At UC Irvine, students like Nithin Jilla (on the cover) learn much more than what’s presented in their textbooks. They chart their own course, and they learn leadership.

Jilla’s commitment to improving education for poor students in Africa prompted him to organize the UCI chapter of Kenya Dream. You can read about his efforts on Page 2.

A third-year information & computer science major, he’s also involved in all kinds of on-campus programs to help students here succeed. He’s been a marketing intern for the UCI Career Center and serves as the ICS Student Council vice president of external affairs. Last November, he and other UCI undergraduates led a novel “AppJam” competition in which they taught teams of middle schoolers in Irvine and Anaheim to develop smartphone apps to help even younger kids learn math, technology and science.

In short, Jilla has taken full advantage of the resources UCI offers tomorrow’s leaders. He credits his campus mentors with showing him how to promote his cause, recruit fellow volunteers and raise funds to make Kenya Dream a reality.

When he graduates in June (one year early), he’ll join the ranks of UCI alumni who have gone out into the world and made it better – those with their own dreams.

And there will be something new waiting for him whenever he returns to campus: the Newkirk Alumni Center. Read about the UCI Alumni Association’s plans to engage current and future alumni on Page 17. (Given Jilla’s track record, he’ll be heavily involved in the association too.)

In the meantime, Jilla will continue to do what he’s done since his first day on campus: He’ll dream big.
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Dreaming big:
After starting a campus club to assist schools in Kenya, UCI undergraduate Nithin Jilla now aims to improve access to education on a global scale.

Going viral:
UCI microbiologist Bert Semler ’74 seeks to stop certain viruses from replicating, changing the way we fight the common cold and other illnesses.

Quite the character:
Whether he’s performing before a TV camera or in UCI’s intimate New Swan Theater, drama professor Richard Brestoff breathes life into a script.

Fill ’em up:
Students help outfit the campus with new hydration stations to turn the tide against wasteful consumption.

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After starting a campus club to assist Kenya schools, UCI undergraduate Nithin Jilla now aims to improve access to education on a global scale

When Nithin Jilla first floated the idea of starting a club at UC Irvine to raise serious money for secondary schools in Kenya, he encountered skepticism — and for good reason. It was the summer of 2010, and he was just a freshman who hadn’t even taken his first class.

“I was at SPOP [UCI’s Student Parent Orientation Program], and we were talking about what goals we wanted to accomplish during college. I said I wanted to help less fortunate students in Kenya get an education,” recalls Jilla, now a third-year information & computer science major. “People were in disbelief. They didn’t think it would happen.”

They don’t doubt him anymore. Since he came to campus and founded the UCI chapter of Kenya Dream, the group has covered two years’ tuition for 16 students through The School Fund and raised more than $50,000 for renovation projects at three Kenyan schools.
Members are supporting efforts to rebuild a science lab at a secondary school in Nthimbiri that currently has no roof and a few old pieces of equipment; create a library and provide textbooks for students at Nkubu Victory Academy; and fix a dilapidated school in Kachiuru.

“I got involved in Kenya Dream at Cupertino High School. When I came to UCI, I wanted to take it to the next level. So I went out there and tapped into the campus resources,” Jilla says. “I met with other student leaders, my hallmates and administrators in different departments, such as Student Affairs and dining, for help with organizing our events. The more I told people about Kenya Dream, the more they were in on it.”

Thanks in part to his charisma, the chapter quickly grew to about 30 members, most of them freshmen and sophomores new to the ways of fundraising. Jilla proved so adept at marshaling support and planning events that he received the 2011 Anteater Award for campus organization President of the Year, a rare honor for a freshman.

“I’m very social for an ICS major,” he jokes. “I love talking with people and being able to connect with them.”

Sandy Jones, executive director of student government, first heard about Jilla when he sought help for Kenya Dream from the Associated Students’ Student Programming Funding Board. He made one of the best presentations panel members had ever seen.

“Nithin is unique in his ability to create a compelling vision that motivates teams and execute the smaller and less glamorous tasks necessary to fulfill it,” Jones says. “He’s not an idealist – he’s a realist working toward an ideal. He sees Kenya Dream as a pilot model for a larger network of student philanthropists. He’s an example of how UCI attracts and cultivates global leaders.”

His first year here, Jilla and fellow volunteers wasted no time launching a major event: Ken-Ya Dance. He lined up popular dance crews such as UCI’s Kaba Modern and, in spring 2011, put on a show that nearly filled the Bren Events Center. “I wanted to go big,” Jilla says. The affair broke even, but he learned from his mistakes. The spring 2012 Ken-Ya Dance netted more than $10,000.
Jilla has a gift for guerilla marketing. To publicize the dance showcase, he and several club members donned sandwich boards and wandered around Celebrate UCI. They plastered stickers on Zot-n-Go cup holders and on cards in the napkin holders of campus dining halls.

Kenya Dream originated in 2006 when Jilla and his classmates at Cupertino High School made an unusual pledge their freshman year. Instead of raising money for parties, dances and proms, the class of 2010 would donate all proceeds for the next four years to helping Kenyan students afford an education. Kenya Dream soon grew into a schoolwide endeavor with support from the Rotary Club, which manages the projects in Africa.

“I got involved in Kenya Dream at Cupertino High School. When I came to UCI, I wanted to take it to the next level. So I went out there and tapped into the campus resources.”

“If I wasn’t doing this, I’d miss it. That’s why I started the club at UCI,” Jilla says. “I’m inspired by the values outlined by Chancellor [Michael] Drake for the university: appreciation, intellectual curiosity, integrity, respect, commitment, empathy and fun. That’s what Kenya Dream is all about.”

Jilla has been busy helping UCI students attain better futures too. As the ICS Student Council’s past corporate outreach chair and current vice president of external affairs, he’s met with executives from Microsoft, Google and other companies, increasing the number of those that participate in UCI career fairs and other on-campus recruiting efforts from 20 to 150.

His own resume is impressive. Last year, as a marketing intern for the UCI Career Center, Jilla came up with the idea of promoting the facility with posters featuring student testimonials.

“Instead of just saying, ‘Come to the center,’” he says, “we shared stories of engineering students – with quotes about how the center helped them find a job – and we posted them around the engineering school. We tried to target the testimonials toward each school.”

Jilla also served as an ASUCI Bren Events Center Advisory Board member and helped organize the first TEDxUCIrvine conference last February, lining up 18 speakers, meeting with professors, touting the event on social media, recruiting interns, etc.

Despite his packed schedule, he’s on track to earn a bachelor’s degree in ICS next June – one year early – then work in the industry and start his own company. “I have a passion for technology, nonprofits and business. I want to bring them together,” Jilla says.

Before leaving UCI, though, he’s got plans. He wants to launch a fundraiser called Ken-Ya Sing in the winter quarter that will feature vocal groups from the area.

Jilla’s also working to expand Kenya Dream. He and former high school classmate Justin Li, now a UC Berkeley undergraduate, recently created a nonprofit called Dream for Schools to improve access to education globally.

“We want to get people all over the nation involved. We want to build this as big as other established organizations like UNICEF and the Red Cross,” Jilla says.

Think he’ll succeed? He may have his doubters, as he did when beginning at UCI, but anyone who has collaborated with him on Kenya Dream believes.
Whether you’re interested in anime or archery, tango or Toastmasters, billiards or beach volleyball, there’s a club for that at UCI. The university has more than 600, and they tend to change with the times.

“Our clubs are forever evolving. Every year, new ones form and others drop off, but the overall number continues to grow,” says Sherwynn Umali ’03, director of campus organizations.

Gaining momentum, she says, are those like Kenya Dream that bring students together for a common cause. They include Right to Know, dedicated to raising awareness of and eliminating sexual violence, and Anteaters Habitat for Humanity.

Clubs also let students pursue creative outlets. DIY Craft & Art has led workshops on do-it-yourself projects such as laptop cases made from recycled sweatshirts, while Electronic Dance Union welcomes disc jockeys who want to share their turntable scratching techniques and other skills.

Anteaters can peruse the various groups at Student Life & Leadership’s Campus Organizations website, www.campusorgs.uci.edu. Umali’s office helps members with event planning, marketing and risk management.

“Clubs are vital to UCI life,” she says. “They educate students outside the classroom.”

During the Anteater Involvement Fair, Jilla dons a sandwich board to promote Kenya Dream.
UCI microbiologist Bert Semler ‘74 seeks to stop certain viruses from replicating, changing the way we fight the common cold and other illnesses.
Growing up, Bert Semler ’74 was never a “science nerd.” He read a lot and played sports, but it wasn’t until he came to UC Irvine to earn a bachelor’s degree in biological sciences that he found his calling: studying viruses.

“What hooked me were the molecular biology and virology courses I took,” he says. “I became intrigued by how genetically simple viruses are, how you can alter them and see them change in real time, and how those changes can impact diseases. Once I started working on them, I wasn’t going to change.”

Good thing he stuck with it. Now a microbiology & molecular genetics professor at his alma mater, Semler has furthered the science community’s understanding of how viruses behave. The director of UCI’s Center for Virus Research, he’s become a recognized leader in his field, receiving numerous awards and serving as the 2011-12 president of the American Society for Virology, an editor of the Journal of Virology from 2002-12, and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Last August, his lab announced a key discovery regarding a class of RNA viruses responsible for hepatitis, viral meningitis and other diseases. Working with Dutch researchers and UCI colleagues, Semler showed how these so-called picornaviruses reproduce by hijacking a DNA repair activity of human cells.

He recently discussed his efforts to understand how viruses replicate – knowledge that could lead to new treatments for everything from paralytic polio to the common cold.

**What interests you about viruses?**

Viruses are not just passive entities. They can’t do anything on their own, but in the context of their host, they can take over a lot of functions. They’re able to get their program in place, and that program is to make more of themselves.

The problem with trying to stop them from reproducing is that viruses develop a resistance to drugs fairly quickly. When researchers discovered that the human immunodeficiency virus causes AIDS, for instance, they had one drug to treat it, but the virus quickly mutated to fight it. So now they give three drugs for HIV, which makes it harder for the virus to become resistant.

Our lab takes a different tack [to stopping viruses]. We’re exploring new frontiers in how infectious agents interact with their host cells to make more of themselves. Once we understand the mechanism of replication, we can study how to interfere with that process and develop treatments.

**What’s the primary focus of your research?**

My lab studies picornaviruses such as human rhinovirus, poliovirus and coxsackie virus, which causes hand, foot and mouth disease, primarily in infants and children. In 2007, a new, more virulent strain of an enterovirus, [a type of picornavirus] closely related to coxsackie virus, triggered a small epidemic in Asia, and kids got very sick. [A reported 22 died.]

Picornaviruses have ribonucleic acid, or RNA, as their genetic material, rather than deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA. Because these viruses are genetically simple, they depend a lot on their host cells.

One of their unique properties is that they have a protein attached to the end of their genomic RNA. Scientists have known about that since the 1970s. We’ve also known that the protein is cleaved from some RNAs of these viruses during their replication cycles. For years, picornavirus researchers wondered about the identity of the enzyme activity that carried out this cleavage. Our lab decided to reopen that book.

“I became intrigued by how genetically simple viruses are, how you can alter them and see them change in real time, and how those changes can impact diseases.”
Your recent study sheds light on this phenomenon. What did you learn?

We discovered the identity of the host cell activity that cleaves the protein from picornavirus RNAs. This activity is carried out by a cellular enzyme called TDP2, which is part of the DNA repair process in normal, uninfected cells. We were quite surprised it turned out to be this enzyme because picornavirus genomes are composed of RNA, not DNA. The enzyme had never been shown to work on RNA before.

What's the significance of this finding?

All picornaviruses have the same linkage of protein to their RNA, and if cleavage of that protein is required for them to replicate, we could find a small molecule or drug to inhibit that activity. That's what I'm trying to show now – that inhibiting this enzyme activity could stop the virus in its tracks.

Will this lead to a cure for the common cold?

Perhaps, but I may not see it in my lifetime. For most of us, colds last three to five days. By the time an antiviral medication might get into your system, you're probably on your way to getting better. But it could happen. The American Asthma Foundation funded our rhinovirus study because people who have asthma suffer greatly when they get a cold. The hope is that we can someday prescribe a medication to help them.

With our approach, we're not targeting the virus itself but one of the functions it needs to reproduce. If we can find drugs or small molecules to stop that process, we may be able to treat all illnesses caused by picornaviruses. That includes the cold.

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

“Viruses are not just passive entities. They can't do anything on their own, but in the context of their host, they can take over a lot of functions.”

About the UCI Center for Virus Research

As the threat from emerging viruses such as Ebola and SARS grows worldwide, UCI’s Center for Virus Research finds itself on the forefront of efforts to understand how viruses work.

Launched 25 years ago, the center is unique in that it draws upon a range of disciplines to unlock viruses’ secrets, including molecular biology, evolutionary biology, immunology, pathogenesis, biochemistry, structural biology, proteomics, and biomedical engineering.

“The idea is to collaborate among the faculty and share our expertise,” says Bert Semler, the center’s director for the last two years. “For our study of picornaviruses, we have collaborated with molecular biology & biochemistry professor Paul Gershon to take advantage of his expertise in proteomics and mass spectrometry in order to identify host cell proteins that viruses use to replicate.

That’s the kind of research our center facilitates.”

Among the viruses studied at the center are murine leukemia virus, human immunodeficiency virus, poliovirus, human rhinovirus, coxsackie virus, vaccinia virus, papillomavirus, herpes simplex virus, polyomavirus, and adenovirus, as well as arenaviruses and coronaviruses.

The Center for Virus Research has two laboratories for dealing with infectious agents that have a biosafety level 2 rating. (Viruses are ranked on a scale of 1 to 4; the more dangerous the virus, the more precautions needed to contain it.)

“We don’t handle the most pathogenic viruses – the nastier stuff,” Semler explains. “Ours is a level of containment where you don’t have to wear a space suit.”
Richard Brestoff (with dagger) as the vengeful Shylock and Greg Beam, M.F.A. '12 as Antonio in the UCI production of "The Merchant of Venice"

Whether he’s performing before a TV camera or in UCI’s intimate New Swan Theater, drama professor Richard Brestoff breathes life into a script.
Last summer, during a production of “The Merchant of Venice” at UC Irvine’s New Swan Shakespeare Festival, Richard Brestoff – the UCI drama professor who won accolades for his portrayal of the vengeful loan shark Shylock – was thrown for a loop just as he was about to launch into a pivotal monologue. There on the ground level of the mini-Elizabethan theater, a young man sitting just off the stage uncrossed his legs and appeared to sigh. Heavily.

“It distracted me enough that I lost a couple words,” recalls Brestoff, who assumed the playgoer was bored. Fortunately, the actor recovered so quickly that only a Shakespearean scholar would’ve known he had deviated from the script.

“It’s a challenge to hold your concentration when you see these instant reviews,” he says.

Despite the peculiarities of performing in a small house like the 125-seat New Swan, Brestoff found the role of Shylock to be one of the most satisfying of his long and varied acting career. He’s appeared in more than 30 television shows (“thirtysomething,” “The Fugitive”) and a dozen feature films (“My Favorite Year,” “The Entity,” “Car Wash”). He’s also appeared in regional theaters, off-Broadway and on radio.
“The character of Shylock turned out to be something I was finally ready to play. He’s so interesting,” Brestoff says. “He’s a normal person, but life’s damage over time has made him capable of monstrous behavior. That’s his flaw.

“You reach a certain age, and you gain enough control of your craft that you can take on these complex, demanding roles, and they seem to fit.”

His performance in the Claire Trevor School of the Arts’ winter 2011 production of “Merchant” earned him a nomination for the Falstaff Award, coveted among Shakespearean actors.

“There was no other actor nominated from a university production. I don’t even know how they found out about me,” Brestoff says. The other nominees – including Kevin Spacey for “Richard III” – performed in professional theaters.

At UCI, he counsels drama students about the realities of their career choice.

“I used to really scare them and tell them only 4 percent of Screen Actors Guild members find work, and less than 1 percent of those make more than $30,000 a year. But I don’t anymore,” he says. “I don’t want them to go into this blind, but I do know they need to go in with hope. They’ve heard it’s impossible all their lives.”

In particular, Brestoff tells them to expect — and rise above — failure. “You’re going to be rejected way more than you’re accepted,” he says. “Failure is an event, not a person. It’s not who you are. You learn from it and you go on.”

He remembers how devastated he felt after narrowly missing out on the role of Mozart in the movie “Amadeus.” (Tom Hulce won the part.)

“I got as far as a screen test with the wig and the makeup,” Brestoff recalls. “That crushed me. It took me a year and a half to get over the disappointment. That took a toll on me, and I swore I would never let it happen again. You have to pick yourself up and go back out there. Otherwise, [rejection] will drag you to your knees.”

He recommends having outside interests to help weather the highs and lows of acting. Brestoff joined UCI’s Claire Trevor School of the Arts in 2003 to pursue his love of teaching and writing; he’s the author of five books, including The Camera Smart Actor.

“Performing before a camera and a live theater are very different,” he says. “With a camera, you can work in such detail. If I pick up a cup and hold my pinkie out a certain way, that reveals something about my character. The camera can capture these tiny behavioral clues and make them mean something. They get lost in a big theater.”

One exception is the New Swan Theater, where attendees are close enough to catch the smaller movements and expressions.

“We can do some interesting, subtle things, and people will get it,” he says.

Brestoff has developed his own method for fully inhabiting his character, a focus that takes his mind off the audience and helps him overcome the stage fright he’s had since he started acting in junior high.

“I look up into the rafters and feel the presence of the characters I play,” he says. “It’s like they’re ghosts who can’t speak for themselves, and as actors we give them a voice. It gets me onstage, because it’s something larger than myself.”

And if a lone playgoer has itchy feet, it doesn’t matter as long as Brestoff feels he’s given a character like Shylock his day in court.

“If I look up during a performance and see the ‘ghost’ nodding his head, I know I’ve done my job,” he says. “And if he’s not happy, I still have another show tomorrow night.”

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

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For the players involved in UCI’s inaugural New Swan Shakespeare Festival last August, it was a midsummer night’s dream come true.

Any fears that “The Comedy of Errors” or “The Merchant of Venice” – plays written more than four centuries ago – might not appeal to an audience more used to digital, special effects-laden entertainment vanished even before the first scene. The Claire Trevor School of the Arts quickly sold out of tickets to the shows at the New Swan Theater.

“We didn’t think we would sell out in a week or we would have extended the run,” says Richard Brestoff, who played Shylock in “The Merchant of Venice.”

Directed by drama professor and then-chair Eli Simon, the festival featured professional actors as well as drama department grad students and undergraduates; the casts frequently received standing ovations from the 125-member audience.

Why does the bard still fill the seats?

“Shakespeare wrote about the human condition, and that doesn’t really change,” Brestoff says. “Even those accustomed to Facebook connections hunger for emotional ones.”

Playgoers also were intrigued by the New Swan, an open-air Elizabethan-style theater in which the audience sits in three tiers circling the stage. The temporary theater comprises 15 sections, each weighing a ton, that workers assembled like massive Tinkertoys and bolted to the ground in Gateway Commons near Aldrich Park.

“There isn’t a theater like it that we know of; it’s unique,” Brestoff says. “It’s so accessible and public. When we were rehearsing, students, faculty and staff would stand in the doorway and watch us – and we didn’t mind.

“Some audience members had never seen a Shakespeare play. But the New Swan’s informality allows people to say, ‘OK, they’re not shoving culture down our throats.’”

The New Swan Shakespeare Festival will return next summer with productions of “King Lear” and “A Midsummer Night’s Dream.”

“Shakespeare gives you the wings, these golden opportunities to act,” Brestoff says. “He goes so deep into emotions that the play feels newly minted. It’s an astonishing experience.”
UC Irvine staffer Amy Provorse was visiting her daughter at Northern Arizona University when she came upon a hydration station where she could refill her beverage container with filtered water – just like the bottled stuff people pay good money for, but it didn’t cost her a cent.

“It tasted like spring water,” she recalls. “I thought it was the hippest thing.”

Provorse, senior superintendent of skilled trades in UCI’s Facilities Management department, liked the hydration station so much she pitched the idea to her colleagues, and in fall 2010 they installed one in Rowland Hall. Students thought the amenity was hip too and began asking for additional stations, but there wasn’t money in the budget.

The project might have run dry if not for An Vinh Tran ’12 and The Green Initiative Fund, a student-run entity that supports sustainability efforts on campus (see related story). Thanks to the unique student-staff partnership, hydration stations have sprung up all over campus, saving water and reducing plastic pollution with every fill-up.

“The typical bottle of water holds a liter. It takes three times that amount plus one-quarter liter of oil to make a plastic bottle,” Tran says. “The stations save oil and water.”

UCI’s hydration stations and goosenecks dispense 60,000 gallons of filtered water per year, saving 13 tons of plastic.
She began her conservation effort two years ago, when she was studying water usage policy and learned of a disturbing statistic: Only 2.5 percent of the world’s water supply is freshwater, and the amount available for drinking, agriculture and other uses is steadily decreasing due to global warming and growing consumption.

“That number bothered me,” she says. “It opened my eyes. We take water for granted because it’s so cheap. But in the future there’s going to be a shortage.”

Tran contacted The Green Initiative Fund and eventually secured two $17,000 grants for six more hydration stations and replacement filters.

“It was a great collaboration between staff and students,” says Anne Krieghoff, Facilities Management’s superintendent of solid waste & recycling services. “We’ve learned how well we work together.”

In spring 2011, Facilities Management, led by plumbing supervisor Juan Tapia, installed the six stations and retrofitted existing water fountains with goosenecks that also delivered filtered water at an additional 22 locations in UCI’s core buildings. To further saturate the campus, The Green Initiative Fund awarded grants for hydration stations to be placed in residence halls, the Student Center and the Cross-Cultural Center.

The stations and goosenecks dispense 60,000 gallons of filtered water per year (based on meter readings), a savings of 475,000 bottles – or 13 tons of plastic. “And that’s a conservative estimate of their environmental impact,” Krieghoff says. “It really adds up.”

Already, the campus has seen a 17 percent drop in bottled-water sales for 2011-12.

To spread awareness of the importance of water conservation and encourage students to use the stations, Tran and Daniel Crout, Facilities Management’s assistant sign supervisor, also created a poster about the freshwater shortage and the environmental toll of plastic bottles. They devised a campus map of station locations that students can download from the posters into their smartphones via a scan tag – another of Tran’s ideas. The posters now hang at all the stations.

“It’s my message to be water-wise wherever they can,” says Tran, who earned bachelor’s degrees in psychology & social behavior and urban studies last June and hopes to pursue a career in water conservation. “I wanted the locations to be more visible.”

So far, the campaign at UCI is having a ripple effect. Facilities Management has received calls from other universities, high schools and water districts interested in the stations, while Tran has happily fielded inquiries from students on other campuses.

“I’ve changed a lot of my behaviors, but I can’t do it on my own,” she says.

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

While a student at UC Irvine, An Vinh Tran ’12 helped saturate the campus with hydration stations.
Students give green light to sustainability projects

For UCI undergraduates, the letters “TGIF” have special meaning. They signify their efforts to save the planet.

Established in 2009 by a student referendum, TGIF – The Green Initiative Fund – awards about $120,000 a year for projects that fight global climate change and shrink UCI’s carbon footprint.

“TGIF is an amazing way for all students to contribute to the campus’s sustainability efforts,” says Katie Chansler, TGIF sustainability commissioner. “UCI is becoming increasingly known for the changes we’re making. We recently ranked ninth nationally on the Sierra Club’s “Coolest Schools” list of greenest campuses.”

Students pay $3.50 per quarter to fund the initiative. They can apply for grants of up to $50,000, and their proposals are reviewed by a committee of five undergraduates.

TGIF has funded a documentary about the harmful effects of plastic water bottles; a solar-powered stage at the annual Wayzgoose festival; recycling bins; energy-efficient computer hardware at the New University student newspaper; and dozens of other green efforts.

“We’ve supported projects that impact the entire student body and encourage everyone to change [his or her] way of life,” Chansler says.

In 2011-12, when she was a resident adviser at the Vista hall in Mesa Court, she witnessed TGIF’s positive effect firsthand.

“TGIF paid for hydration stations in Mesa Court, and they definitely made a difference in how residents got their water. I always saw people filling up their water bottles and rarely saw plastic bottles in our recycling or trash bins,” Chansler says. “TGIF is a great opportunity to support these kinds of inspiring and progressive projects.”

UCI hydration stations annual savings: 475,000 bottles = 13 tons of plastic

Water, water everywhere but …

- Total volume of water on Earth is 1.4 billion cubic kilometers, most of it salt water. Freshwater resources account for 35 million cubic kilometers, or 2.5 percent, of the total volume.

- About 70 percent of freshwater is in the form of ice or permanent snow cover. About 30 percent is stored underground, but much of it is too deep and unavailable for human use.

- Total usable supply for humans and ecosystems is less than 1 percent of all freshwater resources.

Source: United Nations Environment Programme
Making her case

Alumna Rebecca Kanter helps win justice for fraud victims

Rebecca Kanter ’00, an assistant U.S. attorney in San Diego, has an advantage when prosecuting those accused of embezzlement, tax evasion, fraud and other white-collar crimes: She’s nice.

“I tend to be fairly sweet in court. It’s one of my strengths. I’m very bubbly. At UC Irvine, I was on the cheer squad,” she says. “It takes people by surprise when I come out swinging and do a tough cross-examination. They don’t see it coming.”

It’s a mistake to underestimate Kanter, who’s won hundreds of cases for the U.S. Department of Justice’s criminal division, thanks to her disarming demeanor and extensive legal knowledge. Her success as a prosecutor and her community service earned her San Diego Metropolitan magazine’s 2012 “40 Under 40” award. [Another Anteater-turned-attorney, Nadia Bermudez ’98, made the list in 2007.]

“First and foremost, I’m a trial attorney,” Kanter says. “My job is to help with the investigation and prosecution of major frauds, from inception – when we get the case from law enforcement agencies – to the appeal.”

She’s handled all kinds of cases, including identity theft, mortgage and bankruptcy fraud, drug smuggling and human trafficking. She recently helped convict an Orange County attorney and his mother, a Carlsbad real estate broker, for their roles in an $8 million mortgage scheme affecting 16 Southern California homes. Each received a three-year sentence.

“It’s part of a larger case involving 19 total defendants, and it’s part of a bigger problem,” Kanter says. “Mortgage fraud is on everybody’s mind. It’s important to bring down these large schemes.”

In one of her more unusual cases, she successfully prosecuted a podiatrist from Poway who billed Medicare for performing “incision and drainage” surgery on patients’ feet – when he did nothing more than trim their toenails.

“We looked at a lot of pictures of toes. There was definitely some interesting evidence,” Kanter says.

She also leads a coalition of almost 20 agencies that investigate government procurement crimes. “The government buys all kinds of products and services, especially here in San Diego, where there’s a strong military presence,” she says.

Some cases involve businesses that falsely claim they’re owned by disabled veterans, minorities or women to win government contracts.

“I work with teams from the FBI, Naval Criminal Investigative Service and other agencies who do the videotaping, recordings, surveillance – all the stuff you see on crime TV shows,” she says. “I review the search warrants and work closely with law enforcement to make sure they’re respecting people’s constitutional rights.”

While it’s gratifying to fight fraud on the government’s behalf, Kanter’s favorite cases are about winning justice for individuals.

“The first time I handled a case of identity theft, the victim testified that he’d suffered for years and years from poor credit and having money taken out of his account,” she recalls. “It was rewarding to bring justice to him.”

She’s handled cases involving Internet crimes against children through the Justice Department’s Project Safe Childhood. “Those are definitely the hardest to deal with.”
with because of the emotional component,” she notes, “but they’re the most satisfying because we’re vindicating the rights of children.”

Kanter earned a bachelor’s degree in political science at UCI, always dreaming she’d become an attorney. “I took every class with the word ‘law’ in it,” she says. [Note: The UCI School of Law hadn’t opened yet – it admitted its first students in fall 2009.]

After graduating from the UCLA School of Law and working as an associate for the law firm of O’Melveny & Myers LLP, she soon found her calling: prosecuting criminals. “I love the trial. I love being in front of a jury. I enjoy trying to connect with them,” Kanter says. “My job is really cool.”

In addition to law, she’s committed to environmental causes. “My father’s a marine biologist. Growing up, I spent a lot of time outdoors,” she says. “The environment is my priority.”

Kanter doesn’t just write checks but participates in hands-on events such as beach cleanups or collecting water samples for San Diego Coastkeeper, a nonprofit organization that protects inland and coastal waters. Because of her dedication, the group has inducted Kanter into its volunteer hall of fame.

She’s also a board member of Wildcoast, an international organization that conserves coastal ecosystems and wildlife in Baja and Southern California.

“I served for four years on the UCI Alumni Association board, and that experience gave me the skills I needed to help shape and craft governance policies for Wildcoast,” Kanter says.

And, with the same upbeat attitude of her UCI cheer days, she adds: “I like making an impact. I’m so lucky.”

Kathryn Bold, University Communications

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### Alumni outreach: Bringing Anteaters together

When the UC Irvine Alumni Association was established in 1968, there were fewer than 1,000 graduates of the young campus.

Now, more than four decades later, that number has surpassed 140,000 – about the same as the population of the nearby city of Orange.

Serving those alumni and making the most of their combined talents is the job of the UC Irvine Alumni office, which has long been the sponsor of several high-profile yearly events.

These include Dinner for 12 Anteaters, a networking event for current students and alumni; the Homecoming Street Festival; and Lauds & Laurels, which honors...
outstanding alumni and campus supporters. The office also oversees a scholarship program that awards more than $90,000 annually to top students.

While these are popular offerings, the office, led by Jorge Ancona, has been working hard to find additional ways of engaging the burgeoning alumni community. The first step was to conduct a survey.

“What we heard was that our alumni are proud of their connection to UCI, but they wanted us to provide more opportunities to network with fellow Anteaters, as well as to increase the range of activities that promote getting together in a social setting,” says Ancona, assistant vice chancellor for alumni relations and UCIAA executive director.

To that end, the office last August held the first in a series of free career webinars, “Career Building in a Tough Economy: Networking.” Hundreds of alumni from 20 states and four countries signed up for the event, which was designed to help those just starting out in their careers as well as those interested in reentering the job market or changing careers.

“The response from alumni who attended was very positive, and they had great ideas, which we plan to use for future webinars,” says Allison Dolan Wilson, associate executive director of development and alumni relations.

The office also is holding regular “Anteater MeetUps” – casual gatherings in Orange, Los Angeles and San Diego counties and Washington, D.C. – to encourage networking and mingling.

In addition, a new website is in the works, and several months ago the office changed its name to UC Irvine Alumni, removing the word “association” to more accurately reflect that it serves all alumni, not just association members, Ancona says.

Other changes include a new logo and the inclusion of a tagline: “Strong Together.”

Alumni association membership is growing, thanks in part to a recently added no-cost general membership option. The response was immediate; several hundred alumni signed up in the first few days it was offered.

“We were pleased that this new option was met with such enthusiasm,” says Judy Baek, director of membership and marketing. “I think it shows that people are really proud of their UCI education and that they want the connection to campus that membership provides.”

Annual and lifetime paid memberships are still available with enhanced benefits, such as an online research database of more than 2,000 academic and technical journals, as well as popular newsstand magazines.

Of course, no makeover would be complete without a new home. The Newkirk Alumni Center, which held an open house Jan. 12, is strategically located at the corner of Mesa Road and Alumni Court (formerly the Mesa Court access road). Just a short walk from the athletic venues, the Bren Events Center and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts, the 12,500-square-foot building is intended as a campus gateway. The center provides space for large and small conferences, receptions or outdoor get-togethers, as well as a place to just sip a cup of coffee and relax on the way to a campus meeting or event.

In short, it’s designed to welcome alumni and serve their growing needs, Ancona says.

“We want our alumni to think of our office as a resource as they progress in their careers,” he says. “We want them to come back to campus to attend athletic or cultural events, and we want them to feel good about telling others about the quality of our research and academics.”

Kim Lane, UC Irvine Alumni office
UCI Care-a-thon: On their feet for philanthropy

UCI Care-a-thon, featuring six hours of nonstop dancing, live music, free food, games and raffle prizes, will be held from 6 p.m. to midnight Thursday, Feb. 21. The dance marathon raises funds for critically ill infants in UC Irvine Medical Center’s neonatal intensive care unit.

The Care-a-thon will take place at the UCI Student Center and is open to students, staff, faculty and alumni. Participants are asked to stay on their feet for the full six hours and to secure at least $25 in donations from personal, individual and corporate sponsorships.

Last year’s event raised more than $16,000, which helped purchase a portable ultrasound machine for the NICU.

Organized by the Student Alumni Association, the Care-a-thon is part of UCImpact, a UCI Alumni Association initiative that promotes philanthropy and community engagement. More: www.ucimpact.uci.edu/cause/careathon2013/

CLASS NOTES


Amelie Frank* [Hum. ’81] received the 2012 Distinguished Service Award from Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center in Venice, Calif. Since 1998, Frank has curated poetry readings, panel discussions, fundraisers and art shows and hosted numerous special events to extend and diversify Beyond Baroque’s service to local, national and international constituencies of artists and writers.


Valerie Perkins Kester [SocSci. ’93], a United Airlines pilot and former Air National Guard C-130 Hercules pilot, is one of 71 women spotlighted in Linda Maloney’s new book, Military Fly Moms. This compilation includes photos and stories of female aviators in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

Huesan B. Tran [ICS ’94, MBA ’95] is one of 45 visionaries who each contributed a chapter to the book Pebbles in the Pond: Transforming the World One Person at a Time. Published last May, the compilation invites readers to discover how to transform tough times into great gifts and blessings in life.

David W.C. MacMillan [PhySci. Ph.D. ’96] was among 180 influential artists, scientists, scholars, authors and institutional leaders inducted into the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in October. MacMillan is the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of Chemistry at Princeton University.

David McGlynn [Hum. ’98], former UCI swimming and diving team captain, published a new book, A Door in the Ocean, in July.

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Thomas H. Godwin and Robert Tauler [SocSci. ’01] recently opened Godwin Tauler LLP, a trial and appellate law firm that focuses on commercial litigation matters, including business disputes, class-action defense, real estate, securities, unfair competition and trade practices, as well as intellectual property.

Mayte Santacruz Benavidez [SocSci. ’05] is president-elect of the Hispanic Bar Association of Orange County. She’s being honored as Attorney of the Year by the Public Law Center and recently received the State Bar of California President’s Pro Bono Service Award for her incredible commitment to such work.

Sandra Lloyd [BioSci. ’07] graduated from Oregon State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine in August. Lloyd is currently a practicing veterinarian in the Reno, Nev., area.

Kristine Thompson [M.F.A. ’07], Gordon Winiemko [M.F.A. ’07] and Tammy Rae Carland [M.F.A. ’94] were among 29 recipients of 2012 Visual Arts, Craft and Literary Arts Investing in Artists grants. Presented by the Center for Cultural Innovation, the grants are designed to build the personal and creative capacity of California artists working in all disciplines. In a category designed to fund the acquisition of artistic equipment and tools, Thompson was chosen for photography and Winiemko for visual arts. In the artistic innovation category, Carland was selected for her work in a multidisciplinary field. Over the last five years, the CCI’s Investing in Artists program has awarded $1.45 million in grants to 161 California artists.

John Patrick Hogan [Hum. ’10] has been hired as an associate by the banking/commercial lending practice group at Certilman Balin Adler & Hyman LLP.

Amanda Wong* [BioSci. ’10] a USC School of Pharmacy doctoral candidate, was one of 250 recipients from the U.S. to be granted a 2012-13 Albert Schweitzer Fellowship. The award is given to graduate students in the fields of medicine, public health and pharmacy who are committed to serving their local community. Wong will use the funds to promote medication adherence and health education at the Braille Institute’s Los Angeles Center.

Brett Berman [SocSci. ’11] recently opened a mobile technology company, UMeTime, that provides businesses with the tools to connect with new, local customers in real time. More: https://business.umetime.com

* UCI Alumni Association member

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
Media poll ranks **men’s basketball** third in Big West

UCI men’s basketball placed third in the Big West Conference preseason media poll last October, the team’s highest ranking since its third-place showing in the 2003-04 season.

Coach Russell Turner’s Anteaters received 153 points and one first-place vote from the 21-member panel. Defending conference champion Long Beach State was first with 194 points, Cal State Fullerton second with 164, and new Big West member Hawaii fourth with 132.

UCI senior Michael Wilder was picked for the preseason media All-Big West team. The 6-foot-2-inch forward/guard led the Anteaters in scoring last season with 11.5 points per game. He averaged 5.2 rebounds and knocked down 78 three-pointers, earning second-team All-Big West honors. Wilder ranked sixth at UCI with 152 career three-pointers entering this season.

Of the active Big West players returning this season, he tops the league in points (762), assists (162), field goals (223), three-pointers (152), free throws (164) and minutes played (2,321).

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**Women’s water polo** to host Big West tournament

The Anteater Aquatics Complex will be the site of the 2013 Big West Conference Women’s Water Polo Tournament in April.

First-round games will be played Friday, April 26, with championship and consolation semifinals Saturday, April 27, and the first- through seventh-place games Sunday, April 28. The championship game is scheduled for 4:15 p.m. that day.

Joining UCI in the competition will be Cal State Northridge, Long Beach State, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, Pacific, and new conference members Hawaii and San Diego State.

Four-time Big West Coach of the Year Dan Klatt has led the UCI women to four straight Big West titles and the last two NCAA tournaments. Five UCI players have earned All-Big West honors each of the past four seasons.

The Anteaters finished fourth in the 2012 NCAA championship – the program’s highest national finish – and won a school-record 25 games for the season.
Big West *basketball tournament* at UCI, Honda Center

The 2013 Big West Conference Basketball Tournament will feature games at UCI’s Bren Events Center and the Honda Center in Anaheim.

Women’s first-round and quarterfinal games will be played at the Bren at 6 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, March 12 & 13. (The top eight women’s teams in regular-season standings advance to the tournament, with the top two teams receiving byes into the semifinals. The top eight men’s teams also advance to the tournament, but no teams receive byes.)

Men’s quarterfinal action is at the Honda Center on Thursday, March 14, with the semifinal and championship games for men and women at the Honda Center on Friday and Saturday, March 15 & 16.

Led by first-year head coach Doug Oliver, the UCI women’s team features eight returning players from last season, while the men’s squad – led by third-year head coach Russell Turner – has 10 returning players, including all five starters.

The UCI men’s team made it to the semifinals of the Big West tournament last March, knocking off No. 2 seed Cal State Fullerton, 65-59, in the quarterfinals.

Ticket information for the 2013 Big West tournament is available at www.hondacenter.com/EventDetails.aspx?EventID=741. Team schedules and general tournament information are available at BigWestTournament.com.
Anteaters look to defend home turf in 2013

UCI baseball, the perennial national powerhouse, begins its 2013 schedule with 12 of its first 13 games at Cicerone Field, Anteater Ballpark. Nineteen of the team’s 28 nonconference games will be at home this season.

Led by sixth-year head coach Mike Gillespie, the Anteaters will take on 2012 regional champion Baylor in a three-game series Friday through Sunday, Feb. 15-17, followed by a four-game series Friday through Sunday, Feb. 22-24, against California that includes a doubleheader Saturday, Feb. 23.

The Big Ten Conference’s Nebraska visits Cicerone Field on Friday through Sunday, March 15-17. The Cornhuskers are coached by Darin Erstad, who spent most of his major league career playing for the then-Anaheim Angels, including the 2002 World Series championship team. Former UCI pitching coach Ted Silva (2008-10) is also on the Nebraska staff.

UCI plays its first Big West home series Friday through Sunday, April 5-7, against new conference member Hawaii. Other conference home series are against Cal State Northridge on Friday through Sunday, April 12-14; UC Davis on Friday through Sunday, April 26-28; Cal Poly on Friday through Sunday, May 10-12; and Long Beach State on Thursday through Saturday, May 23-25, to end the regular season.

The Anteaters have advanced to the NCAA postseason seven of the past nine years; they’ve averaged 40 wins per year in the last five seasons under Gillespie’s leadership.

UCI’s list of returning players includes junior right-hander Andrew Thurman, who was 8-3 on the mound last season en route to first-team All-Big West honors.

Senior catcher Ronnie Shaeffer, a redshirt last year, was named most outstanding player when UCI won the 2011 Los Angeles Regional. He went 6 for 10 for the series with five runs batted in, one of them the game winner in the contest against UCLA that clinched the title. Shaeffer was also an American Baseball Coaches Association 2011 Gold Glove winner.

Andrew Thurman pitched three complete-game shutouts last season, including a no-hitter against Long Beach State.
Events

Support UCI and enjoy events that entertain and enlighten. For more events, visit the “Shaping the Future” website at http://ucifuture.com/events/.

Claire Trevor birthday celebration, March 8
The Claire Trevor School of the Arts will celebrate the birthday of its namesake Friday, March 8. Location and time TBD. For more information, visit www.arts.uci.edu/event/claire-trevor-birthday-celebration.

Family Health Circle luncheon, March 14
Intended to raise awareness and funds in support of programs and services at UC Irvine Medical Center, this event is scheduled for 11 a.m. Thursday, March 14, at the Bluewater Grill in Tustin. $100 per person. For more information, contact Denice Lanuti at 714-456-3733 or dlanuti@uci.edu.

UCI MIND’s “Time of Your Life,” March 16
“Time of Your Life: Toast to the Holidays – Then & Now” is the theme for this year’s Alzheimer’s benefit, to be held from 6 p.m. to midnight Saturday, March 16, at the UCI Student Center. Tickets are $200 per person through Feb. 14, then $225. For more information, contact Linda Scheck at 949-824-3251 or lscheck@uci.edu.

UC Irvine Health School of Medicine gala, April 6
“Creativity & Magic: Celebrating Innovations in Science & Scholarship” will be held Saturday, April 6, on UCI’s main campus, adjacent to the Gavin Herbert Eye Institute. Time TBD. Funds raised will support medical education programs and technologies. For more information, contact Teri Hauser at 949-824-7910 or thauser@uci.edu or Patricia Falzon at 714-456-6226 or pfalzon@uci.edu.
Program fosters kids’ financial literacy

Dedicated to helping underserved youth by teaching them life skills in money and investment management, the Financial Literacy Summer Residential Program – launched in 2011 by the Center for Investment & Wealth Management at UC Irvine’s Paul Merage School of Business – has doubled in size due to the overwhelming demand and impressive response from the community.

The mission of the program – offered at no cost to students – is to instill a continued desire to strengthen understanding of financial matters, encourage admission into a four-year college or university, and inspire confidence and success in all areas of life. And it’s working, judging by the feedback from graduates such as Tahlese Wright, who participated in 2011 as an eighth grader from Kraemer Middle School in Placentia.

“Back home, girls aren’t interested in college because they don’t really know anything about it,” she said at the time. “The girls here are learning just as much as I am, so we can talk about college, and I feel like I have other people to support me.”

What started as a one-week pilot effort targeted at girls has expanded into a two-part residential program for both boys and girls entering eighth and ninth grade.

“In 2011, we experienced tremendous success with our program for girls. In summer 2012, we added a week for boys. In both cases, the experience exceeded our expectations and those of the really fantastic kids who attended,” says Melissa Beck, CIWM director.

Bill Gross, founder, managing director and co-CIO of Pimco, gives students a tour of its trading floor. He and his wife, Sue, received the 2012 UCI Medal, the university’s most prestigious honor.

“It’s an extremely satisfying program to be a part of, and it’s truly gratifying to see these young students come alive with the knowledge we’re sharing,” adds volunteer Kara Duckworth of Duckworth Mehner Private Wealth Advisors, a CIWM board member, program volunteer and sponsor. “I know they’re gaining tremendous value from what they’ve learned through this opportunity.”

Twenty girls and 20 boys participated in separate one-week programs last August. They took field trips to Taco Bell headquarters and the trading floor at Pimco. They had lunch in the Santa Ana courthouse and an in-chambers meeting with Orange County Superior Court Judge Frances Munoz, the first Latina trial judge in the U.S., and her brother, Orange County Superior Court Judge Gregory Munoz. During a visit to Charles Schwab Corp., the students opened accounts the program funded on their behalf and purchased stocks they chose for their in-class presentations.
“It’s amazing how quickly these students grasp financial concepts. From the time they enter the program – when some of them are unaware of stocks or bonds – to the time they leave – after they’ve done the research and made investments in the stock market – they go through an incredible transformation,” says Mark Moehlman, founding principal at Wealth Management Network and founding chair of CIWM. (See story on Moehlman at www.uci.edu/features/2011/04/feature_finance_110411.php.)

Other businesses involved in the 2012 residential program included Opus Bank, GenSpring Family Offices, Hyundai, Merrill Lynch, Experian and PAAMCO.

“It wasn’t all classroom study; we had a lot of fun too,” Beck says. “All of our corporate participants worked hard to keep the kids engaged and interested in what they were learning. In addition to classroom activities, students experienced the UCI ropes course, a self-defense class, and a night at the Boomers! family entertainment center. To further enhance the curriculum, the program partnered with Wal-Mart and Women Helping Women/Men2Work to give the students professional clothing and personal presentation and social etiquette skills.”

For more information about the Financial Literacy Summer Residential Program, contact Beck at Melissa.Beck@uci.edu or call 949-824-2675.

‘A Celebration of Stars’ pays tribute to 2012 UCI Medal recipients

“More than 550 guests turned out Oct. 27 for “A Celebration of Stars – The 2012 Medal Awards.” UC Irvine’s signature event honors recipients of the UCI Medal for their profound impact on the university. The 2012 awardees are Sue and Bill Gross, Elizabeth Loftus, and Betty Tu, M.B.A. ’00, and David Tsoong.

“I am thankful to our friends and community partners for joining me to honor this stellar group of individuals,” said Chancellor Michael Drake. “Our UCI Medal recipients have given extraordinary contributions of time, talent and support to UC Irvine, and they exemplify the campus’s mission and values.”

Hosted by the UC Irvine Foundation, the 2012 “Celebration of Stars” was co-chaired by Ruth Ann and John Evans. A senior vice president and regional manager at Wells Fargo Bank, Ruth Ann sponsored the program’s surprise dessert.”
Fargo Bank, John Evans is a foundation trustee and sits on its executive committee, as well as the Dean’s Advisory Board for UCI’s Paul Merage School of Business.

“John and his wife committed time, energy and generous support to make the 2012 UCI Medal ceremony more engaging than ever before,” said Gregory Leet, vice chancellor of University Advancement. “I applaud all members of the Medal leadership committee and the UC Irvine Foundation trustees for their vital support. This could not happen without them.”

“Ruth Ann and I have been honored to co-chair ‘A Celebration of Stars’ for two years now, and we’ve enjoyed two once-in-a-lifetime experiences,” said John Evans. “The community came together to honor the many transformative contributions of our 2012 awardees, who – like previous Medal honorees – have truly helped UC Irvine become a world-class institution.”

The theme for the event was “Be the Light,” inspired by the University of California motto, “Fiat Lux” (“Let There Be Light”). It was selected to reflect the Medalists’ achievements as well as UCI’s ongoing contributions to the community, nation and world: innovative research, dedicated faculty and inspired students.

Held at UCI’s Bren Events Center, the gala featured a reception and formal dinner, Medalist tributes, and entertainment by students from the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. All of the dance compositions were created specifically for “A Celebration of Stars.” Past Medalists – who include Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners and industry leaders – also were highlighted.

Net charitable proceeds from more than $900,000 raised through the 2012 Medal ceremony will benefit UCI graduate fellowships, scholarships and other student-focused projects.


“A Celebration of Stars” co-chairs John and Ruth Ann Evans

Sue and Bill Gross

Elizabeth Loftus

Betty Tu, M.B.A. ’00, and David Tsoong
Events

'The Rose Tattoo,' Jan. 26-Feb. 3
The Claire Trevor School of the Arts drama department will present Tennessee Williams’ Tony Award-winning play, "The Rose Tattoo," 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, and Thursday through Saturday, Jan. 31-Feb. 2; 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27, and Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 2 & 3. Little Theatre, Humanities Hall. $11-$15. More: 949-824-2787 or www.arts.uci.edu/tickets.

Valentine’s concert, Feb. 14

Dance Showcase, Feb. 20-24
Dancers from the Claire Trevor School of the Arts will perform in “Visions of ‘The Rite of Spring’” Feb. 20-24.

Celebrate UCI, April 20
One of the university’s oldest and most festive traditions, Celebrate UCI will feature games and kiddie rides, academic information, a classic car show, tram tours, the Wayzgoose festival and more. Housing, admissions, financial aid and other offices will be open to the public. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, April 20. Aldrich Park. Free admission and complimentary parking. More: www.celebrate.uci.edu.

More campus events
http://today.uci.edu/calendar
Vietnamese American Oral History Project website debuts

The Vietnamese American Oral History Project at UCI has launched a website featuring audio files, transcripts and photos from interviews conducted with members of Southern California’s Vietnamese American community.

The project, headed by UCI postdoctoral fellow Thuy Vo Dang, assembles, preserves and digitally presents life stories of the region’s first-generation refugees and immigrants. The collection will be housed at the UCI Libraries’ renowned Southeast Asian Archive.

“This oral histories provide an incredible opportunity for Vietnamese Americans to speak directly to future generations and ensure that their achievements, struggles, fears and hopes are remembered and respected,” said Michelle Light, head of the UCI Libraries’ special collections, archives & digital scholarship programs.

“The Southeast Asian Archive is committed to preserving the life stories online for all to access and appreciate,” she said.

Geriatrics program gets $1 million to target elder abuse

UCI’s Program in Geriatrics has received a three-year, $1 million grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging to combat elder abuse. The funding is part of a major new federal initiative to test promising community-based elder abuse prevention practices.

U.S. Health & Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced the five grant recipients in the pilot program at a fall meeting of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council in Washington, D.C. UCI will implement its new approach to preventing the abuse of people with dementia, called Take AIM Against Elder Abuse.

Testifying before the council, Dr. Laura Mosqueda, chair of UCI’s Department of Family Medicine, director of its geriatrics program and Ronald Reagan Chair in Geriatrics, said: “Adults with dementia are particularly vulnerable to abuse. The sad fact is that about one of every two people with dementia is abused or neglected. With our rapidly aging population, combined with the fact that one of every two people over 85 is diagnosed with dementia, this impacts a huge number of individuals and those who love them.”

UCI has created an innovative model to address the multiple, complex and interrelated factors that lead to abuse. “This grant allows us to develop and evaluate a new model to reduce the risk of elder abuse,” Mosqueda said.
**Systems biology center garners $11.5 million**

UCI has been awarded $11.5 million over five years to further support the biologists, mathematicians, physicists, engineers and computer scientists who collaborate in pursuit of a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of complex biological systems.

The funding for the UCI Center for Complex Biological Systems comes from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, one of the National Institutes of Health, which gave the facility initial grants of $450,000 in 2002 and $14.5 million in 2007.

At the time, the UCI center [http://ccbs.uci.edu](http://ccbs.uci.edu) was the first of its kind in California dedicated to systems biology, an emerging field of study that employs the latest technology and computational methods to examine how networks of molecules, cells, tissues and organs interact in complex, dynamic ways to produce reliable biological functions.

“Over the past decade, we’ve tried to take a teamwork approach to really hard biological problems, encouraging researchers from all over the sciences and engineering to work together. This award is a clear endorsement of that strategy, especially given the current funding environment,” said Dr. Arthur Lander, center director and UCI professor of developmental & cell biology and biomedical engineering.

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**Viewing graphic images may be harmful to health**

Repeated exposure to violent images from the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the Iraq War may have led to an increase in physical and psychological ailments in a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults, according to a new UCI study.

The research sheds light on the lingering effects of “collective traumas” such as natural disasters, mass shootings and terrorist attacks. A steady diet of graphic media images may have long-lasting mental and physical health consequences, said study author Roxane Cohen Silver, UCI professor of psychology & social behavior, medicine and public health.

“I would not advocate restricting nor censoring war images for the psychological well-being of the public,” she said. “Instead, I think it’s important for people to be aware that there is no psychological benefit to repeated exposure to graphic images of horror.”

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Roxane Cohen Silver

Dr. Arthur Lander / University Communications
He’s so money: Matt McNally’s still a Monopoly mogul

Ever since he won the Monopoly U.S. National Championship in 2003, Matt McNally, M.F.A. ’05 has been the game’s guru.

His views on all things Monopoly – from advice on acquiring properties to his favorite token (the race car) – have been reported by the international media, and he’s a sought-after celebrity guest at tournaments and charity events. McNally is also a main character in the 2010 documentary “Under the Boardwalk: The Monopoly Story,” which follows players as they compete for the 2009 world title.

“I was the current U.S. champion at the time of filming, so the story centers on me and tournament competition,” he said. (He finished sixth overall that year.)

McNally got a master’s in drama at UCI and works as the stage manager for “Jubilee!,” the longest-running show in Las Vegas, complete with the iconic feather- and rhinestone-clad showgirls. He still enters Monopoly tournaments.

“I have about a dozen strategies, and I use them depending on how the title deed cards come out in the game,” he said.

One tip: While many players aspire to own Park Place and Boardwalk, he recommends going for the orange properties – New York Avenue, St. James Place and Tennessee Avenue – then adding houses and collecting rent. “Jail is the most frequently landed-on space, so there’s a greater probability that people will land on them because they have to go past them once they get out,” he said.

McNally sounds like a real-life mogul when he adds: “Houses cost a lot more on the green or blue properties. The orange properties provide a better return on your investment.”

Dalai Lama Scholarship awarded to senior promoting human rights

Soraya Azzawi, a UCI senior dedicated to raising awareness of human rights struggles and the plight of refugees around the world, has been awarded the 2012-13 XIV Dalai Lama Endowed Scholarship, established in 2004 to recognize UCI students committed to ethical leadership, peace and positive global relations.

Azzawi will receive $20,000 for academic expenses; to support the publication of a journal documenting humanitarian crises affecting refugees worldwide; and to establish an English tutoring program for local refugees.

“My family was very fortunate to leave Iraq before the Gulf War and settle in the middle-class suburbs of Southern California,” Azzawi said. “They could have easily ended up in a refugee camp. For this reason, I look forward to raising awareness of the unique challenges facing refugees globally.”

A member of the Campuswide Honors Program, Azzawi is majoring in neurobiology and political science and is the 2012 recipient of the Carol Becker McGaugh Award for outstanding research in the neurobiology of learning and memory.
Alumna heads nation’s largest local prosecutorial office

Jackie Lacey ’79 became Los Angeles County’s first female and first African American district attorney when she beat out opponent Alan Jackson in the November election.

Lacey, who replaces outgoing District Attorney Steve Cooley, will oversee the nation’s largest local prosecutorial office with 1,000 attorneys, 300 peace officers and 800 support staff.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in psychology at UCI, Lacey went on to the University of Southern California Law School, graduating in 1982. She has prosecuted thousands of criminal cases in her 26-year career with the L.A. County District Attorney’s Office, including her successful prosecution of the county’s first race-motivated hate crime. Lacey was named Deputy District Attorney of the Month four times while serving as second in command to Cooley.

Wendy Liu honored as NIH Director’s New Innovator

Wendy Liu, assistant professor of biomedical engineering, has garnered a 2012 National Institutes of Health Director’s New Innovator Award – which includes funding support – for her work on immune system response to biomaterials used in medical devices.

“Our strategy harnesses the body’s potential to control inflammation and promote healing, which will hopefully prevent device failure and, ultimately, help cure life-threatening diseases,” said Liu, who’s associated with The Edwards Lifesciences Center for Advanced Cardiovascular Technology, in UCI’s Henry Samueli School of Engineering. “The approach has a long way to go before reaching the clinic, so I’m extremely happy to receive this award so that we can pursue our research aggressively.”

Her goal is to design biomaterials coated with molecules naturally expressed by host tissue. These molecules are the body’s way of regulating immune tolerance to host tissue as well as the healing response to wounds. Liu believes this tactic is better than harsh immunosuppressive therapies.
Valdevit, team win *Popular Mechanics* award for world’s lightest metal

Mechanical & aerospace engineer Lorenzo Valdevit and fellow researchers at HRL Laboratories LLC, along with the California Institute of Technology, have won a 2012 Breakthrough Award from *Popular Mechanics* for their creation of a micro-lattice metal.

"I am really honored to be selected as one of the winners," Valdevit said. "The material we have developed is ultralight and ultracompressible, but more importantly, it’s a unique platform for a novel methodology. This development has been the result of an extraordinary collaboration. I want to thank my colleagues and friends at HRL and Caltech for creating such an enjoyable research environment."

The team was able to make a material that consists of 99.99 percent open volume by designing the 0.01 percent solid at the nanometer, micron and millimeter scales, using an innovative fabrication process.

The new metal - which is 99.9 percent air - is extremely strong yet so light that it can sit atop a dandelion’s fluffy seeds without damaging them.

In memoriam: Gilbert Geis

Gilbert Geis, a UCI criminologist best known for his major contributions to white-collar crime research, died Nov. 10 after a lengthy illness. He was 87.

His work spanned the fields of sociology, psychology, history, criminology, criminal justice, law, media studies, education, and policy studies. He published more than two dozen books, 250 journal articles, 100 chapters and 30 monographs.

"Gilbert Geis was well known as a prolific scholar, charming colleague and beloved friend," said Valerie Jenness, dean of UCI’s School of Social Ecology. "For so many of us, it was a pleasure and an enriching experience to know him."

Geis joined the UCI faculty in 1971 and played a significant role in establishing the School of Social Ecology and Department of Criminology, Law & Society. He was the 1976 president of the American Society of Criminology and in 1985 received its Edwin H. Sutherland Award for distinguished research, the most prestigious prize in the field of criminology. He remained an active and engaged scholar until the very end of his life.