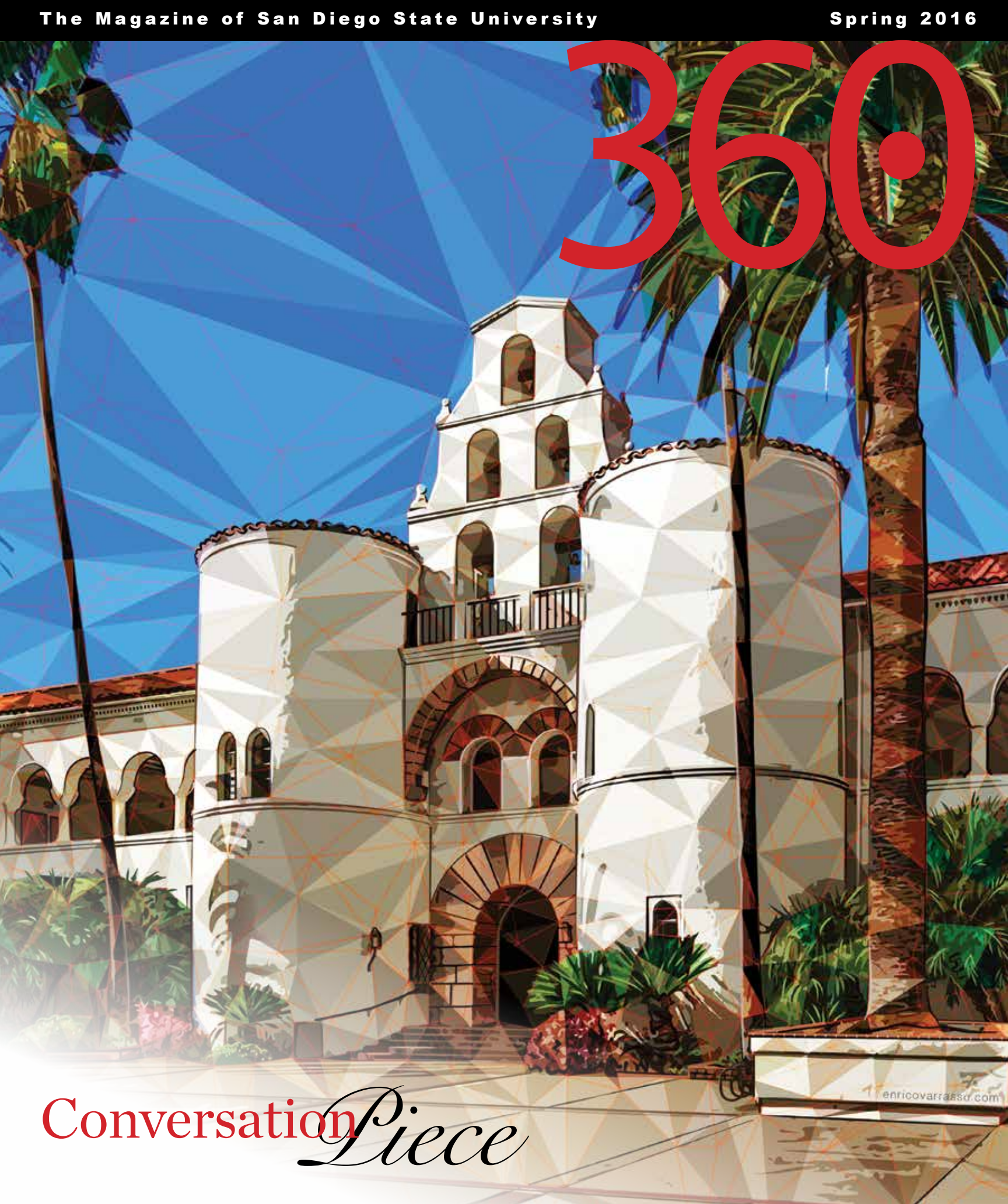


360



Conversation *Piece*

360

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SAN DIEGO STATE
UNIVERSITY

Leadership Starts Here

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Photo: Lauren Radack

Ideas are the lifeblood of our university, and San Diego State is enjoying a renaissance of powerful conversations about the ideas that occur on our campus.

These conversations are taking place in our strong tradition of shared governance in which our University Senate and Associated Students deliberate and also in the working groups that are implementing our strategic plan, "Building on Excellence." They are occurring in our classrooms, where we have added hundreds of small classes and are seeing the fruits of our commitment to hire 300 tenure-track faculty over five years.

Conversations are critical to our One SDSU Community initiative that brings together students from diverse backgrounds and to our Arts Alive SDSU initiative that integrates the arts throughout our campus. Discovery Slams—highlighting faculty and student research—and the creation of seven areas of research excellence foster further dialogue.

Even our buildings are designed around the idea of conversation. Our new 85,000-square-foot Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences Complex is focused on bringing together engineers, scientists and entrepreneurs to address

significant societal challenges in biomedical research, sustainability and other areas.

This issue of *360* presents a few of the important conversations occurring on our campus. Funded through private philanthropy and our student success fee, these conversations are making SDSU a destination where scholars, researchers and artists consider the great issues of our time.

Here, we highlight Vint Cerf, known as the father of the Internet, and former National Endowment for the Humanities chair Bruce Cole discussing the humanities in the digital age—a window into our recent John Adams Lecture in the Humanities. Also featured are former NOAA chief Jane Lubchenco and Dean Stanley Maloy in conversation; President Obama's inaugural poet Richard Blanco trading ideas with professor Sandra Alcosser; and Iranian scholar Trita Parsi speaking at our Hostler Lecture Series.

I hope this edition of *360: The Magazine of San Diego State University* will spark additional conversations.

Elliot Hirshman

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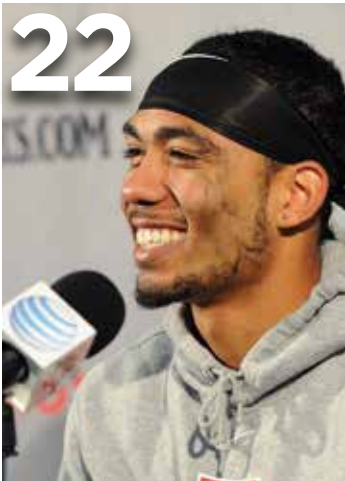
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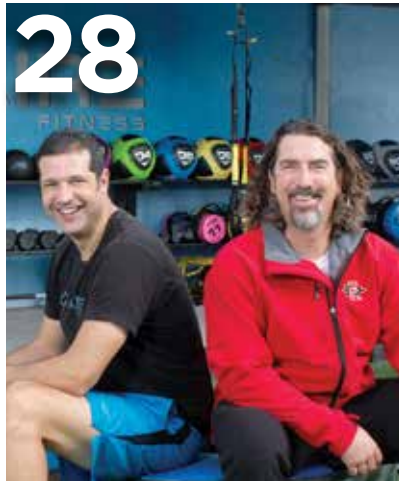
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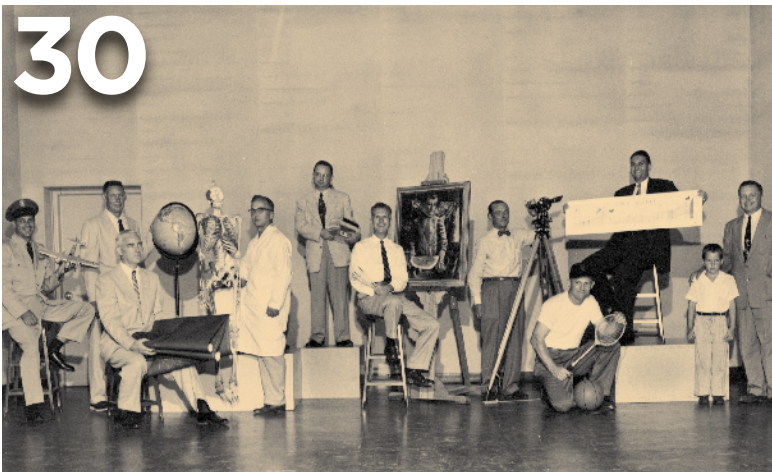
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An invisible threat

Cigarette smoke doesn't just vanish into thin air; it accumulates and is stored in the surrounding environment, such as upholstery, carpets, walls, clothing and curtains. Researchers call this residue thirdhand smoke, and a team of SDSU scientists is at the forefront of studying its effects on human health and the resale value of homes and automobiles.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded SDSU's thirdhand smoke researchers \$700,000 to look at the best ways to reduce the risk of thirdhand smoke in HUD-subsidized housing.

"Homes become reservoirs of tobacco smoke pollutants," said SDSU psychologist Georg Matt. "These volatile compounds soak into the drywall; gypsum is like a bottomless pit for these toxins. Carpets are tremendous reservoirs."

VIDEO  [SDSU.EDU/TOXIC](https://www.sdsu.edu/toxic)

California gold

The San Diego community is invited to attend upcoming campus lectures featuring two California natives who've achieved success in their respective fields.

Linda Lang, '91, '13, former president and CEO of Jack in the Box, headlines the President's Lecture Series on Tuesday, April 26, with an address on leadership lessons and values. To register, visit [sdsualumni.org/pls](https://www.sdsu.edu/pls). The Provost's Distinguished Lecture on Wednesday, April 6, will feature Nobel Laureate Richard Schrock, the Frederick G. Keyes Professor of Chemistry at MIT and a San Diego native. Registration is at [sdsu.edu/provostlecture](https://www.sdsu.edu/provostlecture).

Gas giants



There's a lot more methane gas escaping the Arctic's frozen landscape into Earth's atmosphere during winter months than scientists initially suspected. A study led by San Diego State University climate researchers Walter Oechel and Donatella Zona found that Arctic winter emissions of methane make up at least half of the region's total annual methane output.

Previously, most researchers believed methane remained trapped in the frozen ground during the winter and was emitted mostly during warmer months, but no one had accurately tested this. Oechel, Zona and an international team of collaborators employed a series of monitoring stations in northern Alaska to measure wintertime methane emissions.

Their findings will help climate change researchers develop more accurate models. "If you don't have the mechanisms right, you won't be able to make predictions into the future based on anticipated climate conditions," Oechel said.



Compass



On top of the world

San Diego State is the place to be if you are interested in learning firsthand about our wide world. The Institute for International Education's annual Open Doors report ranked SDSU No. 15 among national universities for the number of students who study abroad. That's up from a No. 22 ranking in last year's report. SDSU also ranked third among California universities.

Over the past several years, SDSU has firmly committed to providing opportunities for students to study abroad

SDSU students on a study abroad trip in Switzerland.

across a wide range of majors and academic interests, and donors have supported this strategy through gifts to The Campaign for SDSU.

"To be able to experience other nations and cultures through the study abroad programs at SDSU is a crucial part of student success before and after graduation," said Chukuka Enwemeka, SDSU provost and senior vice president.

Storytelling savvy

SDSU alumnus and acclaimed author Matt de la Peña was named the recipient of the 2016 John Newbery Medal—one of the top prizes in children's literature—for his novel "Last Stop on Market Street."

The book, aimed at the 3-5-year age group, tells the story of a young boy riding the bus with his grandmother and discussing why their lives differ from those of his wealthier friends.

De la Peña earned his Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from SDSU in 2000 and credits this experience with teaching him the ropes of serious, professional writing. "I showed up as a scrubby ex-jock and left as a real writer," he said. "Winning the Newbery is an amazing honor, and I'm proud to say I learned my craft at SDSU."

"Echo" by SDSU alumna Pam Muñoz Ryan, '73, was chosen as a Newbery Honor book this year, as well.

Earlier autism detection

Due to better detection and diagnostic methods, the known prevalence of autism spectrum disorder continues to rise: The latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that one in 50 children born in the United States will have some form of autism. In many cases, early diagnosis provides better opportunities to improve the lives of those born with autism using behavioral interventions.

To that end, the National Institutes of Health awarded SDSU psychologist Inna Fishman a \$2-million grant to look for the early neural signatures of autism using the latest brain imaging techniques. Fishman hopes to see neural signals that can reliably predict autism symptoms in children as young as 2 years old. "This is the age when symptoms of autism first emerge," she said. "Brain images acquired at this age should allow us to capture development, organization and function of neural networks early in autism."

Red Chair stories

What happens when we put SDSU's most interesting thinkers and doers on the hot seat? Check out the new "60 Seconds in the Red Chair" video series to find out. Each video tells a unique story of a student, faculty or staff member in the Aztec community.

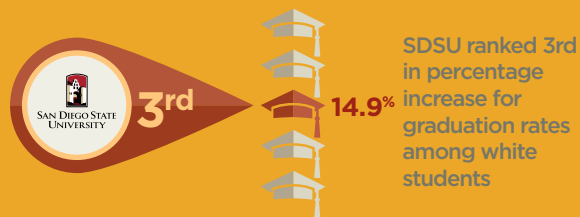
So far, the minute-long interviews have featured geography professor Trent Biggs singing opera; aerospace engineering major Ana Morino discussing her work with the Mars rover; and historian Seth Mallios exploring the layers of history beneath Montezuma Mesa. Visit SDSU's YouTube channel to see these stories and more.

VIDEO  [SDSU.EDU/REDCHAIR](https://www.sdsu.edu/redchair)

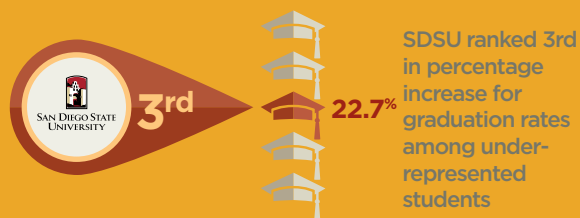
GRADUATION RATES ARE ON THE RISE

AN ANALYSIS OF **489** FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS BETWEEN 2003 & 2013

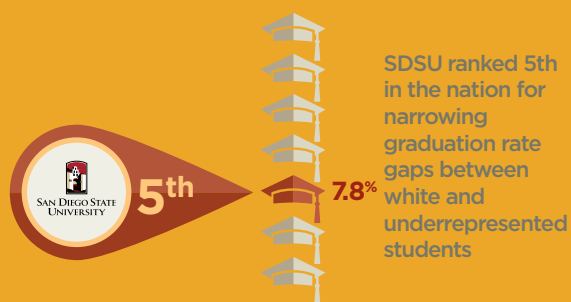
WHITE STUDENTS



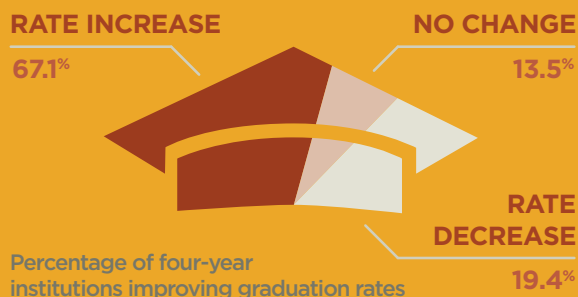
UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS



WHITE & UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS



NATIONAL TRENDS



SOURCE: THE EDUCATION TRUST
TO READ MORE, [SDSU.EDU/CLOSETHEGAP](https://www.sdsu.edu/closethegap)

View Finder. The field of remote sensing is tracking disasters and saving endangered species.

By Michael Price

Today, Doug Stow is a whiz with a grid. But before the San Diego State University geography professor became one of the foremost researchers in a field known as remote sensing, he was more interested in the gridiron. Stow attended De Anza College in Cupertino, California primarily to play football, but shortly thereafter he decided to explore his academic options.

It was a physical geography class that most captured his interest. When he transferred to the University of California, Santa Barbara, to finish his degree, he sought out an education in geography. As part of his curriculum, he took classes from geographer John Estes, considered one of the pioneers in the remote sensing discipline. After earning his bachelor's degree in geography, Stow became one of UC Santa Barbara's first master's degree students in the newly formed geography program.

These were pioneering days for remote sensing, a field that concerns itself with using satellite and aerial imagery to extract useful information about conditions on the ground. It can be used to track the expansion of housing

developments in growing cities, or to measure the impact of natural disasters, or to keep tabs on deforestation. And it's intensely interdisciplinary, calling upon expertise in traditional geography, geology, optics, mathematics, physics, and human behavior to decipher what exactly remotely sensed imagery reveals.

BUDDING LAB

As he was finishing his doctorate at UC Santa Barbara, Stow applied for and was given a job as an assistant professor of geography at SDSU in 1983.

"At the time, SDSU was just beginning to emerge as a research university," Stow recalled. "The geography department had just one computer that everyone had to share."

He continued to do research in remote sensing, but the pace was slow, hampered by costly technology and a relatively small budget. But in 1990, "the department really started moving," as Stow put it. The Center for Earth Systems Analysis was established with a bevy of new, state-of-the-art computers, enabling faculty to seriously compete for and win research funding and support student assistants. Due partly to Stow's background with the university, SDSU formed a joint doctoral geography program with UC Santa Barbara.

Ever since, Stow and his colleagues have worked to turn SDSU into a powerhouse for remote sensing research. He was selected by a faculty committee as this year's Albert W. Johnson Research Lecturer.

This year, Stow is wrapping up a NASA-funded project looking at rural-to-urban migration of people living in western



Africa, primarily in Ghana. Over the past three years, Stow and his team have used satellite imagery to map urbanization and land cover change in relation to population growth and health outcomes in urban and peri-urban areas.

“With the resolution of these land satellites, you’re not going to pick up individual houses, but you can see developments and compare before-and-after patterns of land cover change,” Stow said.

The researchers discovered that peri-urban areas in Ghana were experiencing sprawl as people migrated from rural villages. Within this sprawl, Stow and colleagues picked up on the fact that the satellite imagery could discriminate between higher and lower socioeconomic sectors. Less wealthy areas tended to have less vegetation than the more well-to-do neighborhoods.

Knowing this will allow western African nations to better track their populations’ migration trends, as well as help conservationists understand the environmental effects of nascent sprawl.

MONKEY BUSINESS

Another project with fellow geography professor Li An found Stow using satellite imagery to track the loss of forest canopy in the Fanjingshan National Nature Reserve in south-central China. The forest canopies are the exclusive habitat of the endangered gray snub-nosed monkey.

With funding from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Stow and An are exploring whether reimbursing people who live in the nature reserve for not cutting down trees for agriculture—and indeed, for planting new trees instead—will help

preserve the canopy and protect the dwindling snub-nosed monkey population.

For both of these projects, Stow has also traveled extensively to see how ground conditions match up with what he’s observed with satellite data. That’s been particularly tricky for the China project. In Guizhou province, after the snow cover melts in March, there’s only a month’s respite before the venomous snakes come out, he said.

DISASTER RESPONSE

Two of Stow’s most recent projects are studies funded by the Department of Transportation and NSF to assess damage to critical infrastructure after natural or man-made disasters. It’s important for emergency responders and government officials to know, for example, whether bridges are safe, roads are clear and hospitals are accessible.

Rather than relying upon satellite images, Stow and colleagues are making use of manned and unmanned aircraft to take aerial photographs of critical sites, then precisely mark the height and GPS coordinates the photos were taken at. After a disaster, aircraft could return to the same spot to take new photos.

The researchers are working on new image comparison software that can point out differences between the images that might indicate damage.

“We’re teaching the programs to differentiate between a new rubble pile or a crack, or simply a shift in the shadows,” Stow said.

While these programs grow more sophisticated by the day, there will always be a need for experts to add the human touch to verify post-disaster conditions, he added.

“Automatic recognition is the holy grail,” Stow said, “but there’s always going to need to be an analyst in the loop.”



A Feast for the Eyes

By Coleen L. Geraghty

Vibrant student murals pay homage to SDSU's rich Aztec history and to a new campus initiative supporting the creative and performing arts.



Students painted the “Eyes of Picasso” mural on the exterior of SDSU’s Art Building. “Just to create art and put it in the public sphere empowered the students,” said instructor Mario Torero.



Photo: Jessica Ordon

When Stephan Romero recalls his student days at San Diego State University, he’ll remember, above all, a blank white wall in Love Library.

No longer anonymous, that wall has been transformed—by Romero and fellow students—into a chromatic spectacle of Aztec symbolism with roots in SDSU’s muralist culture.

The students’ work is part of a lively conversation about art on campus, embracing not only the visual arts, but also music, dance, theatre, poetry and creative writing.

Through a new initiative, Arts Alive SDSU, faculty and students are integrating art events and art practices into the broader curriculum to heighten awareness of SDSU’s rich artistic community.

Aztec calendar

The story of the “Circle of Knowledge” mural, co-sponsored

by Arts Alive SDSU and the Library and Information Access, is one of collaboration across disciplines. Gale Etschmaier, library dean, commissioned two art classes to design and paint a wall mural at the former entrance to Love Library.

Art professors Carlos Castro and Eva Struble jointly guided their classes through the process, beginning with the idea of creating a traditional Aztec calendar embedded with modern designs.

“We decided to do a new version of the calendar, which allowed space for the students to reflect on the Aztec theme as part of their lives and identities,” Castro said.

A cultural history

Love Library serves as home to another Aztec-inspired mural created by SDSU students in 1976 for Arturo Anselmo Roman’s Chicano art class.

The “Rock ‘n’ Roll Mural,” also known as the Backdoor Mural, was

preserved, restored and moved to the third floor of Love Library from its original location outside SDSU’s Backdoor music club in the former Aztec Center.

“The murals play an important role in the library,” Etschmaier said. “They preserve the cultural history of our institution and connect the students of today with those of the past and the future.”

Pop-up concerts

The library has also been one of many sites for “pop-up” concerts, featuring student musicians and dancers in brief, between-class performances that anchor the arts right in the center of campus.

These concerts are an element of Arts Alive SDSU, which evolved from the university’s strategic goal to “promote visibility of the arts.”

Arts Alive SDSU sponsors more than 350 events annually, including evening concerts, films, and theatre and dance performances. For more information, visit ArtsAlive.sdsu.edu

Photo: Alex Herbias

VIDEO



SDSU.EDU/MURALS

Conversation Piece

Ideas—freely expressed and debated—are the lifeblood of a university and the legacy of higher education.

Check out the lecture section of the campus events calendar (sdsu.edu/lectures) and you'll find no shortage of interesting speakers whose visits spark conversations among students, faculty, staff and community members. The lineup for this academic year has been particularly compelling.

In the last few months, Aztecs have heard an Iranian American scholar dissect the Iran nuclear deal; a climate scientist appeal for clarity in talking about science; a gay Cuban American poet recall his moment of inspiration writing for President Barack Obama's inauguration; and a pair of thought leaders discuss the future of the humanities in this digital age.

Excerpts from each of the conversations are printed in this issue of *360: The Magazine of San Diego State University*. We invite you to begin your own conversation with SDSU by sending your thoughts and comments to 360mag@mail.sdsu.edu



Sandra Alcosser

is the author of "Except By Nature," which received the Academy of American Poets' James Laughlin Award; "Sleeping Inside the Glacier," a collaboration with artist Michele Burgess; and "A Fish to Feed All Hunger," which was selected by James Tate as the Associated Writing Programs Award Series winner in poetry. Alcosser's honors include two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, a PEN Syndicated Fiction Award and a Pushcart Prize. The first state poet laureate of Montana, she started the MFA Program in Creative Writing at San Diego State University, where she is currently a professor of poetry, fiction, and feminist poetics.



Look Who's Talking

The son of Cuban immigrants, **Richard Blanco** has published three books of poetry, including "Looking for the Gulf Motel," which received the Paterson Poetry Prize, the Maine Literary Award for Poetry and the Thom Gunn Award. President Barack Obama selected him in 2012 to be the fifth inaugural poet in U.S. history, joining the ranks of Robert Frost and Maya Angelou. He was the youngest as well as the first Latino, immigrant, and gay person to serve in such a role. His latest project, co-created with Ruth Behar, is a blog, "Bridges to/from Cuba." In 2015, the Academy of American Poets named Blanco its first Education Ambassador.

Vint Cerf

is vice president and Chief Internet Evangelist for Google, responsible for identifying new enabling technologies and applications on the Internet and other platforms. Widely known as a “father of the Internet,” Cerf is the co-designer, with Robert Kahn, of TCP/IP protocols and basic architecture of the Internet. During his tenure with the U.S. Department of Defense’s Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), he played a key role leading the development of Internet and Internet-related data packet and security technologies. In 2005, Cerf received the Presidential Medal of Freedom—the nation’s highest civilian honor.



Bruce Cole is senior fellow at the Ethics and Policy Center in Washington, D.C. He is a former two-term chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and a 2008 recipient of the Presidential Citizens Medal, which recognizes U.S. citizens who have



performed exemplary deeds of service for the nation. Under Cole’s leadership, the NEH launched “We, the People” and its companion program “Picturing America,” which provided 80,000 elementary schools, middle schools and public libraries across the country with high quality reproductions of art and a website that tells the story of American history through images and words.

Jane Lubchenco is a distinguished professor and advisor of marine studies at Oregon State University. A lifelong advocate for clear communication between scientists, government policymakers and the public, she was appointed the first ever U.S. Science Envoy for the Ocean in 2014. Lubchenco has served as administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel for the World Bank’s Global



Partnership for Oceans. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences and the

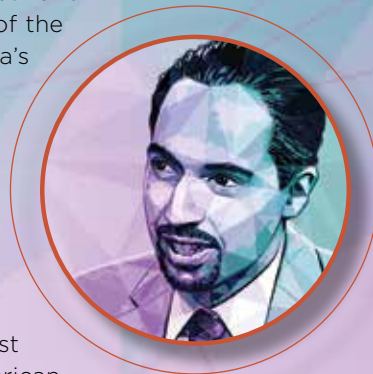
American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Stanley Maloy is the dean of the College of Sciences at San Diego State University and associate director of the university’s Center for Microbial Sciences. His scholarly interests include the genomics of Salmonella bacteria, gene transfer mediated by bacteriophages and novel vaccine development. At SDSU, he has built up the university’s research



capacity and capabilities and facilitated the creation of several new high-performing research programs and centers. He is a former president of the American Society for Microbiology and is an elected fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology.

Trita Parsi is the 2010 recipient of the \$200,000 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. He is the author of two award-winning books, “Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the United States” and “A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama’s Diplomacy with Iran,” both published by Yale University Press. Parsi is president of the largest Iranian American grassroots organization in the United States, the National Iranian American Council. He has taught at Johns Hopkins University and George Washington University and currently teaches at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.



Illustrations: Enrico Varrasso



SDSU invited climate scientist Jane Lubchenco to campus for a conversation with students, faculty and researchers led by College of Sciences Dean Stanley Maloy. Lubchenco was in San Diego as a keynote speaker for the American Society for Cell Biology.

Stanley Maloy:
How does the public perceive scientists?

Jane Lubchenco:
Scientists are widely respected, but the truth is, folks

think they can't understand us. For example, during the time I was administrator of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Vice President Joe Biden's team asked if I would travel to the Gulf of Mexico to join him in meetings

with fishermen after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The VP needed someone to bring him up to speed on the oil spill and fisheries. On the flight to the

Gulf, I briefed him on the effects of oil on fish, on crabs and shrimp and on oysters. Without using a lot of jargon, I explained what we were doing to make sure contaminated seafood didn't get into the market and on family tables.

Partway through my explanation, the VP stopped me and said, "Now wait a minute. I thought you were a scientist." Puzzled by why he was asking, I replied, 'I am.' To which he responded, "But...I just understood everything you told me!"

And I thought, wow, here's a distinguished, very smart politician who has been briefed hundreds of times by scientists and his impression

is he can't understand us. That vignette illustrates how important it is that scientists learn to communicate science in simple English. People often genuinely want to learn something but we often get in the way of making that possible.

SM: How can scientists better communicate what they know to the public?

JL: There are two secrets here. One is to refine your message into something understandable. Learn to translate all the nuance, technical jargon and important assumptions into something understandable but still accurate. The second is to learn to connect with people on a human level. Social science research has shown that scientists are generally seen as competent but cold, and not having empathy for people or their problems. For listeners to trust someone (not just respect them), they need to see them as both competent and

"I THOUGHT YOU WERE A SCIENTIST, BUT I

warm, as someone with whom they share values. Knowing this, scientists can let more of their personality shine through. They can tell stories, use analogies and find ways to communicate that say, “Hey, I’m not just a nerd. I’m also a person, I’m a human.”

SM: What drove you to make one of your primary areas of focus the issue of scientific communication with the public?

JL: I grew up with five sisters, and we have

very different interests, and we wound up doing very different things. They were always intensely curious about what I was doing, and I would try to explain it. Over time, my sisters goaded me into figuring out how to talk about science in ways that were interesting, understandable and approachable.

During my life as a professor, I began taking public communication of science more seriously after I led an effort of the Ecological Society of America in the late 1980s to articulate the

relevance of ecological research. We knew the public cared about the health of their commu-

How should scientists talk about science

nities and the environment, but that did not translate into understanding how ecological research was relevant to their

interests. We produced a landmark report that connected the dots between seemingly esoteric research and important societal problem. All of a sudden we were inundated with requests to explain how research funding could help solve big problems. Congressional committees, budget committees, several funding agencies were clamoring for scientists who could explain things to them in plain language. This was a golden opportunity.

SM: I think there are a lot of people who worry that the focus on relevance will detract from the basic research that is critical for the pipeline of knowledge.

JL: We often make the mistake of categorizing science in two bins: basic, curiosity-driven research and issue-focused, applied research. I’m compelled by an alternative view proposed by Donald

Stokes in his book “Pasteur’s Quadrant.” He suggests there is a third category—fundamental research—that is also immediately relevant to societal problems. He calls this “use-inspired research.” We need all three. Each serves a different purpose.

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If you could choose a conversation partner

who would that be?

We asked the guest speakers on these pages which person or persons they would most like to engage in conversation.

Sandra Alcosser,
founder, SDSU's MFA
creative writing program

An only child of a large ancient family, I miss conversation around the dinner table with my father, mother, aunts and uncles most, even though that conversation sometimes produced eye-rolls and long sighs. Like Odysseus in the underworld, I want to hear where they've been since we last talked.

Stanley Maloy,
dean of SDSU
College of Sciences

Charles Darwin. His experience aboard the HMS Beagle led to his concepts about evolution, a theory based upon broad, interdisciplinary science and deep thinking.

Trita Parsi,
president, National
Iranian American
Council

Zoroaster. Having reached the insights he did 3800 years ago makes him one of the wisest men ever to have walked this earth.

Jane Lubchenco,
U.S. Science Envoy for
the Ocean

Pope Francis. After helping to prepare scientific documents about the environment for a meeting with Pope Francis at the Vatican in preparation for his encyclical *Laudato Si*, I had to cancel my travel to Rome at the last minute because my identity was stolen. I missed the opportunity to meet the Pope and thank him for his leadership and wisdom in connecting people and the environment.

Richard Blanco,
award-winning Cuban
American poet

Nelson Mandela or Gandhi. I would speak with them about the art of negotiation grounded in spirituality, confidence and peace. I would like to learn how their genius might be applied to the rift between many Cuban-Americans and the people of Cuba so as to find healing.

Trita Parsi was a guest speaker last fall at the Charles W. Hostler Institute on World Affairs at San Diego State University. He responded to audience questions following his lecture, “Avoiding War and Nuclear Armageddon in the Middle East.”

From the lecture:

In 2009, U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta put the risk of war with Iran at 50/50. Today, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif are Facebook friends. That’s a long distance to travel in a short time.

The Iran nuclear deal has changed relations between the United States and Iran in ways that could have implications for cooperation on terrorism, which is essential for any progress against ISIS.

This nuclear deal also has the potential to unleash Iran’s middle class. Many countries in the Middle East are authoritarian states governing populations that are more radical than their leaders. Iran is a moderate society governed by a regime that is light years behind when it comes to sharing its people’s values. With the lifting of sanctions against Iran [by the West], you have the possibility of an empowered middle class in Iran.

At 60 percent of the population, Iran’s middle class is one of the largest in the Middle East. If this deal is successful, and Iran’s economy grows at a modest annual rate of

5 percent, the middle class will be 85 percent of the population by 2025. A country with a large middle class is far more likely to pursue the status quo than pursue destabilizing, radical foreign policy.

Q: There are warring factions in Iran and a hardliner backlash against more moderate elements. Who’s going to win?

TP: The hardliners are targeting and arresting those they perceive as having played a role in opening up relations between Iran and the world. They fear the lifting of sanctions because they made money off the sanctions. Although the backlash is more severe than I expected, I remain optimistic. It seems to me a desperate attempt to intimidate and prove they are still relevant.

Q: What are some signs that the Iranian people have become more liberal since the 1979 Revolution?

TP: I don’t want to overstate my case. Iran is not Southern

Will the middle class recast politics in Iran

California liberal. But this anecdote is interesting. A few months ago in Shiraz, which is large, but not a liberal metropolitan city like Tehran, videos were released showing the police shooting stray dogs. This caused uproar—big demonstrations in the streets of Shiraz over the rights of dogs. Where else in the Middle East would you see this kind of first-world reaction?



Africana Studies Professor Charles Toombs invited prize-winning poet Richard Blanco to campus for a lecture about poetry and identity. Afterwards, Blanco sat down with students from SDSU’s creative writing program and with Sandra Alcosser, the program’s co-chair.

Sandra Alcosser: What was it like to be asked by the White House to write an inaugural poem for the nation?

rose on us today.” I don’t know why, but I felt that I could trust that and commit to it. Getting to that phrase

the self is just a social construct. You address this in your work, and yet the articulation of self-identity in your poems has spoken to so many. Can you say something about this contradiction?

“BECAUSE THE EGO WANTS TO WRITE THE PERFECT

Richard

Blanco: There was a little bit of angst. The real panic wasn’t in the writing, but in getting to that point in the writing process where you can commit. It’s like tuning an instrument. There comes a moment when you hear that one chord in the recesses of your psyche that says, here I am. For this poem, it was the first line, “One sun

was four days and then writing the rest took one day. I had faith that God didn’t give this to me to mess it up, and I mean that in the most humble way. You try to look at it as a gift every single moment, to realize you’re part of something larger. Because the ego wants to write the perfect poem and wants to upstage Beyoncé. There was no room for ego in those three weeks. I didn’t do anything except walk the dog, go to the gym and write. We learn craft and we can get good at it. The other part is what we’re not paying attention to. It is ultimately the well-spring of every poem. The craft just teaches us how to pull up the bucket.

RB: There’s this great irony when people ask about my influences. They expect me to spit out the name of every Cuban author, but I don’t write just for a Cuban audience. At the end of the day I want my poems to build bridges across divisions. I’ve always written precisely because I know my story isn’t mainstream, but people can read it and say, “This is just another human being.” Even though my story is different, my story is exactly like your story in that we have all hated, loved, been betrayed, had losses. The Romantics believed that the poet is a conduit. Both the writer and reader are standing in front of a

SA: Feminists and Buddhists agree that

mirror and the lines start blurring. That's ultimately the space I'm trying to work from—not of division, but of unity. Uniting people is one of the most powerful things poetry can do. That's my hope, that's what I invest in it.

SA: How do you write a poem that begins in the macro but doesn't stay there?

RB: It has to breathe between the two, the macro and the micro. I knew I needed some kind of Whitmanesque glue [in the inaugural poem], and for

that I turned to the transcendent power of nature. But I couldn't stay there because it's so highfalutin. So the poem does breathe between the large and the minutiae of our lives.

I also needed to be vulnerable, not some poet telling you 'let's be one people today.' By adding biographical details, the poet is right there with you. I almost didn't include anything personal. But [the Dominican-American poet] Julia Alvarez told me, "If you read that poem it's going to look like

you're stealing the moment from us." This clicked in the sense of how to include my presence and my dignity. That's when I added words in Spanish because [the

to my specific gay, Latino, cute kid story because I thought I had nothing else to build on. So I went back to "One Today" as if I were writing about my mother, with the same sort of passion for the image, the lushness,

the same intimacy.

I was able to cut the umbilical cord of writing *only* my story, but still writing

audience] needed to know—this is our story.

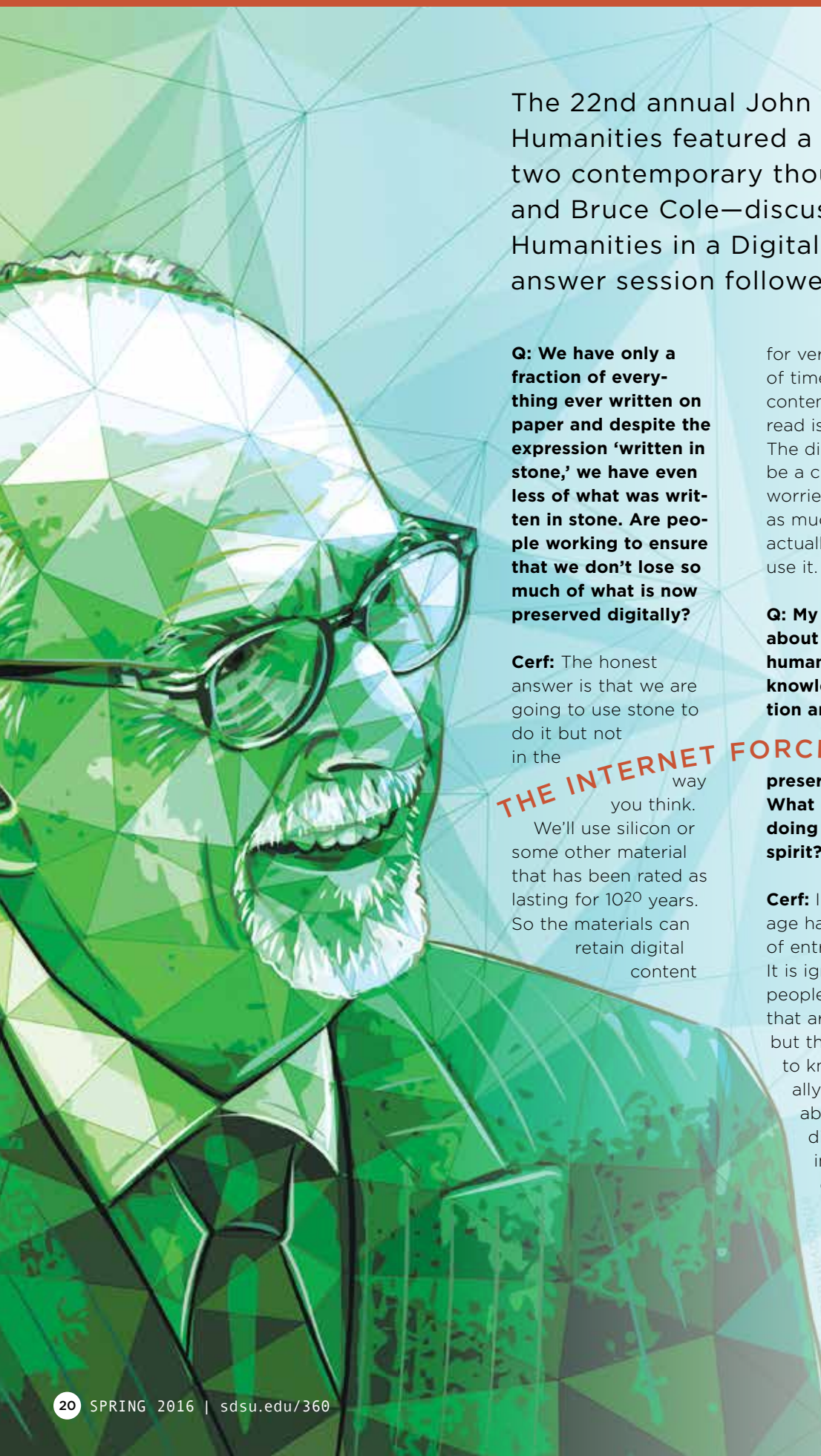
There was some pressure to be politically charged, but my writing has never been like that. I like to consider myself an emotional politician and let that be empowering in a different way. And there was pressure to hold on

my story. The subject matter changed, but subject matter doesn't make our poems. And that's what you see in a brilliant poem. No matter what, the poet's voice is in it.

Can a single poet be the voice of a nation

POEM AND WANTS TO UPSTAGE BEYONCÉ."





The 22nd annual John R. Adams Lecture in the Humanities featured a conversation between two contemporary thought leaders—Vint Cerf and Bruce Cole—discussing “The Future of the Humanities in a Digital Age.” A question-and-answer session followed the lecture.

Q: We have only a fraction of everything ever written on paper and despite the expression ‘written in stone,’ we have even less of what was written in stone. Are people working to ensure that we don’t lose so much of what is now preserved digitally?

Cerf: The honest answer is that we are going to use stone to do it but not in the

way you think. We’ll use silicon or some other material that has been rated as lasting for 10²⁰ years. So the materials can retain digital content

for very long periods of time. Whether the content can still be read is questionable. The digital readers may be a challenge. I’m not worried about saving it as much as I am about actually being able to use it.

Q: My question is about aspects of humanity other than knowledge generation and knowledge

preservation. What is digitization doing to the human spirit?

Cerf: I think the digital age has evoked a spirit of entrepreneurship. It is igniting young people to try things that aren’t possible, but they’re too young to know. So I’m actually very excited about that. The digital age is adding yet another dimension to the human spirit, a new way of sharing information, a new way of finding

information. We are learning how to incorporate that just as we did when other new media came along, like radio, movies and television.

Cole: I see the digital age as adding, not subtracting. Look at something concrete like book sales. When the Kindle came along, people predicted this was the end of the physical book.

But in many ways, the Internet has stimulated book sales.

It’s an addition, not an either-or proposition. Take the e-book, which is basically a book that’s digitized. To me, a true e-book would be dynamic, one that has a footnote with a link that takes you to the source, and that takes you to another source, and then to the archive. In the universal library, no book will be an island. Every bit informs another, every page reads all pages.

THE INTERNET FORCES US TO THINK MORE DEEPLY

Q: Can the process by which Shakespeare's words came into common usage be applied to dead languages? I'd like to hear your thoughts on how supercomputers and advances during the digital age can help decipher dead languages.

Cerf: When you think about Google Translate, for example, one of its mechanisms is statistical in nature. If you have a large enough corpus of material, which is purportedly the same document written in different languages, you can statistically infer what various phrases mean, and you can make that work across multiple languages. We all know the way hieroglyphics were deciphered using the Rosetta Stone. It's

possible if we digitize enough material, we may be able to invent our own Rosetta Stone. I don't want to oversell this idea, but digitization does bring together things that might otherwise never be juxtaposed.

Q: What are your fears regarding control of the Internet? Who determines quality in this vast

resource and what happens to minority voices on controversial topics?

Does the Internet

erode content quality

Cerf: Regarding who determines quality, the answer is—you do. You have the responsibility to make decisions about whether to treat content as high quality or low quality. This is a big challenge. It has been with us for a long time, but the

Internet confronts us with it because of the huge quantity of information out there. We filter the information we consume. Even before the Internet, you didn't read every magazine, watch every movie; you were selective about what you consumed.

The Internet just forces us to think more deeply than we did before about how to filter all that content.

Cole: I think the Internet is a great democratizing force. When you talk about hearing minority voices, remember that until 1960 or so, there were three news channels and what you got was what they thought was representative. Now you have thousands of news channels that can express the

gamut of opinion. I am against any controls. The ultimate responsibility for quality is with the end user.

THAN EVER ABOUT HOW TO FILTER CONTENT.



Training Classics Scholars

Not so long ago “townies” was a common term for returning students who began taking courses in retirement. Townies didn’t live on campus; they drove to campus from town and returned home each day.

David Stepsay was a townie. He commuted to campus from town, but the town in his case was Los Angeles. He would make the 90-minute commute to San Diego State University four days a week to study the things he loved—philology, etymology and the power of language unlocked through the rich history of words that have come into English from arcane origins.

Stepsay enjoyed his time studying alongside younger students and came to be regarded as a treasured enhancement to the education of his fellow undergraduates in the Department of Classics.

After graduation in 1983, he looked for ways to embellish the experience of students studying the classics at SDSU. He supplied the department’s library collection with costly editions of major dictionaries and specialized encyclopedias and donated books from his own extensive collection.

Stepsay’s patronage of the Department of Classics extended to the scholarship he established specifically to promote peer-to-peer tutoring in Greek and Latin classes. He came away from his experience at SDSU firmly convinced that struggling students of ancient Greek and Latin could be helped most by a fellow student right on the spot in class.

Stepsay’s final act of philanthropy to the study of classics at SDSU was the endowment of a lectureship for the department. The Endowed Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Classics in memory of the Stepsay Family—established with an estate gift of \$1.3 million dollars—will allow the department to hire freshly minted doctors of philology to spend up to two years at SDSU teaching courses related to the study of the classical world, including Greek or Latin.

The Stepsay Post-Doc will provide undergraduate students with access to energetic and stimulating scholars of the ancient languages and will give these young scholars the opportunity to advance their research to publication at a critical time in their careers.



The Gift of Knowledge

Ulla Lotta Wiik was born in the land of the Nobel Prize, the smorgasbord and minimalist design. Although she has lived in California for decades, her ties to Sweden and Europe run deep as reflected in her recent gift to San Diego State University.

The endowed gift of \$200,000 will support student exchanges and collaborative scholarly research to strengthen SDSU’s international programs in languages, regional studies and international business. In appreciation, a 500-seat auditorium in the College of Arts and Letters has been named for Wiik.

“I believe that anyone who wants to visit another country and learn another language should be able to take advantage of it,” she said.

The Campaign for SDSU has raised \$675 million of the \$750-million target. Donor support is strengthening academic programs and student success initiatives while driving SDSU toward its goal of breaking into the ranks of the top 50 U.S. public research universities.

Wiik’s gift also supports the university’s goal to increase student participation in international experiences, such as study abroad and internationally based internships. SDSU ranks No. 15 in the country for the number of students studying abroad in the latest Institute for International Education’s Open Doors report. More than 2,100 students have international experiences each year in one of 67 destination countries.

Wiik and her first husband, Einar Wiik, have already contributed much to the San Diego region’s economy. In 1991, they relocated their business, Standard Filter Corp., from Los Angeles to Carlsbad. The company is a world leader in filter bag manufacturing for the Americas, Asia, Australia and Europe. Wiik is chair of the company and her son, Toby, is president and CEO.

A Path to the Top

The Langs' gift supports aspiring business leaders and veteran entrepreneurs.

Linda Martinez might have been a highly successful primary school teacher—or possibly a principal—if her father had not intervened.

“You’re talented in math,” he told her. “You should think about a career in business.” Heeding his advice, the California native transferred from Chico State University to the University of California, Berkeley and switched majors from early childhood education to finance.

So began the career of Linda Lang—eight-year CEO of Jack in the Box,

becoming president of Jack in the Box, she was instrumental in the company’s successful recovery from a major food-borne illness episode. The incident fast-forwarded Lang’s career, leading to increasingly responsible roles from financial analyst to chief marketing officer to head of operations to president and—in 2005—to CEO.

Lang wants young women to hear stories like hers and understand that they can have successful careers. A new gift to SDSU from Lang and her entrepreneur husband, Tom, also an SDSU alumnus, will launch a speaker series within the College of Business Administration to bring prominent business women to campus.

“It’s important to inspire young women by showing them examples of success,” Lang said. “I never considered myself an overachiever, but I was focused and I persevered. We’ve seen an increase in women-owned businesses and women in top positions, but they still represent a small fraction of the whole. Getting a good education is the first step in preparing for a leadership role in business.”

Lang said she made a “strategic” decision in her early career to stop working for a few years to raise two young sons and pursue an MBA at San Diego State. She graduated in 1991 and returned to Jack in the Box, where she had built a reputation as a hard worker and skilled problem solver.

The Langs are ardent supporters of The Campaign for SDSU. Their recent gift to launch the speaker series also includes support for the Joan and Art Barron Veterans Center and for an initiative to increase the number of student-veterans involved in SDSU’s Zahn Innovation Platform (ZIP) Launchpad. Tom Lang, a veteran and Class of ‘67 graduate, sits on the ZIP advisory board.

“The Campaign for SDSU has been very successful, producing tangible results that can be seen all around campus,” Linda observed.

It’s likely she will be seen more often on campus this year as she begins a term on the board of the Campanile Foundation, SDSU’s philanthropic auxiliary.



It’s important to inspire young women by showing them examples of success.



former trustee of the California State University and recipient of an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from San Diego State University in 2013.

Lang is among a handful of women to have run a major publicly traded company in San Diego. A decade before

Talent Sprouts

Soil chemist Gary Waer is a champion of SDSU's science majors.

Gary Waer never thought of himself as a lost Aztec, but he will concede he's been "found." A reception organized by San Diego State University for alumni in the Santa Barbara area reconnected Waer with the university 49 years after graduation.

"SDSU's regional council events are a great way for the university to create and strengthen relationships with its alumni," Waer said.

The regional function he attended led to meetings between Waer and SDSU's College of Sciences dean and a visit to several campus chemistry labs. And that led to a gift from Waer and his wife, Barbara, to The Campaign for SDSU in support of science majors who've graduated from high schools throughout California.

"I was so impressed with the methodology in the labs and the fact that SDSU is producing working chemists—students who know their way around

the labs. Our academic system doesn't always teach hands-on science, but it should be the most important part of a chemistry education," he said.

Waer has always been the hands-on type. Both grandfathers and his father were oil drillers in Texas and California, and Waer was born in Orange, California. He secured a paid internship with Shell Oil while still a student at SDSU.

After 13 years working with oil companies, primarily in management positions on both coasts, Waer settled in Solvang, California. An MBA from Pepperdine University gave him the experience to launch a construction engineering firm and revive a company he had founded years earlier to manufacture and sell synthetic oil for lubrication and cleaning.

Mobilizing his interest in chemistry, Waer also worked for nearly a decade to develop a chelating agent that increases a plant's ability to absorb vital nutrients, such as calcium, copper and iron, from the soil.

His research culminated in a Ph.D. in soil chemistry as well as a marketable product, MPXA, which Waer sells to a range of small growers and major

I was so impressed that SDSU is producing working chemists—students who know their way around the labs.

agribusiness companies throughout the United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

"The entrepreneurship is as interesting to me as the science," Waer said. "I have partners in England and the Netherlands trying to figure out how this product might increase yields in poor countries and enable farmers in arid regions to use salt water for irrigation."

Recently appointed adjunct professor of chemistry and biochemistry at SDSU, Waer is working with Distinguished Professor of Chemistry William Tong and his graduate students to further analyze MPXA. He also mentors a senior chemistry student.

"The best thing we can do for SDSU is help students complete their degrees through mentoring and providing scholarship funds," Waer said. "Barbara and I want to do some good for aspiring scientists."

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

2015 - 2016

ALUMNI BOARD of ADVISORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Perette Godwin '86

President Elect: Alan Dulgeroff '92

Immediate Past President & Liaison

to the Campanile Foundation: Elsa Romero '84

Vice President, Affinity Groups/ Alumni Events:

Katie Hansen '03

Vice President, Athletics and Student Engagement:

Deanna Encarnacion '90

Vice President, Finance: Sean Kilkenny '10

Vice President, Alumni Engagement: Leo Morales '09

Liaison Aztec Mentor Program (AMP)/Career Services:

Aron Getty, '95

Liaison to Technology: Jason Farran '00

Liaison to Veterans/War Memorial: Brian Hayek '09

Administrator: Christy Andrade

OTHER ELECTED ADVISORS:

Kelly Batten '98; Chiloh Baty '08; Mike Cully '11; Stephanie Dathe '95; Lindsey Dixon '02; Ileana Ovalle Engel '94; Aimee Faucett '96; Allyson Frasure '97, '99, '03; Paul Fryling, '10, '14; Daniel Gomes, '01; Ryane Hughes '02, '05; Rudy Johnson '00; Mark Mays '69; Channelle McNutt '13; Steve Nelson '96; James Newland '88; Chris Parks '92; Angie Robert, '04; Allen Sliwa, '04; Todd Vitale '86; Stacey Wolfson '10

PAST PRESIDENTS:

Immediate Past President: Elsa Romero '84

First President: 1931 Vesta Muehleisen

For a full listing of past presidents, visit:

sdsualumni.org/pastpresidents

NON-ELECTED ADVISORS:

President: Elliot Hirshman; Vice President, University Relations and Development: Mary Ruth Carleton; University Senate Chair: Doug Deutschman; Associated Students President: Blaire Ward; Aztec Athletics: Morgan McSweeney

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT STAFF

Interim Executive Director: Ryan DeLong '05

Alumni Engagement Coordinator: Christy Andrade

Alumni Engagement Coordinator: Lacey Lavigne

Assistant Director, Affinity Groups: Dion Akers '08

Assistant Director, Annual Fund: Natasha Bliss

Annual Fund Supervisor: Caitlin Kuhn

Assistant Director, Annual Fund, Stewardship & Membership: Cheryl Lemox

Career Development Liaison: Diane Barragan Marin

Communications Specialist: Tobin Vaughn

Data Control Technician: Robin Breen Rust

Director Development Technology:

Tammy Blackburn '94, '01

Electronic Solicitation Assistant: Vanessa Home

Electronic Solicitation Manager: Dan Majors '03

Facilities Assistant: Mike Lopez '09

Parma Payne Goodall Alumni Center Coordinator:

Lauren Duran, Mariano Rayon

Program Coordinator: Jen Ranallo

1960s

'60 **Peter Ferrantelli** (business administration) was recognized as the Association of Fundraising Professional's Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser of 2015.

'66 **Nancy Ruehlow Hurt** (sociology) received the Carolyn Helman Lichtenberg Crest Award for distinguished alumnae from Pi Beta Phi.

1970s

'70 **Louise Stanger** ★ (master of social work) published "Falling Up: A Memoir of Renewal," her first book.

'75 **Vicki Hallman** (physical education) was inducted into the Kearny Komets Hall of Fame for athletic achievements at Kearny High School (San Diego) and a career in coaching and athletic administration. She lectures at Texas State University.

'78 **Bruce Golden** (English) has published his sixth book, "Tales of My Ancestors" (Shaman Press 2015).

'79 **Enrique Morones** (marketing) published "Border Angels: The Power of One," written with SDSU emeritus professor Richard Griswold del Castillo (SDSU Press 2015).

1980s

'81 **Molly Hillson Nocon** (theatre, television and film) is CEO of Noah Homes, a nonprofit providing care and services to adults with developmental disabilities.

'83 **Steve Martin** ★ (accounting) joined AmpliPhi in San Diego as chief financial officer; **Scott Heath** (journalism) is vice president and general manager for Tribune Broadcasting's Fox affiliate, KSWB in San Diego.

'84 **Mickey Brown** ★ (electrical engineering) retired last year after 47 years with the U.S. Air Force.

'85 **Mark Lee** ★ (finance) is executive vice president and regional director for Umpqua Bank's San Diego commercial banking services; **Raymond Wong** (social work; '89, MA counseling) published "Songs of Ourselves: America's Interior Landscape," a collection of letters to his deceased father (Blue Heron Book Works 2015).

'86 **Torran Nixon** ★ (finance) is executive vice president with Umpqua Bank in Oregon.

1990s

'90 **Paige Levy** (interdisciplinary studies) is chief judge for the California Division of Workers Compensation.

'92 **Brian Hansen** ★ (MBA) joined Tandem Diabetes Care, Inc. as executive vice president and chief commercial officer; **Steven Suzuki** (international business) is global account manager for Dymax Corp.'s western region.

Please send your news to the SDSU Alumni Association, aluminfo@mail.sdsu.edu. | ★ = life member



San Diego State University

If you could have a conversation with one famous SDSU alumnus, who would it be and why?



Ray Rodriguez I would love to spend an hour with 1964 alum, NASCAR team owner and 3X Super Bowl Champion football coach Joe Gibbs.



Taylor Garrett Julie Kavner, just to talk Simpsons with her...particularly see her differentiate her voice between Marge, Patty, and Selma all in the same scene.



David Frerker Tony Gwynn. He's the reason I wanted to go to SDSU.



Nola Woods Potter Kathleen Kennedy...Oh, the questions!!!



Trung Nguyen Apollo Creed, I want to box with him and discuss what was it like being on Psych.



Rosette Isip Granados Ellen Ochoa. I want to be an astronaut. 😊



Cynthia Burke Gregory Peck. No explanation needs to be given with that. 😊



FROM THE TOP: NASCAR team owner and NFL coach Joe Gibbs, '65; MLB Hall of Famer and San Diego Padre Tony Gwynn, '81; Oscar-nominated producer Kathleen Kennedy, '79; NFL linebacker Carl Weathers, '70, who portrayed boxer Apollo Creed in "Rocky;" Academy Award winner Gregory Peck (att. '36).

Class Notes

1990s

'94 **Bob Schassler** (MBA) is executive vice president and general manager of the mobile division at Nuance Communications.

'95 **E. Jason Singley** (physics) is dean of the College of Science at Cal State East Bay.

'98 **Aaron Lorenz** (MA, political science) is dean of the School of Social Science and Human Services at Ramapo College in New Jersey.

2000s

'00 **Zeynep Ilgaz** (MBA), CEO of Confirm BioSciences, was recognized as the Most Admired CEO in San Diego (small business category) by the San Diego Business Journal.

'04 **Amy Benson** (management) joined First Personal Insurance as an account manager in Montana.

'08 **Drew Henriques** (finance) is vice president of the U.S. fixed income strategy division at J.P. Morgan.

'09 **Michael Matteo Rossi** (theatre, television and film) was named one of eight "must know" indie film directors by Examiner.com.

2010s

'10 **Timothy Lepore** (history) joined Ropers, Majeski, Kohn & Bentley P.C. as an associate in the Las Vegas office.

'11 **Nik Ingersoll** (marketing), co-founder of Barnana, was among Forbes' 30 under 30 this year. His company turns bruised bananas into snacks sold at Whole Foods, Sprouts and Safeway.

'12 **Corinne MacEgan** (nursing) is president of the American Nurses Association for the California region.

'14 **Estefania Castañeda Pérez** (political science) is a 2016-2017 fellow in the American Political Science Association's minority fellowship program.

Thinking Outside *the* Box

Mario Scade and Brett Kehler turned their commitment to fitness into a sustainable business.

Business partners Brett Kehler ('15) and Mario Scade ('02) are both into physical fitness, both entrepreneurs and both Aztec alumni. As a team, they are also \$1,000 richer for capturing first place in the inaugural Alumni Track competition at the Zahn Challenge.

San Diego State University's Zahn Innovation Platform (ZIP) Launchpad, which helps students, faculty and staff launch startups from early-stage concepts, sponsors a yearly challenge to identify and reward the most promising ideas

for new businesses. The Fourth Annual Zahn Challenge included a new category just for alumni.

Eight alumni teams signed up, pitching entrepreneurial ideas ranging from a mobile app for organizing and joining pick-up games, to a clothing company for thrill-seeking adventurers. A panel of judges gave the first-place prize to the Aire Fitness team of Kehler and Scade.

Good synergy

The two met when Kehler, programs coordinator for the Aztec Recreation Center, was looking for sustainable flooring

for SDSU's campus fitness center. At the time, Scade headed Pavigym, a supplier of flooring for the fitness industry.

"He clearly cared about the environment and sustainability," Scade recalled. "There was good synergy between us."

After leaving Pavigym, Scade scouted San Diego for a space to open his own fitness center, but nothing appealed to him. Then his thoughts went mobile. He envisioned turning old shipping containers into outdoor fitness centers equipped with a variety of professional fitness equipment, and self-sufficient with solar panels, lighting and music—in other words, a turnkey gym in a box.





Mario Scade, '02, and Brett Kehler, '15, at the Aire Fitness center on the rooftop of the Copley-Price YMCA in City Heights.

Late last year, the first Aire Fitness studio was installed on the rooftop of the Copley-Price Family YMCA in City Heights. Scade then asked Kehler to help him develop the social component of the business.

Tough road

The pair said they suspect the Zahn Challenge judges awarded them the top prize because they presented not a concept, but a saleable product.

“It was an amazing opportunity to show the judges what we have been working on for two years,” Scade said. “As an entrepreneur, you feel lonely sometimes; you have an idea then you have to get investors and it’s a tough road to get to where we are right now. So being able to showcase our work and get an award is amazing.”

Michael Neal ('84, '96), chairman of the Zahn Innovation Center Advisory Board and president and chief executive officer of San Diego’s H.G. Fenton Company, served as a

judge for the competition. He said he liked the idea of including alumni in the Zahn Challenge along with SDSU faculty and students.

“Making the faculty and alumni a part of this whole innovative culture at San Diego State is a terrific opportunity,” he said. “I

would like to see more (alumni

involvement) in the future because San Diego is full of San Diego State alumni who want to be a part of what’s going on here at the university.”

Social vision

Currently, Kehler and Scade are developing the social enterprise component of Aire Fitness in the ZIP Launchpad, using the resources and expert guidance available to SDSU entrepreneurs.

They hope to place their outdoor fitness centers on school grounds, benefitting both students and families in the community. But a lot depends on finding investors who share their social vision.

“That’s what we’re really looking for,” Kehler said, “not just the money, but people who really believe in what we’re doing for the planet and the communities that we’re going to affect positively.”



Common Chords

CHAPTERS FROM AZTEC HISTORY

John R. Adams never meant to come to San Diego. A fluky constellation of sunshine and disease brought one of San Diego State University's most storied researchers to campus.

Born in Cincinnati in 1900 and raised in Detroit, Adams began teaching English at the University of Michigan at the age of 20. Seeking a change of scenery, he and his wife, Jane, moved to Seattle, where he began teaching at the University of Washington in 1925. Soon after, he contracted tuberculosis. Looking to convalesce somewhere sunny and warm, the couple chose San Diego, "which I had never heard of until I looked on the map to see where was furthest from Seattle on the coast," Adams said in a 1977 interview.

That may surprise modern readers, but in 1928, the city had fewer than 150,000 residents and was barely a decade removed from its world debut with the Panama-California Exposition.

While mulling an open invitation to teach at UCLA, "a funny-looking man ... from the local college" paid him a visit, he recalled. That man was Irving Outcalt, head of the English department and vice president at the San Diego State Teachers College. The college offered him a teaching job and a \$2,500 contract.

Adams and his wife didn't plan on staying long. They missed the greenery of the Pacific Northwest and regarded San Diego as kind of a "hick town," but eventually fell in love with its charms.

His foray into the humanities came when President Edward Hardy asked if he could teach a class on English romantic poets. He said that he could, despite knowing nothing about poetry—English, romantic or otherwise. "Young fellows think they can teach anything, you know, and maybe they can," Adams said. The following

semester, he found himself teaching the Victorian poets, as well.

Adams eventually became chair of the university's first humanities department. He taught and administrated at SDSU for 40 years, shepherding the department as the university grew in population and sophistication, and then stayed on as university archivist after retiring.

In 1977, the John R. Adams Humanities Building was dedicated in his honor. Adams created a \$1 million living trust in 1990 that continues to benefit the university, supporting the annual Adams Lecture in Humanities. He died in 1994 but is remembered as "an esteemed colleague and teacher ever devoted to literature, to the humanities, and to the liberal and fine art," according to his colleague E. Nicholas Genovese, professor emeritus in the SDSU Department of Classics and Humanities.

—Michael Price



This photo from 1955 pictures San Diego State College's division chairmen. From left to right: Lt. Col. John Monaco Jr. (air science), Robert Richardson (social sciences), President Malcolm Love, Robert Harwood (life sciences), John Adams (humanities), George Sorenson (fine arts), Dudley Robinson (physical sciences), William Terry (health and physical education), Charles Lamden (business administration) and Manfred Schrupp (education). The child is Jimmy Carlson, a student at the Training School on campus.

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