Cal's culture cache

Advocating in Sacramento for higher education

Bill Gates calls on Berkeley's bright minds
Jean-Paul Bourdier, the UC Berkeley architecture professor whose photograph titled “Sphinx” appears in his book *Bodyscapes* (Earth Aware Editions, San Rafael: 2007). His artwork is represented by Volakis Gallery, and his exhibit, “Body of Light,” can be seen at the Townsend Center for Humanities through Dec. 17.

townsendcenter.berkeley.edu

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To view an online version of *The Promise of Berkeley*, visit promise.berkeley.edu.
**Around Cal**

**Goodwin Liu nomination**

*The New York Times* reports that the effort to confirm Berkeley’s Goodwin Liu, a professor of law and a constitutional law expert, to the U.S. Court of Appeals’ Ninth Circuit has been the toughest fight over any of President Obama’s appeals court nominees. [promise.berkeley.edu/liu](http://promise.berkeley.edu/liu)

**Einstein was right**

While general relativity describes well the behavior of the solar system, Einstein’s theory of gravity and spacetime had not been tested on cosmological scales. A team from Berkeley, University of Zurich, and Princeton has analyzed data on 70,000 galaxies that show the theory is the best and most precise description of the universe. [promise.berkeley.edu/einstein](http://promise.berkeley.edu/einstein)

**Five Guggenheims**

Five Berkeley professors — Leon Chua, Rosemary Joyce, Gregory Levine, Dawn Song, and R. Jay Wallace — have been named 2010 Guggenheim fellows, an award conferred for “achievement and exceptional promise.” [promise.berkeley.edu/guggenheim](http://promise.berkeley.edu/guggenheim)

**Student bear blog**

From student life and housing to academics and extracurricular activities, the Office of Undergraduate Admissions’ student bloggers capture for prospective students the nuances and richness of life at Berkeley. [goldenbearsblog.blogspot.com](http://goldenbearsblog.blogspot.com)

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**Towel-folding robot?**

A team from the Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences department has gotten a robot to fold previously unseen towels of different sizes. Their approach solves a key problem in robotics — dealing with “deformable objects” — things that are flexible with unpredictable shapes. [promise.berkeley.edu/robot](http://promise.berkeley.edu/robot)

**Stadium dispute settled**

UC Berkeley and the Panoramic Hill Association have reached a legal settlement agreement that resolves issues related to recent litigation, and establishes parameters for the use and operation of California Memorial Stadium after extensive seismic retrofitting and renovation work is completed in 2012. [promise.berkeley.edu/settlement](http://promise.berkeley.edu/settlement)

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*The Campaign for Berkeley*  
July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2013

As of March 31, 2010, the campus raised $1.75 billion toward the $3-billion campaign goal with 36% endowment and 64% non-endowment funding.
Culture
In this age of ranting blogs, flash mob performances, cell phone novels, and straight-to-DVD movies, determining what falls under the rubric of a complex word like “culture” can be perplexing. Does it serve to inform, develop moral and intellectual faculties, define identity, nurture beauty, or simply captivate and amuse?

The word “culture” originates from the idea of cultivation or tillage — evoking the seeds of growth and renewal. At Berkeley, culture is probed with pens and Petri dishes. It appears as notes scribbled on paper and resonating in the air. And it’s found in Australian towns, traveling Airstreams, and neglected urban patches, as our faculty, students, and alumni till a rich landscape of mediums and places.

Glimpse this sampling of Berkeley’s provocative projects as they push the evolving boundaries of what we know and understand about ourselves and our society.
Three afternoons a week, in an airy room bathed by sunlight in The Bancroft Library, a handful of Cal students leaves behind a world of iPhones and Twitter to step into a world of ink, metal letters, and iron presses.

With each section limited to six students, History 200X: The Hand-Printed Book in its Historical Context is among the campus’s best kept secrets. “You feel that you’re in this exclusive club,” says Ian Leighton, a third-year student in mechanical engineering, describing the class created by Bancroft rare book curator Anthony Bliss.

Clad in canvas aprons, the students huddle around a massive cast-iron hand press — one of two owned by The Bancroft — examining today’s type setting for missing letters, worn serifs, and any minute debris that could mar the page.

Graduate student Jen Zahrt is first on the ink roller. She coats its heavy cylinder with viscous, glossy liquid, then slowly moves it over the type, gliding forward and back.

Guided by instructors Les Ferriss and Peter Koch, students also get to hold, touch, and examine some of the most rare and important tomes ever printed. “A lot of the texts are books that I’ve been reading in my classes,” says third-year English and art-practice major Anna Reeser.

The students are working on the final project: 35 copies of a previously unpublished manuscript from The Bancroft archives. Each will receive a copy, as will the instructors. A single copy will be reserved for the library’s permanent collection.

“We’re actually producing a book that’s going to be in the archives,” says Reeser. “That’s kind of exciting.”
When associate professor of English Namwali Serpell received word that her work had been selected for Best American Short Stories 2009, she thought it was a mistake. "My confidence in my creative writing was at a low point," recalls the young talent. In fact, "Muzungu" — set in Zambia, Serpell's native country — is the first fiction she ever had published. With her name now appearing alongside Annie Proulx and Alice Sebold, Serpell's fiction-writing career has taken off, but the Harvard alum has no plans to abandon academia. "I want to be done with my current novel by summer, so I can concentrate on my academic writing," Serpell says.

Poetry for the people

Megan Downey, a first-year graduate student in African American Studies, is a Student Teacher Poet in Poetry for the People (or P4P). Founded by Professor June Jordan in 1991, P4P combines classroom studies, artist residencies, and community projects — empowering participants of all backgrounds to write, teach, and perform poetry.

"Not Your Good Southern Woman" (Excerpt)

i will not be your girl
next door
your good southern woman
will not silence myself
nor feign ignorance
i will not be groped
in the night
will not wear
your bruises
this body
my body
will not behave.

By Megan Downey

Berkeley proves fertile ground for writing couple

When English lecturer Vikram Chandra landed a rumored $1-million advance for his novel, Sacred Games, he had no thoughts of leaving Cal. "It's an incredibly fertile atmosphere," says the author; "There's not enough time to explore everything."

Chandra and his wife, Melanie Abrams (whose novel Playing was published in 2008), teach creative writing — a surprising choice considering that Cal does not offer an advanced degree in the field. But both insist that teaching outside of a traditional M.F.A. program is more fun. "The students have all the excitement that I had as a young writer," says Abrams.

Sowing more seeds of inspiration, the couple helped create Story Hour in the Library, a series that has attracted Dave Eggers, Michael Chabon, and Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket) to campus. "The Berkeley ethos of questioning and inquiry is still alive and well," says Chandra.

Balancing fiction and academia

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Provoking thought

Launched last fall, The Berkeley Blog (blogs.berkeley.edu) lets more than 150 of the campus’s brightest faculty exchange opinions, share research, and react to breaking news. “This interactive site opens a window on the topical debates that fuel the Berkeley campus, especially as readers add to the mix,” says editor Jeffery Kahn. Recent posts include:

“To protect the environment, we don’t need environmental crusaders on the Court. We just need judges who understand that the paramount role in environmental law is played by Congress . . .”
— Dan Farber, professor of law, on retiring Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens’ impact on environmental law

“Tell [your daughter] you don’t know if that woman is beautiful or not. You have never met her. You don’t know if she is kind or cruel . . . These are the things you need to know before you can say whether or not she is beautiful.”
— Joanne Ikeda, co-founder of the Center for Weight and Health, on magazine covers and body dissatisfaction

REFASHIONING RETAIL

Retail impresarios Carol Lim ’97 and Humberto Leon ’97 didn’t study design while at Berkeley — she majored in economics and he in art and American studies. Yet the insights expressed through their Opening Ceremony clothing stores are changing the way their peers look at fashion.

“We’re engaged in all steps of the fashion cycle ranging from designing our own collection, to having a showroom, to retailing in our stores,” says Lim. “Our love of all creative mediums — fashion, music, books, and art — as well as our love of travel made us think, Why not take a chance and open a store that combines all these things?”

Opening Ceremony features more than 200 lines of approachable, inspirational designs. In just seven years, its concept of featuring designers from a different country each year has helped it grow to four stores in New York, Los Angeles, and Tokyo.

“We are good at storytelling about how we discovered a designer or the history of a company we’ve partnered with. I think our customers appreciate this knowledge, which is why they come back again and again,” says Lim.
A mysterious connection between Cal and the Star Trek universe has come to light. Not only did Chris Pine ’02 (Captain Kirk) and John Cho ’96 (Mr. Sulu) — who together starred in last spring’s blockbuster Star Trek film — attend Berkeley, so did fellow thespians Roxann Dawson ’80 (B’Elanna Torres, Star Trek: Voyager) and George Takei (Mr. Sulu, Star Trek: The Original Series), who transferred to UCLA.

Angeleno Dana Slatkin ’89 has spent her adult life inspiring others to eat healthier, while still reveling in the culture that surrounds mouth-watering meals. Born into a True Blue family — her parents, stepfather, brother, aunt, and cousins all attended Cal — Slatkin found her own inspiration studying abroad in Venice, Italy. “I fell in love with the fresh markets and café culture, and I was captivated by the power of good food to bring people together,” she says.

After graduation, Slatkin headed to New York’s Culinary Institute of America, eventually training in France with renowned Michelin three-star chefs. In 1994, she helped launch the Beverly Hills Farmers’ Market to combat prevalent “conspicuous consumption” and provide a place where neighbors could gather.

“In Los Angeles, it’s so easy to live by the slow food philosophy,” Slatkin says. “Farmers’ markets are open year-round and always have beautiful produce.”

Her first cookbook, Summertime Anytime, was published last year, and these days this busy mother of three spends her time blogging (danaslatkin.com) and teaching coveted cooking classes.

Says Slatkin, “There’s no better excuse to slow down than a delicious meal.”
Siamese dreams

SCENE ONE: A North Carolina plantation, late 1830s. Two sisters trace their fingers along a thick knot of skin that connects twin brothers — their future husbands — to discover where one man ends and the other begins.

This scene — part history, part poetry — exemplifies what you might see in I Dream of Chang and Eng, a new play being developed for the Department of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies by internationally renowned playwright Philip Kan Gotanda.

The piece follows the extraordinary lives of Chang and Eng Bunker — conjoined brothers whose condition coined the term “Siamese twins” — from their childhoods in Siam (now Thailand), to being exhibited around the world as oddities, to owning plantations in North Carolina. It also highlights a number of contemporary issues, including disability, interracial marriage, and immigration.

“I envision an animated staging with big movement, bold colors, and music,” says Gotanda. “But it’s also an intimate love story about two inseparable brothers and the historic changes swirling around them at that time.”

Gotanda will collaborate with a stellar cast of Berkeley faculty and students, as well as Bay Area theater professionals, Asian scholars, and others who intersect the topic, to produce the play, which will be performed in March of 2011.

“If we want our principals, teachers, and staff to better themselves as professionals, we need to infuse artistic expression into that process. Learning is exciting, challenging, and uncomfortable at times. Art provides us with a way to communicate what sometimes cannot be said in words.”

— Lucius McKelvy, principal at Johnston Cooper Elementary in Vallejo, Calif.

McKelvy participated in BRAVO!, a program of Berkeley’s Principal Leadership Institute that pairs performance, visual, and spoken-word artists with aspiring urban leaders from under-resourced K–12 schools to engage in a deep creative process that explores issues of race, class, and equity in education.
Holden Wan Lai, a 17-year-old whose large family lives on $15,000 a year, auditioned for a music scholarship program four years ago with worn-out drumsticks but clear talent. He is now a thriving member of the Young Musicians Program (YMP), which provides free, year-round training with Berkeley faculty and professional musicians, academic tutoring with Cal students, and personal guidance to gifted, underprivileged children ages 9 to 18. This year, 95 students will have the opportunity to perfect their innate talent.

“Each student comes to us with an unsung song,” says Daisy Newman, YMP director. “We watch them transform from those who sit in the back of the room to leaders in their school and community music ensembles.”

When Wan Lai first started, he had only played rock music on a drum set for six months, but he now plays every percussion instrument in the orchestra. And with the program’s heavy emphasis on college preparation, he will be starting at Oberlin Conservatory this fall — a shining example of YMP’s 100 percent success rate for seniors who go to college.

A final public concert will be performed in Hertz Hall on August 4, 6, and 8.

Katherine Sherwood, professor of art practice and artist in residence at Berkeley’s Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute, investigates the intersection of art and medicine in her mixed-media paintings. Her works (such as “Transports Instantaneously,” pictured at left) juxtapose medical images, including angiograms of her own brain taken after she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage, with fluid renderings of ancient patterns. Viewers may recognize organic forms such as tissue, nerves, and blood vessels, and are invited to contemplate the brain as a vessel for ideas, memories, dreams, and imagination.
Mentioning “race” on the UC Berkeley campus following the 1996 passage of Proposition 209 in California “was almost like referring to Voldemort,” the villainous character in *Harry Potter*, says American Cultures program director Victoria Robinson. “You could not speak its name.”

Today — thanks in part to the American Cultures (AC) requirement launched at Cal more than two decades ago — the conversation about race, ethnicity, and culture is thriving.

In Professor Darlene Francis’s popular AC class called Is Inequality Making Us Sick?, students delve into how the social circumstances in which we are born, live, and work relate to health. In Engineering 130AC, students look at how poverty, race, and culture come up in engineering ethics — examining lessons learned from New Orleans and the impact on levee design nationwide, for example.

The only required course for all Berkeley undergraduates, American Cultures is taken by 9,100 students a year and offered in 49 departments and programs across campus.

“We have moved away from a box of multiculturalism, toward a landscape,” says Robinson. “It’s a set of critical thinking skills and has to live, breathe, and be active.”

Students and faculty won demands for this requirement in the University’s Academic Senate in 1989. Unlike similar requirements across the country, Berkeley’s program mandates a comparative study of at least three of the following groups — African American, European American, Asian American, Native American, or Hispanic/Latino — in any given class.

“I was challenged to think about how politics, economics, and culture interact in the Bay Area,” says Peter Volberding, a senior whose essay about China’s economic relationship with the Bay Area won last year’s American Cultures research prize. “This holistic approach was crucial to my intellectual development.”

A gift from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund (see page 20) supports the creation of 30 new AC courses that will incorporate a distinct public service component. “Our intent is to advocate for research not on community but with community,” explains Robinson. “The requirement always has to be willing to listen to the edges of new thought and new research.”
In Pormpuraaw on the northeast point of Australia, the aboriginal people speaking Kuuk Thaayorre [pronounced kook ti yor] use the belly — instead of the heart — as a metaphor for emotion. If you’re heartbroken, you’re “dead bellied.” If you’re generous, you’re “big bellied.” If you receive bad news, your hand might fly to your stomach instead of your chest.

Berkeley linguist Alice Gaby, a native Australian who wrote her dissertation about Kuuk Thaayorre, studies this inextricable link between language and culture. Using photos depicting an alligator’s development from egg to adult, for example, she asked Kuuk Thaayorre speakers to put them in chronological order. They usually placed the photos east to west.

“Every language takes some things for granted and makes you pay attention to other details,” she explains.

Gaby is now researching the language of the northern California Karuk tribe, teaching, and observing her 15-month-old son who is just learning to talk. “It’s extraordinary that we can learn a language at all,” she laughs.

It’s been 30 years since Khmer Rouge leader Kaing Guek Eav oversaw the execution of at least 14,000 fellow citizens, but his televised tribunal unfolded just last year before 3 million Cambodians and monitors trained by UC Berkeley’s War Crimes Study Center.

Berkeley’s center held international humanitarian law workshops for Cambodian lawyers and judges, prepared trial monitors, and spearheaded the project to televise the proceedings.

Founded a decade ago with hands-on support and philanthropy from Frank Wang and Berkeley alumna Laura Young B.A. ’84, J.D. ’87, the War Crimes Study Center’s relatively small staff is also working in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Indonesia, and East Timor.

“We go where needs are not being addressed and where we can make the most difference,” says director David Cohen, a Berkeley rhetoric professor who flies about 300,000 miles annually to lend the University’s neutrality, credibility, and expertise to truth-telling processes in countries ravaged by war.
Coming soon to northern India is the futuristic-sounding Nano City, a master-planned development close to construction near the Himalayan foothills — but imagined, in large part, a world away on the Berkeley campus.

The innovative design features parks and open space in half of the city, a mix of business and residential areas connected by innovative “green” public transit, and priority for pedestrians.

The idea originated with Hotmail cofounder Sabeer Bhatia, who dreamed of building a sustainable, eco-friendly, and high-tech city in his homeland. With input from Berkeley Professor Nezar AlSayyad, Bhatia — a Stanford alum — funded a design studio at the College of Environmental Design in which 16 master’s and Ph.D. students teamed with faculty to formulate a master plan for the city. “He is so thrilled with his relationship with Berkeley that he keeps talking about it in public,” AlSayyad laughs.

Apart from working on the master plan, students received unmatched real-world experience that included visits to India and meetings with top-ranking political figures there. Much still needs to be done — only 3,000 of the plan’s 11,000 acres have been purchased for development so far — but the introduction of a major developer to the project keeps AlSayyad hopeful that groundbreaking will happen in the fall. “They are on an upward trajectory,” he says.

Iben credits Berkeley for giving her the problem-solving skills needed for perfecting Pixar’s technology. “Giving the animators the control that they want has been particularly challenging,” says Iben, adding that seemingly simple movements — such as creating a character’s walk — are being made lifelike through the software.

Set in Scotland, the film featuring Iben’s work will be Pixar’s first fairytale. The story will mix humor, fantasy, and excitement — and, apparently, very lifelike movements.

Hayley Iben
M.S. ’05, Ph.D. ’07
is ready for her close-up — or at least her work is. A graphics software engineer at Pixar Animation Studios, Iben is refining the company’s cutting-edge animation software, which will make its big-screen debut in Pixar’s still-unnamed Christmas 2011 release, featuring the voices of Reese Witherspoon and Emma Thompson.

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Bringing a fairytale to life

City smarts
Touring the country in her Airstream trailer this spring, Emily Pilloton ’03 celebrated the power of good design in the name of the greater good — promoting innovative products that blend usefulness and affordability, and many for those in great need.

Pilloton’s Design Revolution Road Show visited 35 high schools and colleges, showcasing 40 products that use smart design to make social impact. Items on display in the trailer ranged from affordable prosthetic feet for landmine victims to Brita in-home water filtration pitchers.

“We wanted to show a range of things, not just designs for the poor but things that you can buy in Walmart or Target,” says Pilloton, who studied architecture at Berkeley and is the director of Project H Design, a nonprofit firm working on humanitarian product design and architecture projects. Many of the touring items are Project H creations, and all were featured in her book Design Revolution, published last year.

Pilloton credits Berkeley for showing her what design can achieve. “So many programs are about training professional architects,” she says, “but Berkeley gave me a foundation to do any number of amazing things.”

Design with a difference

Alleys, neglected patches of pavement, spaces under freeway overpasses:
To Nicholas de Monchaux, these overlooked spots can “green” and cool our cities — and eradicate the need for expensive sewer upgrades and electrical-grid expansions.

An assistant professor of architecture and urban design, de Monchaux’s Local Code project uses digital mapping tools to identify these spaces, and suggests micro-parks that can relieve a city’s stormwater system, lower urban temperature by several degrees during hot weather, and more.

De Monchaux and his students located more than 1,600 such spots across San Francisco — equal in size to more than half of Golden Gate Park. “Everyone likes green spaces,” he says, “but if you can save an enormous amount of money in old-style infrastructural investments, that’s new and interesting to citizens and city decision-makers.”

Green streets

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Arturo Fernandez is just one Cal student who is facing a 32-percent hike in tuition and fees this year. But instead of weakening his spirit, facing the firsthand impact of California’s budget crisis has spurred him to press for change.

“In a time of budget woes, the last thing we should be doing is denying an education to prospective undergraduates,” says Fernandez, a second-year math and statistics double major from Pittsburg, Calif., who is the first in his family to attend college. “Sacramento needs to realize how important higher education is and fund this great state’s need for professionals and experts.”

Fernandez took action to back up his rhetoric. This spring he met with the aides of his hometown legislators, Assembly Member Tom Torlakson and Senator Mark DeSaulnier, in Sacramento.

Fernandez’s trip to the capitol was just one of many efforts that the Berkeley campus has organized as it presents its case to state legislators. In a series of March and April meetings, Chancellor Robert J. Birgeneau and a coalition of students, staff, faculty, and administrators — including representatives from all campuses of the University of California, California State University, and the California Community Colleges — joined forces to make the case for funding higher education.

“This has to be a mass effort on the part of tens of thousands of Californians, people willing to write...
their legislators and lean on gubernatorial candidates and willing to talk with their friends, neighbors and co-workers about why education matters and why UC is worth saving,” says Wendy Brown, a professor of political science who spoke at a Sacramento rally. As an example of the budget impact, Brown says her sophomore research assistant is unlikely to return to Berkeley next year due to the tuition and fee hike. Brown also has experienced great difficulty this semester in recruiting new graduate students.

Plummeting state funding

Each year, state cuts have left Berkeley with less money to spend on students; over the past eight years, if you adjust for inflation, state support has plummeted by more than $7,000 per student, which means the state is now paying less than 50 percent of the cost of a student’s education. The campus has had to trim courses and services to help counteract the budget shortfall. It has also launched Operational Excellence, an effort to create permanent savings — totaling more than $75 million — by reducing costs and improving services in key areas.

Regarding the cuts and their impact on students, Fernandez says, “Yes, I had seen the tuition figures, but I would have never expected a 32 percent tuition hike. It came as a blow.”

But Fernandez thinks the future can be brighter: “If you really care about something, then all you have to do is find others who share your passion and rally to change things for the better,” he says. “People might say that the California budget is a complicated problem, but I would argue that the lack of a prepared and educated workforce is one much greater.”

Visit ucforcalifornia.org/cal to voice your support for Cal and the importance of public higher education.
Eye in the sky. Cris Benton has taken his passion for photography to new heights. Benton, an architecture professor at the College of Environmental Design, regularly takes photos using a setup consisting of a kite and a camera — resulting in stunning aerial images of our world, including “Wave at North Beach, Pt. Reyes” (left) and his own self-portrait, taken high above an old salt pond near Coyote Hills Regional Park. To view more of his photography, visit promise.berkeley.edu/benton.
Alumna Francesca Weems ’09 walked briskly across campus with billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates at her side — seizing an opportunity to thank him for enabling a low-income foster child like her to excel at Berkeley.

“I gave him two photos of my graduation and told him to keep them in his scrapbook of successful scholars,” said Weems, who was a recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship and will attend Berkeley’s Graduate School of Education in the fall. “It was great to be able to thank him in person and tell him that I want to help foster children get the kind of help that I did.”

At his first stop on a five-day tour of colleges intended to inspire students to think big about changing the world, Gates spoke at Zellerbach Hall on April 19 about the urgency to reduce childhood mortality and improve education worldwide.

“Are the brightest minds working on the most important problems?” he asked.

Gates mentioned “goofing off” with friends recently and being struck by how deeply knowledgeable they are about a few topics — March madness and Wall Street. “How possible is it that we could be having the same intense conversation about how to make a teacher better . . . about how to make seeds that would make poor farmers more productive?” he asked, crossing the stage in a white pin-striped shirt and his signature wire glasses.
Gates praised the bright minds and outstanding record of public service at Berkeley — noting that 459 Berkeley students applied to Teach for America, the most from any university in the nation. But the founder of Microsoft and co-chair of the $33-billion Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation beseeched students to do more.

“I dropped out of school myself,” Gates said to ripples of laughter among students. “I promised my dad I’d go back and so I’m working that debt off a day at a time.”

In fact, Gates did have a “learning experience” during his daylong trip to Berkeley. He visited Dan Portnoy’s laboratory, where the professor and his postdoctoral fellows, graduate, and undergraduate students offered a lesson on vaccines. Portnoy’s research focuses on the food-borne bacterium Listeria monocytogenes — a good model for understanding how other intracellular pathogens, such as those that cause AIDS or tuberculosis, spread throughout the body. Portnoy’s work is leading to breakthroughs in developing safe and effective vaccines — a topic of particular interest to the Gates Foundation.

“He picked up on the things that I thought were very critical,” said a beaming Portnoy about Gates immediately following the visit.

Portnoy’s students echoed the professor’s sentiment.

“It was really refreshing to see how interested he was in the work we’re doing and the global impact,” said Jaspreet Singh, a third-year undergraduate, who plans to go to medical school. Singh said Gates also wanted to know about her extracurricular activities as a resident assistant in student housing.

After his talk at Zellerbach, the PC pioneer donned a Cal baseball cap — a gift from students — to the delight of the crowd. He invited Berkeley students to post comments on his foundation’s Facebook page about what they are doing to address global issues and how they are drawing others to be involved.

For some students, Gates’s talk itself was an inspiration and an invitation to do more.

“It made me rethink what I’m doing and what I’m focused on,” said junior Ann Beaver, 22. “I am going to figure out a life direction that uses what I know to fix problems in the world.”
The storied timeline of Haas family philanthropy — dating back to the earliest days of UC Berkeley — grew once again in March with a five-year, $16-million investment in equity, diversity, and inclusion that is expected to grow to $31 million when fully matched. Robert D. Haas ’64 (pictured above right), annual fund chair of The Campaign for Berkeley and former CEO and current chairman emeritus of Levi Strauss & Co., talks with The Promise of Berkeley about the landmark investment from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

Q: Why did the Haas, Jr. Fund make such a significant — and unprecedented — investment in equity, diversity, and inclusion?

A: Chancellor Robert Birgeneau has said that the ability to navigate successfully among diverse groups in an increasingly globalized society — intercultural competence — is the most important skill for 21st-century students. So I believe this effort gets to the very heart of Cal’s educational mission.

Our state is the most diverse in the nation, and Berkeley undergraduates reflect that diversity. California and the nation will benefit from efforts to harness this richness of different perspectives and experiences and promote equity and inclusion.

Research shows that taking a piecemeal approach to studying or supporting diversity doesn’t have a meaningful impact. I think this effort will set Berkeley apart as the leading center for research on issues affecting our increasingly diverse society.

Q: This gift includes a $1.5-million matching fund for scholarships to transfer students. Why?

A: Transfer students disproportionately come from low-income communities. Many are immigrants or are the sons or daughters of newcomers to this country. They are often the first in their families to attend college. Yet despite the challenges, they graduate at the same rate as their classmates. We’d like to reward their efforts and help them realize their dreams.

A public university should serve all qualified students, not just those with the means and background to attend college without help.

Q: Why did the Haas, Jr. Fund make such a significant — and unprecedented — investment in equity, diversity, and inclusion?

A: Chancellor Robert Birgeneau has said that the ability to navigate successfully among diverse groups in an increasingly globalized society — intercultural competence — is the most important skill for 21st-century students. So I believe this effort gets to the very heart of Cal’s educational mission.

Our state is the most diverse in the nation, and Berkeley undergraduates reflect that diversity. California and the nation will benefit from efforts to harness this richness of different perspectives and experiences and promote equity and inclusion.

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A public university should serve all qualified students, not just those with the means and background to attend college without help.
In times of state budget cuts, why is this investment important?

A. Private philanthropy cannot make up the gap created by state funding cuts to education — that's for the legislature and Californians to resolve. I think philanthropy can play an important role by supporting new initiatives like this one, which need to demonstrate benefits before state funds are deployed to provide ongoing support.

Q. How do you respond to critics who say this is another form of affirmative action?

A. This initiative seeks to expand people’s understanding of what it means to be inclusive. Race, ethnicity, and gender are important parts of the puzzle, but achieving inclusiveness demands deeper thinking and a broader approach. True diversity embraces many other dimensions that include socio-economic status, sexual identity, issues of disability, and more. Importantly, this initiative is consistent with state and federal laws and does not change the University’s policies.

Q. Where does your own strong commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion come from?

A. Our parents modeled this value at home and in their professional, volunteer, and philanthropic activities. Their beliefs shaped the Haas, Jr. Fund’s commitment to providing access and opportunity to all people. In my case, studying at Cal stretched my imagination and ways of looking at things, introducing me to people and experiences that were different than anything that I had encountered before.

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— Robert D. Haas

What’s in the Haas gift?

Five multidisciplinary endowed faculty chairs focused on diversity-related research

An endowed Haas Scholarship Challenge to inspire matching scholarship contributions of $50,000 or more in new named funds directed toward community college transfer students

An expansion of the American Cultures curriculum; mentoring and career development for faculty members; and innovative programs affecting the entire campus
Creating films to jumpstart change

Imagine presenting extensive research to a group of judges and attorneys in Mexico about the lack of legal access and fair trials in that country. With statistics on your side, could you convince them of the need for reform?

Layda Negrete LL.M. ’96, M.P.P ’98 stood in that exact situation and was met with rage. Undeterred, she and her husband, Roberto Hernández, both doctoral candidates at the Goldman School of Public Policy, adapted a different strategy. They are among a growing group of Berkeley students and alumni who are making films to connect research and societal issues to real people’s stories.

Proving innocence

While Negrete and Hernández’s first documentary, El Túnel, eventually led to a constitutional amendment, their latest film, Presumed Guilty, aims for a broader audience. The award-winning documentary chronicles the story of Antonio “Toño” Zúñiga, who was wrongfully imprisoned in Mexico City in 2005 for a murder he knew nothing about.

The couple caught up with Zúñiga after he had unsuccessfully appealed his case. Hernández suspected that Zúñiga’s lawyer had forged his license — a theory that proved correct and resulted in a retrial. Negrete and Hernández were granted unprecedented camera access to the court and prison systems. The result — a collaboration with top producers, photographers, director Geoffrey Smith, and others — is a chilling story of the struggle to free
Birth of a democracy

Bhutan isn’t a place that gets much attention in the Western media. But when the tiny Asian nation — long an absolute monarchy — made the switch to a parliamentary democracy in 2008, grad student Mike Shen ’10 knew the story was too good to overlook.

“I’d been interested in Bhutan for years,” recalls Shen, “ever since reading a newspaper article about the introduction of television to the country.” An editor in the journalism department of San Francisco-based Current TV at the time of Bhutan’s switch, Shen was approached by Current reporter Christof Putzel about pursuing the story. The pair quickly received the green light from Current to head to Bhutan, where they chronicled how the nation’s young people are adjusting to democracy and westernization in their once-isolated culture.

Their resulting piece, Lost in Democracy, aired soon after the changeover and netted Shen and Putzel an Emmy nomination. “We received lots of great feedback from people who previously knew almost nothing about Bhutan,” Shen says. “My hope is that the piece not only entertains but educates people about a remarkable country few are lucky enough to visit.”

Zúñiga from a system riddled with corruption and ineptitude.

“It’s easier to talk about a problem with stories than with abstraction,” says Negrete. “It adds a human dimension.”

Beyond telling Zúñiga’s story, the film also suggests a solution: “A transparent trial system and presumption of innocence,” says Negrete.

“We want to equip and mobilize, as well as inform,” adds Hernández. “The film is our policy memo.”

Called “a compelling human story of… international importance” by Variety, Presumed Guilty has been showcased at seven festivals worldwide and has won three awards.

Mike Shen shoots footage in Bhutan for Lost in Democracy.
New smile, new life

Pinki Kumari was born with a severe cleft lip in one of the poorest areas of India. Not allowed to attend school and ostracized for her deformity, she lived in quiet isolation, wondering whether she would ever receive the surgery that her parents could not afford. When Pinki’s parents met a social worker with Smile Train, which provides free operations to thousands of poor children annually, she had corrective surgery — and her life was transformed.


“As a filmmaker who focuses on social issues, it’s rare that I do a film with a happy ending,” said Mylan in an interview with the International Documentary Association. “I was excited to tell the story of this beautiful hospital that treats its patients with such compassion and care and is making a positive impact.”

More than 4.7 million children in developing countries suffer with cleft lip or cleft palate, yet the operation is easy and costs as little as $250. When news of the Academy Award hit, Smile Train, which funded the film, watched its donations double within days. The Oscar has given the film more than an award — it’s giving children back their dignity.
Class Acts

upping the ante

The Class of ’84 nearly quadruples its last fundraising success

Building on the Momentum

of their last effort, the Class of ’84 Reunion Gift Campaign Committee has brought in $1.8 million — a new record in 25th-reunion fundraising for Berkeley, and almost four times what the committee raised for its 20th reunion. Nearly $1 million of the total raised was used to create an endowment for the Cal Opportunity Scholarship (CalOp), which awards talented, financially needy students who are interviewed and selected by faculty.

Committee co-chair Mike Halper ’84 said they considered different options for where to direct their funds, but chose the scholarship because of its immediate and long-term impacts. “The mid-’80s were a boom time when we graduated,” he says. “We’re asking our classmates to share some of that fortune with students who might not be at Cal without this scholarship. An investment in their education today is an investment in their future.”

Nineteen people made generous leadership gifts of $10,000 and above.

Armia Arnett ’10 is one of 10 students who have been supported by the class’s scholarship funds. She says CalOp lifted a heavy burden from her shoulders. “Instead of worrying about loans, I can worry about what really matters — school,” Arnett says.

Currently completing her senior thesis on diet and disease among African Americans, Arnett hopes to pursue advanced degrees in medicine and public health.

“I came from a community where people are discouraged from going to college,” she says, “but after Berkeley, nothing can stop me from succeeding.” Part of a community of supporters that is helping students realize their full potential, the Class of ’84 has provided a permanent source of funding for CalOp students with its endowment, while raising the bar for class giving at Berkeley.

“If you throw a rock into a pond, it creates a ripple that expands in ever-greater rings across the water’s surface,” says co-chair Laura Young ’84. “Our efforts are like that ripple.”
A member of the Cal Parents Board and one of the campus’s most avid cheerleaders, David Gee ’76 touts the University’s focus on innovation and entrepreneurialism, which he believes helps to expand the economy. “Instead of dividing up the pie, Berkeley makes the pie bigger,” he says.

Gee sees that entrepreneurial spark in his son, Daniel ’09, who earned his bachelor’s degree from the College of Engineering and is considering launching a start-up company with classmates after he completes his master’s degree at Cal this spring. “I never would have thought he’d be interested in that,” says Gee of his son. “But Berkeley opens your eyes to possibilities you may not have thought of if you weren’t in that environment.”

Gee speaks from experience. The child of Chinese immigrants and a first-generation college student, he was the youngest of four children, all of whom attended Cal and went on to earn advanced degrees. Today, he is a cardiologist based in Walnut Creek, Calif.

Gee credits Berkeley with much of his family’s success and is dedicated to keeping the doors of opportunity open. In 2008, he and his wife established The David S. Gee and Caryn C.Q. Lum Endowed Opportunity Fund, which provides resources for recruiting and retaining women and underrepresented minorities in the College of Chemistry. They also recently made a major contribution in support of improved undergraduate laboratories at the college.

“David never misses an opportunity to advocate for Cal,” say Cal Parents Board chairs Chick and Rick Runkel, “whether through fundraising, outreach to other parents and Cal alums, or leading the way with his own personal generosity to the school.”

According to Gee, it’s all just a part of the cycle of giving. “As long as they’ll have me, I’ll continue to help out,” he says.
Considering that he’s been one of Forbes’s annual “25 Web Celebs” for four years running — along with celebrity bloggers, journalists, and other larger-than-life personalities — Frank Warren ’90 is surprisingly low-key. Founder of the popular website PostSecret.com, a community-based art practice in which people anonymously send him their secrets via postcard, Warren has unexpectedly become an arbiter of the unspoken. He sorts through thousands of postcards, selecting those that are particularly poignant, original, or just plain witty, posting 10 each week. This powerful snapshot of humanity has attracted so many followers that Warren has parlayed the experience into many mediums including Facebook, Twitter, speaking engagements, and New York Times bestsellers such as his latest, PostSecret: Confessions on Life, Death, and God.

“There have been exhibits with hundreds of postcards,” says Warren. “Most were made by people who didn’t consider themselves artists, but their work is now seen in that way, helping us redefine what art is and who can make it.”

These experiences led Warren, who was a social sciences field major, to become deeply involved in suicide awareness. He recently helped raise $50,000 for “Send Suicide Packing,” an exhibit of 1,100 backpacks — representing the number of college students annually lost to suicide — that is touring campuses this spring.

Warren, a Cal donor, feels that his own campus experience was “formative” in ways that he didn’t fully recognize at the time.

“Serendipitous communication is something that I noticed a lot at Berkeley,” says Warren. “I recall a folder in Boalt’s library where if you had a question you could write it down. Days later you’d see the thoughtful, creative answer from a reference librarian. It made me think that if I could compose the right question and put it out in the world, maybe something really beautiful could come back.”
A new impresario has stepped in to lead Cal Performances, Berkeley’s revered performing arts center. **Matías Tarnopolsky**, who was vice president of artistic planning at the New York Philharmonic, swapped coasts to oversee all artistic and executive decisions, in addition to commissions and educational ventures, for the 104-year-old organization. He succeeds **Robert Cole**, whose 23-year stint as director catapulted Cal Performances to international acclaim.

“I’ve inherited a remarkable legacy,” says Tarnopolsky. “I’m excited by the quality and variety of our offerings, as well as the audience’s great appetite for the very best in the arts.”

Saluting the organization’s world-class track record, Tarnopolsky views his approach as evolutionary, not revolutionary. He will sustain relationships with artists who have appeared regularly throughout the years, including Mark Morris Dance Group, mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma, while also introducing new faces.

A new residency program will invite different groups each year to do multiple performances, as well as offer master classes and other opportunities to collaborate with students and faculty. The Vienna Philharmonic — one of the finest in the world — will inaugurate the program next February. The orchestra has not been to the West Coast since 1987, nor has it ever performed in Zellerbach Hall.

“This will be an historic, once-in-a-generation opportunity,” says Tarnopolsky, emphasizing the importance of the arts to Berkeley students’ education and development. “In this era of cuts, when many students have little exposure to the arts, Cal Performances can show them how enriching the arts are to the human experience. Students are, after all, our future audiences and supporters.”

Visit [calperformances.org](http://calperformances.org) for details.
Making Connections

Upcoming Events

Discover Cal New York (May 26)

Ending Poverty: Transforming the Lives of the World’s Bottom Billion

Can the world’s markets and development institutions transform the lives of the “bottom billion,” those living on less than $1.25 a day? Hear Professor Ananya Roy’s “class” describe how Berkeley students are fighting global poverty.

Register at discovercal.berkeley.edu.

Homecoming 2010
(October 8–10)

Celebrate alumni reunions, Parents Weekend, and everything that Cal stands for. Enjoy three days of fun, faculty seminars, and football, with the Golden Bears taking on UCLA.

To register, call 888.UNIV.CAL.

1. Darius Anderson, chair of the Institute of Governmental Studies’ National Advisory Council, and former San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown present the IGS Distinguished Service Award to former UC Regent William K. Coblentz ’43 at the IGS Salon Gala.


3. Honorees at the recent Bear Backers Luncheon included Ryann Pollock (Rally Committee); Diane Milano (Cal Spirit Coordinator); Elaine Marquez (Dance Team); Chancellor Birgeneau; Carol Kavanagh Clarke ’60 (Chair, Cal Spirit Alumni Club); Mary Catherine Birgeneau; and Ian Villanueva (Mic Men).

4. Samantha Ann Catella ’10 received the first $1,000 Khyentse Foundation Award for Excellence in Buddhist Studies. Pictured with her are Professor Jacob Dalton and Khyentse Foundation representatives (from left) Cangioli Che, Sydney Jay (back), and Florence Koh.

5. Nathan Ota M.S. ’03, Ph.D. ’07 led a discussion on “Wireless Technology in the Smart Grid Space,” part of the i4Energy Seminar Series presented by the Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS).

6. Ken Behring receives a gift presented by students and graduates of the Behring Principal Leadership Institute at the Graduate School of Education on the program’s 10th anniversary.
7. On hand at the School of Public Health’s annual Public Health Heroes Awards Ceremony were Regional Public Health Hero Angela Glover Blackwell J.D. ’77; Dean Stephen Shortell; and Anne Bakar ’80.

8. UNICEF Executive Director Ann Veneman ’71 spoke with Goldman School of Public Policy board member Doug Goldman ’74 at the ninth annual Rhoda Goldman Distinguished Lecture in Health Policy.

9. Bob Wong, Judy Moorad, and Sheryl Wong, members of the Class of ’68, attended the ninth annual Rhoda Goldman Distinguished Lecture in Health Policy.

10. I-House board member Yoshi Akiba ’73 (right), co-founder of Yoshi’s Jazz Club in Oakland and San Francisco, at the international tasting tables at the I-House Gala Soiree.

11. Don and Gwen Reichert, and Roger Thompson — all members of the Class of ’50 — catch up over breakfast at their 50th Reunion Campaign Kickoff.

12. David Crane (center), special adviser to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger for jobs and economic growth, with student speakers Katherine Trujillo ’11 and Marvin Nettles ’10 at the Undergraduate Scholarship Donors Reception.

14. Oakland Unified School District superintendent Anthony Smith ’92, M.A. ’93, Ph.D. ’02, Dana Graham, and Shelley Graham ’72 were among those in attendance at the CAA Fund Society Inaugural Reception at Alumni House.

15. At Wurster Hall, CED Dean Jennifer Wolch thanks Cynthia ’58 and Norm M.Arch. ’59 Dyer for their planned gift toward an undergraduate scholarship in architecture.

16. CED Gala Committee members Beth ’66 and Fred ’68 Karren.


18. Connie Moore M.B.A. ’80 discusses the future of real estate and the housing demands of Gen Y and aging baby boomers at a Haas School of Business event in San Francisco.

19. Connie Yu ’06, Laura Englert M.B.A. ’12, and Meaghan Kroener M.B.A. ’12 network with industry leaders at the Haas School of Business’s 11th annual Alumni Network Celebration in Silicon Valley.

20. Liz ’64 and Greg Lutz are recognized for their support of human rights research and advocacy by International Human Rights Law Clinic Director Laurel Fletcher (left) and the Human Rights Center’s Camille Crittenden.

21. Former President Bill Clinton shakes hands with students at Zellerbach Hall following his lecture “Global Citizenship: Turning Good Intentions into Positive Action,” sponsored by the Blum Center for Developing Economies.
Berkeley...

You’ve opened my mind and my eyes to the truth.

Kevelynn Hare ’10

Robert Yeh ’10

Run! Chase after your dream like there’s no tomorrow!

Jenny Lai ’10

I love that I as a Latino from Cal...

Sennado Pineda

Just coming from Berkeley gave me a leg up for grad school.

Joshua Vera ’10

Andrea Bella
There is NOTHING like a full house at Memorial Stadium!

Thanks to Berkeley...

Class Gift Donors

Can refer to myself mathematician dream come true!

Gina Jacobson '10

Call taught me that questioning is better than silent acceptance

Lauren Brock '10

Visit seniors.berkeley.edu.