Veterans are coming home to UCI
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Produced by the UCI Office of Strategic Communications, the magazine will include stories of the faculty, students, alumni and campus supporters who have made an impact – both locally and around the world.

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A test of nerves

Thomas Lane leads UCI’s efforts to end the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis
Thomas Lane looks anything but the typical scientist as he strides through his lab at UC Irvine’s Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center sporting shorts, a T-shirt and loafers. Walking past research assistants hunkered over microscopes and test tubes, he pauses to show off his prized possessions: 1970s posters of the Cincinnati Reds that once adorned his bedroom in his hometown of Muncie, Ind.

That’s the thing about Lane: He’s just as comfortable talking sports as he is discussing stem cells. He loves baseball, swam competitively in high school and college, and is an avid surfer. In short, he’s a regular guy – who has made extraordinary gains in UCI’s battle against a devastating disorder with no known cure.

His low-key demeanor belies the fact that Lane belongs to a select group of researchers who’ve made significant advances toward understanding and treating multiple sclerosis, a chronic disease of the central nervous system that can cause blurred vision, slurred speech, numbness, acute fatigue and, in its most extreme form, blindness and paralysis.

A Chancellor’s Fellow and professor of molecular biology & biochemistry, Lane has dedicated his career to studying MS. He directs UCI’s new Multiple Sclerosis Research Center, built in part with a five-year award he received in 2009 from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to develop new techniques for repairing and regenerating MS-ravaged nerve tissue.

“I want to bring research from the bench to the clinic in order to help people with MS,” Lane says. “We have researchers at UCI with different approaches to the disease, and the center gives us a wonderful platform to discuss new avenues of treatment.”

For example, Dr. Michael Demetriou, the center’s associate director, is exploring ways to combat MS through metabolic therapy, with the hope of someday treating patients with nutritional supplements.

Lane’s own research attacks MS on two fronts. In 2001, he and UCI researchers Hans Keirstead and Michael Liu stopped the disease’s progress in mice by blocking the source of the nerve tissue damage. To illustrate how, Lane calls up on his computer screen an MRI scan of a normal brain with the axons – nerve fibers that conduct electrical impulses – highlighted in red.

“The green part wrapping around the nerves is the protective sheath called myelin. It’s like the plastic coating you find on electrical wire,” he says. “In patients with MS, the axons start to lose their protective sheathing. It’s an ebb and flow that occurs throughout the brain.”

As demyelination progresses and more axons are exposed over time, the disorder causes severe clinical symptoms in patients. (See related story.)

“In the beginning, they might experience awkward sensations in their extremities, such as tingling or numbness,” Lane says. “It’s when the disease goes from its relapsing-remitting stage to progressive that things go to hell. It impairs movement. Patients develop difficulty walking and can be confined to a wheelchair. Some lose their vision. And there’s really no cure.”

The UCI team found that they could stop the nerve damage by blocking chemokines, a class of proteins that recruit to the brain T cells that contribute to myelin destruction. A drug Lane helped create to target chemokines is now in Phase 2 clinical trials on people with inflammatory bowel disease (chemokines also have been implicated in IBD).

“IBD allows us to more rapidly determine the drug’s safety and effectiveness,” he explains. “We hope to expand future trials to include MS patients.”

Still, it’s not enough to just arrest the progress of the disease, Lane says: “I wanted to know how one could repair the damage that already has occurred. There are no therapies for restoring movement. This is why we got involved in stem cells.”

His second area of research focuses on treating MS with human neural progenitor cells, which Lane has found can not only halt myelin destruction but reverse it.

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He’s working with Jeanne Loring, professor and
director of the Center for Regenerative Medicine at
The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla. In May, the
two received a $4.8 million grant from the California
Institute for Regenerative Medicine to develop stem
cell therapies that can be used in animal models with
MS for the next phase of clinical trials.

“Collaborations are based on personalities. That’s
why this has been so successful,” says Loring, who
recognized a kindred spirit in Lane. Neither is
hampered by a big ego; each insists the other is
responsible for winning the grant.

“Tom and I are very similar,” Loring says. “We both
embrace new ideas. He was really interested in
learning about human stem cells and molecular
analysis, and I wanted to learn about immunology. We
both care about patients and wanted to make
the symptoms of MS go away.”

In their first collaboration, conducted about a year ago,
they injected mice paralyzed by an MS-like condition
with human neural progenitor cells.

“A couple weeks later, one of my postdoc students
came to me and said, ‘The mice are getting better.’ I
didn’t believe her,” Lane recalls. “So we walked down
to the lab, and she showed me.” The mice that had
received the stem cells were walking slowly around
their enclosure.

“We’re building on very exciting data,” he says. “We
can transplant cells into mice with MS and get them
moving again. It’s pretty cool.”

Loring agrees: “It was almost magical. We thought,
‘We must be onto something,’ but we didn’t know why
the cells worked. The grant will allow us to follow up
on our original study, but bring it up to the stage where
we can eventually treat people.”

While excited about the initial findings, Lane is a
careful and cautious scientist. He doesn’t want to offer
false hope, noting: “What works in mice often doesn’t
in humans.”

He frequently speaks to MS patients about the research
being done at UCI. During a recent presentation for the
San Diego chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis
Society, Lane invited the entire group to tour his lab.

“We have an open-door policy,” he says. “We just want
people to know we’re working as hard as we can to
find a treatment.”

And, if they’re interested, he has a few cool baseball
posters to show them.

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

“We’re building on very exciting
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More about multiple sclerosis:

- There are about 400,000 people diagnosed with MS
  in the U.S., with nearly half – about 160,000 – living
  in California. Almost 2.5 million people worldwide
  have the disease.

- MS affects significantly more women than men.
The disorder is most commonly diagnosed between
the ages of 20 and 40, but it also can appear in
young children and older adults.

- MS is not contagious or directly inherited, but
researchers including UCI’s Michael Demetriou
have found a link between genetics and the
environment in triggering the disease.

- MS occurs in most ethnic groups, including African
Americans, Asians and Hispanics/Latinos, but is
more common among white individuals of Northern
European ancestry.

- MS is caused by damage to the myelin sheath, the
protective covering around nerve cells.

- Symptoms vary, because the location and severity
of each attack can be different. They include vision
loss, typically one eye at a time; numbness, tingling
or pain; problems with walking or coordination; and
fatigue and depression.

Sources: U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Multiple Sclerosis Society
For Irvine attorney Nan Luke, the trouble started with a strange loss of feeling in her left foot. “After a month, I was numb up to my left hip,” she recalls. “Then it progressed all the way to the left side of my face.”

After undergoing an MRI and spinal tap, Luke learned the cause: multiple sclerosis. “I was 28 and just starting to practice law,” she says. “So I decided to ignore the diagnosis. My left side was definitely weaker than my right, but I went on a 10-year journey of denial. I didn’t let people know. Most don’t understand what MS is, and they freak out.”

An autoimmune disease that damages the central nervous system, MS is an unpredictable foe. Symptoms, which vary from person to person, can occur in any part of the body and range from mild tingling or numbness to paralysis. Episodes can come and go, lasting days, weeks or months. In progressive forms of the disorder, symptoms grow steadily worse, though MS is not considered fatal.

Luke is among the luckier ones. “I’m not in a wheelchair; I can walk and talk. Mostly, I just don’t have the same energy,” she says.

She continued to pretend all was well until 1997, when she sought medical help for her worsening symptoms and a related hand injury. A neurologist showed Luke images of the lesions in her brain – where MS had stripped away protective myelin from nerve cells.

“That’s when I finally came to grips with the fact that I had this incurable disease and that it was going to be part of my life,” she says.

Luke went from a silent sufferer to a vocal supporter of MS research and awareness. She now serves on the board of the Pacific South Coast chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and the patient advocacy committee for UCI’s Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center.

“We’re creating a bridge from patient advocates to research scientists,” Luke says.

She’s especially interested in stem cell treatments that, if successful in humans, could reverse the nerve destruction wreaked by MS. That would mean she’d have no more episodes of blindness in one eye or loss of bladder control – a symptom she admits isn’t very “sexy.”

“Getting involved with UCI and seeing the new stem cell research is so exciting,” Luke says. “I’ve had MS for a while; I have established nerve damage. UCI is looking to repair the deterioration that’s already occurred and for me, that’s like, ‘Yessssss!’ Before I learned about the work going on here, I didn’t know there was hope.”

“I’m not in a wheelchair; I can walk and talk. Mostly, I just don’t have the same energy.”

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In pursuit of happiness

Gerontologist Kerry Burnight shares lessons she’s learned on living well
When giving talks on how to live a full, meaningful life, UC Irvine gerontologist Kerry Burnight often invokes the memory of her two grandmothers. One was a self-centered woman who complained constantly about her health, her various discomforts and her declining appearance. “She was tough to visit,” Burnight recalls.

The other grandmother, she says, was just the opposite: “She was interesting, funny and lovely. And she was truly interested in each of her grandchildren. We could never get enough of her. I often bring her to mind and think, ‘OK, how can I position myself to be more like her?’”

It’s a question that interests Burnight both personally – as someone in her early 40s who hopes to end her days as the good grandmother – and professionally – as a professor of family medicine in UCI’s Program in Geriatrics and co-director of the university’s Elder Abuse Forensic Center.

By interacting with seniors, she’s learned a lot about how to live well and make the most of each day, not just in later years but now. “I’m lucky,” she says. “Working with older people holds up a mirror to my own life. If you can picture the way you want to age, you’ll be much more likely to go down that path.”

With her high energy (she’s a marathon runner) and upbeat personality, Burnight hardly appears in danger of morphing into a cranky crone. Is it simply favorable circumstances or good fortune that makes some people more content than others? She doesn’t think so.

She regularly encounters individuals who’ve endured significant hardships and loss – such as the death of a spouse, neglect or even abuse – but still maintain a positive outlook. Others she’s met have enjoyed all the trappings of worldly success but remain unfulfilled.

“By seeking your own comfort, your own happiness, you often end up less so,” Burnight says. “That’s not a new idea, but now there’s growing research that shows people who are generous live longer, have fewer diseases and are happier.

“Wisdom, generosity, gratitude – these areas are linked to a healthier, longer life and lower depression. Maybe if we cultivate them when we’re young, we won’t feel so alone when we get to the end of life.”

She remembers one older man who approached her after a lecture and said: “I’m a Ph.D. I’ve published four books. I’m wealthy. My kids are all successful. I’ve been married more than 50 years. I’ve done everything; there’s nothing left for me to do. When I wake up in the morning, I’m bored. I’m done – I did it.”

“I thought that was really sad,” Burnight says. She responded by opening her briefcase and taking out a list of six virtues that psychologists Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman found are common to happy people: wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity and love (generosity, kindness), justice (social responsibility, citizenship), temperance (avoiding excess) and transcendence (spirituality, forgiveness, gratitude).

“So you’ve mastered all of these?” she asked. “Maybe this list would give you something to do. Is there anything you could improve on in your life?”

The man admitted that he’d never been a generous person, especially with his time. He decided to call his daughter and take her to lunch, something he’d never done before. “The next time I saw him,” Burnight says, “he had a spring in his step. He had something to work on; we all need that. When we cultivate these virtues, others want to be around us.”

Peterson and Seligman are leaders in the positive psychology movement, which aims to help people not just survive but thrive and lead more creative, rewarding lives. Burnight admits that encouraging others to practice love and courage is tougher than, say, coaxing them to get more exercise or eat better.

“It’s hard to say to someone, ‘You really need to work on your wisdom,’” she says. “But things like intellectual curiosity and generosity can be manipulated.”

The latter, Burnight adds, has nothing to do with forking out more money: “It’s generosity of self. It’s about giving your time, about being truly interested in others. That makes you more interesting to them.”

One also becomes more interesting by gaining knowledge, she says, which can be achieved by attending lectures, reading inspiring works, finding a creative
outlet, learning a new skill or taking up a new hobby. Burnight’s job offers ample opportunity for intellectual growth, but she has also challenged herself by tackling such things as learning to play the guitar.

“We’re not used to doing something we’re particularly bad at,” she says with a laugh. “But the goal is to be as sharp as possible and manifest our potential.”

Gratitude, which enables people to transcend their difficulties, also can be nurtured, Burnight says. She encourages others to write down what they’re thankful for in a daily journal. “It’s been shown to increase generosity, compassion and life satisfaction,” she notes. “And everyone can find something good about their lives.”

Positive spiritual attributes such as kindness and gratitude can sustain us in old age, Burnight says, a time when we can lose seemingly everything – our health, our homes, our friends, our family. Accepting our decline and death is key to appreciating the time we have and living a full life.

“Despite all the crossword puzzles we can do, there’s going to be change,” she says. “Things are going to fail. We want to live the best life, we want to age well, but it isn’t as though we can avoid death.”

And those virtues we cultivated when we were younger? They’re what lasts, Burnight says: “Our fundamental self is not our body or our brain. As we grow older, we become more like the person we authentically are – that which doesn’t die.

“Ageism is so pervasive in our society. Every magazine, every card in every card shop, every TV show depicts growing old in a negative light. We need to say, ‘This is what 80 looks like, and it’s OK.’ When you see an older person who has wisdom, it’s beautiful.”

Much like her favorite grandmother and her 83-year-old mother.

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

Related Links
Social justice movement Ageless Alliance to be launched at White House, UCI
http://today.uci.edu/news/2012/06/nr_agelessalliance_120613.php

UCI receives $1.7 million federal grant to be National Center on Elder Abuse

UCI Program in Geriatrics
http://www.som.uci.edu/geriatrics/

More for your brain
Want to learn more about living a full life?
Kerry Burnight recommends these titles:

- Essential Spirituality, by UC Irvine psychiatrist Roger Walsh
- Man’s Search for Meaning, by Viktor E. Frankl
- Why Good Things Happen to Good People, by Stephen Post and Jill Neimark
- Becoming Human, by Jean Vanier
- 30 Lessons for Living: Tried & True Advice from the Wisest Americans, by Karl Pillemer

About the Elder Abuse Forensic Center

Kerry Burnight calls it the dark side of aging, and as co-director of UC Irvine’s Elder Abuse Forensic Center, she’s seen way too much of it. Instead of enjoying a comfortable old age, a disturbing number of older people fall prey to financial, emotional and physical abuse – often at the hands of family members or caregivers.

“We get 800 reports of elder abuse a month in Orange County,” Burnight says. “We’re dealing with heart-breaking cases. It’s the opposite of happiness in aging.”

UCI has taken the lead in combating the problem. Based in Santa Ana, its Elder Abuse Forensic Center aids victims and brings together legal, medical, social services and law enforcement experts to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of elder abuse cases.

Established in 2003 by UCI’s Dr. Laura Mosqueda and other Program in Geriatrics faculty and staff, the center was the first of its kind in the country. The U.S. Department of Justice honored the center and Mosqueda, director of UCI’s Program in Geriatrics, with a 2011 Award for Professional Innovation in Victim Services.

In 2011, Answers Eldercare OC, a coalition of Orange County organizations united to recognize excellence in senior care, presented Burnight with its first Administrator of the Year award for her work on elder abuse and neglect.

To further raise awareness of the crisis, UCI recently launched a national social justice movement called the Ageless Alliance, which brings people of all ages together to identify, prevent and eliminate the problem.

“The only way to move forward in addressing the abuse and neglect of our society’s most vulnerable adults is for each of us to take a stand,” Burnight says.
Bound for Glory

UCI’s Olympians weigh in on what makes a champion

Growing up, Ryan Bailey ’99 was never the most gifted water polo player in the pool. “There were always guys bigger and faster than me,” he recalls. But he had something the others lacked: tenacity. As a member of the UC Irvine water polo team, Bailey spent so many hours training, it’s a wonder he didn’t sprout fins and a tail.

His persistence paid off. This summer, he competed in his fourth Olympic Games, playing on the U.S. men’s squad with fellow UCI alumni Jeff Powers ’03 and Tim Hutten ’08 (the team placed eighth). Bailey also won a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing games with Hutten, Powers and Rick Merlo ’05.

Olympians are able to focus on their sport and do all the extra little things,” he says. “It comes down to who’s more willing to put in the time and make the sacrifices.”

UCI athletes have gone on to coach and compete in the Olympics. UCI women’s water polo head coach Dan Klatt ’01 has done both. He played on the U.S. men’s water polo team in the 2004 Olympics and helped guide the U.S. women’s water polo team to its first gold medal (shown) at the 2012 London Games.

Photos: Daniel A. Anderson / University Communications
Those from UCI who’ve coached or competed in the Olympics know a lot about how athletes reach the top of their game. And though they might have different ideas about what makes a winner, they agree it’s not just physical prowess. (To see how Anteaters fared in the 2012 games, visit UCI Athletics’ Olympic Central site at www.ucirvinesports.com/inside_uci/history/olympians/index. And watch a video of Anteater Olympians at http://youtu.be/phZme9WiPeE.)

"Competing at the Olympic level is 100 percent consuming. It’s a full-time job, especially in the two years leading up to the games," says Dan Klatt ’01, UCI women’s water polo head coach and member of the U.S. men’s water polo team in the 2004 Olympics.

He returned to the games this summer as assistant coach of the U.S. women’s water polo team that made history with their first gold medal win.

"All athletes who compete at the collegiate level have a certain amount of desire, discipline and persistence, but at the Olympic level, there’s a heightened focus," he says. "It’s the ability to sacrifice a lot of yourself."

Klatt trained incessantly during his UCI days. "He was a grinder," recalls Bailey, who was two years behind him in school. "He worked all the time."

Although his father, Rick, was a world-champion swimmer (belonging to an 800-meter freestyle relay team that set a world record in 1973) and he started swimming competitively at age 6, Klatt never thought of himself as Olympic material until he became an Anteater.

"I don’t think I realized until I got to UCI and saw that I could play with the best players that the Olympics were a possibility, until coach Ted Newland said I could be an Olympian if I worked hard," he says.

"I’ve had that conversation with players here. Women’s water polo is just coming into maturity as a program. We’re starting to get players who have that [Olympic] capability."
Last season, Klatt guided his squad to its fourth straight Big West tournament title and a record fourth-place showing in May at the NCAA championships. He admits to pushing the women hard.

“Most of our players were the best in high school. They’ve usually trained below their capabilities. It’s a hectic schedule here, and sometimes that meets resistance,” Klatt says. “I reach inside the souls of players to try to pull something out they didn’t know they had.”

Hard work also paid off for former UCI volleyball standouts Brian Thornton ’07 and David M. Smith ’07, who both earned a spot on the U.S. men’s 2012 Olympic team. Thornton says making it to the games takes an all-consuming devotion to one’s sport.

“What most people don’t know is that you have no time off. We train every day. It’s year-round,” he says. “Everyone at this level is competitive almost to a fault.”

While putting forth one’s best effort is crucial, Thornton notes, luck also plays a role in reaching the top tier of athletics.

“A lot has to happen to get to the Olympics,” he says. “I was given the right opportunity at the right time. I lived by the beach [in San Clemente] where people play volleyball, and I was lucky enough to go to UCI.”

UCI alumnus Brian Thornton works out with the U.S. men’s 2012 Olympic volleyball team.

David M. Smith catches some air while Thornton assists in a drill to psych out the opponent during pre-Olympics practice.
During his Anteater days, Thornton was a standout on the volleyball court; he was captain of the UCI team that won the NCAA championship in 2007.

“If I’d gone to any other school but UCI, I wouldn’t have made it to the Olympics,” he says. “I wasn’t the most gifted athlete in the world, but I was lucky enough to play for [former head coach] John Speraw and [current head coach] David Kniffin. They were paramount in my development as a player.”

Like Klatt, UCI women’s volleyball coach Paula Weishoff is another Olympian who knows how to sharpen her players’ competitive edge.

“The best way to instill winning and an Olympic spirit is by example,” says Weishoff, who – along with her UCI colleague Jamie Morrison – was assistant coach of the U.S. women’s team that earned a silver medal in the summer 2012 games. “I go into work with a positive outlook and do the best I can each and every day. I work hard, am disciplined, determined, and love what I do.”

Weishoff knows a lot about endurance. She competed in three Olympics – in 1984, when she took home a silver team medal; in 1992, when she won the bronze and was named the games’ Most Valuable Player; and in 1996.

At the height of her career, Weishoff practiced eight hours a day, six days a week. She also knew to listen to her body – “when to push and when to rest” – which helped her avoid injuries and burnout. She now strives to pass along that strong work ethic to her UCI players.

“I tell my girls that I never tried to be the best player; I just tried to be the best player I could be every time I stepped on the court, whether in practice or a match,” Weishoff says. “That’s how I approach my life. You can only do your best, and when you fall down, you get up and do it over again.”

One other thing distinguishes Olympians from mere mortals: They’re passionate about their sport. Weishoff says that even after three decades of playing and coaching, she still enjoys a game of volleyball. And Klatt likes nothing better than hopping in the pool for a water polo match.

“If I could play every day, I would,” he says. “[Olympic] athletes are driven by a love for the game and for competition – a love that supersedes everything else in their lives except maybe family. This love justifies, to the brain and body, the most intense and brutal training so that they can perform at the highest level.”

Kathryn Bold, University Communications
However, Scandone was growing weaker by the day. Unable to compete any longer in the 2.4-meter class, he switched to the SKUD 18, a two-person skiff designed for even severely disabled athletes. In 2007, he and crewmate Maureen McKinnon-Tucker won the Paralympic trials, qualifying for the 2008 games in Beijing. But Scandone was also in a different kind of race, against ALS.

“ALS is a degenerative disease. You’re always going downhill,” says former UCI sailing coach Mike Pinckney, a childhood friend of Scandone who coached him in the 2008 Paralympics. “That was very tough for Nick. It’s really depressing to watch yourself fall apart. Ninety days before the games, he started losing use of his hands. We had to put a whole new steering system in the boat just before leaving for Beijing.”

Focusing on the games lifted Scandone’s spirits. He showed up at John Wayne Airport for the flight to China sporting an official Olympics hat. Asked where he got it, he explained that it had been given to him by his mother, Marilyn, three years earlier. She told him to wear it to the games but died before seeing her son compete.

Scandone’s condition continued to decline even during the competition. “We kept adjusting the boat’s hand controls to accommodate his weakening fingers,” Pinckney recalls. He had to be fed and hydrated intravenously.

Still, Scandone and McKinnon-Tucker sailed so well that they won the gold medal without having to enter the final races of the regatta. Returning to the dock after their last event, they were greeted by cheers from not only the entire U.S. squad but sailors and fleets from every country that entered the Paralympics. Afterward, Scandone said, “Without sailing, I don’t know where I’d be.”

On Jan. 2, 2009, not long after realizing his Olympic dream, Scandone lost his six-year battle with Lou Gehrig’s disease. He left behind his wife, Mary Kate; brother, Rocky; and father, Vincent.

“Nick was someone who gave. He was a caring person,” Pinckney says. “For a lot of able-bodied athletes, the game’s all about them. But Nick was different. He realized there are bigger things in life than being first.”

Like many athletes, Nick Scandone ’90 dreamed of Olympic glory, but the winds weren’t always in the sailor’s favor.

While attending UC Irvine, he helped the sailing team win the 1988 North American dinghy and team racing championships and earned All-American honors, but after graduating with a bachelor’s degree in social sciences, his sporting career stalled. At the 1992 Olympic trials, Scandone barely missed qualifying for the U.S. team. He gave up competitive sailing and began working in advertising, then sold restaurant equipment.

In 2002, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis – or Lou Gehrig’s disease – which attacks the nerve cells that control voluntary muscle movement. Facing a progressive, fatal illness, Scandone decided to quit his job and pursue his childhood dream of sailing in the Olympics.

At the helm of a 2.4-meter keelboat that he could control single-handedly from a sitting position, he won the 2005 open world championship in Italy, one of many victories that earned him U.S. Sailing’s 2005 Rolex Yachtsman of the Year award.
New initiatives help student veterans adjust to campus life
When Jack Williams IV ’12 first arrived at UC Irvine as a transfer student, he felt – like many veterans – out of step with his fellow undergraduates.

He’d served four years in the U.S. Marines, including an eight-month tour of duty in Iraq. Most students he met came to UCI straight out of high school or community college. He knew the stress of war; his combat unit was hit twice by improvised explosive devices and exposed to enemy fire. His classmates knew the stress of finals week. Even casual conversations could be challenging.

“They usually didn’t know what to say to me. They’d ask, ‘Is going to war like [the video game] ‘Call of Duty’? Every once in a while, if they’d been drinking, someone would ask, ‘Did you kill anyone?’” recalls Williams, who never had to fire his weapon in combat. “They’re trying to find common ground, but it’s not there.”

Last year, Williams started UCI’s Alpha Psi Omega veterans fraternity so that he and other Anteaters who did have that common ground could connect. The group fosters the kind of camaraderie and shared values they experienced in the military. It’s one of several new initiatives at UCI to ease veterans’ transition to academia.

The university recently established a separate office for Veteran Services where students can go for assistance with their GI Bill education benefits and other academic, personal or housing needs. (See related story.) The move gave veterans a much-needed physical space of their own, says office coordinator Adelí Durón.

In April 2011, UCI adopted a groundbreaking policy guaranteeing on-campus housing for enrolled veterans, who – additionally – may choose graduate housing despite their undergraduate status.

“Most of our veterans are between the ages of 25 and 32, and many have families,” Durón says. “A couple graduate communities allow for families, and some of our students just want to be around people their own age.”

UCI also grants veterans and military students priority registration for classes. This helps them maintain a full course load, which they need to qualify for their education benefits.

“We’re seeing more and more institutional backing,” Williams says.

The UCI student body currently includes about 140 veterans, reservists and active military service members, and their ranks are growing as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq wind down and they return to civilian life. For many, coming home can be a shock.
Still, veterans enjoy extracurricular activities too, which is why he figured a fraternity would be a bigger draw at UCI than the Veterans Student Union it replaced. The union had just a few members; about 15 men and women have joined Alpha Psi Omega and organizers hope their numbers will grow as word of the group spreads.

“A fraternal model builds an esprit de corps, like we’re used to in the military,” Williams says. “UCI is so big that you tend to get swallowed up if you don’t get involved in a group. One of our fraternity members told me he hadn’t made a single friend or gone out since leaving the Marine Corps. For veterans, the best thing is to be around other veterans.”

Fraternity president Max Samhammer, a fourth-year student majoring in criminology and psychology & social behavior, says he felt out of place at UCI until joining Alpha Psi Omega.

“When I first started going here, I kept to myself,” says Samhammer, who served tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan with the Army, then spent another two years in the National Guard. “I didn’t identify with most of the students on campus. After serving and being deployed, you don’t feel you’re on the same level as other 18- to 20-year-olds. They have different priorities.”

Alpha Psi Omega helped him fit in and gave him a purpose.

Besides enjoying pub nights, baseball games, beach outings and other social activities, fraternity members participate in volunteer projects such as assembling care packages for troops and assisting at homeless shelters for veterans.

“Before we started the fraternity, the community here wasn’t that strong,” says Alexander Louie ’12, last year’s Alpha Psi Omega co-president. “Students chose not to self-ID themselves as veterans. There weren’t social outlets or incentives to step forward.”

One sign of their growing strength is the annual Veteran Appreciation Dinner, launched by Veteran Services three years ago to honor graduating seniors and welcome newly admitted students. At the 2012 dinner, in May, Williams was named Veteran Student of the Year, and Louie was designated Military Student of the Year.

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The dinner gives veterans a chance to remember those killed or missing in action. It’s frustrating for them when civilians appear unconcerned about military conflicts or current events.

Fraternity members also celebrate veterans’ sacrifices and accomplishments through such events as Veterans Week in November and a Memorial Day display at the UCI Student Center.

“People don’t know what veterans have done,” says Louie, who was a California National Guard reservist while earning bachelor’s degrees in nursing science and public health sciences at UCI. “There’s no attention paid to the fact that there are people out there fighting.”

The growing camaraderie among campus military students and veterans becomes painfully apparent when they lose one of their own. Williams spoke at the funeral of Army Spc. Ricardo Cerros ’09, who was killed Oct. 8, 2011, by enemy forces in Afghanistan.

“The fact that he was a graduate of UCI speaks volumes,” he told those assembled. “It’s a testament to the kind of people drawn to serve.”

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

A place of their own

UCI Veteran Services moved into its own location in the Student Center to provide a welcoming environment for veterans, reservists and their dependents.

For those who have served, it’s a friendly outpost: In September 2011, UCI Veteran Services moved from the campus’s Center for Service in Action to its own space in the Student Center.

“When we got our own office, it made us feel there’s a place for us at UCI,” says Gladys Rojas, an Air Force reservist and Veteran Services peer adviser who will complete a bachelor’s degree in political science this fall. “If new veterans get lost on campus, we can show them around, so they’re not just thrown in there with a bunch of 18-year-olds.”

The office provides veterans and military students with information on their education benefits, on-campus housing and preregistration for classes.

“We’re here to help veteran students reach their goals,” says Adelí Durón, Veteran Services coordinator, noting that local community colleges already have separate offices for veterans because they have larger military student populations. “This will increase veterans’ interest in UCI. Hopefully, we’ll have the number we should have, being so close to Camp Pendleton.”

Veteran Services launched a four-hour education program called VetNet Ally that increases awareness of veterans and military culture among the campus community. The office also offers confidential referrals to counselors; mentoring with a veteran faculty or staff member; a quarterly newsletter; and a resource guide.

“Other veterans understand where you’ve been and where you’re coming from,” Rojas says. “Everyone who has been deployed or lost someone understands what it is to serve. They know the risks. You understand you may not come home. It’s something service members share.”
Alumni

Keepin’ it classy

NBA basketball coach Scott Brooks ’87 teaches Oklahoma City how to win – and lose – with style

In the closing minutes of the NBA Finals last June, with Oklahoma City facing imminent defeat at the hands of the Miami Heat, the Thunder’s head coach, Scott Brooks ’87, huddled with his team. “One last thing, guys,” he said after the usual end-of-season kudos. “We’re going to treat [the Miami players] like they’re the champions. After this game, we’re going to walk [over] and shake their hands and acknowledge all of them. They beat us fair and square.” Watch video at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ea5BS0AsjvY.

In that televised moment of sportsmanlike conduct, basketball fans everywhere learned what many UC Irvine alumni already know: Brooks is one class act.

During his two seasons as an Anteater, he displayed talent and tenacity, which made him popular with his coaches and teammates. He averaged 23.8 points per game his senior year, earning first-team All-Big West honors. And Brooks helped christen the Bren Events Center on its opening night Jan. 8, 1987, by scoring 43 points in a win against Utah State. He holds the campus record for career free-throw percentage (.859) and was inducted into UCI’s Hall of Fame in 2001.

After earning a bachelor’s in social science, Brooks played in the NBA for 11 years and was on the 1994 Houston Rockets championship team. The strong work ethic he exhibited as a player has helped him succeed on the sidelines.

In 2009-10, his first full season as Oklahoma City’s head coach, he led the team to a 50-32 record, a 27-game improvement over the previous year. The Thunder earned a berth in the playoffs, and Brooks was named NBA Coach of the Year. The young team has continued to grow under his guidance, making it to the Western Conference Finals the past two years and to the NBA Finals this past season.

Through it all, Brooks has maintained a calm, understated coaching style. He doesn’t throw tantrums, nor does he project a slick, GQ image like some of his counterparts. He’s just intensely focused on getting the most from his players. (In that, he has help from another former Anteater, assistant coach Brian Keefe, who played at UCI from 1994 to 1996 before transferring to UNLV.)

Photos: Glenn Feingerts / UCI Athletics
Brooks has continued to show his Anteater loyalty – and his class – returning the past two Septembers to host the UCI/Scott Brooks Golf Invitational to raise funds for student-athlete scholarships. He recently chatted about his alma mater and, of course, basketball:

Q: The Oklahoma City Thunder had a terrific season. As the team’s coach, what was the highlight?
A: It was exciting just to see the players develop and get to the finals. We’re young, but we’re good. Seeing the guys work so hard was definitely the highlight for me.

Q: You’re known for keeping your cool on the sidelines. How would you describe your coaching style?
A: I always look at myself as a coach who’s very transparent. I’m straightforward, and I’m fair. I demand a very high level of play. I don’t let the guys go below the standard we set every day. I like players who are committed to the team.

Q: What’s the toughest part about being an NBA coach?
A: The hardest part is finding the time to be with my family and with the team – keeping the balance. My family is my No. 1 priority. I have a wife and two kids, ages 16 and 11. I tell people that if I’m good with them, I’m a better coach. And my family understands how much I love to be with the players.

Q: What did you learn at UCI that’s helped you succeed in the NBA?
A: UCI taught me to never give up. Perseverance is an important word in my life. There’s always an opportunity to achieve your goals. Sometimes you have to search for it – it’s not just going to come to you – but there’s always that possibility. UCI was a wonderful place to play. They opened up the Bren Events Center my senior year, and it’s a great facility. I was on the ground level, just as UCI’s basketball program really took off. It was a great time to be an Anteater.

Q: You host the annual UCI/Scott Brooks Golf Invitational to raise funds for athletic scholarships. Why is this event important to you?
A: I wouldn’t be in the position I’m in now if not for UCI. I would’ve never made it to the NBA as a player or as a head coach. I’m the youngest of seven children; without a scholarship, I wouldn’t have been able to afford college. It gave me the opportunity to get an education and play basketball. I feel it’s my duty to give back. UCI will have a special place in my heart forever.

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

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**Newkirk Alumni Center:**

A groundbreaking ceremony for the Newkirk Alumni Center took place last fall. Completion of the 12,500-square-foot facility, depicted in this rendering, is expected in November.

The soon-to-debut, 12,500-square-foot Newkirk Alumni Center will serve as a gathering place for alumni, faculty, staff, students and campus guests to conduct business or relax. Featuring progressive architecture, sustainable design and practical usability, the center will make it possible for the campus to increase networking opportunities and give the community a new setting for conferences, meetings, reunions and weddings.

“The Newkirk Alumni Center will allow us to provide more programs and services for our growing alumni family,” says Jorge Ancona, assistant vice chancellor of alumni relations. “It’s the next step in the evolution of a maturing institution.”

The facility provides a range of options for events, including a spacious reception area and a patio that can be reserved for gatherings of up to 250 people.
The first floor offers a large conference room; a living-room-style den containing couches, a fireplace, a large-screen television and a display of UCI memorabilia; and a café serving refreshments.

The second floor includes an executive boardroom, a smaller meeting room and a mezzanine with access to a rooftop deck that affords a view of the San Joaquin Wildlife Sanctuary. Staff offices also will be on the second floor.

The new center is strategically located near a campus entrance, off University Drive on Mesa Road, close to the Bren Events Center and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts.

"Most of our alumni come back to campus for sporting or arts events, so this location is excellent," says Greg Mickelson ’84, UCI Alumni Association president. "The Newkirk center will serve as an initial touch point – a place to meet, network and grab a quick bite before heading off to an event. As UCI approaches the milestone of its 50th graduating class, it’s a time for alumni to elevate our game and show pride in the university."

The center will be the first stand-alone building on campus named after a UCI alumna. Martha ’72, M.A. ’76, Ph.D. ’81, and James Newkirk (honorary ’12) provided the generous funding to start construction of this much-needed facility.

The current Phineas Banning Alumni House was built in 1986, when UCI had about 32,000 alumni. Today, the UCI Alumni Association serves more than 140,000, a number that will grow by 9,000 each year.

A dedication ceremony will be held in January. Alumni also are invited to stop by the center at a grand opening on Saturday, Jan. 12, during the homecoming street festival.

The Newkirks are longtime supporters of the university. Martha Newkirk is a UCI Foundation trustee, a past member of the University of California Board of Regents and a past president of the UCI Alumni Association.

She and her husband have endowed two fellowships in social ecology, and their name is on the Newkirk Pavilion at Anteater Ballpark. The couple also established UCI’s Newkirk Center for Science & Society, which helps professors share their research with the community to improve the quality of life.

Their hope in making a leadership gift for the alumni center was that it would inspire others to support the facility as well.

"UC Irvine has provided Jim and me with benefits that go well beyond the education that resulted in my degrees," says Martha Newkirk. "Cultural offerings, sports, events that allow us to meet with other alumni and even the opportunity to support the outstanding programs on campus have all been very rewarding. We hope this new center will provide the impetus for others to take advantage of what the campus has to offer."

The UCI Alumni Association is seeking to raise the last $3 million needed for the $10 million project, and several naming opportunities still exist. For more information, contact Allison Dolan Wilson in the alumni office at 949-824-4552.

Lori Brandt, contributing writer
Have news to share?

Just got a promotion? Changed jobs or published a book? Let your fellow Anteaters know what you are up to with a UCI alumni class note. Visit www.alumni.uci.edu/connect/class-notes.php

Travel the globe with your fellow UC alumni

First-class accommodations, innovative itineraries, the opportunity to spend quality time with fellow UC alumni and value are among the many benefits offered to alumni through the UCI Alumni Association’s travel program. Experience a no-hassle vacation with every detail taken care of – from transportation, lodging and meals to specially arranged cultural and educational experiences. Upcoming trips include 17 days in Southeast Asia, 11 days in Ecuador, and an eight-day tour of the waterways and canals of Holland and Belgium. For more information, visit the association’s travel website at www.uci.ahitravel.com.

Become a part of the Anteater network

Join the UCI Alumni Association and enjoy members-only benefits: Save money, stay connected and show your Anteater pride. We now offer free general membership. And for a limited time, new annual and lifetime members will receive a complimentary UC Irvine Alumni license plate holder. To sign up, visit www.alumni.uci.edu/join and enter “chrome” in the referred/invited by text box.

Have news to share?

Just got a promotion? Changed jobs or published a book? Let your fellow Anteaters know what you are up to with a UCI alumni class note. Visit www.alumni.uci.edu/connect/class-notes.php

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David Kniffin returns to lead men’s volleyball

As the UCI men’s volleyball team begins to pursue another national title this season, there’s a familiar face on the sidelines of Crawford Court. David Kniffin, the new head coach who replaced John Speraw this summer, has been here before.

Kniffin is a former player and assistant coach at UCI. He’s returned to his alma mater after one year as an assistant coach of women’s volleyball at the University of Illinois, where in 2011 he helped guide the team to the NCAA championship tournament for the first time in the program’s history.

“I’ve had two great and distinct mentors in my time as a collegiate player and coach,” Kniffin said. “John Speraw came in as head coach my senior season at UCI and allowed us to be the team we knew we could be. Kevin Hambly [at Illinois] facilitated my journey as I learned about the coach I wanted to be. I’m appreciative of both and looking forward to building upon the championship culture at UCI.”

During the five seasons Kniffin spent coaching UCI with Speraw, the Anteaters always advanced to postseason competition, winning national titles in 2007 and 2009. The program posted a 96-52 record and was nationally ranked each year, including 12 weeks at No. 1. In 2010, Kniffin was named American Volleyball Coaches Association Division I-II Men’s National Assistant Coach of the Year.

“I believe in the experience we provide at UCI,” he said. “Our student-athletes learn from world-class professors, are trained by a great staff, and when the day is done, they can take the short drive to Newport Beach and watch the sunset.

“Kniffin graduated from UCI in 2003 with a bachelor’s in philosophy. He was the starting setter for the 2002 and ’03 teams, helping the Anteaters to their first No. 1 ranking and first Mountain Pacific Sports Federation postseason victory as a senior. Kniffin ranks fifth in UCI career assists (2,806) and posted the second-most single-season assists (1,632) in 2003. He also earned UCI Scholar-Athlete and MPSF All-Academic honors.

In August, Kevin Burch was named men’s volleyball assistant coach. Burch was the 2012 American Volleyball Coaches Association Division III Men’s National Assistant Coach of the Year while at Massachusetts’ Springfield College. His father, David, was a 1975-’77 member of the Anteater track & field team.

Golf alumna Selanée Henderson gets her ‘Big Break’

Selanée Henderson ’08 recently competed in the Golf Channel’s “Big Break Atlantis” reality television show, making it all the way to the final round – and sporting her UCI cap throughout the series.

Henderson beat out 10 other contestants but fell to Marcela Leon in the last round of the competition, which was taped at the Atlantis resort on Paradise Island in the Bahamas.

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Santora gift to build stronger Anteaters

UCI Athletics has received a $1 million gift from Kathleen and Mark Santora to renovate and expand the strength and conditioning center used by nearly 400 NCAA Division I student-athletes.

“We hope the new training facility will allow UCI athletes and teams to reach their greatest potential,” Mark Santora said.

The funds will help Anteaters compete in 18 sports programs, boost Athletics’ recruiting efforts and provide a safer, more effective training environment. West of the center will be the proposed Al Irwin Academic Center for student-athletes and Carlos A. Prietto, M.D. Sports Medicine Center, creating a synergy of physical conditioning and academic success.

“We’re so thankful for the Santoras’ exemplary commitment to UC Athletics,” said director Michael Izzi. “Their leadership and dedication to the success of our student-athletes is paramount to our pursuit of excellence on and off the playing field.”

For her television work, Henderson received a paid trip to Dubai and the $5,500 fee required to participate in LPGA Qualifying School. While competing for UCI, she was a four-time All-Big West first team member.

Anteaters again rank among nation’s best

Thanks to its dominance across multiple sports, UCI earned second place in the 2011-12 Division I-AAA Athletics Directors Association All-Sports rankings of 95 non-football schools. UCI has finished in the division’s top five for six consecutive years, including first-place honors in 2007.

Key postseason successes this spring contributed to the Anteaters’ lofty ranking: a national men’s volleyball title, a fourth-place NCAA finish for women’s water polo and Charles Jock’s 800-meter NCAA championship win in track. In fall 2011, men’s soccer advanced to the second round of the NCAA final, and women’s soccer competed in the first round.

Among all NCAA Division I institutions, the Anteaters placed 69th of 282 schools that scored postseason points – the highest-ranking Big West Conference member in the Learfield Sports Directors’ Cup standings. UCI finished above such Football Bowl Subdivision schools as Boise State, Texas Tech, Georgia Tech, Utah, Wake Forest, UNLV and Washington State.
Men's basketball will receive national television exposure when ESPNU broadcasts UCI's game Wednesday, Jan. 9, against new Big West Conference member Hawaii at the Bren Events Center.

The Anteaters' home schedule also includes nonconference games against University of Nevada – in the Mountain West Conference – on Saturday, Nov. 10, and LSU – in the Southeastern Conference – on Tuesday, Dec. 18.

On the road, UCI faces UCLA on Tuesday, Nov. 13; UNLV on Wednesday, Nov. 28; and USC on Thursday, Dec. 20. The team competes against Liberty, Southern Mississippi and host Sam Houston State in the Legends Classic in Huntsville, Texas, on Monday through Wednesday, Nov. 19-21.

Led by third-year head coach Russell Turner, the Anteaters will open Big West Conference play on Saturday, Dec. 29, at home against UC Davis – with all five starters returning from last season. UCI will take on Cal State Northridge at homecoming on Saturday, Jan. 12.

The Big West tournament will be held March 14-16 at the Honda Center in Anaheim.

Senior Michael Wilder tops the returning league players in points (762), assists (162), field goals made (223), three-pointers made (152), free throws made (164) and minutes played (2,321).
UCI Medalists show what it means to ‘Be the Light’

This fall’s UCI Medal event – “A Celebration of Stars” – will honor two couples and one individual who have made exceptional contributions to the university’s mission of teaching, research and public service.

The annual Medal was first awarded in 1984 to UCI founding Chancellor Daniel G. Aldrich Jr. It was the beginning of a tradition – started by then-Chancellor Jack W. Peltason. Honorees have included Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize winners, authors, inventors, captains of industry, scientists and pioneers in virtually every field of endeavor.

This year’s theme, “Be the Light,” is taken from the University of California motto: “Fiat Lux,” or “Let there be light.” Mirrors, water features and gold-and-silver decor will reflect the idea that donors, innovation and research, and dedicated students help light the path to a better future.

“UCI has become a top-tier university because of exceptional people,” said Chancellor Michael Drake. “The Medal ceremony is a wonderful way to pay tribute to individuals who have helped pave the way to a brighter future for UCI and its positive impact in our community. We are proud to bestow these awards in recognition of their many contributions.”

Tickets to the October event may be reserved at medal.uci.edu or by calling 949-824-9801.

Recipients of the 2012 UCI Medal are:

Sue and Bill Gross

Sue and Bill Gross developed a keen interest in healthcare and stem cell advances at UCI after seeing Hans Keirstead, UCI professor of anatomy & neurobiology and one of the nation’s pioneers in human embryonic stem cell research, on “60 Minutes.” The television news magazine described Keirstead’s use of a treatment derived from human embryonic stem cells to improve mobility in laboratory animals with spinal cord injuries.

The couple toured Keirstead’s lab and later made a $10 million gift to UCI supporting construction of Sue & Bill Gross Hall: A CIRM Institute, which recently celebrated its two-year anniversary.

Bill Gross is co-founder of the Newport Beach-based international investment firm PIMCO. He is one of the world’s most prominent investors, managing nearly $2 trillion, including the biggest mutual fund. The author of several books who has appeared globally on television, Gross has 42 years of investment experience and an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management. He received his undergraduate degree from Duke University.

Sue Gross, a twin, was born in Phoenix, attended high school in Chula Vista and graduated from Saddleback College. She married Bill Gross in 1985, and between them, they have three children. She’s president of the Gross Family Foundation, the largest such entity in Orange County.

The couple live in Laguna Beach and are devoted yoga students. Known for their generous gifts to educational and healthcare institutions, the Grosses also fund the annual Orange County Teachers of the Year awards and are the most active donors in history to Doctors Without Borders.

Elizabeth Loftus

Elizabeth Loftus is renowned for her groundbreaking work on the malleability of human memory. A UCI Distinguished Professor, she holds faculty positions in the School of Social Ecology, School of Social Sciences and School of Law.

Since earning a doctorate in psychology at Stanford University, Loftus has published 22 books (including the award-winning Eyewitness Testimony) and 500 scientific articles. Her 30 years of research have focused on the misinformation effect, eyewitness fallibility, and the creation and nature of false memories. Loftus has contributed her expertise to hundreds of high-profile criminal cases, including those of Martha Stewart, the Hillside Strangler, Oliver North, Scooter Libby and Michael Jackson.
Past president of the Association for Psychological Science, she has received six honorary doctorates and been elected to the National Academy of Sciences. In a list of the 100 most eminent psychologists of the 20th century, the journal *Review of General Psychology* placed Loftus at No. 58 – making her the top-ranked woman.

Betty Tu and David Tsoong

Betty Tu, M.D., and David Tsoong, M.D., have supported UCI for more than a decade. The married couple owns Pinnacle Resources International Inc., a holding company focused on international real estate and senior living.

Tu established a private obstetrics-gynecology practice in Anaheim and, until retiring in 2005, was a clinical professor at USC’s Keck School of Medicine. She served as chair and is a member of several committees at the American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists. Tu earned an MBA in 1999 at UCI’s Paul Merage School of Business and in 2007 was honored with its Lauds & Laurels Distinguished Alumni Award.

Tsoong was a surgical intern at UC Irvine Medical Center and, after orthopedic surgical training in New York, returned to Orange County for private practice. He’s a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American College of Surgeons. Tsoong founded and managed Gateway Medical Group, StarCare Medical Group and Pinnacle Health Resources. A former member of UC Irvine Medical Center’s Executive Council, he was on the UC Irvine Foundation’s Board of Ambassadors and is currently a trustee serving on the foundation’s Nomination & Board Development Committee.

Tu and Tsoong are on The Paul Merage School of Business’ Center for Health Care Management & Policy Advisory Board, the Humanities Dean’s Advisory Council, UC Irvine Medical Center’s CEO Advisory Board and the UCI Medal Steering Committee.

The couple made a major gift to help build UC Irvine Douglas Hospital and were honorary co-chairs of the 2012 UCI Health gala “Healing Under the Stars.”

“A Celebration of Stars” will take place Saturday, Oct. 27, at the Bren Events Center and will feature a reception and formal dinner, Medalist tributes and entertainment. Past recipients of the UCI Medal also will be highlighted.

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**Gift will support robotic technology to treat cancer patients**

A $600,000 donation from a grateful patient to Dr. William Armstrong, chair of the otolaryngology department at UC Irvine Douglas Hospital, will be used to purchase two state-of-the-art pieces of da Vinci robotic equipment to treat cancer patients.

The most recent version of the da Vinci Surgical System, featuring three-dimensional, high-definition vision and miniaturized, wristed instruments designed to take surgery beyond the limits of the human hand, is used in UC Irvine Douglas Hospital’s new, digitally integrated, high-tech operating rooms.

An anonymous donor, whose life was saved by Armstrong, asked the prominent neck and head cancer surgeon what he could use to be even more effective. The resultant gift will fund a da Vinci console and simulator for teaching surgeons advanced robotic techniques in cancer surgery.
Analogous to a driver’s education setup, this equipment lets an assistant surgeon and a master surgeon work together in parallel consoles that communicate. The master surgeon can cede instrument control to the assistant – who has the same view of the surgical field – or keep/reclaim it.

Armstrong’s vision is to develop, effectively utilize and continuously improve surgical training through revolutionary technology to enhance patient care.

Letter from Vice Chancellor
Gregory R. Leet

With the arrival of autumn and the beginning of another academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a significant milestone and thank all of UC Irvine’s contributors for your absolutely essential philanthropic support of this extraordinary, world-class university. The importance of your dedication and commitment to the success of this institution cannot be overstated.

I am thrilled to announce that UCI’s $1 billion “Shaping the Future” campaign has surpassed its $750 million milestone, and ahead of schedule! Such an accomplishment is only possible through the continued support of UCI Foundation trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, students and community friends. The university is extremely grateful for this unprecedented outpouring of support as we advance toward our $1 billion goal in 2015 – the year UCI will celebrate its 50th anniversary.

It’s also important to note that this is the first comprehensive campaign in UCI’s history and is exceeding the university’s expectations, to date. Average new gifts and commitments per year are nearly twice the average of the decade before the campaign was launched, and total gift transactions per year have increased more than 50 percent over the pre-campaign period. Without question, the “Shaping the Future” campaign is substantially impacting UCI!

Additionally, as part of our commitment to enhance our individual major gifts program and reinforce a “culture of philanthropy” on campus, UCI is making great strides reaching out to current and future campus supporters. In fact, this fiscal year we had nearly 40 percent more individual meetings with friends and supporters than the previous year. We are eager to meet and connect with our friends, parents, alumni and other supporters not only today, but also well into the future to ensure long-term support and advocacy for the university.

So much has been achieved in the midst of serious budget challenges and an atmosphere of continuous change and uncertainty. Despite these challenging times, the “Shaping the Future” campaign is ahead of schedule and on track for success.

As members of the UCI family, we are understandably impressed at the lightning-speed trajectory, unprecedented excellence and brilliance our university has achieved in 47 short years. We also share, and rightfully so, a sense of pride and accomplishment at UCI’s remarkable and rapid ascension into the ranks of the top research and academic institutions in the nation. There’s never been a better time to be an Anteater!

UCI is clearly an engine for solutions, innovation and discovery that is serving our local community, our nation and the world. As further validation of UCI’s exceptional progress, the international publication Times Higher Education recently ranked UCI as one of the top five “new” universities under the age of 50 in the world – and No. 1 in the U.S.!

Let me close by again thanking our thoughtful and generous supporters. Our university is poised to receive the global recognition it so richly deserves, and philanthropy will continue as a key ingredient in UCI’s ascent.

Best regards,

Gregory R. Leet
Vice Chancellor | University Advancement
“Shaping the Future” campaign
www.ucifuture.com/
**Libraries book signing, Oct. 30**

UCI Libraries will host a program and book signing by Walter Stahr, author of *Seward: Lincoln’s Indispensable Man*. 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 30. Langson Library. Free and open to the public. Registration requested. More: 949-824-4651 or email partners@uci.edu.

**Drama: ‘Orlando,’ Nov. 2-4**

Adapted from Virginia Woolf’s novel, “Orlando” examines the nature of identity by following a gender-changing protagonist who travels through five centuries, aging only 36 years, while observing changes in sexual stereotypes, laws, morals and fashion. 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Nov. 2-3; 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 4; 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 3-4. Claire Trevor Theatre. $11-$15. More: 949-824-2787 or www.arts.uci.edu/calendar.

**University Club Forum, Nov. 7**


**Dance: ‘New Slate,’ Nov. 15-17**

Claire Trevor School of the Arts faculty members Molly Lynch and Tong Wang will direct new dance works by graduate student choreographers. 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Nov. 15, 16 and 17; 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17. Claire Trevor Theatre. $11-$15. More: 949-824-2787 or www.arts.uci.edu/calendar.

> More campus events
http://today.uci.edu/calendar
Earth-friendly UCI again makes ‘Coolest Schools’ list

We knew it all along, and now it’s official: UCI is cool.

For the third year running, UCI made Sierra magazine’s list of the top 10 “Coolest Schools.” The annual ranking salutes U.S. colleges and universities that help solve climate problems, make significant efforts to operate sustainably, and help prepare the next generation of leaders in this arena. Judged on education, research, operations and management practices, UCI placed ninth.

Wendell Brase, UCI vice chancellor for administrative & business services, said the application and evaluation process was rigorous. “There are many good institutions on this list, all doing great things in the area of sustainability. We’re pleased to be part of such an outstanding group,” he said.

UCI has traditionally scored well for its efforts to reduce automobile traffic to and from campus, energy-efficient buildings, waste diversion and water savings. On the academic side, UCI manages three field research sites within the University of California’s Natural Reserve System and has partnerships with another five locations within California and abroad; operates 37 research centers, institutes and programs related to sustainability; and has more than 175 faculty members involved in collaborative research and instruction across an array of relevant issues.

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Topping-out ceremony held for Gavin Herbert Eye Institute

A special “topping-out” celebration was held at the site of UCI’s Gavin Herbert Eye Institute, acknowledging both the completion of the concrete frame for Orange County’s only academic eye institute and those who are driving the effort.

The 70,000-square-foot facility is being funded entirely through local private philanthropy. UC Irvine Health has raised 75 percent of the $37 million goal for the “Shine the Light” capital campaign and is on schedule to open the institute in summer 2013.

A generous $500,000 donation from philanthropists Kelly and James Mazzo set an upbeat tone at the ceremony.

“As chairman of The Gavin Herbert Eye Institute board,” James Mazzo said, “I take great pride in seeing the completion of the structural frame and in knowing that we will have a world-class eye institute here in Orange County for many years to come.”

The institute’s initial naming gift came from Gavin Herbert, chairman emeritus of Allergan Inc., and his mother, Josephine Gleis, in 2007.

More than 150 donors, dignitaries, physicians and staff members signed a commemorative glass pane that will hang in The Gavin Herbert Eye Institute. From left are James Mazzo and Dr. Roger Steinert, institute director.
Building a better **mosquito** to fight malaria

**Mosquitoes bred to be unable to infect people with the malaria parasite could help curb one of the world’s most pressing public health issues, according to UCI scientists.**

Anthony James and colleagues from UCI and the Pasteur Institute in Paris have produced a model of the *Anopheles stephensi* mosquito – a major source of malaria in India and the Middle East – that impairs the development of the malaria parasite. These mosquitoes, in turn, cannot transmit the disease through their bites.

“Our group has made significant advances with the creation of transgenic mosquitoes,” said James, a Distinguished Professor of microbiology & molecular genetics and molecular biology & biochemistry. “But this is the first model of a malaria vector with a genetic modification that can potentially exist in wild populations and be transferred through generations without affecting their fitness.”

![The Anopheles stephensi mosquito is a major vector of malaria in India and the Middle East.](Image)

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 300 million to 500 million cases of malaria occur globally each year, and nearly 1 million people die of the disease annually – largely infants, young children and pregnant women, most of them in Africa.

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Seeing is believing for recipients of **tiny eye telescope**

**Two UCI ophthalmologists are the first in Orange County to implant a miniature telescope in the eyes of patients with end-stage age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness among older Americans.**

The device restores a portion of vision lost to the disease. UCI’s Gavin Herbert Eye Institute is the sole facility in the county and among only a few nationwide to offer this new technology. Last December, Dr. Marjan Farid implanted the 4-millimeter telescope in the left eye of an 85-year-old Irvine woman. In May, Dr. Sumit “Sam” Garg implanted the device in a 94-year-old Anaheim resident’s right eye.

“Macular degeneration damages the retina and causes a blind spot in the center of a person’s field of vision,” said Garg, medical director of The Gavin Herbert Eye Institute. “The telescope projects an image onto an undamaged portion of the retina, making it possible for patients to recognize faces, read and perform daily activities.”

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UC Irvine Medical Center ranks high among hospitals

For the 12th consecutive year, UC Irvine Medical Center has made U.S. News & World Report’s list of “America’s Best Hospitals.” Its geriatrics program placed 35th among the country’s top 50.

“We’re proud of the outstanding care our physicians, nurses and staff provide the people of Orange County – as shown by our consistent recognition as a top hospital,” said Terry A. Belmont, CEO of UC Irvine Medical Center. “We’re committed to delivering compassionate, quality-driven and world-class patient care.”

Stem cell research gets $20 million boost

UCI researchers Aileen Anderson and Brian Cummings, in collaboration with StemCells Inc., recently received a $20 million award from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine to develop human clinical trials for cervical spinal cord injury.

Anderson and Cummings, associate professors of physical medicine & rehabilitation at UCI’s Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center, proved that transplanting human neural stem cells – discovered and developed by StemCells Inc. – into rodents with thoracic spinal cord injury could restore mobility.

The CIRM award will fund the collection of data necessary to establish human clinical trials in the U.S.
Voters in November will be asked to decide Proposition 30, an initiative that would raise new state revenue through temporary increases in the state sales tax and the personal income tax on those who earn $250,000 or more per year. It is sponsored by Gov. Jerry Brown and is part of the 2012-13 budget approved by state lawmakers.

The University of California Board of Regents has endorsed Prop. 30, noting that if the initiative fails, UC is scheduled to receive a budget reduction of $250 million this year and lose an additional $125 million next year.

Already, state funding for UC has dropped by nearly $900 million – or about 27 percent – over the last four years. At UC Irvine, this has resulted in sharp tuition increases, slowed enrollment growth, staff layoffs, academic program cuts and other reductions.

UC also has embarked on a program to save $500 million through administrative efficiencies over a five-year period.

The regents, in endorsing Prop. 30, noted that further budget reductions could restrict access to the high-quality education that Californians have come to expect from the university.

Prop. 30 has active campaign organizations on both sides. Opponents of the measure say that the initiative would harm small businesses. They emphasize that it raises taxes on all Californians, not just the wealthy. Supporters say it will help stabilize the state’s fiscal picture and prevent deep budget cuts to public education. A majority vote will decide the issue Nov. 6.

The university cannot tell people how to vote, and UC employees are precluded by law from using state resources, time or equipment to lobby either for or against any ballot measure. The university can, however, share factual information about a ballot measure’s impact on the university. And members of the UC community are free to participate in political activities on their own time and using their own resources.

The following resources provide more detailed information:

- Proposition 30

- Proposition 30 fact sheet

- UC Regents’ endorsement resolution
  www.universityofcalifornia.edu/regents/aar/julf.pdf

- Regents endorse Proposition 30 (press release)
  www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/28037

- Academic Senate Memorial on Proposition 30
  www.universityofcalifornia.edu/senate/RMA2Yudof_MemorialResults_FINALMW.pdf

- Opponents
  www.stopprop30.com

- Supporters
  www.yesonprop30.com

- Election information
  www.sos.ca.gov
In memoriam: R. Duncan Luce

R. Duncan Luce, a pioneering mathematical psychologist at UCI and 2003 National Medal of Science winner, died Aug. 11 after a short illness. He was 87.

Hailed as one of the most influential figures in the social sciences, Luce combined formal math models and psychological experiments to understand and predict aspects of human behavior, fundamentally altering theories of individual and group decision making.

His nine books – including Individual Choice Behavior – are widely recognized as groundbreaking in both economics and psychology and have been used by generations of students and academics.

Luce’s work over half a century, which also yielded more than 250 scientific articles, crossed disciplinary boundaries to offer an innovative perspective on human behavior.

“Duncan Luce was one of the giants in the social and behavioral sciences and an exemplary scholar, educator and human being,” said Barbara Dosher, dean of UCI’s School of Social Sciences. “He contributed to our intellectual lives – but also to our community, where he quietly set an example of kindness and generosity that will be long remembered.”

R. Duncan Luce was the first University of California professor to receive the National Medal of Science in social sciences.

Bryant appointed interim provost

Susan V. Bryant, an internationally acclaimed biologist with 40 years’ experience at UCI, was named interim executive vice chancellor and provost, effective in July.

Bryant will oversee academics and operations, with responsibility for schools, research programs, and financial and strategic planning. In addition, she will shepherd the recruitment, development and maintenance of high-quality faculty and students while managing budget challenges.

She joined the UCI faculty in 1969 and held leadership positions from 1973 to 2010, including vice chancellor of research and dean of biological sciences. She suspended her retirement to serve as interim provost.

“Susan Bryant is an outstanding leader, scientist, teacher and administrator,” said Chancellor Michael Drake. “She’s a leading expert in the study of limb regeneration, with research highlighted in more than 100 publications. In addition, she’s a champion of initiatives that improve our university and community, from stem cell research to gender and diversity equity in the sciences.”

Bryant succeeds Michael R. Gottfredson, who became president of the University of Oregon.
Klimow to lead community and government relations office

Kate Klimow has joined UCI as assistant vice chancellor for community and government relations. In this role, she provides leadership in developing and implementing programs and strategies to engage community and government leaders in support of campus priorities.

Most recently, Klimow served as vice president for government and community affairs at the Orange County Business Council, where she directed public affairs strategies and managed an advocacy program championing legislative, regulatory and public policy issues to improve Orange County’s economic and business climate.

“I am thrilled to be part of such a prestigious and respected institution as UCI,” said Klimow, who started her new job Aug. 27. “With a public affairs career focused on bridging business and government, I look forward to applying my skills to help make UCI’s next 50 years as successful as the first. Of course, being married to an Anteater [Dave Golbeck ’81] makes it personal too.”

Vandell named founding dean of education

Deborah Lowe Vandell, chair of UCI’s Department of Education since 2006, has been appointed the first dean of the UCI School of Education – officially established July 18 by vote of the University of California Board of Regents.

Vandell is widely credited with leading the unit’s transformation from a department to a school by attracting top-flight talent and creating a rigorous program that prepares more teachers than any other UC campus. UCI’s education students are intensely recruited, with more than 90 percent placed in California classrooms upon graduation.

The evolution from department to school was validation of years of diligent, high-quality work, Vandell said: “The faculty, students and staff at UCI have been united in our mission to build an education school for the future, one that brings together early childhood development, after-school and summer programs, technology and online learning, along with our strengths in K-12 and higher education. I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as the founding dean for a school of education that’s taking this comprehensive approach.”
Thompson tapped as first editor of Huntington’s disease journal

UCI neuroscientist Leslie Thompson has been named editor-in-chief of the first academic journal dedicated to Huntington’s disease.

The quarterly Journal of Huntington’s Disease features original research in basic science, translational research and clinical studies. Thompson, professor of psychiatry & human behavior and neurobiology & behavior, is a leading HD researcher – the seventh most cited over the past 25 years.

“This is an exciting opportunity,” she said. “There’s enough momentum in the field to have a dedicated journal, and it’ll be a very comprehensive resource for the HD community.”

Thompson has been a pioneer in the exploration of stem cell-based HD treatments and is affiliated with the Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center, UCI MIND and the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Joan Steffan and Larry Marsh of UCI, both among the top 100 cited HD researchers, are on the journal’s editorial board.

Liu Chen honored for plasma physics research

The American Physical Society has awarded UCI physics & astronomy professor Liu Chen the $10,000 James Clerk Maxwell Prize in Plasma Physics for outstanding contributions to the field.

“I’m truly honored to be recognized,” he said. “This award is especially meaningful to me as it caps my 40 years of professional life in the U.S.”

Chen has long been committed to theoretical research in plasma physics and its applications in space science and fusion energy. He joins a prestigious list of prize recipients and plans to continue his work at UCI and at Zhejiang University in China.
UC Irvine recaptured the Guinness world record for largest dodgeball game Sept. 25 with 6,084 participants. It’s the third time the university has held the title; annual attempts to reclaim it have become a Welcome Week tradition.