Professor of Physics and Astronomy Gillian Wilson, Canalizo created the astrophotography course for students in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. It was such a hit that their students even considered changing their majors to astronomy. Collaboration, Canalizo says, breeds opportunity: “When you’re only around people who look and think like you, your idea of the universe is limited. When you interact and collaborate with people who aren’t like you, your parameter space is expanded.”

THE POSTDOC

De Leo-Winkler, a former UC MEXUS fellow and a current education director for a NASA program at UCR, came to campus with the idea of creating outreach programs for the astronomy research group.

Astrophotography works as a gateway to science, he says, because it’s beautiful and accessible. “It has this impact just through images that catch people’s attention.”

THE MUSICIAN

Professor of Music Tim Labor is part of the cohort that De Leo-Winkler gathered to lead a capstone project for Honors Program students majoring in computer science, media arts, and biomedical sciences funded through the NASA MIRO FIELDS program. The collaboration also involves the Sweeney Center for Media Studies and faculty members from the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The goal? To create a virtual reality game that shows what it’s like to fly through the galaxy. “Creating the experience is a chance,” Labor says of the project, which kicked off last spring. “Synergies are being created, but they still have to be exploited.”
WILL THERE STILL BE ORANGES IN THE UNITED STATES?

IT WAS DISCOVERED FIRST IN CHINA. CITRUS TREES BORE FRUIT THAT WOULDN’T RIPEN: INSTEAD, THEY STAYED GREEN, MISSHAPEN, AND BITTER. AND ONCE A TREE WAS INFECTED, THERE WAS NO CURE. EVENTUALLY, THE TREE JUST DIED.

The disease was named citrus greening, also known as Huanglongbing (HLB). Spread by a bacteria-bearing insect, the Asian citrus psyllid, it is one of the most serious citrus plant diseases in the world and has destroyed millions of citrus trees in the United States and abroad. In Florida, HLB has led to a 75 percent decline in the $9 billion citrus industry. HLB was detected in Los Angeles County in 2012, and in Orange County in 2016.

Luckily, California has UCR, which is using its core strengths in citrus research, plant pathology, engineering, and entomology to minimize the threat to its citrus industry. Collaborations between citrus growers, academics, the government, the UCR Citrus Variety Collection, the UCR Citrus Clonal Protection Program, and the National Clonal Germplasm Repository for Citrus signal that California is ready and united in a joint effort to fight HLB.

THE PLANT PATHOLOGIST

Wenbo Ma, a professor of plant pathology, is studying the disease at a molecular level. Understanding how HLB occurs will identify ways to stop it from killing citrus trees and develop varieties that are resistant to the disease. Her research has also led to the identification of molecular markers that can be used for robust HLB diagnosis.

THE BIOMOLECULAR ENGINEER

Xin Ge, an assistant professor of chemical and environmental engineering, has developed novel technologies, such as a synthetic library, deep sequencing, and functional screening, to rapidly identify antigen-specific monoclonal antibodies (mAbs). These mAbs could lead to new diagnoses and treatments for diseases — not just in humans, but plants as well. Collaborations between Ge and Ma allow the application of cutting-edge technologies on HLB management by generating high-affinity antibodies that efficiently target the pathogen.
THE PLANT PATHOLOGIST

Caroline Roper, an associate professor of plant pathology, is studying which bactericides (chemicals that kill bacteria) target HLB, and the pathways those bactericides travel inside citrus trees. Roper calls UCR's collaborative citrus environment a forward and reverse continuum. “We are trying to translate our research to practical use, and then getting feedback from the growers through this continuum.”

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SPECIALIST

Georgios Vidalakis, a professor and UC Cooperative Extension specialist in plant pathology and director of the Citrus Clonal Protection Program at UC Riverside, emphasizes that UCR's unbreakable ties with the citrus industry have helped keep HLB devastation at bay in California. "We took action (against HLB) immediately, as soon as the psyllid entered California in 2008," says Vidalakis.

THE ENTOMOLOGIST

Mark Hoddle is a UC Cooperative Extension specialist in entomology and director of the Center for Invasive Species Research at UC Riverside. In recent years, Hoddle has released two species of parasitoids — tiny wasps the size of a sesame seed — native to Pakistan that are natural enemies of the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP). Hoddle says the Pakistani natural enemies “are a really important weapon to control the ACP in urban areas where pesticides are seldom used by homeowners and where ACP and HLB currently reside.” He adds, “We have no other choice except to use natural enemies in people's gardens or do nothing. And the 'do nothing' option is unacceptable.”
THREE REASONS FOR UCR’S TOP BLACK GRAD RATES

BY KOREN WETMORE
According to a report recently released by the Education Trust in Washington, D.C., UC Riverside has one of the nation’s best graduation rates for black students. Nationally, black student graduation rates lag those of white students by about 22 percent. At UCR, black students graduate at a rate 1.7 percent higher than their white peers.

The report analyzed data from 676 institutions and highlighted 18 — chosen for high graduation rates for black students with little to no gaps between black and white students. UCR was the only California-based institution to be spotlighted.

Here are a few reasons why at UCR, African American students excel:

1. **BLACK SCHOLARS ARE VALUED**
   
   Black scholars in leadership positions — ranging from a vice provost and an athletic director to deans and associate deans — serve as role models and mentors.

   “The fact that UCR supports those who have risen to such heights in their careers is a testament to its empowerment of black scholars,” says Kendrick Davis, associate dean for assessment and evaluation at UCR’s School of Medicine. “Black students are bright, inquisitive, hardworking, and eager to learn from black scholars, which increases the strengths of both.”

2. **AFRICAN STUDENT PROGRAMS**
   
   Since 1972, UCR’s African Student Programs (ASP) has served students of African descent. ASP connects students with campus resources and advocates on their behalf, helping them to navigate academic challenges or bureaucracy related to housing, financial aid, policies, and parking.

   “When we eliminate the barriers, it allows our students to focus on their academic success,” says ASP Director Ken Simons ’83.

   Each year, ASP invites about 400 black scholars to its annual Academic Awards Ceremony, where they are recognized for making the dean’s list. The department also provides mentoring, cultural experiences, and networking opportunities.

3. **SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**
   
   Black students feel comfortable on UCR’s diverse campus and credit their success to the support of faculty, peers, and programs.

   “Everyone was friendly and willing to help, the opportunities to enrich myself were endless, and the environment was one of excellence. I loved my experience at UCR so much that I decided to come back to complete my medical education,” says Queen-Ivie Egiebor ’14, now a graduate student.

   For environmental engineering major Kayla Ross ’17, supportive faculty and tutors at the Academic Resource Center proved key to her success, as did groups such as UCR’s student chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE). “NSBE provided a space for me to get advice, when needed, to excel academically,” says Ross. “I was also able to serve in my community through various outreach events and mentoring programs.”

   UCR’s black graduation rate may reflect the university’s increased focus on helping underrepresented students, suggests Michael Nduati ’01, M.D., an associate clinical professor and senior associate dean at the UC Riverside School of Medicine. “There are now much more structured and funded programs than when I was a student,” says Nduati, who has mentored dozens of black scholars and co-founded African Americans United in Science while an undergraduate student at UCR.

   “It is great to see that leaders throughout UCR recognize the value in having a diverse campus where students of all colors and ethnicities succeed.”

Watch the video <a href="magazine.ucr.edu">magazine.ucr.edu</a>

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Distinguished Professor Timothy Paine on studying bugs for human benefit

UNDERSTANDING INSECTS TO HELP PEOPLE
Timothy Paine, distinguished professor of entomology, didn’t always consider himself a bug geek. “It wasn’t until I got to college that I started studying them. It was a curiosity because insects are so diverse,” he says. “They’ve adapted to so many environments. There are so many examples of insects living in places where you wonder how they can survive.”

He should know: He’s studied the ecology, behavior, and management of insects feeding on forest and landscape trees since before he came to UCR in 1986. In his research, Paine has primarily focused on various insect interactions, from the ash whitefly to the shot hole borer. How do insects find mates? How do they compete for food? What eats them? What are the environment’s effects on them?

“What we’ve been trying to do is learn about them, trying to get an understanding of their behavior and ecology, and then see whether or not there are ways we can reduce the impact of insects,” he says. If scientists can understand the relationships among insect species and the environment, “then we can learn how to exploit the associations to either reduce the impact of detrimental insects or enhance the effect of beneficial insects,” Paine says.

Born in the San Joaquin Valley and raised in California’s Bay Area (a great-grandfather was a 49er), Paine got his bachelor’s degrees in history and entomology at UC Davis. After a detour to law school and a realization that it wasn’t for him, he returned to UC Davis and earned his Ph.D. in entomology. And as the Tokuji and Bettie L. Furuta Endowed Chair, Paine’s work has never been more important. New insect species are entering California at an alarming rate, and studying insects in California’s diverse ecology is always a challenge. “There’s always some [other insect] showing up, so it’s hard to get bored.”

BY LILLEDESHAN BOSE AND SHANNON KOGA
What is your research about?

My position was initially described as working in and solving problems in nursery stock, woody ornamental plants, and urban forests. The problems are typically associated with invasive species. What we’ve been trying to do is get an understanding of their behavior and ecology, and then see whether there are ways we can reduce their impact.

What insects are you currently studying?

We have a new beetle called the polyphagous shot hole borer that was introduced to Southern California, probably from Southeast Asia. It is causing a lot of damage to urban forest trees, killing trees in the landscape and in the native riparian forests. We’re trying to understand the potential risk, how far it is likely to spread, and whether we can reduce the population. We’re trying to understand the beetle’s interactions with its food sources and fungi it carries under different environmental conditions.

We have a whole series of applied studies trying to come up with tree protection. We have another series of studies focused on parasites of snails and slugs, for biological control. People don’t pay a lot of attention to [snails and slugs], yet they cause a lot of damage. They are also a problem [when plants are shipped to California].

Southern California has so much ecological diversity — you probably will never run out of insects to study because of that.

There’s always something new coming in. We have the benefit — the luxury — of living in an environment where we can grow pretty much anything. We have an extremely diverse range of plants that we can grow in Southern California. Plants are brought here from all over the world, and our landscapes are just dominated by exotic plants. That means that there’s food for insects from all over the world and they move around. When they find something in one place where they can prosper, [their populations] take off, and that’s what we’re dealing with.

How entomologists decide to study insects is always interesting. What drew you to the field?

The diversity is one of the things that really drew me to it. It’s one of the areas in biology where you have the opportunity to impact the quality of people’s lives. One of the things that distinguishes entomology is that you can ask the same fundamental questions [in biology], but you’re getting information that can ultimately be used to benefit people’s quality of life or survival.

More than 200 million people contracted malaria last year. Even though there has been a great reduction in mortality, malaria kills nearly half a million people each year. The most dangerous animal on the planet is the mosquito, and the reason is that the mosquito vectors disease-causing pathogens. Malaria, yellow fever, encephalitis, dengue, Zika, and many other diseases are all vectored by insects. So, if you
have an opportunity to ask a question and solve a problem at the same time, that’s terrific. It’s one of the things that helps keep you motivated, because you’re providing some level of benefit.

What about UCR makes it a great place to do your research?

UC Riverside is internationally recognized as the birthplace of ideas and practices (e.g., integrated pest management and biological control) that have revolutionized the management of pest problems around the globe. A sense of excitement for discovery is palpable and becomes part of the tradition that we can pass on to our students.

What do you plan to do with your endowment?

We’ll be able to look at emerging problems. We’ve been doing a lot of work on invasive insects that come in to California. They’re often local issues at first, and it’s hard to get funding to work on important local issues. California is a unique place — its environment, plant community, and problems from introduced insects create unique issues. Here, you can go from desert to mountaintop in a very short period of time. You have subtropical environments where you’re growing plants that can’t tolerate frost, to alpine, to tundra at the top of mountains. The Tokuji and Bettie L. Furuta endowment will enable us to address some of these issues that are very hard to generate sustained funding for. It also lets us study problems right away and address them faster.

About the Tokuji and Bettie L. Furuta Endowed Chair

The Tokuji and Bettie L. Furuta Endowed Chair was established in honor of Tokuji Furuta, a professor of botany and a Cooperative Extension specialist in the Department of Botany and Plant Sciences. Furuta joined UCR in 1965 and conducted multiple research projects involving nursery crops and plant production. He authored more than 200 technical papers and became well-respected among educators, nurserymen, and industry professionals. Furuta passed away in 1989.

His wife, Bettie, was also a horticulturist and an active member of UCR’s legacy group, the Watkins Society. Upon her death in 2007, she donated her $1.3 million estate to UCR to study the control and eradication of insects and diseases relating to natural plants.

As a young faculty member, Timothy Paine crossed paths with Furuta and the Japanese American agricultural community often. “[Furuta] had a very significant impact on the direction my program has taken over the last 30 years, particularly in maintaining the connections of what we do on this campus and the University of California Cooperative Extension that is spread throughout the state,” said Paine. As senior faculty, Furuta emphasized the need for interactions and collaborations among faculty members, the cooperative extension specialists, and the cooperative extension advisers throughout California.

Furuta was committed to the Agricultural Experiment Station’s mission, which allows plant scientists to test in real-life conditions everything from how to combat insects and disease to methods for increasing crop productivity via a 1,000-acre open-air lab, Paine said. “It showed how we could identify problems, develop teams of researchers that involved academics at the campus and county levels, and adapt research questions not only to discover new information but to make sure that information got to the users – farmers and the communities alike.”
A legacy of pomegranate research plants its seeds at UC Riverside
In recent years, there has been an increase in pomegranate demand, driven in part by its powerful antioxidant properties, which are associated with good health.

Chater has a vivid memory of walking along a row of pomegranate trees and thinking of the experience as timeless, as if the trees were monuments or statues.

As he picked fruit from the trees — some varietals developed by his grandfather — and ate it in the field, he realized how valuable they were. Hardly anyone else had access to them, and these pomegranates weren’t grown commercially.

Now, eight years later, Chater is a Ph.D. student at UC Riverside. His research focus is to better understand the commercial potential of 13 pomegranate varieties, including several his grandfather developed. He’s also breeding new types of pomegranates.

“I’m a very fortunate graduate student,” Chater said. “I have been able to fulfill my dreams carrying on this family legacy of pomegranate research.”
Throughout his childhood he recalls his grandfather sitting in a brown recliner in the living room, watching television (favorites included the news, “Sanford and Son,” and “The Rockford Files”) while peeling pomegranates. The chair was covered in blankets and sheets to keep it from being stained by pomegranate juice.

His grandfather, S. John Chater, who died in 2001, was a maintenance worker at a hospital. But he developed a cult following among fruit growers in California for developing new varieties of pomegranates at his Camarillo home.

The younger Chater’s entrance into the pomegranate field coincides with a jump in interest in the fruit. In recent years, there has been an increase in acres planted with pomegranates and in demand for pomegranate fruit and its juice. That increased demand is being driven in part by pomegranates’ powerful antioxidant properties, which are associated with good health.

California grows more than 95 percent of pomegranates in the country. And 90 to 95 percent of pomegranates grown in the United States are the Wonderful variety.

Chater would like to broaden the varieties of pomegranates available so that someone going to a supermarket can buy varieties of pomegranates that vary in sweetness, seed hardness and color — the same way we buy apples.

With that in mind, shortly after starting the Ph.D. program at UC Riverside several years ago, Chater planted 13 pomegranate varieties at sites in Riverside and Camarillo to evaluate how well they establish, flower, and fruit; their usefulness to growers; and their desirability to consumers. (Two of the 13 varieties are being evaluated strictly for their use as flowers; pomegranate flowers look similar to carnations and can be used in bouquets.)

The varieties Chater is studying range in color from green, to yellow, to pink, to orange, to red, to nearly purple. He planted trial orchards in both Riverside and Camarillo to compare the impacts of the cooler coastal
climate and the warmer inland climate. Prevailing thought says more acidic varieties do better in inland conditions because the high summer temperatures reduce acidity before the fruit is picked in the fall.

No one has done such a comprehensive study of pomegranates in the United States. It will allow Chater to study the interplay of variables including size, color, sweetness, acidity, antioxidant activities, and seed hardness in different climate conditions.

Chater, who graduated with his Ph.D. in June, is married. His wife, Rafika, also graduated from UCR in June with a bachelor’s degree. They would like to have children soon.

“I hope to have a kid that is interested in pomegranates,” he said. And maybe it will skip a generation, like it did before. “Maybe one of my grandkids will appreciate pomegranates and be interested in what their great-great-grandfather did.”

Currently, 90 to 95 percent of pomegranates commercially available are one variety: Wonderful. Chater has initially identified seven pomegranate varieties that have commercial juice potential. Three of them — Blaze, Phoenicia, and Purple Heart — were developed by his grandfather.

- **Al-Sirin-Nar**: Large fruit, with hard seeds and soft peels. With its sweet-tart juice, it could be useful for juice applications. Seeds may be too hard for fresh market consumers.
- **Blaze**: Red, medium-sized fruit, juice more sweet than tart. Fruit similar to Wonderful. Could grow in coastal and inland areas.
- **Desertnyi**: Soft-seeded, medium-sized fruit with an ornamental quality. Delicious balanced flavor that has been described as citrus-like. Trees may need trellis or rootstocks for commercial production.
- **Parfianka**: Soft-seeded variety with sweet-tart to sweet flavor. This variety is an international favorite for its refreshing flavor and soft seeds.
- **Phoenicia**: Large fruit with medium-to-hard seeds. Fruit multicolored with yellow, pink, and reds. Sweet-tart flavor with a tartness that consumers enjoy. Fruit seems to keep well in storage.
- **Purple Heart**: Medium-sized red fruit that has dark red juice and arils. Fruit and juice similar to Wonderful. Sold as Sharp Velvet at the largest wholesale grower of fruit trees, the Dave Wilson Nursery in California.
- **Sakerdze**: Large fruit, with hard seeds, soft peel, and large arils. Juice is sweet to sweet-tart. Fruit can be pinkish to red.

Every once in a while the younger Chater would hear a strange glugging sound from the pomegranate wine his grandfather had fermenting in a dark corner of his living room. The younger Chater’s father, who didn’t inherit the pomegranate gene, said the wine was sour and tasted awful. The younger Chater never got to try it.
“This is our moment to tell the compelling stories of impact and transformation that draw support for our students, faculty, and programs.”

That’s how Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox announced the public phase of UCR’s $300 million comprehensive fundraising campaign last October — a campaign that will help the university continue to lead the nation into the future.

As of UCR Magazine’s publication, UCR has secured $175 million in gifts toward the effort, which will conclude in 2020. The gifts will be used to aid students, create faculty support, fund research and university programs, and build new infrastructure around campus.

At a university where 57 percent of undergraduate students are eligible for Pell Grants (meaning they’re from low-income families) and many are the first in their families to attend college, it’s significant that Highlanders are also determined to give back to their communities and society. Through the years, graduates of UC Riverside have lived their promise in community-building, in friendships, in conducting research that affects our lives, and in government.

In addition to efforts within seven colleges and schools, the library system, and intercollegiate athletics, UCR’s campaign is focused on six key themes dubbed “Solutions That Change Lives.”

- **Social Innovation and Empowerment** aims to strengthen our social fabric through quality education, robust public policy, and community engagement.
- **New Voices and Visions** spotlights the way we express and celebrate our humanity through the visual and performing arts.
- **Health and Wellness** examines the ways UCR’s research and service have advanced the study of human health, and served the Inland Empire with its community-based School of Medicine.
- **From Genomics to Harvest** addresses the basic science, cultivation, and production of plants and food.
- **Emerging Technologies** encompasses innovations that enrich how we experience and interact with our world.
- **Renewable Nature** explores the environment, energy, and sustainable development for a healthier planet.

UCR recently concluded a yearlong series of symposia linking the themes of the campaign with the interdisciplinary ways that UCR teaches, conducts research, and serves the communities of the Inland Empire and beyond. Following is a look at this year’s events.
Living the Promise: The Campaign for UC Riverside

What Does Living the Promise Mean to You?

“Living the Promise’ is pursuing the goals and dreams you set for yourself when you enter college. My promise for myself was to grow as a person during my time here; to take advantage of every opportunity; to pursue my passions and the things I really care about; get a better perspective on the world; and to graduate, and to make my family proud.”

UC Riverside materials science and engineering major Maya Otoum

“UCR is by far one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in the UC system. My goal of building cultural and societal bridges is very much in tune with the overall cultural, racial, and ethnic landscape of UCR. I am happy to be at a place where I can promote these ideas in the kind of landscape that fosters it.”

Reza Aslan, professor of creative writing

Health and Wellness

JANUARY 17

How can we improve the health of the communities we serve? A conversation led by experts at UCR covered topics such as the education of future physicians, translating research discovery into treatment, and engaging community partners in lasting health improvement.

Emerging Technologies

FEBRUARY 16

A conversation led by experts at UCR focused on research driving innovation in the areas of energy, environment, transportation, big data, food, and education.
From Genomics to Harvest
MARCH 17

Expert researchers discussed the vast contributions UCR is making to the basic science, cultivation, and production of plants and food.

Renewable Nature
APRIL 19

Experts examined the concept of renewable nature, and how UCR’s environmental, energy, and sustainable development research solutions are creating a healthier planet.

New Voices and Visions
MAY 8

UCR celebrated some of its best-known, best-selling authors and their unique visions of the world.
An Investment in Interdisciplinary Scholarship

Teresa and Byron Pollitt’s $1.5 million gift for endowed term professorships will promote research in the humanities and social sciences

BY BETTYE MILLER

Teresa Pollitt ’74, and Byron Pollitt ’73, have given $1.5 million to establish three term professorships that will support interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences at UCR.

The gift establishing the Teresa and Byron Pollitt Endowed Term Chairs for Interdisciplinary Research and Learning in the Humanities & Social Sciences was announced in June. The professorships in the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CHASS) will support research that invites collaboration among disciplines within CHASS and across UCR as well as with other universities and research institutions, and will engage undergraduate students and community partners, both local and global.

“UCR has a long tradition of interdisciplinary scholarship aimed at solving society’s most pressing issues, and the generosity of Teresa and Byron Pollitt ensures that this legacy will live on for years to come,” said Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox. “Teresa and Byron are both distinguished alumni who have dedicated themselves to the public good their entire careers. We are grateful for their support that benefits our students and the communities we serve.”

Research for the public good is a primary goal of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, and the Pollitt Chairs will further that effort, said CHASS Dean Milagros Peña.

“I am so excited about the opportunities this gift will provide,” she said. “I love the idea of research for the public good and involving undergraduates in that experience, whether it is participating in fieldwork or some other activity. The requirement to partner with a community organization makes it clear that we expect research undertaken by the Pollitt Term Chairs to contribute new insights or understandings of issues that will have a lasting impact in our communities.”

The Pollitts said they view their support as an investment in UCR and future students.

“We’re huge believers in giving back,” Byron Pollitt said. “Your undergraduate education is the early foundation, which, for us, led to two very successful professional careers. At the time when Teri and I went through UCR, the university had a science side, but it was a classic, liberal arts-oriented campus. It made us better citizens, better parents, better people, and more worldly.”

Pollitt Chairs will be selected for terms of up to five years for each of the three professorships based on research that focuses on one or more of the university’s six strategic priorities, is interdisciplinary across the humanities and social sciences, strengthens the vitality and resiliency of communities, and creates meaningful learning experiences for students, particularly undergraduates.
**Tenth Annual Alumni Day at the Races**

**Aug. 20**
Mix and mingle with fellow alumni and friends in the private Native Diver Skyroom at the Del Mar racetrack, where you can watch and wager on exciting thoroughbred racing. The Skyroom suite includes a private betting window, cocktail bar, private balcony overlooking the track, and plenty of video monitors. Visit [alumni.ucr.edu/delmar](http://alumni.ucr.edu/delmar) to place your reservation by Aug. 7. Space is limited to 120.

**UC Alumni Regent Darin Anderson**

The UCR Alumni Association Board of Directors selected Darin Anderson ’89, M.B.A. ’91, to serve a term as alumni regent on the Board of Regents of the University of California. Anderson will serve as Regent-designate from July 1 through June 30, 2018, followed by a one-year appointment as a voting member on the board. Anderson is a longtime supporter of UCR and the UC system. He is the current chair of the UCR Foundation Board of Trustees and previously served 10 years on the UCR Alumni Association Board of Directors.

**Get a Free Subscription to UCR Business Magazine**

The School of Business has launched UCR Business magazine. Subscribe to the biannual publication for free; go to [business.ucr.edu/magazine](http://business.ucr.edu/magazine). UCR School of Business alumni? Share your news! Tell us about your recent career success for possible inclusion in the next issue. Email: HeatherD.Jackson@UCR.edu.

**Living the Promise Regional Events**

Alumni and friends are invited to receptions with campus leadership and faculty members. Connect with fellow alumni while hearing about exciting developments at UCR. Visit [alumni.ucr.edu/regionalevents](http://alumni.ucr.edu/regionalevents) to register.

Oct. 10 – Culver City
Jan. 31, 2018 – Phoenix
Feb. 21, 2018 – Thousand Oaks
March 7, 2018 – San Francisco
March 20, 2018 – Sacramento
April 18, 2018 – Inland Empire
May 8, 2018 – Anaheim

**L.A. Chapter Dodgers Game**

**July 30**
Alumni and friends are invited to join the L.A. Chapter at the Dodgers game versus the San Francisco Giants. Seating is in the Coca-Cola AYCE Pavilion in right field, where you can enjoy unlimited Dodger Dogs, nachos, peanuts, popcorn, and soda. Visit [alumni.ucr.edu/dodgers](http://alumni.ucr.edu/dodgers) to get your tickets by July 21, or while they last.

**Save the Date! Homecoming 2017**

Nov. 18
60s

Johnnie Ann Ralph ‘67, received the Philanthropist of the Year Award at the annual Philanthropy Day Luncheon sponsored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Inland Empire Chapter in November. Ralph is a generous and steadfast supporter of the Museum Association and many other San Bernardino organizations, including the San Bernardino Humane Society and the San Bernardino Historical Society. She served as a member and vice chair of the San Bernardino Historic Preservation Commission and is currently a member of the Water Resources Institute’s Community Advisory Board.

Robert Sydnor, M.S. ‘75, recently retired after 25 years as a senior engineering geologist with the California Geological Survey.

80s

Josefina Canchola ‘88, received the 2016 Volunteer Service Award from President Barack Obama. Canchola was recognized for her work with the Latino Education and Advocacy Days (LEAD) partnership effort in December.

Kathleen Lane ‘88, Ph.D. ‘97, received the 2017 Kauffman-Hallahahan Distinguished Researcher Award. This award recognizes individuals whose research has resulted in more effective services or education for exceptional individuals. Lane is a professor of special education at the University of Kansas. A significant focus of her research has been on students with emotional and behavioral disorders. She is the author of eight books, 31 chapters, and 25 other publications. Her research has yielded external support approximating $10 million.

70s

Lucy Dechene, M.S. ‘75, Ph.D. ‘77, recently retired after 36 years as a professor of mathematics at Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Michael W. Harris ‘68, recently retired from the egg-processing industry after more than 35 years.

Ofelia Valdez-Yeager ‘69, T.C. ‘71, received the 2017 President’s Award from the Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce in March. Valdez-Yeager received the award for her leadership on the passage of Measure O, which will provide locally controlled education funding.
Cynthia Okocha ’90, recently accepted a position as project manager for the MIND Research Institute. The institute’s goal is to teach math through visual learning. Through their visual, nonlanguage-based approach to teaching math, students across the country are better equipped to understand math, develop perseverance and problem-solving skills, and become lifelong learners.

Diana Renteria ’90, was named Riverside Poly High School’s volunteer of the year for 2016. Renteria started her service with Poly High School in 2013 when her daughter was a freshman. She was PTSA parliamentarian for three years and managed the PTSA website from 2015 to 2016. She was elected as the Track and Field Booster Club secretary and went on to serve as president. She was also the Cross Country Booster Club secretary from 2014 to 2016. She has served on many boards and positions for various Riverside organizations.

Donna Brandt ’92, of Pacific Grove, was honored by the Monterey County Commission on the Status of Women in March. The commission honored women around Monterey County who are making a difference by volunteering their time and talent within their communities. Honorees work for the betterment of their fellow citizens with the hope of helping young women and inspiring them to give back. Brandt came to Monterey County in 1992 to attend what is now the Middlebury Institute of International Studies for her M.B.A. and has been very active in the community ever since. She graduated from the last class of Leadership Monterey Peninsula, is a past president of the Junior League of Monterey County, and was named Woman of the Year by the Professional Women’s Network in 2011. She has served on several nonprofit boards and is on the board of Legal Services for Seniors.

Rickerby Hinds ’94, was recognized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) with three Theatre Awards for his play “Dreamscape,” including Best Director. Hinds is a professor of playwriting in the Department of Theatre, Film, and Digital Production.

Daniel L. Gonzalez ’97, was promoted in January to shareholder for Littler, an employment and labor law solutions firm. Gonzalez works in the Los Angeles office and advises management clients through a variety of federal and state labor and employment matters. He regularly serves as first chair in litigation before various California agencies, including the Office of Administrative Hearings, the Labor Commission, the Department of Industrial Relations, and the Workers’ Compensation Appeals Board.

While planning for retirement, Sally Gref and her late husband, Lynn (’63, M.A. ’64, Ph.D. ’66), set up multiple UC charitable gift annuities, deferring income to a later date in order to secure higher payout rates. The gift annuities pay income to the couple for life. After both their lifetimes, the remaining funds will endow the Gref Family Endowed Fund for Student Support, carrying on their legacy while providing scholarships in perpetuity.

“Did you know?”
You can make a gift to UCR that pays income to you for life.

“We wanted to ensure that students in STEM have help in their academic endeavors.”
~ Sally Gref

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To learn how you can make a gift that provides secure income for life, contact the UCR Office of Gift Planning at (951) 827-3793 or giftplanning@ucr.edu.
Sarah Whorley (Mills) ’04, was recently appointed assistant professor of biology in the Department of Natural Sciences at Daemen College in Amherst, New York.

Brian Sylva ’04, was elected in November 2016 to a seat on the Beaumont Unified School District Board of Education after a year as president of the Beaumont Chamber of Commerce. In October, he was hired to run the Sports Information Department at College of the Desert after nine years at San Bernardino Valley College. Sylva continues to serve on the board for San Gorgonio Memorial Hospital and was recently appointed to the Measure AA Citizens Oversight Committee for Mt. San Jacinto College.

Jo Scott-Coe, M.F.A. ’05, was selected by Riverside Community College District as its 57th Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. In May she delivered a talk titled “Private Letters, Public Witness: Fifty Years after America’s First School Shooting,” in which she shared Kathy Leissner Whitman’s story. Whitman was the wife of Charles Whitman, who killed 16 people and wounded 31 in 1966, most of them random victims at the University of Texas. His wife and mother were among the victims.

TAKE FIVE

Vanessa Hua M.F.A. ’09

Vanessa Hua received her bachelor’s at Stanford, then went to UC Riverside for her M.F.A. in Creative Writing. A columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle and teacher at San Francisco’s The Grotto, Hua’s short story collection “Deceit and Other Possibilities” was published in 2016. Oprah Magazine described it as a “searing debut.” Hua received a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers’ Award in 2015 and the Asian American Journalists Association’s National Journalism Award. “Deceit” was a finalist for the California Book Award. Read an excerpt at magazine.ucr.edu.

1. What fond memories do you have from the M.F.A. program at UCR?
   The lively discussions in workshops that continued over beers at the Getaway. (I miss the carne asada fries!) Hanging out in the grad student offices with fellow teaching assistants. Going to amazing readings by faculty and students.

2. Which professors helped foster your growth and creativity?
   I am so fortunate to have studied under generous, brilliant professors who taught me much about writing: Susan Straight, Michael Jaime-Becerra, Andrew Winer, Reza Aslan, Chris Abani, Goldberry Long, and Robin Russin. I’m grateful to the M.F.A. program — it transformed how I conceived of stakes, perspective, and characters, and also taught me the importance of fostering literary community, sharing opportunities, and cheering each other on.

3. Can you share anything about your recently sold projects, “A River of Stars” and “The Sea Palaces”?
   In “A River of Stars,” a Chinese factory clerk is sent by her married lover to give birth in America, bestowing their child a priceless gift: U.S. citizenship. When he betrays her, she flees. It will be published by Ballantine in spring 2018.
   In “The Sea Palaces,” set on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, a teenage girl becomes a lover of the Chairman. The seed of this novel began as my thesis at UCR.

4. How has UCR helped you get to where you are today?
   By providing the time, space, and guidance to hone my writing craft. I am indebted to the faculty and classmates, who still generously offer their support and encouragement.

5. What advice do you have for others in terms of career goals and writing?
   Apply yourself! Send your work to literary magazines, apply for residencies, fellowships, awards, and conferences. Your chances may be slim, but if you don’t apply, you’ll have none at all.
   Foster literary community. Attend or organize readings, subscribe to literary magazines, and form writing groups. Share opportunities with colleagues and friends, and celebrate and spread their victories — even if they won what you wanted! It will help you cast your net farther in search of opportunities, and they will share with you in return.
   No one will care as much as you do. Not your partner, not your mother, not your professor, not your editor, not your agent, not your dog. Sounds depressing, but for me, it’s empowering. Your work ultimately rests upon you, and you must do whatever it takes to put forth your best. — Interview by Shannon Koga
Jenny Banh, M.A. ’06, Ph.D. ’14, and Melissa King, M.A. ’06, Ph.D. ’13, co-edited a book titled “Anthropology of Los Angeles: Place and Agency in an Urban Setting,” which was just released. The book is available to purchase on Amazon. Banh recently took a position as assistant professor at California State University, Fresno. King is chair of the Anthropology Department at San Bernardino Valley College.

Jean Paul Jamarne ’06, was recently hired as deputy trial counsel at the State Bar of California. Duties include assisting in the investigation and prosecution of professional misconduct cases against California lawyers.

Jeff Doolittle ’08, received the Teacher of Excellence Award presented by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Redlands Stake Center in February. Doolittle is a kindergarten teacher at Victoria Elementary School in the Redlands Unified School District, where he has been teaching for eight years.

Natali Micciche ’10, won Best Lead Actress at the 2016 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Theatre Awards in November for a role in “Dreamscape,” a play written

William Domnarski
Ph.D. ’01

What made you want to write Richard Posner’s story?
What I was most intrigued or interested in was his writer’s sensibility and the way he seemed to live in the worlds of both law and literature.

What challenges did you encounter in writing “Richard Posner”?
It doesn’t really qualify as a struggle, but there was a mountain of Posner’s books, articles, and opinions to read through — more than 50 books, 600 articles, and 3,000 judicial opinions. The other principal work for the book — conducting about 200 interviews and working with the Posner archive at the University of Chicago — was more or less fun.

How did studying English at UCR help you get to where you are now?
My UCR Ph.D. was, in fact, essential to my work on the book in a variety of ways, given that my subject has a strong literary bent. You don’t often find detours in judicial biographies into discussions of Yeats, New Criticism, or picaresque novels, but you find them in my book. Knowing my way around English literature made my book richer in detail and exposition.

Why did you choose UC Riverside?
The fellowship I received for the two years it took to get my Ph.D. probably tipped the balance, but my first attraction to UCR (aside from the weather) was the terrific people I could study with. I’m thinking in particular of John Ganim and John Briggs. I learned a lot from each of them, not just about literature itself but about a life lived studying literature — and about writing, as they are both gifted writers.

What’s next in terms of goals?
I have a few more books in mind. I’m just about done with a book which tries to explain lawyers to the general public. I’m calling it (for now) “Lawyers, You Gotta Love ‘em.” I’ve been a lawyer for 35 years, and I can’t say I’m particularly fond of — or impressed by — the profession. The book seeks out why. — Interview by Shannon Koga
and directed by UCR professor and alumnus Rickerby Hinds ’94. Rhaechyl Walker ’10 also received the Best Lead Actress award at the 2016 NAACP Theatre Awards for the same role.

Danielle Wickman ’10, received the 2016 American College of Emergency Physicians Medical Student Professionalism and Service Award. The award is intended to recognize students who excel in compassionate care of patients, professional behavior, and service to the community or specialty. Wickman graduated from the UCR/UCLA Thomas Haider Program and started her emergency residency at Los Angeles County+USC Medical Center.

Jessica Maldonado ’11, ran the field program for Voto Latino during election season, which educated and empowered Latinos to vote. She is also a member of the UCR Alumni Association Advocacy Committee.

Brittani Daniels ’12, recently created a startup called Spoonie Essentials Box, a monthly subscription care package for the chronically ill. The gifting of a subscription enables purchasers to show their support over a period of time. The goal of Spoonie Essentials Box is to raise awareness of invisible illnesses. Daniels plans to donate profits to a future nonprofit organization called #iAmVisible.

Michelle McNeary ’12, is serving with the Peace Corps and recording and compiling readings from textbooks on a website called English for Moldova. The resource allows local students to use the tool to improve their listening comprehension and pronunciation skills.

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Wendy Rodriguez ’15, M.Ed. ’16, took part in January on a ride on SOFIA, NASA’s Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy. SOFIA carries a massive infrared telescope, which NASA scientists use to study star and planet formation, black holes, planets, and other bodies in the solar system. Rodriguez participated on the flight as part of NASA’s Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors program, which puts teams of two teachers on board SOFIA missions, where they observe scientists conducting their own experiments. Rodriguez is a science teacher at Snowline Joint Unified School District’s Heritage School in Phelan.

WE REMEMBER


Mary Alice Cline ’79, M.A. ’84. October 2016.

Lisa Michelle Cotton ’92. August 2016


Loris Kathryn Loper ’75. October 2016.


Jack Allen Sweeney

Longtime arts benefactor Jack Allen Sweeney, for whom UCR's Jack and Marilyn Sweeney Art Gallery is named, passed away peacefully at his home in Beverly Hills on Feb. 3. He was 87.

Sweeney was the founder, chairman, and CEO of First Regional Bank in Century City. He served as a trustee of the UCR Foundation from 1989 through 2007.

Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox called Sweeney a quiet, behind-the-scenes force, whose business advice and philanthropy made a lasting and profound impact at UCR.

Sweeney and his wife, Marilyn, who preceded him in death in 2013, were dedicated supporters of UCR's arts programs. As a couple, the Sweeneys supported the California Museum of Photography (CMP) for nearly three decades and initiated the transformation of the University Gallery to the Sweeney Gallery.

They were instrumental in bringing the entire collection of 6,700 negatives of famed photographer Ansel Adams to CMP from the Fiat Lux commission, a commission created by the University of California to mark the university's centennial anniversary. The Sweeneys generously supported the renovation project of the California Museum of Photography.

Sweeney is survived by his three children: Cynthia Trice, Patricia Sweeney, and Steven Sweeney; and his three grandchildren, Nicholas and Jaclyn Sweeney and Brandon Trice, to whom he was a devoted father and grandfather. Sweeney was laid to rest at Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego with military honors.

Ada Ruth Schmidt

Ada Ruth Schmidt, one of the founders of the Creative Writing Program at UCR, was a friend and mentor to many writers and poets, and an understanding teacher to a generation of student writers. She died peacefully in her sleep at home in Riverside on Feb. 22, after years of illness. She was 87. Preceded in death by her daughter, Claudia Schmidt, she is survived by her loved ones: son Steven Schmidt; daughter-in-law Rong-Huey Liu; husband of 59 years, Hartland Schmidt; granddaughters Autumn and Aurora; brother Kostek Haussmann; sister-in-law Eileen Haussmann; and their children.

Schmidt was born in Mannheim, Germany, to Dr. Hans and Julitta Haussmann. She immigrated with her parents to the United States in 1948, lived in Sierra Madre, California, and received her bachelor's degree and Ph.D. at UCLA. Her research and subsequent publications were analyses of the symbolist poetry of Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

After a period as an instructor in German at UCR during the 1950s and 1960s, Schmidt followed her love of poetry by cultivating nurturing friendships with writers, sensitively illuminating their work by participating in and leading poetry groups. She was eventually asked to join in establishing and staffing a creative writing program at UCR, where she became a lecturer in creative writing and helped form the now-thriving Department of Creative Writing. She was much respected for her helpful reading of, commentary on, and encouragement of many Inland Empire writers and generations of UCR creative writing students extending from 1972 until her retirement in 1996.

June Elizabeth O'Connor

Professor Emerita June Elizabeth O'Connor, 75, passed away on March 13, surrounded by her family at Woods Health Services in La Verne, California.

O'Connor completed a bachelor of arts in English at Mundelein College in 1964, and master of arts degrees in theology at Marquette University in 1966 and religion at Temple University in 1972. In 1973, she completed a Ph.D. in religious ethics at Temple University, and in the same year, O'Connor joined the faculty of the young Religious Studies Program at UCR. Throughout her long, distinguished career of research and teaching, O'Connor’s varied research interests have included: comparative religious ethics; religion, violence and nonviolence; women and religion and feminist perspectives on religion; theologies and testimonial writings of the developing world; and methods of ethical analysis and inquiry. She was nationally recognized, particularly in her role as chair of the Society for Christian Ethics.

O'Connor developed and taught many of the courses that remain core parts of the Religious Studies curriculum.

She chaired the committee on Women’s Studies from 1980 to 1981, which would eventually become the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies, and she was instrumental in developing the Peace and Conflict Studies minor at UCR. It was under her leadership that Religious Studies moved from a program to a full department in 1993. Also in 1993, O’Connor initiated and successfully raised funds for the Holstein Family and Community Chair in Religious Studies. The Holstein Chair was the first endowed chair within the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at UCR. She also served as chair of the Department of Religious Studies twice. She retired from full-time teaching and took emerita status at UCR in 2011.

Upon her passing, the Department of Religious Studies passed a resolution to establish the June Elizabeth O’Connor Outstanding Teaching Award for a graduate student. The department will also plan a seminar on “Pulpit and Podium” in her memory in the next academic year.

A loving wife, mother, daughter, and sister, June was predeceased by her husband of 39 years, Harry J. Hood. She is survived by two sisters, Karen and Shevawn; her brother, Kevin O’Connor; her daughter, Meagan O’Connor Erwin; her grandson, Bodhi; several nieces and nephews; and many friends.
Tragic Failures: How and Why We are Harmed by Toxic Chemicals
by Carl F. Cranor
Oxford University Press
March 2017, 264 pages

The world is awash in chemicals created by fellow citizens, but we know little to nothing about them. Understanding whether even the most prevalent ones are toxic would take decades. Many people, including children, have tragically suffered serious diseases and premature death during development. Why has this occurred?

Many factors contribute, but two important ones are the laws permitting this and the manner in which science has been used to identify and assess whether products are toxic. Congress created laws that keep public health officials and the wider population in the dark about the toxicity of virtually all substances other than prescription drugs and pesticides.

Under both public health law and the tort law, there are possibilities for improved approaches, provided public leaders make different and better choices. This book describes these issues and suggests how we could be better protected from myriad toxic substances in our midst.

Cranor is a distinguished professor of philosophy at UCR.

Community Colleges and New Universities under Neoliberal Pressures: Organizational Change and Stability
by John S. Levin
Palgrave Macmillan
February 2017, 345 pages

This book examines seven higher education organizations, exploring their interconnected lines: organizational change and organizational stability. These lines are nested within historical, social, cultural, and political contexts of two nations — the United States and Canada — and two provinces and three states: Alberta, British Columbia, California, Hawaii, and Washington. Levin studies the development of the community college and the development of the university from community college origins, bringing to the forefront these seven individual stories. Addressing continuity and discontinuity and identity preservation and identity change, as well as individual organizations’ responses to government policy, Levin analyzes and illuminates those policies with neoliberal assumptions and values.

Levin is a professor of education at UCR.

Memoir of a Cashier: Korean Americans, Racism, and Riots
by Carol Park, M.F.A. ’11
Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies at UCR
February 2017, 172 pages

Author Carol Park grew up in Los Angeles during the 1980s and 1990s, a time of ethnic strife. Now she seeks to give voice to the Korean American community both then and now. “Memoir of a Cashier” is more than just a description of a young girl’s life growing up while working in a bulletproof cashier’s booth in Compton, California. Park tells the story of the Korean American experience leading up to and after the 1992 Los Angeles Riots and shares her journey of finding her identity. Intricately weaving the story of her mother into the text, she provides a bird’s-eye view into the Korean American narrative from her own unique perspective. With candor and direct language, she recounts the racism and traumatic incidents she lived through. Park bore witness to shootings, robberies, and violence, all of which twisted her world view and ultimately shaped her life.

Park is an award-winning journalist and a research assistant at UCR.
The number of UCR alumni, students, parents, staff, and community members who participated in the Highlander Day of Service on April 22.

Community service projects that Highlanders volunteered for — including food drives, beach cleanups, and beautification projects. (One was even held in London!) Total hours of service completed by volunteers.

### By the Numbers

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<th>395</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>1,087</th>
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<td>shrubs and two 24-inch box trees were planted, more than 50 yards of repurposed mulch was spread and 5 yards of sod, grass, and soil were removed from campus.</td>
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<th>3,320</th>
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<td>pounds of food were sorted for Feed America Riverside.</td>
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<th>8</th>
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<td>bags of trash were picked up between University Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard on Iowa Street in Riverside.</td>
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<th>AT THE R’ GARDEN …</th>
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<td>72 signs painted</td>
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<td>600 seedlings transplanted</td>
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<td>5 fruit trees planted</td>
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<tr>
<td>42 wheelbarrows of mulch spread</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 community garden plots cleared for new gardeners</td>
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<td>60 pounds of oranges picked</td>
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<td>680 feet of row crops cleaned up</td>
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<td>photos were hung, 24 bags of stuffed animals were sized and sorted into categories, books were organized, and season décor was sorted by holiday for the Friends of Upland Animal Shelter.</td>
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<td>care packages were assembled for currently deployed troops and soldiers who recently finished boot camp, sent off by the volunteers who assisted Operation Gratitude.</td>
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<td>large bags of trash were removed from the London Canal.</td>
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<td>pounds of trash were picked up from Huntington State Beach.</td>
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If you were unable to make it out for a project, you can still support UCR by making a tax deductible gift to one of our ongoing projects. Go to advancementservices.ucr.edu/HighlanderDayOfService/Home/Giving for more information.
Even as a high school student in Northridge, California, Jimmy Torres was drawn to working and collaborating with his classmates. He was captain of the cross-country team, student body treasurer, and an active volunteer.

“I’m really motivated by the people around me,” he says. “If I see my classmates struggling, my instinct is to support and encourage them.”

Now a business student at UC Riverside, Torres spends many of his evenings talking to UCR’s alumni, parents, and friends about how their contributions support and encourage his fellow Highlanders. In October 2015, he started as a caller with UCR Telefund, the student-staffed fundraising call center within the Office of Annual Giving.

When he was considering universities, Torres was looking for a diverse, competitive environment. The business program at UCR was exactly what he wanted. As he did in high school, Torres started several new organizations on campus, including the Anointed Campus Ministry. He became a member of Phi Sigma Pi, an honors fraternity.

As a telefund caller, Torres phones alumni, parents, graduating students, and community members to share what is happening on campus and ask them to support UCR philanthropically.

He describes his job as a “dream opportunity to connect individuals to the university and find out what they care about.” Calls range from brief chats to in-depth conversations, and are as much about listening as they are about fundraising.

Torres says the advice he gets from alumni is invaluable in shaping his own experience as a student. Regardless of whether the people answering his phone calls contribute money, Torres says there is immense value in their interaction.

“I’ve learned what our campus was like 30 years ago, and what an alumnus who just graduated last year wants to see happen at the university. Everyone is bound together by a passion for this school and all it has given us.”

His co-workers are a major source of inspiration and camaraderie; Torres wants to see that in current students, prospective students, and alumni, and wants them to think about the broader contribution they can make to the university. “I can’t imagine coming to school here and just getting a degree and leaving. I have to make a contribution — and by working at the UCR Telefund I know I will make a lasting one.”

“I CAN’T IMAGINE COMING TO SCHOOL HERE AND JUST GETTING A DEGREE AND LEAVING. I HAVE TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION.”

Illustration by Mike Tofanelli
The UCR alumni network is more than 110,000 Highlanders strong. With a membership in the UCR Alumni Association, get connected, stay connected, and unlock exclusive member benefits while supporting the Highlander heritage.