

President's Message



Deborah Seiler

President

The Renaissance Society
of Sacramento

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Renaissance Website:
<https://csus.edu/rensoc>

Key Dates

Friday, Sept. 27

Fall Social

Friday, Oct. 4

First Friday Food Pantry
collection and Pizza

Monday, Oct. 7

Board of Directors meeting

Sunday, Oct. 13

New Member Dinner

Monday, Oct. 14

Indigenous People's Day

Tuesday, Oct. 31

Halloween



President Wood's Fall Address: The Ugly, The Bad, The Good

President Luke Wood addressed a packed ballroom on August 22 to deliver a much-anticipated address about the state of affairs at Sacramento State University.

In a spirit of transparency and refreshing candor, he began with the “worst audit in Cal State history,” the July 2023 report about Capitol Public Radio which was followed by the recent August 14, 2024 forensic examination report. President Wood chronicled nearly \$800,000 in unsupported payments to the former general manager, now the subject of a law enforcement investigation, and contracts with former board members, now the subject of potential legal action. He described a lease of two floors in a downtown headquarters that cost as much as the entire purchase price of the building. And, he spoke of long-term debt of \$35 to \$42 million for which the university is seeking a long-term solution. He also signaled that a federal Office of Inspector General audit will be coming soon and will be “seismically worse.”

But he also shared that membership is up, the contract with NPR has been extended, and he stated with a confidence unimaginable six months ago: “Capitol Public Radio is here to stay.”

He proceeded to speak of budget deficits caused by rising costs and increased pay for university employees that must be addressed by boosting some student fees that have not increased in 30 years. Each division is making cuts and some divisions are being merged. However, he vowed that cuts to core student services will be avoided. He proudly announced that due in part to innovative programs such as Combat U, Black Honors College, and the AI Institute, Sac State enrollment is up, and the incoming class is the highest in Sac State's history.

President Wood spoke about the exciting new faculty and staff housing, new Arts Building, SWANA Center, and an expanded Pride Center. The Guardian Scholars center for former foster youth has new quarters in Sacramento Hall near the Project Rebound center for formerly incarcerated students.

Importantly, he boasted that Sac State is becoming the “flagship” of the entire California State University system and predicts that in a few years, various UCs will be viewed as “backup schools for Sac State.”

From low to high, President Wood presented the current state of affairs with honesty, many facts and figures, and sense of optimism that reverberated around the room.

Our Renaissance Society is proud of its affiliation with Sac State and grateful for this association. Enjoy the new Fall semester!

Deborah



Honoring Our Generous Donors to Renaissance Programs

By Mike Pidd

This list represents donors to all of our programs—scholarships, special programs, and general programs.

Fiscal Year 2023 - 2024

310 Donations (includes individuals and couples)

Total: \$94,259



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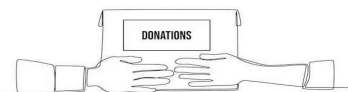
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Thank You, Donors!

We value our donors and we attempt to be accurate in recognizing your donations. If there are any inaccuracies please contact the Renaissance Society office so we can update our records.

Donations to support Sac State Student Scholarships and Renaissance programs are always welcomed.
<https://www.csus.edu/college/social-sciences-interdisciplinary-studies/renaissance-society/spotlights/donate.html>



October Forums

Forums are a special category of highly acclaimed and high-profile speakers addressing current topics of special interest to a wide variety of our Renaissance members. These esteemed speakers are also seasoned experts in their fields. They bring a diversity, depth, and breadth of topics to inform us about critical issues facing us and our society on an ongoing basis.

All Forums occur on Friday afternoons from 3 to 4 pm when no other Renaissance seminars, Shared Interest Groups, or presentations are offered. Speakers encourage the audience to ask probing questions about their topics.

Forum speakers for Fall 2024 will give in-person presentations in Mendocino Hall 1005. In addition, the new hybrid technology will enable these presentations to be simulcast via Zoom and viewable in real-time from home. Note: To access any of the previous Forums that are on our YouTube Channel, go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/@therenaissancesociety-foru8188/featured>

October 4

Norv Wellsfry, Deanna Hanson: Grand Juries: What? Who? How? Me? And More!



Deanna and Norv, both Renaissance members and former Sacramento County Grand Jury Forepersons, will discuss the importance of Grand Juries in California Counties and how they differ from other juries. They will share how you could become a grand juror, the expectations of grand jurors, and why you might want to be on one. They have both served multiple terms during the pandemic and had very interesting experiences. Oh, the stories they could tell – and some they might!



Deanna Hanson founded Hanson Consulting Group in 1984, providing management and strategic planning services to both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations throughout the United States. Norv had a 46-year career as an administrator and professor in Community colleges.

October 11

Michael Sanford: The Future of Public Media in the Digital Age



Mr. Sanford is the Associate General Manager — Production, PBS KVIE. The media landscape is undergoing profound and rapid change. Data shows that in 2023, consumers were getting their news via streaming services through live television. How does public media continue to compete in a marketplace of unlimited

choices? He has spent 40 years in television news and production. His reporting took him to Europe, as well as places such as Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia, to name a few. Sanford received his BA in Journalism and Rhetoric at UC Berkeley.

October 18

Steven Maviglio, Rob Stutzman: California's November Ballot Measures



California voters will decide the fate of nearly a dozen ballot measures in the November election. Who's funding them? What are their implications for public policy? Two Sacramento-based political experts, Democrat Steven Maviglio of Forza Communications and Republican Rob Stutzman of Stutzman Public Affairs, have both worked on multiple initiative campaigns over the past two decades, and they will offer insights on the upcoming initiatives. Learn about what's hidden in the fine print, the budget implications, and who has endorsed each initiative to help you make an informed decision when your ballot arrives.



October 25

Dena Spatz: Discovering the Nature of California's Biodiversity



Dr. Spatz is the Biodiversity Coordinator at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. This role was created on September 7, 2018, when Governor Jerry Brown issued an historic executive order to protect California's biodiversity. Dena received her PhD in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from UC Santa Cruz. She applied science to

inform conservation decision-making and restoration best-practices, particularly with seabirds in coastal environments.

Janet Heath Has Seen a Varied Career

By Judy A. Lewis

A native of Martinez, California, Janet Heath attended Diablo Valley College, and San Jose



State, then completed her Master's Degree in adult education at San Francisco State. Initially, her goal was unclear, but as career opportunities presented themselves, she took advantage of them.

After having two children, she went back to work at a community college where she managed a peer tutoring program and the and student assessment program where placement tests determined which level of math or English incoming students needed.

When the career of her husband, Wes Brown (also a Renaissance member), took the couple to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Janet began eight years of working for an injury prevention research center. The focus was on reducing and preventing injuries in the workplace, farms or domestic violence incidents.

While Janet was visiting her father in California, he told her of a grant UC Davis had recently received which involved training of professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and health care providers in forensic medicine (i.e. how to collect evidence and testify in court in cases of domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse and sexual assault).

When funding began to disappear, she was led to a position managing nurses and social workers in the coordinating of health care and needed community resources for low income, frail elderly, which she held for eight years.

Her next management experience was in the Office of Continuing Medical Education in the UCD School of Medicine. The office met the continuing education needs of doctors, nurses and pharmacists through hundreds of offerings ranging from multi-day conferences to hour long presentations departmental presentations.

In 2015, she retired and joined the Renaissance Society. One of her passions is traveling and she has shared some of her experiences with the

Renaissance Travel and Adventure class. Her destinations in the last two years have included Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, South Korea, South East Asia, and Greece where she especially delighted in sharing that country with her grandsons. Janet will soon be heading to Japan. She says, "Just making up for lost time working and raising a family."

In addition to serving on the Renaissance Society Board as a Member at Large, she puts her talents to work as tech host on Zoom classes as well as the Forum presentations. "Every day is different when working with the technology," she says.

Reading, quilting, going to lunch with friends, participating in a history book group and teaching Sunday School fit into her schedule, and she indulges in her guilty pleasure during her downtime by viewing Korean TV shows.



Dining Together October

By Cheryl Nelson

Dining Together will meet at **Piatti, at 571 Pavilions Lane**, (<https://sacramento.piatti.com>) at 5:30 PM on October 9, 2024.

Although Dolores Eitel will be the dinner host, Dining Together members who wish to attend should RSVP to Cheryl Nelson: slynnsearch@yahoo.com, no later than October 2, 2024.

Parking is available. Table checks will be provided; please bring cash, including small bills.



Renaissance Society Goes to Cuba!

We will be examining Cuba's art, culture, gastronomy, dance, music and history in this "support the Cuban people" program

By Jack Jennings

Dear Renaissance members: It is my pleasure to share with you the opportunity to travel to Cuba with the Renaissance Society in February of 2025. This is a unique opportunity as there are not that many opportunities to go to Cuba and this a well-managed trip by a local company Global Educational Facilitation, which has a history with Sac State and Cuba.

Paul Bardwil of Global Educational Facilitation began working with Cuba in 1998 at the request of Professor Jorge Santana of Sacramento State University. Bardwil and Santana created the first trip with the Spanish Department at Sacramento State university in 1999. Bardwil since has worked with Cuban cultural and educational trips as well as trade mission since this trip. Bardwil has led groups with UC Berkeley, UC Davis, San Francisco City college, Sonoma state to name a few.

Bardwil led groups with Friendship Force Sacramento chapter in 2022 and Friendship Force International in 2023. Bardwil was recently named the Cuba country specialist for Sister Cities international in July of 2024.

I had the pleasure of traveling with Paul Bardwil in 2022, right after Cuba opened after Covid. Paul's trips are always small groups, 20-25, and do home stays with local families not large hotels. This adds to our insight into Cuban life and benefits them and us financially. This trip is a real bargain and Paul takes care of our visas, airfare and reservations from Miami to Havana, and currency exchange at very favorable rates.

Bardwil constructs his trips in an educational fashion similar to the philosophy of the Renaissance Society, which is why he was chosen for this educational adventure.

I'm looking forward to this trip and hope to hear from you soon.

Jack Jennings
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415 806-5357

Paul Bardwil
pbardwil@aol.com
916-225-8207



Sac State Celebrates SWANA (SouthWest Asian & North African) Center

By Cynthia Hubert (from the Sac State Website)

(Renaissance President, Deborah Seiler attended the opening of the SWANA Center).

Sacramento State celebrated the diverse food, music and traditions of Southwest Asian and North African cultures on Tuesday, September 10, with the grand opening of its newest equity and affinity center.

The SouthWest Asian and North African Center, or SWANA Center, will offer cultural events, academic services and a sense of welcoming for SWANA scholars and their supporters.

About 500 Sac State students identify culturally with the region, which represents more than two dozen countries including Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq and Lebanon.

“For many students of color, it can be very easy to feel like you are a guest in someone’s house,” said University President Luke Wood. “We want students to see themselves when they walk on this campus.”

The SWANA Center is the latest campus space the University has opened to support students from underrepresented backgrounds. Earlier this year, Sac State opened the Esak’timá Center for Native American students and Jewish Life and Resource Center, joining others including the Dreamer Resource Center, PRIDE Center, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Center and MLK Center.

“Sac State is a very large and diverse institution,” said Wood. “We want to ensure that every single student feels that this place can be their home.”

The new center, located inside the Academic Information Resource Center, is the product of about a year of planning from a group that included students, faculty and administrators, said Aniesha Mitchell, vice president for Student Affairs.

“It’s so important for students to feel as though they have a home on campus,” Mitchell said, “a safe place where they can meet students like them, celebrate their culture and talk about

their challenges.”

Marcellene Watson-Derbigny, the associate vice president for Student Retention and Academic Success, was among those who led the effort to create the center.

“We have made it. We did it,” she said on Tuesday. “When we imagine and believe, we can achieve our dreams.”

“(The SWANA Center) will help (students) find their footing, build friendships, and nurture their identities. It will help them succeed in all aspects of life.”

More than 250 people attended the grand opening, which featured food, music, dance and a display of attire from across SWANA.

Speakers included Khydeeya Alam, executive director of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs and board president for the Sacramento area’s Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Alam said the new center “will play a vital role in the lives of thousands of students at Sac State,” and serve as a sanctuary where they can grow academically and personally.

“It will help them find their footing, build friendships, and nurture their identities,” she said. “It will help them succeed in all aspects of life.”

Sac State student Amar Farhat presented President Wood with a gift box filled with food and other items from the SWANA culture. The gift was a collaborate effort among Farhat, fellow students Mariam Damlakhi and Zoya Altabaa, and Faculty Coordinator Amna Salameh, said Associate Professor of Political Science and SWANA Center Faculty Scholar Advisor Sahar Razavi.

“We are so glad to finally have a center where students feel at home and a sense of belonging,” Farhat said.



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November Submissions Due: October 2

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In Memoriam

Renaissance member Linda Birner passed away on July 3, 2024. Linda Birner, an extraordinarily loved leader in the Sacramento LGBTQ+ community as a social justice activist and newspaper business founder, passed away on July 3, 2024. She is survived by her two younger sisters. Linda was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She graduated from Mira Loma High School and California State University, Sacramento with a degree in journalism and psychology. In the Fall of 1978, Birner founded one of the first LGBTQ+ newspapers in Sacramento County. She named the newspaper after a popular coming out phrase, "Mom...Guess What!" (MGW). A celebration of life is planned for Linda on Thursday, September 19, 2024. For details and an invite to RSVP, send an email with your name to: lindabirner.lifecelebration@gmail.com

In Memoriam

Below is a link to a video which Renaissance member Mike Pidd has produced as a loving appreciation video honoring long time Renaissance member, Nancy Findeisen.

"Nancy Findeisen Renaissance Society Memorial Video" :

<https://youtu.be/oxJ-7VVwKgU>