Coming together at Cal

Olympic oasis

A scholar’s journey into entrepreneurship
Cal Bears names new football coach

Justin Wilcox, who has engineered some of the best defenses in the country, has been named head coach of the California Golden Bears football team. Wilcox was Cal’s linebackers coach from 2003-05, when Cal earned trips to three bowl games. He was a defensive coordinator for the next 11 seasons, most recently with Cotton Bowl-champion Wisconsin.

Three faculty honored for “prolific spirit of innovation”

Vice Chancellor for Research Paul Alivisatos, bioengineer Amy Herr, and chemical engineer Enrique Iglesia were named fellows in the National Academy of Inventors for their involvement in “outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development, and the welfare of society.” Berkeley is one of five universities that founded two-thirds of all biotechnology companies in California.
Around Cal

Photo: Elena Zukova

Alumna casts bright light on late actresses

Alexis Bloom M.J. ’01 co-directed and produced the documentary *Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds*. The film chronicles the charismatic lives — and their fierce, complex love for one another — of Fisher, who was best known as Princess Leia in *Star Wars*, and her mother, Reynolds, a long-time film and stage performer. It aired on HBO in January, following both of their deaths in December, one day apart.

Berkeley a top university for upward mobility

A new upward mobility report card for U.S. colleges and universities reveals high rankings for California schools. A conclusion of researchers, who include Cal economists Emmanuel Saez and Danny Yagan: UC Berkeley is the nation’s top-ranked college for upper-end mobility. It has the largest fraction of students who come from families in the bottom fifth of the income scale and end up having earnings in the top 1 percent among colleges with at least 500 students.

Campus mourns victims of Oakland fire

Berkeley deeply mourns the loss of five community members in the tragic Ghost Ship warehouse fire in Oakland, Calif., in December. Four of the fatalities were affiliated with KALX, the campus radio station: juniors Jennifer Morris, 20, and Vanessa Plotkin, 21, who were roommates; Griffin Madden ’15, a former KALX volunteer who worked at Cal Performances; and Chelsea Dolan, 33, a community volunteer DJ. Alumnus David Cline ’15 had graduated with degrees in computer science and cognitive science.

Alumna casts bright light on late actresses

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Complete stories on news.berkeley.edu.
WHEN PLANNING BEGAN FOR the February issue of *The Promise of Berkeley*, naturally we were inspired by the month of love to explore how Cal, like Cupid, awakens the passions we pursue in our lives. But events around the world demand a deeper look. In July, Berkeley lost two students in the terrorist attacks in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Nice, France. Following the U.S. elections, many in the community, especially students, expressed fear and anxiety about a seemingly uncertain and unwelcoming future. And in February, violence erupted when an outside group disturbed an otherwise peaceful protest of a controversial speaker. In almost every instance, the campus came together in profound and healing ways.

Taking all of this into account, we offer stories about how Cal,
rooted in its love for learning and humanity, brings people, disciplines, and ideas together to push for progress — even during turbulent times. A set of questions originally developed to spark romantic intimacy is now being used to bridge the racial divide. A joint program between UC Berkeley and UC San Francisco helps students tap into the compassion they will need beyond medical know-how to address individual healthcare needs. A mentoring program pairs undergraduates with graduate students to help them feel more connected — to their studies, professors, and each other.

Regardless of the world’s uncertainties — and often because of them — Berkeley continues to unite the very best in new and heartening ways.
As questions go, this conversational icebreaker is popular among professionals. It is also the first of a 36-question “fast friends” procedure created by Arthur Aron ’67, M.A. ’68, a visiting scholar from Stony Brook, to study interpersonal closeness. Popularized as an accelerant to romantic intimacy, the three-part Q&A has also had a disarming effect on cross-race relations in settings ranging from classrooms to police departments. Hundreds of studies — including several by Rodolfo Mendoza-Denton, faculty advisor to Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center — have shown its ability to reduce prejudice, improve health and well-being, and enhance academic performance among minority student populations.

“What research shows is that human beings have a natural proclivity to make distinctions between ‘us’ and ‘them,’” says Mendoza-Denton, co-author of the book Are We Born Racist?. But in a multicultural society, this primitive instinct frequently leads to racism and discrimination. Cross-race friendship, he says, can be a powerful antidote. “It bridges boundaries where there’s trepidation about crossing.”

**What’s at the heart of this fast friends phenomenon?**

In the time it takes to watch a movie, participants experience a sense of connection that might otherwise take months to achieve. The key is in the questions, says Aron, who first introduced the method in 1997. Increasingly personal, they are designed to encourage self-disclosure and reciprocal sharing. Cue points in the process ask participants to identify shared commonalities and characteristics they like about each other. In other words, it’s an inherently friendly process despite whatever biases or expectations people might bring to the table.
“Familiarity breeds liking,” says Mendoza-Denton. “The more often and consistently people experience one another through intergroup contact, the less likely they are to be influenced by stereotypes and prejudices.” And this has a ripple effect, he says, reducing their bias overall.

Intergroup friendship also reduces cortisol levels, which is tied to increased risk of heart disease, he found. And students with stronger intergroup connections consistently performed better academically.

“At the end of the day, we are social creatures,” says Mendoza-Denton. “This process reifies how powerful our social relations are. In a short amount of time, you can develop positive feelings toward the other person, and it stays with you.”

As for who would grace his evening meal? “I’d love to have dinner with Obama and Biden.”

Curious about the fast friends method?

Here are just six questions to jumpstart your conversations. For a complete list, search for “36 questions” on ggia.berkeley.edu.

What would constitute a perfect day for you?

If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?

What is your most treasured memory?

If you knew you were going to die in one year, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?

Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.

Share a personal problem and ask your partner’s advice on how he or she might handle it.
Since the 1990s, interdisciplinary courses and majors about food have emerged in colleges from coast to coast. Berkeley’s involvement in agriculture and food education dates to its founding in 1868, and more than 120 current courses touch on some aspect of food. So it’s fitting that food is the main course of a new minor that integrates knowledge and perspectives from the natural and social

“Food is our common ground,” wrote acclaimed chef James Beard.
sciences, public health, and nutrition to provide a holistic view of contemporary food production and agriculture.

Since fall 2015, more than 50 undergraduates have enrolled in the food-systems minor, which was co-developed by the Berkeley Food Institute — a center for food-system research, education, and policy — and is hosted by the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management. Academic advisor Ginnie Sadil fields weekly inquiries from curious prospective students.

A required community engagement internship empowers students to apply what they learn in the classroom to an organization committed to food-system change. Danielle Weitzman ’17 spent last summer working with Project Open Hand, which delivers daily meals to clients with a chronic illness. She wrote in a blog post, “The community I have built ... makes me want to come in every single day to help others learn how to eat healthfully and to provide them with adequate sustenance.”

Food also brings multiple disciplines to the table in a graduate-level course called “Eat.Think.Design.” Using food systems to inspire design innovation for public health, this course — the only one of its kind in the country — has drawn participants from more than 30 academic programs across campus.

Course co-creator and lecturer Jaspal Sandhu Ph.D. ’08 describes innovation as a team sport. So each cohort assembles into teams with an array of expertise and experience, the better to brainstorm multiple solutions to design problems. Last year, Grace Lesser M.B.A./M.P.H. ’16 took the course to grow her idea for Farmcation, a hands-on farming opportunity targeted at millennials that also promotes farm-to-consumer produce delivery.

Berkeley’s curriculum will continue to provide plenty of food for thought. ■

More intellectual feasting

A taste of interdisciplinary courses offered this spring by the College of Letters & Science:

- “Sense, Sensibility, and Science” — A philosopher, psychologist, and Nobel laureate astrophysicist probe the nature of critical thinking
- “Consciousness” — Conjoins the perspectives of a neurobiologist and Buddhist scholar
- “Collaborative Innovation” — Combines business, theater, and art practices to provoke the creative process

A dose of seminars that bring freshmen closer to the campus and local community:

- “Arts and Culture at Berkeley and Beyond” — Introduces first-year students to local poets, painters, and performing artists
- “Berkeley through the Lens” — Engages students in politics via documentary photography
- “Discovered, Invented, or Perfected at Berkeley” — Surveys ideas and everyday objects originating from campus research
- “Natural History of the Bay Area by Bicycle and Public Transit” — Local explorations led by a biologist
Imaginative approaches to the built environment

Berkeley's Global Urban Humanities Initiative brings together experts in wildly disparate disciplines to discuss the human experience in an age of rapidly expanding built environments. Through the initiative, dancers have worked with urban planners to explore how bodies move in space and in response to the structures we create. Musicologists and historians have pondered the evolution and implications of urban sounds such as passing cars, sirens, and voices. And architects have brought their skill at the drafting table to such art forms as film and fiction.

In one project supported by the initiative, Neyran Turan, an assistant professor of architecture, recently created STRAIT, “a geographic fiction” set in Istanbul in 2025 about a giant oil tanker that gets stuck in the Bosphorus. Inspired by real-life misadventures of large vessels navigating a busy and narrow passage, Turan created a stop-motion film and installation to explore architectural responses to a challenging passageway. In the film, a trapped tanker is incorporated into the city’s shoreline, skyline, and culture scape.

The initiative’s courses and symposiums help distinct modes of inquiry feed one another and spawn the creativity we need to respond to an increasingly complex world. Confronting the pressures presented by ever-expanding urban populations and limitations on natural resources, the initiative stresses the importance of aesthetic pleasure and play in problem solving. As it turns out, architecture and the humanities have a lot to offer each other!
Healthcare with a human face

For **Stephanie Fong M.S. ’16**, a humanistic approach to a medical degree is the key to success. As part of her training in the UC Berkeley/UC San Francisco Joint Medical Program (JMP), she invited young men of color to photograph themselves and record their personal stories. Her project, a collaboration with UCSF’s children’s hospital and a youth center, brought together young men at risk with those who support them for a culminating exhibition.

In her post about the exhibition on Oakland Local, Regina Jackson of the East Oakland Youth Development Center said the young men expressed frustration, yet: “They also shared stories of resiliency and perseverance, revealing a commitment that they would be part of the new statistic: the successes Stephanie and her team are just beginning to analyze.”

Fong’s project is but one example of the uniquely human approach of the JMP, a five-year pathway to a medical degree that is grounded in student-centered, experiential education. **Graduate students spend their first three years at Berkeley, where they conduct interdisciplinary research while earning an M.S. in public health. Then they move across the Bay to complete their M.D. at UCSF, a top-tier medical research institution.**

For Fong and other JMP students, the program is a means to hone analytical skills and think on their feet. Most importantly, it helps them tap into the receptivity and compassion that will serve them in addressing the particular needs of individual human beings.
Last year, an estimated 500 Berkeley students suffered a concussion. Bicycles, cars, and intramural sports were the worst offenders, with athletics responsible for just a fraction of those fumbles. With 10,000-plus students on campus, including 850 student-athletes, that may seem like a statistical win, but it could reflect hidden losses.

According to Dr. Jacqueline Theis OD ‘13, clinical instructor in the School of Optometry and researcher in the Sports Vision Institute, concussions are often challenging to diagnose. “If left untreated, even a mild concussion can lead to cognitive and visual problems that impact a student’s ability to learn.”

Concussions lack clear indicators to accurately gauge their presence. Telltale signs include dizziness, nausea, headaches, and confusion, but reporting is subjective, and athletes eager to get back on the field may downplay their symptoms. The ability to objectively diagnose — then treat — a concussion would be a game changer, says Theis.

Since the eyes and brain are closely interconnected, subtle visual disturbances can point to a problem. Using optometry tools to examine visual function pre- and post-impact may reveal what the naked eye can’t: measurable evidence of a concussion. Theis and Dr. Lindsay Huston, head team physician for Cal Athletics, have been examining hundreds of Cal athletes, who generally have 20/20 vision, to determine “normal” eye activity. Already, their research has improved diagnosis and treatment of campus-based concussions, helping more students get back into the game — both on the field and in the classroom.

“Clinical services for concussions are scarce,” says Huston. “We’re hoping to provide a valuable resource to the campus community.”
Farmworkers laboring in California’s Central Valley fields are exposed to more than just the sun each day. Most commercial crops, including strawberries, grapes, and artichokes, require pesticides to bear financial fruit, but it can come at a cost to the mostly Latino families living and working in the region. Research on community populations has linked in-utero and childhood pesticide exposure to ADHD, lower IQ, asthma, and neurological disorders.

Professor Brenda Eskenazi, director of the School of Public Health’s Center for Environmental Research and Children’s Health (CERCH), has been carefully documenting the pre- and post-natal impacts of these contaminants for nearly two decades. The longitudinal study includes 600-plus children and is conducted through the Center for the Health Assessment of Mothers and Children of Salinas (CHAMACOS), which CERCH manages with regional community members and campus colleagues.

Regulatory action against pesticides often moves at a snail’s pace, but thanks to the CHAMACOS data, organophosphates have been drastically cut in California. CERCH will now participate in a National Institutes of Health (NIH) program investigating environmental influences on children’s health nationwide.

“This endeavor will produce a rich database of information,” says Eskenazi, “as well as cross-country collaborations among students and faculty.”

A seven-year NIH grant will allow CHAMACOS — which means “little children” in Mexican Spanish — to continue monitoring children as they transition to adulthood.

“We hope to remain active members of this community,” adds Eskenazi. “We want to improve the health and well-being of Latino farmworker families in California.”
“I knew it!” exclaimed Sahil Sheth ’19. The words just slipped out of his mouth.

During an exercise in which history students were asked to grade academic papers written by “previous undergraduates,” Sheth’s team gave one paper a scathing B-. As they were citing its issues, Sheth noticed that their graduate student mentor was suppressing smiles, revealing that she had written the paper they were tearing apart. The students quickly learned that even Ph.D. candidates have to build their skills over time.

The incident could have gone down as one of Sheth’s most embarrassing moments. Instead, it highlights the lively engagement, camaraderie, trust, and even humor that are hallmarks of a mentoring program called Berkeley Connect. Since its launch in 2010, more than 7,700 undergraduates and 140 graduate students have participated.

At a big university, students often feel lost in the shuffle and long for more personal conversations about their academic and career paths. Berkeley Connect — now operating in 13 departments and growing — pairs undergraduates with graduate student mentors, who provide one-on-one advising and lead small-group discussions, fieldtrips, and other activities to strengthen the bonds between the students and their peers, professors, and alumni. The result is that participants — 92 percent last semester — report an increased sense of belonging and confidence that they can succeed at Cal.

Berkeley Connect’s motto — “You belong here” — captures the feeling many undergraduates seek. Wrote one student, “I cannot stress how much this program and my mentor have guided me and made me feel like so much more than a number.”
Linnae Schroeder ’19 was a bundle of nerves when she first entered a local kindergarten class to teach art. She wondered how she would get through her lesson plan with 20 squirmy children. Instead, she has learned a few things herself.

Schroeder is a member of CREATE, a student-led program in which undergraduates pair up to teach empowerment-based art, dance, and theater classes — using curriculums they develop themselves — in local schools and community groups. CREATE’s 35 student-teachers also meet weekly to share ideas, make art, or hear from professional artists.

Last semester, Schroeder and her partner incorporated diverse disciplines into their art projects, including making South American-inspired mosaics to examine culture, working with natural materials to probe environmental themes, and building miniature pop-up cities to understand architecture. Schroeder says the children rose to every challenge.

“Kids are fun and have a lot to say!” she says. “If they expressed any self-doubt, I’d remind them that there was no such thing as good art or bad art.” Reflecting on the power of mentoring, she says, “It’s really important to know someone who believes in you until you can believe in yourself.”

CREATE also helps student-teachers like Schroeder develop new collaboration, organizational, and communication skills. Most importantly, they gain a supportive community.

“I’m sticking with CREATE for the long run,” she says. “It’s the best thing for me to grow and to feel at home at Cal.”

Empowerment through art
Razing our notions of border walls

Border walls are intended to provide security. But do they work? In the documentary *The Other Side of Immigration*, two American women scaled the U.S.–Mexican border in less than 18 seconds to demonstrate its futility.

Ronald Rael, associate professor of architecture and art practice, uses his expertise as a designer to question how existing border walls can be reimagined not only as security measures, but also as opportunities to bring people together.

“A wall is full of meaning,” says Rael. “The range of things it can do ... reveals the positive power of architecture.”

His upcoming book, *Borderwall as Architecture*, shares real-life stories of people who are transforming the 700-mile U.S.–Mexico border in remarkably creative ways. In Arizona, for example, a musician creates ethereal compositions by “playing” the fence with a mallet or cello bow.

Rael also proposes ideas, from the practical to the satirical, that suggest the necessity for economic, environmental, and social benefits in borderlands. “Can we create solar farms, since the greatest potential for solar development is along the southern border? Can we collect rainwater or treat wastewater from nearby rivers? Can we build public parks or libraries?”

Rael has been exploring this issue for years, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York recently featured his work in an exhibition on immigration. His book is timely and may help us rethink our nation’s relationship to its neighbor. In all of his inquiries, he says, the existing border wall is “less a divider and much more a facilitator for exchange.”

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The Promise of Berkeley    | Winter 2017
While the “People’s Republic of Berkeley” can claim its share of “multi-culti” cred, nothing beats foreign travel to gain appreciation of other cultures. Through Berkeley Study Abroad (BSA), students have many options to pursue their education from afar for a summer, a semester, or an entire year.

After 25 years with BSA, assistant director of advising Barbara Tassielli ’89 knows that, “The [study abroad] experience really changes you. You have to allow for new possibilities.” Students often return with new plans for their careers and lives.

Senior Nadja White ’17, for instance, spent a recent spring at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy in Amman. Then she changed her major to Middle Eastern Studies and became a BSA peer advisor to guide other prospective participants. Fellow peer advisor Alex Lopez was drawn to being a pioneering participant in the new Global Edge program in London for incoming freshmen.

While the United Kingdom and France are perennially popular choices, the potential programs span dozens of locales from Cuba to Korea. For students with a recurring case of wanderlust, BSA could be the cure.

**Bears abroad**

Study Abroad at a glance

- 1,700 students study in more than 50 countries each year
- Provides cultural immersion or practical work experience
- Open to students from all majors at all stages of their educational journey
- Earn UC credit in a foreign land
Students studying in the newly modernized Moffitt Library can also find fresh inspiration in original artwork adorning the walls. For example, Berkeley Squared — two 6-by-8 foot murals — was a grand undertaking involving more than 60 artists, including a handful of alumni and staff. Spearheaded by Bree Hylkema ’97 and Sean Orlando ’11 of Five Ton Crane, an Oakland-based artist collective, the murals replicate two photographs of iconic campus scenes — Sproul Plaza, with its otherworldly trees and overburdened sign kiosks, and an organic farm run by students.

Many techniques, one vision
The photos were enlarged and divided into 48 square panels. Then the panels were assigned to artists to recreate in the media of their choice. When you stand close to the murals, you see a mishmash of textiles, paint, puzzle pieces, guitar picks, rocks, and other objects. But when you step back, says Hylkema, “That’s when the magic happens.” While each panel represents a distinct and surprising part of the original photo, together, like UC Berkeley, they create a magnificent whole.
During our third annual online fundraising blitz, donors like you raised more than twice the amount as last year, resulting in the Biggest Give yet: $11.6 million from more than 9,000 gifts! This supports hundreds of campus programs and student services and helps our faculty and graduate students in the lab and in the classroom.

This year’s theme was the Berkeley Effect: If a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil can cause a tornado in Texas, then surely the generous hearts, good deeds, and innovative leaps of UC Berkeley could spark transformative change all over the world. Here’s how Big Give demonstrated the Berkeley Effect this year.

You supported 611 funds.

Alumni donors: 5,504 (52% of all donors)
Non-alumni donors: 5,089 (48% of all donors)
First-time donors: 2,081 (19.6% of all donors)

California donors: 8,351 (78.8% of all donors)
Non-California donors: 1,937 (18.3% of all donors)
International donors: 305 (2.9% of all donors)

Current student donors: 683 (6.4% of all donors)
Current parent donors: 1,733 (16.4% of all donors)
Faculty and staff donors: 926 (8.7% of all donors)

You are the Berkeley Effect. We’re so grateful for you.
The self-fulfilling philanthropy of seniors

The Senior Gift Committee (SGC) has boldly spearheaded student fundraising for the Cal Fund for decades. But why are these brave, generous Bears so devoted to educating their peers about the power of giving?

Tanisha Syeda Muquit ’17 (pictured right), vice chair of logistics for the 2016–17 committee, may have some answers. The Bangladesh-born, Union City-raised senior is also involved with the Rally Committee, New Student Services, and CalSo — but her path to Cal wasn’t always so clear.

As a high schooler, Muquit was 100 percent certain that she belonged at Cal, but she didn’t get in initially and had to make an appeal. “Despite my excitement, I was really scared. ... I wasn’t good enough the first time. What makes me good enough now?” In the throes of “major imposter syndrome” after failing a midterm, she found her way to the Student Learning Center. “Those tutors made me realize that struggling is a shared experience and does not make you less than you are.”

Muquit got involved with the SGC, in part, to ensure that students will always have access to such campus offerings. “We didn’t become so great out of thin air,” she says. “Resources such as the learning center, the Public Service Center, and the Disabled Students Program all get funding from the Cal Fund.”

Muquit knows the committee is asking students to give on top of rising tuition and difficult economic and political times. “But we are also asking them to give back to a place that shaped them, and to offer that opportunity to another.”

Paying it forward has been SGC’s mission since it first raised $48.10 in 1874. The 2015–16 committee raised $91,091, and this year’s SGC plans to continue that proud ascent.
Volunteers are the heart of our philanthropic community — leading by example and stirring up Cal enthusiasm wherever they go. They encourage exceptional students to attend Berkeley, mentor them during their time on campus, and recruit alumni to their first jobs after graduation. They also encourage others to join our volunteer force and work to ensure Berkeley’s bright future. At the Alumni House last fall, three awards were given to people whose exemplary dedication has made a great difference in bringing forth the best of Berkeley.

The Sather Gate Young Volunteer Award honors the exceptional leadership of an alumnus who graduated in the last 10 years.

- Jarvis Givens ’10, M.A. ’12, Ph.D. ’16, who is currently a dean’s postdoctoral fellow at Harvard, was recognized for his work to shape Black2Cal, an annual networking gathering for Berkeley’s black alumni.

- Dave Madan ’05, whose nonprofit work focuses on urban and organic gardening, was honored for co-chairing the largest 10th reunion committee in Berkeley’s history. “I believe UC Berkeley’s alumni are a sleeping giant waiting to be awoken,” he said at the ceremony. “We have incredible resources to offer the university — through our networks, our financial contributions, our political power, and our time.”

The Spirit of 1868 Award acknowledges outstanding philanthropic and outreach efforts.

- Shawn Christianson and Phillip McLeod are proud Cal parents who have served in volunteer leadership roles since 2009, most recently as chairs of the Parents Leadership Circle, a philanthropic group. Both are practicing attorneys and have helped with everything from Move-In Day to Discover Cal traveling lectures to the “booster board” for men’s lacrosse.
Association (CAA) group, was given to the Los Angeles Chapter for its efforts to broaden and deepen Berkeley’s base of support in Southern California. David Smith, who accepted the award on behalf of the LA chapter, said, “Anyone who came to Berkeley is part of one giant Cal family. … A university doesn’t exist without the energy of its students, the expertise of its faculty or the support of its alumni. An alumni chapter doesn’t exist without its members. … And our family doesn’t exist without you.”

With the Volunteer Awards, the campus community celebrates those often unsung heroes and heroines of the Berkeley story. “This university is a treasure, and if we, in some small way, helped to polish its luster, then we are thrilled to have done so,” said Christianson.

Finally, the Loyal Company Outstanding Volunteer Group Award, which recognizes a Cal Alumni Association (CAA) group, was given to the Los Angeles Chapter for its efforts to broaden and deepen Berkeley’s base of support in Southern California. David Smith, who accepted the award on behalf of the LA chapter, said, “Anyone who came to Berkeley is part of one giant Cal family. … A university doesn’t exist without the energy of its students, the expertise of its faculty or the support of its alumni. An alumni chapter doesn’t exist without its members. … And our family doesn’t exist without you.”

Noel Nellis ’63 was honored for 28 years of service, including two stints as president, on the board of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive. He also has held multiple roles on campus, including his continuing work as an adjunct professor at the Haas School of Business.

Jim Koshland, widely recognized as one of the Bay Area’s best lawyers, has deep family ties among Berkeley’s faculty and alumni ranks and serves as a trustee of the UC Berkeley Foundation. At the event, he said that “to reduce the divide between the haves and have nots in this country, we need to have more lower-income young adults attend and graduate from college. … It is incumbent on all of us to be constantly evangelizing for public and private support of public universities.”
Cal swimmers swamped the competition at the 2016 Summer Olympics, bringing home a staggering 19 medals, including eight golds. In the wake of their epic win, athletes were welcomed back with a well-earned upgrade to their campus training facilities.

The $18-million Legends Aquatic Center, funded primarily by private donors, opened last September with splashy fanfare. The state-of-the-art facility has a 52-meter pool, three-story diving tower, and moveable bleachers that can accommodate 500 spectators. **Athletes can now train with more space and pool time, and divers no longer have to travel to Stanford every week to practice.**

“Cal has a world-class aquatics program and has done it with fewer resources than most competitive programs,” says former Cal water polo letterman Edward “Ned” Spieker ’66, who helped fund Spieker Aquatics Complex in 1982. “That’s why several of us decided to help.”

Spieker and fellow Cal swimming legends — **Rick Cronk ’65,** the late **Don Fisher ’51,** and the late **Warren Hellman ’55** — launched the “More Water” campaign to build an Olympic-worthy facility. In 2012, Spieker and surviving donors and family members established Cal Aquatic Legends, a nonprofit that functioned as a springboard to the new facility.

Until now, the competitive swimming, diving, and water polo teams had been sharing one congested pool with recreational swimmers and club sport teams.

Not anymore.

“Having two pools has really opened up our practice times,” says **Kathleen Baker ’19,** who earned a silver and gold in Rio. “We’re enjoying being part of history, knowing that so many of our predecessors helped create this amazing facility.”

**OLYMPIC OASIS**

New swim center brings gold standard to training

Photo: Ian Walsh
Where most people saw a parking lot, Robert “Bob” Tanem ’53 saw possibility. Tanem, who hosts a popular garden show on KSFO–AM, turned an unused bit of black top into a highly productive garden for people who are homeless. For his dedication, Tanem recently received Berkeley’s Peter E. Haas Public Service Award.

A self-described “type A” personality, Tanem sought a project after retiring from running a plant nursery. Interested in deepening his commitment to a Marin County shelter organization, he was particularly inspired by its New Beginnings program, which helps people transition out of homelessness through job training and support.

“I asked what would happen if I created a garden for the people who were serviced by New Beginnings,” says Tanem. A board member offered him a half-acre parking lot, and he went to work. “I called in chips from former business partners and suppliers. In our first year, we had about $80,000 in donations, and we grew 400 pounds of produce for the food bank.”

New Beginnings members develop gardening skills over six months, then Tanem often helps them find permanent landscaping jobs. These days, the produce they grow is donated back to the shelter organization’s culinary academy and catering program, as well as its food bank.

Tanem, a proponent of organic gardening, stresses that a thriving garden requires careful attention to the needs of its plants and surrounding environment. He recommends a similar approach for a successful and happy life.

“People ought to take a little time, discover their own talents, and do [that work] for the benefit of others. If everybody does that, many amazing things can be revealed.”
Martin Romo ’89 recalls a story about his grandmother teaching his grandfather how to read and write. These skills proved critical when they immigrated from Mexico to the United States — and gave rise to a passion for education that has passed down through the generations. Now the family is giving other students the opportunity to study at Berkeley.

Martin’s parents, Teresita and Jesus Romo (pictured left), worked hard throughout their lives. Jesus was a firefighter and, ultimately, a chief. Today he is an artist whose most acclaimed commission — a tribute to the courage he witnessed daily in his earlier career — is the California Firefighters Memorial in Sacramento. Teresita worked in state government and raised their six children, all of whom graduated from the University of California (five from Berkeley and one from Santa Cruz). She enrolled at Berkeley later in life and graduated in 2001 with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy.

To mark the couple’s 50th wedding anniversary last fall, Martin and his wife, Leesa ’88, along with the Romo family, established the Teresita and Jesus Romo Scholarship so that more first-generation students will receive a rewarding academic and life-changing education that reflects their family’s shared experience.

Says Martin, “If we can make a small dent in helping students fund their education — in our parents’ name — it’s a lovely way to honor them.”

He also recalls how his mother aided other family members and friends on the pathway to school. “She helped facilitate their dreams,” he says. “This scholarship creates a legacy out of her inspiration.”
Following the U.S. presidential election, many Berkeley students expressed anxiety about what the future holds, including the nearly 500 undocumented students who are concerned about their legal status and ability to remain at Berkeley. Said one student, “My world has been turned upside down in all aspects of life. I’m scared and worried my family won’t be here tomorrow.”

Yet the moment also catalyzed the university to publicly reaffirm its values of respect, inclusion, and equal opportunity, and to quickly determine how to protect these students, whose unique hardships make them among the most vulnerable in the Cal community. With leadership from Chancellor Emeritus Robert Birgeneau and Chancellor Nicholas Dirks, Berkeley launched an emergency effort to raise $638,000 in private gifts for the Undocumented Student Program (USP), with an immediate focus on increasing mental health and legal support. As of mid-January, nearly $500,000 had been raised.

Undocumented students — who count family and financial issues among their top concerns — benefited from mental health services in 2015–16. Since the election, demand for counseling has doubled. In addition, with the uncertain fate of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), which protects young adults who came here as children from deportation, more students are turning to USP for legal consultation. Successfully completing this campaign would enable Berkeley to expand its professional resources for the near term.

“We are committed to providing access and support without fear,” says Meng So, director of the USP. “More than ever, Berkeley needs to be a beacon of hope and remain unequivocal in our vision for equity.”

— From Still I Rise, by Maya Angelou

Rising above the rancor

Just like moons and like suns
With the certainty of tides
Just like hopes springing high
Still I’ll rise.

— From Still I Rise, by Maya Angelou
“I, like many folks, came to college to get out of poverty,” said Anthony Carrasco ’18 in an October PBS “NewsHour” story. Instead, he often skips meals to save money — putting the struggle to meet basic needs ahead of his studies.

Unfortunately, Carrasco, the first in his family to attend college, is not alone. An estimated 39 percent of Cal undergraduates recently reported lacking consistent access to nutritious food — a growing problem as fees, textbook costs, and living expenses increase. The university is investing in efforts to ensure its students are food secure, and employees are stepping up to help.

Cal Nourish, which collects gift cards for local supermarkets, launched last year to assist students during the winter break, when financial aid halts. In just two campaigns in December of 2015 and 2016, staff gave nearly $14,000 in gift cards, providing groceries to approximately 425 students.

In a related effort, University Development and Alumni Relations recently raised $3,200 for the campus Food Pantry, which reportedly served three times the number of students in 2016 than it did in the previous two years. The pantry also drew overwhelming attention during November’s Big Give, raising nearly $17,000 (see pg. 18).

Wrote one pantry visitor, “Coming from a family that struggles to make ends meet, it is nice to be able to focus clearly on school without the worry of where and when my next meal will come.”

Reflecting the compassion of the Berkeley workforce, such efforts send a message to students that they are not alone.
Generations of Berkeley students recall the animated anatomy lectures by Professor Marian Diamond ’48, M.A. ’49, Ph.D. ’53, during which she filled multiple chalkboards with colorful drawings or hoisted a human brain from a hatbox. Ron Hammer ’74 remembers instead how she sparked his enduring interest in neurobiology and mentored him as a student researcher in her lab. Now Hammer has generously returned the favor by extending Diamond’s academic legacy.

A professor at the University of Arizona’s College of Medicine, Hammer and his spouse, geriatric neuropsychiatrist Sandra Jacobson, recently established an endowed fund for the Marian C. Diamond and Arnold B. Scheibel Chair in Neuroscience. The faculty position jointly honors Diamond and her husband, a neuroscientist at UCLA, where Hammer earned his Ph.D. in anatomy.

“Marian and Arnie have meant a great deal to me, inspiring my career as a scientist. For years, I have wanted to offer them a lasting tribute,” says Hammer.

Retired since 2014, Diamond has devoted 60 years to probing the mysteries of the human brain, which she describes as “the most magnificent structure” in a recent documentary about her. Diamond demonstrated experimentally that an enriched environment causes measurable changes in brain structure, including a thicker cortex and longer, more numerous dendrites, the extensions of a neuron that receive electrochemical signals.

Having enriched the intellectual environments for so many students, Professors Diamond and Scheibel can continue to encourage future brain scientists through this eponymous endowment, which marks one of the first major gifts to Berkeley’s ambitious, interdisciplinary initiative to drive discovery around fundamental understanding of the human brain and mind.
1. Ashraf Habibullah M.S. ’70 and Professor Emeritus Ed Wilson celebrate the creation of the Ed and Diane Wilson Presidential Chair in Structural Engineering at the Women’s Faculty Club. Habibullah gave $2 million to endow the chair, prompting a $500,000 match from UC for the Computers & Structures, Inc. Fellowship in the same field, recognizing the Walnut Creek-based company that Habibullah founded.

2. Lt. Col. Phillip Litts ’66, Marily A. Howeckamp ’66, and Michael McGinnis ’66 present Chancellor Nicholas Dirks (second from right) with a check for $18,057,193 at their 50th class reunion, breaking fundraising and class participation records for a 50th class reunion.

3. Robin ’65 and Peter ’61 Frazier are among this year’s new Builders.

4. New Builder Michael Go ’71 poses for a photo with Teri McKeever, Cal women’s swimming head coach.

In October, the campus honored the newest cohort of Builders of Berkeley with a special celebration on the Doe Library Terrace.
5. Alumni and friends gathered at the Berkeley Club of Korea’s Annual Gala in Seoul. Dr. Yong-Kyung "Ken" Lee Ph.D. ’75 received a plaque for his leadership of the club.


7. Ambassador Frank Baxter ’61 (center) with this year’s Baxter Liberty Initiative participants: Daniel Farber (left), Sho Sato Professor of Law and co-director of the Center for Law, Energy, and the Environment, and Greg Lukianoff, president and CEO of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. The initiative features lectures by intellectual leaders that focus on the ideal of freedom in political and economic life.

8. Paul Roesler ’88 hosted a reception and lecture for the Center for Quantum Coherent Science (CQCS) at his home in Ross, California. Here he thanks postdoctoral student Vinay Ramasesh for etching his thank-you gift on a 10 mm-by-10 mm chip made from aluminum on silicon in the CQCS lab.
9. Alumni from the Classes of 2006–16 gathered in San Francisco for the fourth annual Blue & Gold Bash, a fast-growing tradition started by young alumni for young alumni.

10. Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts a master class with the UC Berkeley Symphony Orchestra as part of the Cal Performances Orchestra Residency with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

11. Robert Haas ’64 (left) speaks with University Librarian Jeff MacKie-Mason and Chadwick Bowlin ’20 at Moffitt Library. Haas generously supported the revitalization of Moffitt’s fourth and fifth floors.

12. Greg Pitzer, Professor Phillip Geissler, Ken Pitzer, College of Chemistry Dean Douglas C. Clark, and Russ Pitzer at the opening of the newly renovated Kenneth S. Pitzer Center for Theoretical Chemistry in November. The center, located in historic Gilman Hall, was funded by a gift from the Pitzer Family Foundation.
13. Joe Brand M.B.A. ’91 and his family returned to campus in October for the Haas School of Business’s Homecoming festivities.

14. Aditi Roy ’96 (left) moderated a panel discussion on elections, technology, and cybersecurity with Ron Rivest, visiting professor; Laura Jehl ’86, Jasjeet Sekhon (second from right), Robson Professor of Political Science and Statistics; and Philip Stark (far right), associate dean of mathematical and physical sciences. They are pictured here with Carla Hesse, executive dean of the College of Letters & Science (third from right).

15. Thomas and Karen Berquist, parents of Kyle Berquist ’19, enjoy the College of Natural Resources’ Reunion and Alumni Picnic.

Since I was a graduate student at Berkeley in the early 1980s, I have always wanted the fundamental research I was part of to have a practical use. This follows from the broader ethos of Berkeley, where scholarship is brought to bear on changing the world, and has guided me over the years. It led me to a postdoctoral position at Bell Labs and to work on tiny crystals before the subject was formally recognized. At that time, while my Berkeley colleagues were debating the relative merits of basic versus applied research, I sensed that the Bell Labs community had a more nuanced concept in which these two approaches could be integrated seamlessly. It has always been my personal goal to work this way.

I have been involved in creating three companies, each one a wonderful adventure that resulted from our team's very foundational research in nanomaterials. Quantum Dot Corp., now part of a large biotech company, invented products that are widely used today in medical imaging. I was involved with Solexant, a solar energy effort, during its start-up phase, but it struggled to gain traction. Nanosys, Inc. has been the most fun of all, as the materials we developed continue to impact diverse areas, especially commercially available...
but no longer at the cutting edge of technology. In the end, my experiences with industry have prompted me to move toward new research questions that are best suited to an academic group, while also providing invaluable context for the possibilities of my work.

I believe a deep commitment to patient scholarship and careful foundational work is essential. Still, entrepreneurship has been indispensable to my intellectual renewal and to pushing me toward new directions. I haven’t stopped looking for another foray into entrepreneurship. Next time, if I am careful, I can go even further in realizing my career-long dream to participate in a full journey in which my foundational academic research makes an important positive difference in this world.