Pitzer College
The Participant

Spring-Summer 2019 Vol. 52 No. 1

The Joy of Science
Alumni Blaze New Trails

Class of 2019
"Your Time Is Now"

Surfboard Art & Culture
Shaping a New Perspective
President’s Message

Pitzer College recently celebrated 264 of our seniors as they accepted their hard-earned diplomas at the College’s 55th Commencement. We congratulate them on their self-transformation, with help from their Pitzer professors, friends and supportive families.

I was privileged to introduce Pitzer’s newest graduates and encourage them to produce a personal or professional masterpiece in their lives: through their hands, such as a work of art; their mind, such as creative writing, scholarship, a feat of engineering, or their heart, through relationships, social ties and passionate societal engagement. My wish for our new alumni is that they will also make masterpieces of themselves and transform the world. Their Pitzer diploma is just the beginning of their unfolding story.

In this edition of The Participant, we are presented with a combination of alumni stories and faculty achievements that lift our community—from the growing Keck Science program to faculty research, publications and national and international honors. The feature story profiles a Pitzer student and three alumni breaking barriers in the sciences. They inspire me and I hope will inspire you. The sciences at Pitzer have grown beyond all expectations, and these profiles about how our students and alumni are blazing new trails in science create a compelling picture. It is fitting, considering this critical moment in Pitzer’s Keck Science program history as we transition from a three-college to a two-college partnership.

We also catch up with our professors, who are fanning out around the world to conduct research, develop knowledge and prepare to lead a new class of students on their next academic journey.

At Pitzer, our students, faculty and staff never hesitate to confront real-world issues, as we have continued to do from the environmental to the political. This year, we have challenged each other to open up to other experiences and perspectives. This commitment has been essential to transitioning from research and visioning the College’s future to implementation of the Pitzer College Strategic Plan 2024.

Thank you for being a part of our Pitzer community, for your support and for joining us on our search for ever-brighter futures for our students and our graduates. With your help, we are continuing to make Pitzer a masterpiece of higher education.

Melvin L. Oliver
President
ANGELA SANBRANO ’75
Commitment to a more humane world inspired a meaningful life

When Angela Sanbrano ’75 earned her BA in psychology from Pitzer College, she began a path that would lead her to the heights of international activism and meaningful social change.

Since the 1970s, Angela organized communities, advocated bilingual education and supported housing rights in Los Angeles. In the 1980s and 1990s, she earned her law degree from Peoples College of Law, became executive director of the national grassroots organization CARCELS, supported social and economic justice and opposed US military intervention in El Salvador. She was an official witness of the signing of the Chapultepec Peace Accords in Mexico City. In fighting for immigration rights, she organized marches that drew more than one million people to the streets.

Angela credits her Pitzer education as a turning point in her life. Recently, Pitzer designated her as its 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award honoree.

Angela Sanbrano blazed her own path to serve immigrants and refugees in California. Today, she is making a meaningful difference around the world.

Follow your passion

Pitzer College
PATHFINDER
Family, friends, faculty and staff celebrated the Class of 2019 at Pitzer College’s 55th Commencement ceremony on May 18, 2019, with more than 2,500 in attendance.

Keynote speaker, actress, activist Laverne Cox told the class: “We need your innovation, your vision, your wisdom, your courage in the world right now.”

For this year’s Class Charge, President Melvin L. Oliver challenged the newest alumni to produce “masterpieces that embody a commitment to intellectual curiosity, intense observation, critical appreciation, perseverance, human sympathy, discipline and diligence. They add to the richness of our lives and the lives that come after. I charge you to make the commitment to produce a masterpiece that lives beyond your time and leaves a legacy for all of humanity.”

Collectively, the graduates won prestigious fellowships and scholarships during their four years, including:

- EnviroLab Asia Fellowships
- Neuroscience Fellowship
- Freeman-ASIA Award
- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship
- Fulbright Fellowships

Some graduates are headed to graduate studies at:

- Stanford University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Cornell University
- University of Calgary
- University of Oklahoma
- UCLA

Other graduates are starting their careers at:

- AEG Presents
- Salesforce
- Fox Television
- Goldman Sachs
- Nike
- Apple, Inc.
- PwC China
- IBM

264 graduates
- came from 31 states and 13 countries
- range in ages from 20 to 50 years old

Top 5 majors
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- Organizational Studies
- Psychology
- Economics
- Human Biology

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Room for Resistance

Pitzer College Art Galleries spring exhibitions, Publishing Against the Grain and Emerging Artist Series #14: Cathy Akers, opened on February 2. Organized by the Independent Curators International, Publishing Against the Grain created a space for reading, thinking and talking — “where slowing down can become a form of intellectual resistance.” Cathy Akers’ exhibition, curated by Pitzer College Art Galleries Director Ciara Ennis, explored two experimental communes that closed in the 1970s.

Modern Metamorphoses

The SCI Theatre and Dance production of Metamorphoses, a modern retelling of Ovid’s interwoven myths where gods, humans and nature intermingle and collide, played March 7-10 in the Seaver Theater with Pitzer students on stage and behind the scenes.

From CA Drought to the Arctic Climate

The College hosted several endowed lecture series, which kicked off on February 5 with the 2019 Murray Pepper and Vicki Reynolds Pepper Distinguished Visiting Artist Lecture with poet Sesshu Foster and artist Arturo Ernesto Romo’s presentation of “Recent Rupture Radio Hour (The East L.A. Dirigible Tapes).” On February 15, the 2019 John D. Sullivan Memorial Lecture brought award-winning author and journalist Mark Arax, who has chronicled California throughout his career, digging “deep into the dirt of the Golden State.” Arax’s talk, “The Dreamt Land: Chasing Dust and Water Across California,” was hosted by the Redford Conservancy at Pitzer College.

Next up, Associate Professor of Environmental Science Branwen Williams was the featured speaker for the 2019 Distinguished Scientist Lecture, where she spoke on “Arctic Climate, as documented by algal rocks.” The spring series concluded with filmmaker, writer and painter Moussa Sene Absa’s “Niit Nitka” (“Enlightening Humanity”) at the Stephen and Sandra Glass Humanities Lecture.

1st in CA, 4th in World to Reach Net Zero

This April, the Robert Redford Conservancy for Southern California Sustainability at Pitzer College won the first higher education building certification in California for its zero net energy consumption. The certification from the International Living Future Institute is highly sought-after and challenging to achieve. The Redford Conservancy is only the fourth higher education structure in the world to earn ILFI Zero Energy Certification. The Claremont Heritage also recognized the Redford Conservancy with its Bess Garner Preservation Award, which honors excellence in historic preservation in the city of Claremont.

Students Aid Refugees at Border

Pitzer College students, increasingly aware of the humanitarian crisis for Central American refugees at the US-Mexico border, decided to do more than study the situation. They acted.

Working with other students and faculty of The Claremont Colleges, they formed Claremont for Refugee Rights to raise funds, supplies and awareness. Then, in November 2018, a group of six students and Suyapa Portillo ’96, assistant professor of Chicano/a-Latino/a transnational studies at Pitzer, traveled to a refugee shelter run by the Mexican government in Tijuana. They wanted to see things for themselves and help where they could.

Javier Lopez Caserano ’19, one of the student organizers, was surprised how much help was needed. “There were so many people. We were making only a temporary difference. There’s a lot of work to do,” he said.

On their initial visit to the camp, the students were not prepared for the crowd’s reaction to the distribution of goods. “Every time you opened a suitcase, you would be flooded with people. They were grabbing whatever they could—it became quite chaotic,” said Lopez Caserano.

The students revised their methods. They went to a grocery store to purchase the basics—toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap—and made individual small bags. “It just became handing out what we had,” said Lopez Caserano.

Students continue to raise funds and awareness, hold campus events and provide information to refugees to help them gain asylum. While the process has been time-consuming and often frustrating, Lopez Caserano said students are making progress. With funds in hand and energy to spare, they are increasingly able to act proactively.

This spring, US Congressional Representative Norma Torres honored the students for their work on the US-Mexico border at a ceremony at the Chicano-Latino Student Association. “Our students garnered her ear and admiration with their grassroots work on this pertinent issue, a Pitzer tradition,” said Portillo.

Around the Mounds

News from Campus and Beyond

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This Earth Day, Pitzer College expanded its commitment to environmental sustainability at a ribbon-cutting ceremony by dedicating six new ChargePoint electric vehicle power stations in the East Mesa parking lot on campus. This expansion triples Pitzer’s electric vehicle power stations.

Family Weekend

This February, more than 320 family members traveled to Claremont for Pitzer College Family Weekend. The annual event provides family members a glimpse into their students’ Pitzer educational experience. This year, they heard from alumni about their lives post Pitzer; attended lectures by Professors Jessica Kizer, Jemma Lorenat, Shelva Paulse and Phil Zuckerman; and toured the Redford Conservancy.

To relive moments from Family Weekend in photos, be sure to check out The Participant online at www.pitzer.edu/participant.

Pitzer & U of Haifa

In November 2018, the faculty passed a motion to suspend the direct enroll program with the University of Haifa. Following requests from the Student Senate and other governing bodies at the College, the faculty decided that the matter needed to undergo the College’s shared governance review.

On March 14, the Council voted 67 to 28 with eight abstentions on an amended motion in favor of suspending the program. According to College shared-governance bylaws, the motion was then presented as a recommendation to the president. President Oliver shared his decision with the community, noting that, among other reasons, the suspension would set the College “on a path away from the free exchange of ideas, a direction that ultimately destroys the academy’s ability to fulfill our educational mission.” He said, “I categorically oppose any form of academic boycott of any country.” Additionally, he noted that for the College to take a political position, “there must be a consensus across all the College’s internal and external constituencies in support of the position. This recommendation fails that test.”

President Oliver concluded that “we will seek to expand our students’ opportunities for study abroad in the Middle East and around the world. Our goal must be to create engagement in the world that our students will one day lead, not less.” To this end, he visited the University of Haifa on May 28-29, where he met with students, faculty and administrators and also addressed the University of Haifa Board of Governors. This visit was the first step in a presidential initiative to increase opportunities for scholarly exchange and cooperation between Pitzer and institutions across the Middle East.

Crafting with Conscience

As part of The Claremont Colleges’ Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service on January 19, students wrote greeting cards to senior citizens and postcards to refugee children. This “Crafting with a Conscience” volunteer event included a presentation about Martin Luther King, Jr.

International Flair

International Place of The Claremont Colleges and our international students hosted the 41st International Festival. Open to all, the event showcased international cuisine, cultural activities, live music and dance hosted and performed by students and professional artists from around the world.

Volunteer Service Awardees

Tracy Strayer P’18 and Ed Wong P’18 were honored with the 2019 Parent Volunteer Service Award during Family Weekend. Strayer and Wong are both finance professionals and former members of Pitzer’s Parent Leadership Council. They have spent countless hours providing guidance and advice to our students on their career-related interests. They inspired and helped found the Pitzer Career Roundtable, an annual event that connects Pitzer students with alumni, parents, trustees and other supporters.

Their daughter, Everest Strayer-Wong ’18, graduated with a degree in art politics. In an October 2018 VICE article, writer Kat Thompson described her art as “a harmonious marriage of color and texture, with themes of her mixed-race identity and intrigue with astrology sprinkled throughout.” You can find Strayer-Wong’s work on Instagram @sinistersquids.
Opportunities abound in the Keck Science program. Each science major participates in a substantive research project; students often co-author with faculty on peer-reviewed articles and present their own work at professional scientific conferences. In the interdisciplinary program, in partnership with students from Claremont McKenna and Scripps Colleges, Pitzer students apply their education to real-world issues. Undergraduates rarely obtain such benefits elsewhere, especially at large universities, where graduate students garner most of the research perks. In the Keck Science program, undergraduates do scientific research, often at the graduate level.

The result of this influx of Pitzer students in science is outstanding scholarship and groundbreaking research. National recognition has followed.

This spring, Marya Ornelas ’20, a rising senior and biology major, won the Barry Goldwater Scholarship, regarded as one of the most prestigious recognitions of outstanding scholarship and groundbreaking research. National recognition has followed.

The Claremont Colleges. The coach invited her to campus and introduced Ornelas to the people and the programs.

"The selling point for Ornelas, a first-generation student from the San Francisco Bay Area, was that Pitzer has a human biology major. "I was super pre-med," she said. "There was also the lust of softball. "I wasn't sure I could balance academics and sports—but when I visited, I met current students and was inspired by their ability to do both."

Ornelas soon stood out in Associate Professor Aaron Leconte’s Introductory Biological-Chemistry class, in fall 2016. Leconte noted that Ornelas produced some of the class’s most intelligent work on problem sets, which challenge students to apply their newfound knowledge. He invited her to join his lab as a research assistant the following semester and as a full-time paid assistant in the summer of 2017. She has continued through to spring 2019.

“Because of Marya’s obvious interest and talent, I wanted to give her a project that she could take ownership of and develop over time,” said Leconte.

Leconte’s group was working on a project to engineer improved medical imaging tools by evolving the protein firefly luciferase. Although others had done essential research, nobody to date had worked on developing methodology to improve the brightness of the protein. Color and stability often lessen the brightness of the enzyme, explained Leconte, so being able to engineer this property has high value.

“I intentionally gave Marya this project because it would challenge her to develop her own ideas and take ownership of the project,” Leconte said. "Marya has taken this challenge and run with it."

It is her main project in the lab. “Ultimately, we want to be able to use this protein in mammalian systems in order to do things like monitor gene expression patterns and inform drug discovery substance in whole animals, and to use it effectively, we want to have bright enzymes that can be detected by an external camera. Now that we have a method to maximize light emission, we are in the process of evolving brighter enzymes,” she said.

Ornelas, who leads two other students in the project, said she enjoys being surrounded by people who love science and research as much as she does. “Doing research at Keck is such a profound experience because you get to learn so much from the professor and also from other people in the lab. I enjoy never-ending questions. The more you learn, the better questions you can ask. I just love the open-endless of that. You can go into the lab and answer the scientific question with your own hands.”

Although she once planned to be a doctor, a visit to a SACNAS (Society for Diversity in the Sciences) conference changed her mind. "It was a light bulb moment," she said. "I realized my interest in both the coach and in Ornelas, who had never heard of the science at Pitzer College. To be exact, science in the integrated W. M. Keck Science Department. Each year, more and more students discover this secret for themselves. Thirty percent of Pitzer College students major in a STEM-related field, with human biology and neuroscience consistently among the top 10 majors.

Why the increased interest? As Pitzer alumna Dr. Susan Celniker ’75 said, "Science is too much fun." Why the increased interest? As Pitzer alumna Dr. Susan Celniker ’75 said, "Science is too much fun."
Participant opportunities that she has embraced, “said Leconte. The research that students did over the summer. A leader in the First-Gen conference in Long Beach as a first-year student changed her mind. It was “This approach was one of the reasons I went into the field. “he took Associate Professor Nancy Williams’ inorganic chemistry class. His most recent success is winning America’s Next Top Chef. His ligands. Then, with Johnson, he drove to Caltech, where he could mount the cryoliter, or solid, that he also added. “To link in with his ligands and to be successful and excited about his structure was one of the highlights of my career,” said Johnson. During his time in Johnson’s lab, Mitchell built a diverse research portfolio, which resulted in the American Chemical Society Undergraduate Award in Inorganic Chemistry and Best Thesis Award at Pitzer College in 2018. Mitchell calls his Pitzer experience “awesome!” He said he “loved the tiny classes—in inorganic chemistry, there were 10 students. I had one-on-one time with brilliant professors. I was able to go to other classes within The Claremont Colleges. Also, the people at Pitzer are second to none.” Adding to Mitchell’s interests is STEM outreach. In high school, he started a club, HOPe For Uganda, where he and classmates wrote a $10,000 grant to furnish Gayaza Cambridge College of St. Mbaga with textbooks and science supplies; the grant was fully funded by Fisher Scientific. At Pitzer, he became involved with the non-profit organization Middle Tree, which offers reduced price tutoring and test prep to elementary, middle and high school students. Mitchell also volunteered weekly as a math and science tutor to local students from low-income families. While at the University of Washington, Mitchell will volunteer on weekends for Seattle MESA, which provides hands-on STEM experiences for elementary, middle and high school students. Mitchell also volunteered with the American Chemical Society and became involved with the American Association for the Advancement of Science while at Pitzer. Through his involvement at Pitzer, Mitchell has become more aware of the obstacles faced by minority students to enter STEM careers. “More than ever today, it is necessary to make science accessible to everyone, regardless of their background,” he said. “This is why I am passionate about outreach and I strive to make a change for the better throughout graduate school, and for the rest of my career.” Mitchell’s goal, after earning his PhD, is to teach at a small liberal arts institution, much like Pitzer, where “professors have their own research and are doing stuff. I want to spread my excitement and passion for science,” he said. Presumably, with a soccer ball in the corner of his lab.

Pitzer College, with its renowned joint Keck Science Department, seemed the right choice. But there is a strong competition: passion. At first, he thought he’d need to go to a large university to pursue both his interests. When he learned Pitzer is a partner with Pomona College in the NCAA Division III as the Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens, it was a match made in science-soccer heaven. At Pitzer, Mitchell became a team captain and was the SCAC All-Academic Team for both years and the All-West All-Team in 2017. As goalie, he posted more than 200 career saves. Although I couldn’t decide at first which area of science to pursue, then he took Associate Professor Nancy Williams’ inorganic chemistry class. Williams treated her students much like graduate students, said Mitchell. “This approach was one of the reasons I went into the field.” Mitchell soon became fascinated by carbon-metal bonds and contacted Professor Adam Johnson, an orgonometallic chemist at Harvard Mudd College, about an internship. Johnson welcomed Mitchell to his lab on a one time with brilliant professors. I was able to go to other classes within The Claremont Colleges. Also, the people at Pitzer are second to none.” Adding to Mitchell’s interests is STEM outreach. In high school, he started a club, HOPe For Uganda, where he and classmates wrote a $10,000 grant to furnish Gayaza Cambridge College of St. Mbaga with textbooks and science supplies; the grant was fully funded by Fisher Scientific. At Pitzer, he became involved with the non-profit organization Middle Tree, which offers reduced price tutoring and test prep to elementary, middle and high school students. Mitchell also volunteered weekly as a math and science tutor to local students from low-income families. While at the University of Washington, Mitchell will volunteer on weekends for Seattle MESA, which provides hands-on STEM experiences for elementary, middle and high school students. Mitchell also volunteered with the American Chemical Society and became involved with the American Association for the Advancement of Science while at Pitzer. Through his involvement at Pitzer, Mitchell has become more aware of the obstacles faced by minority students to enter STEM careers. “More than ever today, it is necessary to make science accessible to everyone, regardless of their background,” he said. “This is why I am passionate about outreach and I strive to make a change for the better throughout graduate school, and for the rest of my career.” Mitchell’s goal, after earning his PhD, is to teach at a small liberal arts institution, much like Pitzer, where “professors have their own research and are doing stuff. I want to spread my excitement and passion for science,” he said. Presumably, with a soccer ball in the corner of his lab.

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The Science of Giving
$5 Million for Keck Science Program

Two recent gifts totaling $5 million will help renovate and expand the science program at the W.M. Keck Science Department (KSD), which is transitioning to a joint Pitzer College and Scripps College program.

The Pitzer Family Foundation (PFF) has donated $3 million to Pitzer College to support the growth and expansion of science facilities at KSD. Along with a $1 million donation from the PFF in April 2017, this gift will revitalize Keck Science's facilities and academic programs to provide a more effective 21st century science education for Pitzer and Scripps students. It will also enable the colleges to move forward with the construction of a new $65 million shared science facility located directly west of the W.M. Keck Science Center.

In June, Scripps and Pitzer Colleges received a combined total gift of $2 million ($1 million to each college) from the W.M. Keck Foundation toward the purchase of equipment and the renovation of the Keck Science Center. The Foundation has awarded $4.9 to Pitzer since 1982 and more than $4.7 to Scripps. Pitzer President Melvin Oliver said: “The Keck Science Program is special in that undergraduate students participate in original research, present their findings at national venues and publication opportunities either alone or with their professors before they even graduate. We extend our most sincere gratitude to the Pitzer family for their long-standing support and their commitment to superior science education, and we deeply appreciate the Keck Foundation for recognizing the department’s success in fostering future leaders in science and supporting the programs growth.”

Pitzer College Joins Elite Colleges in Social Science Research

Pitzer College has become a select member of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) College and University Fund for the Social Sciences. The fund’s purpose is to sustain and enhance the national infrastructure of social science research, launch and enhance the careers of young scholars and deepen relationships with campus faculty communities through various forms of service and intellectual participation.

The fund was initiated in 2013 with a dozen supporters—University of California, Berkeley, Brown University, Columbia University, City University of New York, Cornell University, Duke University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, New York University, Princeton University, Stanford University and Vanderbilt University. Today, the fund has grown to more than three dozen members, including Swarthmore College, Boston College, Dartmouth College and now Pitzer College.

Pitzer College President Melvin L. Oliver, a social scientist himself, said: “This prestigious membership creates outstanding opportunities for Pitzer’s social scientists to inform the direction of modern social science and ensure that the College’s scholarship makes a difference.”
A STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

Pitzer College Strategic Plan 2024

Following more than a year of information-gathering and priority-setting by the entire Pitzer community, the College has established four distinct goals as it enters Phase Three: Implementation.

Academic Resources & Planning

GOAL I: Broaden the interdisciplinary landscape and expand academic resources to better equip students to engage holistically with the complex problems of the world.

• Create new interdisciplinary strategies, leveraging existing academic programs, both to guide and respond to students’ changing academic interests.
• Rethink the allocation of faculty lines through cross-disciplinary, faculty-led conversations to advance the College’s academic plans and priorities.
• Further integrate Keck Science into traditional core academic programming to expand interdisciplinary learning opportunities and promote creativity and innovation in the sciences.

Financial Sustainability

GOAL III: Deepen our commitment to financial sustainability to promote broader access to a Pitzer education and create adaptability in response to the evolving higher education landscape.

• Implement a thoughtful plan for enrollment growth to increase revenue and realize the benefits of scale.
• Build a more robust, nimble and creative advancement operation.
• Build our brand, create more awareness, and capture more of our public’s mindshare through a concerted communications program emphasizing the accomplishments of our students, alumni, faculty and staff, and how these reflect and reinforce the College’s core values.
• Diversify revenue sources, including building the endowment, to create a more flexible foundation for the future.

Planning & Decision-Making

GOAL IV: Develop a culture of inclusive, intentional and transparent planning and decision-making.

• Build a flexible, collaborative infrastructure to collect, store, analyze and share data to inform institutional planning and decisions.
• Make governance structures, policies and processes more effective, ensuring they draw fully on the wisdom of all stakeholders.

Build a Thriving Community

GOAL II: Advance a College-wide sense of community and engagement by cultivating an environment where students, faculty and staff all thrive.

• Facilitate the bringing together of students, faculty and staff in both formal and informal settings by expanding the portfolios of shared experiences.
• Steward campus facilities and technology to promote learning, community and engagement.
• Promote intercultural understanding and community trust through cross-group dialogue and other means.

Marchant Leads Strategic Plan Implementation

Jim Marchant has been appointed Pitzer’s first vice president for strategic initiatives and community relations. This position was established to provide leadership as Pitzer implements its institutional strategic plan and bolsters its commitment to the community.

Marchant’s tenure at Pitzer College spans 25 years, during which he has helped Pitzer ascend into the top tier of national liberal arts colleges. He has held numerous key positions at Pitzer, including as the longest-serving vice president for student affairs and as executive director of advancement, where he has built relationships and raised funds for numerous institutional priorities, such as financial aid, student life programs and the renovation and expansion of science facilities.

Marchant has been a leader in institutional strategic planning and community engagement, and his experience and leadership will be critical in guiding Pitzer through its next phase of growth and development.
Allen M. Omoto became Pitzer’s new vice president for academic affairs and dean of the faculty on July 1. Most recently, Omoto served as Claremont Graduate University’s associate provost for academic affairs and as the director of its Institute for Research on Social Issues. He joined CGU in 2000 as a professor of psychology. He went on to serve in several leadership roles, including as interim dean of the School of Educational Studies at CGU. Prior to CGU, Omoto was an associate professor of psychology at the University of Kansas. His scholarly research focuses on issues relating to the environment, HIV disease and lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns from a social psychological perspective.

“Even before joining The Claremont Colleges, I have known about and admired Pitzer College and its distinctive academic mission. Throughout my career, my scholarly, community and professional service work has centered on themes of diversity, social justice and civic engagement,” said Omoto. “Pitzer College and I are a perfect match. I am excited to be part of such a vibrant and innovative academic community.”

Meet Allen M. Omoto
New Dean of the Faculty

Pitzer Faculty Field Notes

- **Awards, Grants, Honors**
  - Associate Professor of Philosophy Ahmed Abidinah served as a guest researcher with Representation and Reality: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Aristotelian Tradition, a research program within the Department of Philosophy, Linguistics and Theory of Science at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. A 16-member Cambridge University’s Clare Hall College, Abidinah is co-editor of the anthology Aristotle and the Arabic Tradition, among other volumes. His research focuses on philosophy of language and mind in Islamic tradition, as well as the intersection between Aristotle and Arabic philosophy.
  - Professor of English and World Literature Sumangala Bhatacharyya was admitted to the California State Bar in December 2018. She also penned two articles, “Elusive Justice: The Rangoon Chronic Crisis and the Responsibility to Protect” for the Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review and “Taj of the Raj: Appropriating the Colonial Nineteenth-Century Contexts” for Nineteenth-Century Contexts.
  - Professor of History Carina L. Johnson was awarded a Short-Term Research Fellowship from the New York Public Library and a research fellowship from the Herzog August Bibliothek for her research project “Matters of Appearance: Identity Markers and Complexion in Sixteenth-Century Europe.” She also wrote a book chapter, “Naming the Turk and the More Preponderant of Races,” in Names and Naming in Early Modern Germany.
  - Tarana Krajnak, associate professor of art, won a Harpo Foundation Emerging Artist Grant and a Photo London/La Fabrick Book Dummy Award. Her solo exhibition, 1979: Contact Negatives, was hosted at as-is gallery in Los Angeles and was a critics’ pick in Artnet.com. Her photo book, El Jardín de Senderos Que Se Bifurcan, was shown in Northern Ireland and Spain.
  - Professor of Biology and Environmental Science Donald McFarlane received the Kenneth S. Pitzer Professorship, which recognizes excellence in the areas of mathematics and the natural sciences.
  - Professor of Psychology David S. Moore has been elected a member-at-large of the Executive Committee of Division 7 (Developmental Psychology) of the American Psychological Association. His term begins January 1, 2020. He was also the featured speaker in the Future Tech Podcast episode “Rethinking Genes, Understanding Epigenetics.”

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  - Professor of History Carina L. Johnson was awarded a Short-Term Research Fellowship from the New York Public Library and a research fellowship from the Herzog August Bibliothek.
Awards, Media & Talks
- Professor of Art Timothy Berg showcased his work in five exhibitions across the country: Birdwatcher at Visions West Contemporary Gallery in Denver, CO; Making a Difference at The Clay Studio in Philadelphia, PA, and at the Art Miami in Miami, FL, and Nature In/Forms at the Great Park Gallery in Irvine, CA. In addition, he wrote "Test Store Breaks for Ceramics Monthly." He and Associate Professor of Art Jessica McCoy participated in Campus Mart’Ed at The Claremont Colleges, an exhibition featuring works by faculty and staff that were either hand-delivered to The Claremont Colleges or traveled through the intercampus mail system.
- During this year’s annual meeting of Alphabet City and Cave Canem in Pittsburgh, PA, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy Jim Ikenaga was invited to participate in the conference’s panel “Doula Trainings as Invented Tradition”.
- Professor of Political Studies/Chicano Studies Amanda Sanii delivered an invited presentation titled “The Major Challenges Facing the World today are Not Just us or the Poor from a nonreligious ethical perspective. In short, we need to look to our fellow citizens and within ourselves for moral and ethical action.”
- Professor of Political Studies/Chicano Studies Adrian Pantoja P.18 discussed immigrant “Dreamers” in the midst elections in the Los Angeles Times article “How young immigrant ‘Dreamers’ made flipping control of the House a personal quest.”
- Professor of Environmental Analysis Paul Telles F97 ’13 held a second exhibition this academic year, photos of local wildlife he’s taken with motion-triggered trail camera. Intimate Encounters: Up Close with Claremont’s Wildlife opened in February at the Claremont Community Foundation. He also joined the Editorial Review Board of Australian Archaeology.
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- In May, Assistant Professor of Psychology Marcos Rodriguez co-authored a five-day intensive workshop on Dialectical Behavior Therapy for 166 mental health professionals at the Shanghai Mental Health Center in China.
- Associate Professor of Chemistry Bahak Sani spoke on “Scalable biomaterial manufacturing” at the UCLA Center for Minimal Invasive Therapies. He co-authored “Drawing and Hydrophobicity-patterning Long Polydimethylsiloxane Silicone Hmatoms” in the Journal of Vascular Interventional Radiology.
- Associate Professor of Academic Writing and Writing Center Director Andrea Scott delivered the opening keynote at the first joint conference of the German Society for Writing Didactics and the Swiss Forum for Academic Writing and the SWISS Forum for Academic Writing, hosted by the Adria-Universitat in Klagenfurt, Austria. She co-authored the peer-reviewed article “What Can Citizens Tell Us About the State of the Discipline Now?” in Schriften des Verbandes für Hochschuldidaktik und Pädagogische Bildung.

Books, Essays and Articles
- Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese Juanita C. Aristizabal co-edited a dossier on violence and representation in contemporary cultural production from Mexico and Colombia in the Revista de Estudios Hispanicos, published by the University of Houston in its, You could also be interested in the academic conference’s panel “Radical Strategies: A Century of Los Angeles Graffiti” at Society of American Archivists/Association of Research Libraries in Albuquerque, NM. Her essay “Moniker Writing as Invented Tradition” was published in Monikers: Identity and Power.
- Associate Professor of Academic Writing and Writing Center Director Andrea Scott delivered the opening keynote at the first joint conference of the German Society for Writing Didactics and the Swiss Forum for Academic Writing and the SWISS Forum for Academic Writing, hosted by the Adria-Universitat in Klagenfurt, Austria. She co-authored the peer-reviewed article “What Can Citizens Tell Us About the State of the Discipline Now?” in Schriften des Verbandes für Hochschuldidaktik und Pädagogische Bildung.
Shaping New Perspectives

One-of-a-kind course dives into the art & culture of surfboards

Kapule made a fish surfboard like those he had seen in Hawaii but designed for what he terms the "muscular California waves." Ottengheime’s creation was a fishboard featuring her Japanese family’s crest and an image of the Japanese woodblock print ‘The Great Wave off Kanagawa.’ Wim designed a longboard choice based on both her surfing skills and its cultural significance to Hawaii, and incorporated personally significant artwork. "My family always brought art along with us on the road," Wim says. "It’s our language on the road—our way of expressing who we are and where we come from." Wim’s work was also of interest to award-winning surf photographer and filmmaker Elizabeth Pepin Silva, who was making a film about backyard surfboard building. When Silva learned that most of the class participants were women, she jumped at the opportunity to interview and film everyone.

The professors hope to continue the effort and are currently working with students on the exhibit, which will feature surfboards created in the course and will be on display at The Hive, which promotes creative development and collaboration across The Claremont Colleges and provided funding for the course. The timeline the students created covered the history of surfing from native Hawaiian society to the present and once again required collective thinking. Tim Berg, who worked with the students on the exhibit, says that they needed to create an oral history and tell a story to illustrate the history of an object. "There is a cultural aspect to the class, the students learned a lot of practical skills, whether it was how to use a band saw correctly or how to keep track of differences." The professors hope to offer the course again, although Pantoja believes it will be impossible to replicate what he considers the “magic” of the first time. He comments, "There are certain classes where you can tell something is happening that is going to transform lives.” The students felt the same magic. Kapule calls it his favorite class at Pitzer. "We were learning new ways of thinking and how to organize information, tell a story and illustrate the history of an object. Those are the kinds of things students take away from the class; they learn a lot of practical skills, whether it was how to use a band saw correctly or how to keep track of differences." The students also shared their surfboard experience and knowledge with the Claremont community. They designed an exhibit at The Hive, which promotes creative development and collaboration across The Claremont Colleges and provided funding for the course. The timeline the students created covered the history of surfing from native Hawaiian society to the present and once again required collective thinking.

The board ride is important and has meaning, he says Wim. "I wanted to learn how to make my own board," Wim says. "I also like the idea of design and utility, the intersection of making something aesthetically pleasing that also works well." Pantoja believes the course taught them to think differently. He explains, "There are certainly classes in surf culture, but in terms of making a surfboard, I don’t think there’s anything like it. There was no model, so every hour of the class was innovative. That’s the nature of Pitzer. It’s an institution that encourages experimentation and innovation.” Berg worked with the students on craftsmanship, tool safety and design ideas, while Pantoja addressed surf culture and its products, history and politics. But the students played a large role in the class proceedings, including decision-making related to constructing the shaping room where they would create their surfboards.

"Because the class was innovative, we both said the students should be partners in it. We didn’t say this is how it’s done. Just in building the shaping room, there are hundreds of puzzles. We figured them out collectively," says Pantoja. The surfboards the students and professors made in the class, however, reflected individual rather than collective perspectives. Pantoja says, "There were 14 different personalities, so there were 14 different designs. There are thousands of forms a surfboard can take. It was up to each student to connect their interest, surfing ability and where they want to surf to a particular design. They were authentically representing who they were through their boards."
Sagehens Sports Highlights

Directors’ Cup High

The Pomona-Pitzer Sagehens earned its highest-ever ranking in the Learfield Directors’ Cup at No. 23 to close the 2018-19 athletics season. This is the second time in three years the Sagehens finished in the top 30. The Directors’ Cup ranks every athletic program in the US and awards points based on each program’s finish in the NCAA Championships.

Legacy of Excellence

Lesley Irvine, Pomona-Pitzer athletic director since 2015, resigned in May to accept a position as vice president and director of athletics at Colorado College. During her highly successful tenure, Sagehen Athletics finished in the top 40 of the Division III Learfield Directors’ Cup each of the past three years and won the SCIAC men’s all-sports trophy in 2017-18 for the first time in program history. Jennifer Scanlon, head coach of the Sagehens women’s soccer team since 2003, is serving as interim athletic director.

Hall of Fame

The Sagehens inducted multi-sport athlete Kathy Finn-Senseman ‘94 (at right) into the Pomona-Pitzer Hall of Fame on March 9. Finn-Senseman played basketball, softball and soccer and spent two seasons with the Women’s Track and Field team. Among her honors are SCIAC Offensive Player of the Year in softball, All-SCIAC honors in track and the Pomona-Pitzer Athletic Excellence award for a student-athlete participating in more than one intercollegiate sport.

A Man For All Positions

Hunter Hennigh ’21 played every position in a single game—a feat never accomplished before by any Sagehen—as the Baseball team ended their season with a four-game sweep over non-conference opponent Linfield. In the final game, Hennigh started in right field, then moved to a different position each inning, finishing as pitcher in the 9th; final score: 7-1. With the win, the Sagehens ended the season 21-18.

Season Best

Softball posted its best season in program history, 31-12-1 overall and 21-7 in SCIAC play. SCIAC Pitcher of the Year Liz Rodarte ’19 ended her career as the Sagehens’ all-time strikeout leader, single season strikeout leader and wins leader.

Courting Excellence

Men’s Basketball was 26-3 overall and 15-1 in SCIAC play, both single-season highs. Micah Elan ’20 earned SCIAC Athlete of the Week and D3hoops.com Team of the Week in November after scoring a career-high 38 points against then-No. 4 Whitman College. In January, he notched his 1,000-career point in a game against Chapman University and earned his second SCIAC Athlete of the Week. Sagehens finished with the best record in program history, most wins, most conference wins, and longest win-streak (15 Games). Elan finished First Team All-SCIAC.

SCIAC Champs × 7

Pomona-Pitzer capped the year with seven SCIAC Championships. For the first time in program history, the Sagehens were champs in all winter sports: Men’s and Women’s Basketball (the women’s team made its first appearance in the NCAA Tournament since 2002) and Men’s and Women’s Swimming and Diving. In the spring, Sagehens claimed SCIAC Championships in Women’s Soccer and Men’s and Women’s Water Polo.

Unsung Hero

Sonia Olson ’20 of the Women’s Lacrosse Team earned the Yeardley Reynolds Love Unsung Hero Award, an honor given to only six student-athletes in the nation who help their collegiate lacrosse teams achieve success on and off the field. Olson was diagnosed with cancer in mid-season but she continued to cheer on her teammates while undergoing chemotherapy. Off the field, Olson serves the community by bringing college education to women in prison and aiding survivors of sex trafficking.

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Her Research Makes Things Happen

As a result, the Sacramento County Probation Department has started to implement the RAND team’s recommendations, which include methods to help probationers alleviate their financial burdens and provide them with a full range of support—from stipends for program participation to on-site substance-use treatment programming. Barnes-Proby is known for her natural empathy for people. “I feel it’s imperative to help those in need, especially children. I have to step up because maybe no one else will,” she said. As a qualitative researcher, she spends time in communities, with children, families, administrators and service providers, giving them a platform for their perceptions and experiences. She shares their stories and makes recommendations for improving their circumstances.

Barnes-Proby believes her empathy comes from facing similar personal challenges. Raised by a single mother in a low-income, high-crime neighborhood in south Los Angeles, Barnes-Proby admits that life was hard. “I didn’t have to do it alone. I could always go to her for advice,” she said.

She excelled at community college, was admitted to Pitzer and her academic career took off. “At Pitzer, I got a depth of understanding of what I wanted to do,” she says. Her professor and adviser, Halford Fairchild, now professor emeritus of psychology and black studies, was instrumental in her development by talking through her concerns with her. “All the professors cultivated personal discovery,” she said. “This helped me develop confidence in my abilities. I came into being me at Pitzer.”

After graduating from Pitzer with a degree in psychology and black studies, Barnes-Proby earned an MSW in policy, planning and administration at Loyola Marymount University and a doctorate in public administration-collaborative governance at the University of La Verne. Her dissertation explored the relationship between the performance of an interorganizational network and foster youth outcomes. She was a foster care social worker for several years, gaining direct clinical practice with at-risk youth and families.

Now at RAND, she is part of a group of social policy researchers who are dedicated to the organization’s mission “to help make communities throughout the world safer and more secure, healthier and more prosperous.”

The field of social policy work is competitive (an estimated one percent of all RAND applicants are hired), but people are needed, says Barnes-Proby, especially those with diversity in life experiences. RAND gives its researchers the freedom to follow their personal interests, provided the project addresses a policy issue and there is adequate funding. Barnes-Proby is currently pursuing funding for multiple projects to improve the wellbeing of system-involved youth. One example is a project to prevent human sex trafficking for children involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

“I see policy research as a conduit for affecting positive change,” she said. “Things happen because of research.”

Class Notes

1970s

75 Michael Philips received his undergraduate degree in environmental studies at Pitzer College in 1975 and his master’s degree in art history and technology studies from MIT. He is an accomplished musician and host of his own jazz program in Washington DC. Philips held a White House assignment at the US Department of Energy’s Office of Policy and was a staff member on the US House of Representatives’ Resources Committee.

76 Susan Feniger and business partner Mary Sue Milliken opened their newest restaurant, Socail, in the Gateway Hotel in Santa Monica, CA, this summer. Culinary pioneers, Feniger and Milliken established their first restaurant, Camino Grill, 34 years ago in Los Angeles and hosted the Food Network show, The Secret Life of the White House assignment at the US Department of Energy, focusing on renewable clean energy on a global scale. He is an accomplished musician and co-hosts his own jazz program in Washington DC. Philips held a White House assignment at the US Department of Energy’s Office of Policy and was a staff member on the US House of Representatives’ Resources Committee.

77 Claremont-Pomona Locally Grown Power, founded by Devin Hartman, received $2.1 million from the 2019-20 California state budget to construct a manufacturing facility that will produce solar panels for low- to moderate-income households. Locally Grown Power is a program of the nonprofit CHERP, Inc., at which Hartman serves as the executive director.

Michael Roper manages interactive media at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He designs and directs multimedia for the museum, which has nearly 50,000 works of art in its collection.

Roper studied history and philosophy at Pitzer and went on to earn a master’s degree in visual studies from MIT.

79 Karin Russo Skiba has created art for over 40 years. She now has a studio in Joshua Tree, CA, and devotes the majority of her time to making art. Skiba’s latest work involves layered and constructed mixed-media paintings that include trees and portraits. She had a solo exhibition of work at the Joshua Tree Art Gallery, which ran from February to March 2019.

85 Tanya Maffin’s first collection of poetry, Two Souls Collided: A Poetic Journey, was published in 2018. Tanya Maffin describes his new album as “a melodic, smoldering masterpiece of Americana.” In December, Freund played a solo show at Claremont’s Folk Music Center.

86 Beatrice Casagran, founding artistic director of Opheila’s Jump Productions and theatre program director at Diamond Bar High School, received the 41st Assembly District 2019 Woman of Distinction Award representing the city of Upland, CA. Casagran launched the Opheila’s Jump Claremont Midsummer Shakespeare Festival, which takes place at Pomona College’s Sontag Creek Theater each summer.

88 Annie Davidson Rubineau joined the staff of the University of Rhode Island Publications and Creative Services Department as an editor and project manager in 2018. She is a senior ambassador and team leader with Pure Haven, a company that creates and promotes nontoxic products. She is also the founder of the Rhode Island nonprofit Savvy Women’s Alliance and a volunteer with the Pitzer Alumni Interview Program. She lives in southern Rhode Island with her husband and two children.

90 Todd Simon, a clinical hypnotherapist, started his own company, Kinder Mind Hypnosis. Based in Santa Monica, CA, Simon works with professional athletes and individuals dealing with anxiety, self- sabotage, fears and phobias, as well as other issues.

Immersed Therapy, his secondary business venture, combines virtual reality and hypnosis techniques to help people free themselves from fears, phobias and vices (or habits) such as heights, public speaking and smoking.

99 Tom Freund’s latest album, East of Lincoln, dropped in Fall 2018. The Claremont Courier described his new album as “a melodic, smoldering masterpiece of Americana.” In December, Freund played a solo show at Claremont’s Folk Music Center.

99 Lauren Dolgen was named Paramount Network’s new senior vice president, unscripted development and production. She began her career at MTV developing hits such as The Challenge, Teen Mom, Teen Mom 2 and Punk’d. She went on to lead the West Coast development for Viacom and was most recently head of BuzzFeed Studios.

2000s

99 Michael Collins joined Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), as vice president, government relations. In 2018, he leads the company’s efforts to protect the rights of its songwriters, composers and music publishers. A political and policy strategist, Collins previously served as a principal with the lobbying firm Mahlman Castagnetti Rosen & Thomas and spent 15 years working for Tom Udall, who is now a US senator.
The and therapeutic opportunities in cancer," was the journal Nature Cell Biology. Valencia's article for the 20th anniversary edition of Harvard University, co-authored a review pursuing his PhD in chemical biology at CUE's website.

exclusion of American history, " according to Siegel's exhibition employed "visual cues from vernacular colonial photographs and drawings, Siegel's exhibition included New York in January. The exhibition included 's solo exhibition '10 Kurosh Hashemi Supreme Court in " American Legion et al. v. American Humanist Assn et al. " in February 2019. , senior counsel at the American Humanist Association, argued before the Monica Miller '08, senior counsel at the American Humanist Association, argued before the

2010s

Cal Siegel's solo exhibition I am the box no roof can cover opened at CUE Art Foundation in New York in January. The exhibition included a large-scale house-like structure sheathed in dollhouse drapes. Along with paintings, photographs and drawings, Siegel's exhibition employed "visual cues from vernacular colonial architecture to explore the violence and exclusion of American history," according to CUE's website.

Alfredo "Freddy" Valencia, who is pursuing his PhD in chemical biology at Harvard University, co-authored a review article for the 20th anniversary edition of the journal Nature Cell Biology. Valencia's article, "Chromatin regulatory mechanisms and therapeutic opportunities in cancer," was commissioned by the publication.

In Memoriam

Emily "Emmy" Norris '73 passed away on November 22, 2018, after being diagnosed with glioblastoma. She strongly believed in political involvement and was a committed activist for local environmental issues. She loved listening to music and attending concerts, lectures and movies. Over the years, she worked as a massage therapist, caregiver and landscaper. Norris leaves behind two sisters, her partner, Patrick McGinn; her cat, NiWhi; and many friends. Her family says her humor, sense of style and inner light will be greatly missed.

Cristina "Cris" Preciado (Maria Cristina Preciado-Otto) '72 lost her battle with cancer on January 28, 2019, in Jalisco, Mexico, her home of many years. She is survived by four children and two grandchildren. Preciado received a teaching credential and master's degree from UCLA. She went on to teach English and mediation at ITESO, Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara in Mexico; she will be remembered for her inclusive stance on spirituality.

"He was open and available to friends and strangers alike and lived Pitzer's mission of educating students to make meaningful contributions to the world," said President Melvin L. Oliver of the importance of interaction between teachers and students that's less formal. It's where you aren't 'Herr Doktor, ' imparting the wisdom of the ages, but somebody who has a favorite sports team. Whatever it is that you stay after the screening and answered every attendee's question. McConnell continued to teach that very same course at Pitzer until 2018. His other courses included a two-semester survey class on US history, from 1847 through 1877, and 1877 to 1940. McConnell received his undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan and earned his PhD at Johns Hopkins University. Prior to his scholarship on history, McConnell wrote for the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, as well as for several Chicago weeklies. In graduate school at Johns Hopkins, his adviser knew he had a journalism background, so assigned him to design a course on the history of journalism as part of his qualifying exams. McConnell took McConnell's introduction to the world, as represented in his deeply researched and elegantly written Negro: The Life of Alain Locke. "Through his illness, he never lost his nerve and joy in teaching, no matter the venue. He was a historian who thought the most important thing was to get the facts right. His own work, as represented in his deeply researched and elegantly written Glorious Contentment: the Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900, demonstrated that commitment. He also taught that to students."

Chris Bray '03, who took McConnell's senior historiography seminar, recalls, "He taught students to think like historians, to be careful about evidence and make arguments we could support."

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Professor Emeritus of History Stuart McConnell, a charismatic and inspiring presence on the Pitzer College campus for 32 years, passed away on February 14 at age 62, after battling pancreatic cancer for several years. He taught his last class at Pitzer in fall 2018. Known for his playful sense of humor that brought delight to students and colleagues alike, McConnell explained his approach in an interview for The Participant in 2018. "Playful is a quality of interaction between teachers and students that's less formal. It's where you aren't 'Herr Doktor,' imparting the wisdom of the ages, but somebody who has a favorite sports team. Whatever it is that brings you down off the pedestal."

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He is survived by his wife, Rebecca Franks, and children Alex and Leah.

Days after his death, McConnell’s colleagues and students gathered for a memorial held on campus. They sang"
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