

Highlights & Signature

STORIES

2025 NEWSLETTER

Stories of Achievement in the
Humanities & Social Sciences

*Dean Stern and
Provost Dabirian
celebrate 20 years
of Cal State DC in
the nation's capital*



Highlights & Signature

STORIES

Several of the stories featured in this issue of HIGHLIGHTS include programs and experiential opportunities in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences that are funded by private support. If you are interested in receiving additional information about ways you can make an impact, please contact our Senior Director of Development Melissa Martinez at melissamartinez@fullerton.edu or 657-278-4847.



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In this issue...

- 2 Dean's Checklist 2025
- 4 Teaching Through Polarization: Building Bridges Across Divides
- 5 History Student Uses Research Skills to Rebuild Memories After Coma
- 6 Royce International Symposium Empowers Students to Approach Diplomacy With 'Intelligence and Great Integrity'
- 7 American Studies Professor Pens Book on the Impact of Decluttering



- 8** A Legacy of Learning and Adventure: The Remarkable Journey of Kirt and Donna Spradlin
- 10** History Major Preserves Military Lives of Marine Aviators Through Passage to the Future Internship Opportunity
- 11** Titan Alumnus Lands a Dream Role at Warner Records
- 12** An Interview with CSUF Alumnus and Attorney Representing Google and Apple Inc.
- 13** HSS Mural Project Completes the Installation of Four Vibrant Works of Public Art On Humanities Building
- 14** Welcome to our New Faculty for 2025
- 16** Parting Words from 2025 Commencement Speeches
- 17** Upcoming Events



Dean's Checklist 2025

Faculty Making it Make Sense

"I need to talk to a historian!" one of my Dean colleagues exclaimed. "Yes, always," I thought. But this year feels different as people have grappled with US political systems, global economics, and tectonic technological shifts. To serve the community we created the panel and video series, "Lowkey Confused: HSS Explains," where faculty experts answer questions like, "Do tariffs spur economic growth?" "Can the President accept an airplane as a gift?" "Does federal funding stimulate basic scientific research and technological development?" Follow along at youtube.com/@csuf-HSS

Launching into Meaningful Careers

Sixty students interned in Washington, DC through our Cal State DC Scholars program! Thirty-two students interned in Southern California with companies and non-profits partnered with our Passage to the Future program! We are expanding programs that ensure that our students can answer, "What will you do with a humanities and social science degree?" and land in a meaningful career the day after graduation (okay, maybe they get a little break!). VIP tour of Google? Check. Attend the BIO International Convention in Boston to learn about humanities and social science opportunities in biotech? Check. Thanks to donor-funded Passage fellowships and DC program scholarships, students are able to accept unpaid or underpaid internships to prepare for their next chapter. Read about our new collaboration with the Flying Leatherneck Museum on page 10.





Graduation

We graduated 2,500 undergraduate and 220 graduate students in three commencement ceremonies in May. Six-hundred and eighty-five of those students earned higher than a 3.5 GPA, receiving honors! During my speech, I assured students that they are artificial intelligence proof because we have trained them to do connective labor; create and recreate theories that respond to the here and now; and embrace struggle as productive and beautiful. See excerpts of commencement speeches on page 16.



An HSS Book Festival

Nerdy and fun—that’s how we roll in HSS. Our inaugural publication festival, called HSS Pub Fest, was an ebullient day of author interviews and talks, used and new book sales, and bookmark coloring. The air hummed with the creativity of our faculty and the love of books and ideas of our students and staff. Plan on joining us for PubFest 2025 on November 13 in the HSS quad. Learn more at: hss.fullerton.edu/pubfest



We are Building Native American Studies!

Last year I announced our goal to hire faculty members who will develop curriculum related to Native American Studies. I am so proud to announce that this year we are welcoming four new faculty who will lead this charge from the departments of History, Political Science, and Anthropology. Read all about them on page 14.



Teaching Through Polarization: *Building Bridges Across Divides*

In October 2023, just weeks after the tragic events of October 7, faculty experts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Dean Jessica Stern organized a campus event to bring the community together and hear diverse perspectives on Israel and Palestine. The event centered on Palestinian experiences of trauma, Jewish vulnerability, and the long history of violence and peace efforts. Hundreds of students, faculty, and community members attended. This gathering planted the seed for the *Teaching Through Polarization* initiative—an effort to encourage faculty to teach courses on polarizing topics using diverse perspectives and encouraging constructive conversations across ideological differences.

Dr. Ella Ben Hagai, a specialist in social psychology and intergroup conflict and reconciliation, is leading this initiative. As part of this initiative, faculty are trained in best practices for preparing, listening, and leading conversations about today's most contentious issues with complexity and care. The initiative not only strengthens students' education and helps them work across political, cultural, and ideological lines. It also fosters a more cohesive and resilient campus community.

This work is especially urgent in today's climate, where Americans are increasingly unlikely to befriend, live near, or feel comfortable with those who disagree with them politically. The extreme polarization we face is fueled by political rhetoric that frames opponents as enemies, online platforms that reward outrage, and algorithms that reinforce echo chambers by exposing people only to ideas they already agree with. The rise in polarization

has also had a negative impact on higher education. Many Americans now view colleges and universities as biased or ineffective. Campus debates often amplify extreme viewpoints while silencing moderate voices. Professors are increasingly reluctant to teach controversial topics, and students may self-censor for fear of being "canceled."

To address these challenges, faculty from departments including Anthropology, Psychology, African American Studies, Liberal Arts, and the Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice, have formed a learning community as part of the *Teaching Through Polarization* initiative. Together, they are designing innovative teaching strategies to help students navigate complex and controversial issues. Courses in the initiative will explore topics such as Israel/Palestine, Sex and Gender, Law and Order and Prison Abolition, Social Welfare vs. Individual Responsibility, and Democracy vs. Authoritarianism and with an emphasis on nuance, complexity, and critical thinking.

Starting in the fall, hundreds of students will gain not only a deeper, more nuanced understanding of divisive issues but also essential leadership skills. These include the ability to collaborate with people who hold different views, listen with empathy, communicate across divides, and resist the pull of groupthink. Students will be empowered to become bridgers—leaders who can connect rather than divide.





History Student Uses Research Skills to Rebuild Memories After Coma

William Trevilla always knew he wanted to be a historian. But his love for history took on a new meaning in 2009 when a near-monthlong coma erased most of his memories. During his recovery, the Cal State Fullerton alum relied on photos, letters, journals and social media accounts to piece together his past.

"I learned firsthand the importance of primary sources," said Trevilla '24 (B.A. history). "That's why I decided to pursue history. I needed to go back in time to relearn what happened, so I could understand the future and the present."

When he decided to return to college, he knew that it wasn't going to be an easy road. Although he was able to regain most of his memories, his neurologist said that Trevilla might struggle to retain new information.

"I had three heart failures when I was in a coma and I almost didn't make it," said Trevilla. "But when I woke up, I wanted to make the best of the situation and find a way to positively impact the world around me."

With the help of CSUF's Disability Support Services and the community he found in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Trevilla achieved a 3.5 GPA overall and graduated cum laude with the Class of 2024.

For his unique connection to history and his dedication to academic excellence, Trevilla was recognized with the Dr. Jeffrey Griffith '13 Award in U.S. History and a \$1,000 scholarship.

"This award helped me build my confidence toward my next goal, which is to return to CSUF to earn my master's degree in history and teaching credentials," said Trevilla.

The Griffith Award provided him crucial financial support as he purchased new books and primary documents to further his undergraduate senior capstone research on the involvement of U.S. companies in WWII, which he presented at the annual College of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Symposium.

Outside of the classroom, Trevilla joined the CSUF History Student Association, American Historical Association and the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society, which helped him bolster his research skills and provided him networking and professional development opportunities.

"I've been introduced to important scholars and historians, had the chance to present my research and implement everything I learned into making a better future for myself," said Trevilla. "I want to teach high school students about history, so they can make a difference too."





Royce International Symposium Empowers Students to Approach Diplomacy With 'Intelligence and Great Integrity'

With support from faculty experts, Crystal Weber presented her research paper on the evolution of China's power techniques to a crowd of foreign policy and political science scholars at Cal State Fullerton's Royce International Symposium.

"I'm extremely grateful for this opportunity, not only to share my research at this level, but to develop my skills," said Weber, who was recognized with a student research award and a \$500 scholarship for her academic achievements at the symposium. The Class of 2025 political science grad plans to use the scholarship to take the LSAT after graduation. The first step toward law school and her future career.

Her paper explored China's use of soft power, which occurs when government systems use non-coercive techniques such as media control to shape people's cultural, social and political values. With guidance from Simon Tang, a CSUF lecturer in political science who specializes in international political economy and comparative politics, Weber found that China's soft power influence has weakened with hard power techniques like increased military capacity.

Weber was one of four students to share their research on March 13 at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library & Museum. The student research panel included Ji Hwan Lee, who presented on Africa's message to the U.S. and China in soft power competition; Daisy Sandoval, who presented on hard and soft power in Latin America; and Francis Arguien, who presented on hard-ruled China and soft power.

"This symposium connects academic inquiry with real-world policy challenges," said CSUF President Ronald S. Rochon. "For students, this event provides an opportunity to move beyond the headlines and to examine the complexities of diplomacy and international relations by encouraging open discourse. We empower the next generation of leaders to approach diplomacy with intelligence and great integrity."

Former U.S. Rep. Ed Royce '77 (B.A. business administration-accounting, finance) delivered the event's keynote address on "American Foreign Policy in a Destabilized World: Hard, Soft and Sharp Power Challenges," exploring the promotion of democracy and the use of strategic communication and policy initiatives to negate authoritarian influence.

Royce provided insights into such key issues as Russia and China's control of mass media, the importance of bipartisan cooperation in U.S. foreign policy and aid programs, and the necessary balance between hard and soft power.

"Soft power is about persuasion. It's about information and ideals. Let's use that and reserve the hard power only when we need it," explained Royce.

The event also featured policy and political science experts from various universities and Washington, D.C.-based organizations, who shared their knowledge on power dynamics in the 21st century and Latin America's relations with the U.S. and China.

Throughout his career, Royce represented California's 39th Congressional District from 1993 to 2019 and served Orange County for more than 25 years. He also served as chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee from 2013-19. The foreign policy, national security and international business expert currently serves as a policy director at Brownstein, a lobbying and law firm.

The symposium was organized by CSUF's Department of Political Science. Sponsors and partners included: Brownstein, SoCal Gas, Paul Carter '92 (B.A. political science), Richard Nixon Foundation, CSUF's College of Humanities and Social Sciences, OC Forum, The Orange County Register, and the World Affairs Council-Orange County. To receive future symposium program announcements, email contact information to roycesymposium@fullerton.edu.

American Studies Professor Pens Book on the Impact of Decluttering



more than pretty boxes

how the

rise of

professional

organizing

shows us

the way

isn't

working

Carrie M. Lane

Sorting through a kitchen cabinet jam-packed with coffee mugs, Carrie Lane selected a few to donate to Goodwill. She felt relieved and proud, but did not understand why.

"As a cultural critic, that was the moment where I decided I wanted to investigate the belief that decluttering makes us happier people," said Lane, Cal State Fullerton chair and professor of American Studies.

Across the United States, overconsumption and other factors have resulted in a clutter crisis. Lane said research has found that individuals in the United States have more self-storage facilities than Starbucks, McDonald's and Subway locations combined nationwide. Lane explained that being surrounded by clutter can result in emotional, physical and financial struggles.

To combat this clutter crisis, Lane conducted ethnographic and historical research on the evolution of the professional organizing movement, finding that organization is a powerful tool to help people cope with the overwhelming demands of work and home. She explores the power of decluttering in her newest book, *More Than Pretty Boxes: How the Rise of Professional Organizing Shows Us the Way We Work Isn't Working*.

A women-led effort to "organize and winnow personal belongings" emerged in the late 1970s as an occupational category. A decade later, the National Association of Organizing and Productivity Consultants was founded to empower its members by providing quality education, enhancing business connections, advancing industry research and improving clients' living conditions.

While writing her book, Lane interviewed more than 50 professional organizers, including some of the field's earliest founders. She also attended conferences, meetings and workshops where she worked for more than 100 hours as an unpaid assistant organizer.

Through this work, she learned that professional organizers listen empathetically to clients while encouraging them to be mindful about their possessions.

"After collaborating with a professional organizer, many clients say they feel much lighter and less anxious," said Lane.

Lane also noted that men and women respond differently to clutter. While women's stress levels increase dramatically when they walk through cluttered areas of their homes, the same is not true for men.

"I think that's because women have internalized the cultural idea that they are responsible for the home and that they're to blame if the home falls short of the unrealistic images of the picture-perfect homes we see in the media," said Lane.

For people who want to participate in decluttering, Lane recommends starting with small tasks.

"Choose a manageable space — one junk drawer, a linen closet and focus on that task. Remember that it gets worse before it gets better and create a functional system for the treasures you keep," said Lane.



A Legacy of Learning and Adventure: The Remarkable Journey of Kirt and Donna Spradlin

In the heart of Southern California, the lives of Kirt and Donna Spradlin weave a tapestry rich with dedication, adventure, and philanthropy. Kirt Spradlin, an electrical engineer and manager with Hughes Aircraft Company and its successors, carved a distinguished career until his retirement in 1983. His journey ended in 2020 at the age of 92, leaving behind a legacy of innovation and leadership.

Donna Spradlin, a spirited alumna of California State University, Fullerton, graduated in 1970 with a degree in English. At 98, she stands as a testament to resilience and pioneering spirit, being the first in her family to earn a college degree. Donna dedicated her career to teaching within the Fullerton School District, retiring in 1985, and nurturing generations with her wisdom and passion.

Together, Kirt and Donna raised three daughters, Trish, Kathy, and Carol, and celebrated the joys of four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Their family reflects their values: education, commitment, and exploration.

After retirement, the Spradlins became vibrant participants in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at CSUF, formerly known as CLE. Kirt served as president of the board, a board member, and the unofficial photographer, capturing moments of joy and learning. Donna, with her keen organizational skills, supervised an upgrade to the OLLI kitchen and led memorable trips to cultural landmarks like the Hollywood Bowl and San Francisco. Their community spirit extended to CSUF sports, where they proudly served as ushers for baseball and basketball games.

Their shared love for the outdoors saw them embark on thrilling adventures, hiking the John Muir Trail in Yosemite, scaling Mt. Whitney ten times, and conquering summits like Mt. Kilimanjaro and the base camp of Mt. Everest. Their adventures were not just physical feats but reflections of their zest for life.

In 1997, Kirt and Donna began their journey as regular donors to CSUF, creating the Kirt and Donna Spradlin Scholarship in Aging Studies and supporting OLLI and the Art Alliance. Their involvement in exercise classes at CSUF sparked their interest in the Aging Studies Program, leading to their philanthropic endeavors.

In a profound gesture of generosity, the Spradlins decided in 2018 to include CSUF in their estate plans,

gifting their Orange County residence to the university. The proceeds from this gift will establish an endowed scholarship for English graduate students as well as endow their existing scholarship to support graduate students in Aging Studies. In recognition of their contributions, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences honored them at the annual "Taste of HSS" Donor Appreciation Dinner with the 2025 Cornerstone Award and will soon dedicate the HSS Auditorium lounge in their honor.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences extends its heartfelt gratitude to Kirt and Donna Spradlin for their unwavering support and generosity. Their legacy not only enriches the academic and cultural fabric of CSUF but also inspires future generations to pursue excellence and embrace lifelong learning. Thank you, Kirt and Donna, for your remarkable contributions and enduring impact.



There are meaningful ways to make a difference for our students, faculty and staff. In addition to a cash gift, you can make a impact through a variety of opportunities now and in the future. Some include:

- Create a Charitable Gift Annuity, a Charitable Remainder Unitrust, or another charitable gift vehicle
- Cryptocurrency
- Gifts of appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds
- An IRA rollover allows people aged 70½ and older to reduce their taxable income directly from their IRA
- Real Estate
- By leaving a fixed amount or percentage of your estate to CSUF, you will be recognized as a member of the Ontiveros Legacy Society.

History Major Preserves Military Lives of Marine Aviators Through Passage to the Future Internship Opportunity



At a Feb. 10, 2025 event inside a historic hanger at the former Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, now the Great Park in Irvine, CSUF and the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum celebrated the university's donation of a copy of its El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Oral History Project to the museum. The oral histories of service members stationed at the base will be among exhibits when the new museum opens at the Great Park. Retired Marine Lt. Gen. Terry Robling recalled serving at El Toro when the area was rural, flying over farms and greenbelts. Robling is among the 525 voices featured in CSUF's project, which will be part of the museum's exhibits opening by early 2027 at the CSUF Pollak Library.

The Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History donated the project, featuring Marines who served from World War II through the 1970s. The collection includes interviews with military pilots, enlisted Marines, and others, such as the first Marine Corps female general, said Natalie Fousekis, director of the center. The original interviews remain in the archives at Pollak Library, available by appointment.

The museum is building a new 131,000-square-foot facility to showcase over 40 military aircraft, artifacts, and exhibits. Jessica Yirush Stern, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, emphasized the partnership's role in bringing personal stories to public display. Alumnus and retired Marine Col. Patrick "Paddy" Gough, instrumental in the partnership, highlighted the historical significance of El Toro. Robling, chair of the Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation, noted the oral

histories educate future generations.

Eli Wolcott, a CSUF history major, interns at the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum, preserving historical artifacts. Supported by a paid internship through the Passage to the Future program, launched in 2022, Wolcott gains hands-on experience, aspiring to become a museum curator. The program prepares humanities and social sciences majors for careers through internships and professional development. Wolcott catalogs military artifacts, ensuring accuracy for future exhibits, contributing to safeguarding Marine Corps aviation history. The museum partners with the Passage to the Future program to offer students opportunities in public history.





Titan Alumnus Lands a Dream Role at Warner Records

Surrounded by beaming strobe lights, roaring speakers and energetic concertgoers, TJ Landig dreamed of becoming a rock star on the grand stage.

At 5 years old, Landig's dad taught him how to play the guitar. He immersed himself in his high school band and cherished the rich sound of musical notes filling the air. His love for music boomed at Cal State Fullerton. Landig recalled feeling inspired by Professor Emeritus of American Studies John Ibson's interactive discussions on masculinity, ethnic diversity in American culture and music's power to the ear.

"My professors opened my eyes to American culture in a deeper way, such as understanding the history of rock and roll and jazz music," said Landig '06 (B.A. political science and American studies).



During his bustling college years, Landig gained leadership and community relations experience participating in Camp Titan, a former student-run program under Associated Students Inc. that supported underserved youth in Orange County. He was a lead counselor who organized shows, presentations and campfires to entertain young campers.

Tapping Career Resources on Campus

Landig said he experienced an existential identity crisis in college. A trip to the Career Center job fair changed his career trajectory from finance and banking to his true passion; music. Cal State Fullerton's Career Center provides students with workshops, career fairs, graduation preparation and specialist appointments.

"One company dropped out of the job fair and Warner Music Group replaced them," said Landig. "I bought a brand new suit and did a round of interviews with Morgan Stanley and Warner Music Group. I was offered internships at both companies."

He trusted his gut instinct. Landig joined Warner Records as an intern and radio promotion assistant before transitioning into the marketing department and climbing the corporate ladder to senior vice president.

"Figure out what you love. I love music more than I love trading stocks," said Landig. "I walked into a music industry that was being faced with challenges by music pirating, but despite that, I chose to commit to it."

Reflecting on his stomping grounds at Cal State Fullerton, Landig learned the power of manifestation, mindfulness and investing time into the Career Center's free resources.

"Build upon the core value of loving your career," said Landig. "Embrace your passion. Your genuine happiness and fulfillment will launch you into new heights."



An Interview with CSUF Alumnus and Attorney Representing Google and Apple Inc.

If you ask Gregory Washington's parents why he pursued a career as an attorney, they'll tell you that it's because he loved debating everything when he was growing up. But Washington adds that his love for law and policy landed him in a courtroom.

After graduating from Cal State Fullerton, Washington '12 (B.A. communication studies, political science) earned his law degree from UC Berkeley. Today, he is an attorney at Jenner & Block in San Francisco, providing legal counsel to business clients across the country.

A proud Titan, Washington shares how Cal State Fullerton helped him go from competing with the moot court team to representing clients like Google and Apple Inc. in state and federal courts.

Can you describe a day in the life of an attorney?

From contract disputes to thorny intellectual property issues, I help companies navigate ever-changing legal landscapes and make arguments on their behalf in state and federal courts. The core responsibility of an attorney is to act as an adviser for clients, helping them make the best possible decisions and serving as their advocate in court when needed.

What's one of your favorite moments as a lawyer?

During my first year of practice, I helped a pro bono client get asylum in front of an immigration judge who only granted asylum in a small percentage of cases. In that moment, you could see years of uncertainty about

his immigration status give way to pure elation as my client realized he now had a home. To this day, it's my favorite moment as a lawyer.

How did CSUF prepare you for success in your career?

Being part of Cal State Fullerton's moot court team was easily the biggest influence for my legal career in college. Moot court is a simulation of the United States Supreme Court where students study case records and present their arguments to a panel of attorneys, law faculty and occasionally, members of the government's judicial branch. Moot court was my first opportunity to explore legal writing and oral advocacy. The program taught me how to analyze and understand legal issues before delivering persuasive arguments; much like I do now. I do not think I would be where I am today without Professor of Political Science Pamela Fiber-Ostrow's encouragement and my moot court experiences.

What advice would you offer to students interested in pursuing careers in law?

Always remember the reason you wanted to become a lawyer. From law school to passing the California bar exam and figuring out how to practice law in a professional setting, the journey is sometimes difficult. If you can hold on to what made you want to pursue a legal career in the first place, you will be able to overcome any challenges that come your way. I also had to learn to confront my impostor syndrome. In law school and early in my career, I was always worried that I was not good enough. Though I had the resume of someone who should be in every room I was in, I never truly felt like I belonged. Once I embraced what made me different, my career began to take off.

HSS Mural Project Completes the Installation of Four Vibrant Works of Public Art On Humanities Building

In Spring 2025, the HSS Mural Project concluded with the addition of four stunning murals to the Humanities building. Dean Stern commented on the project's broader purpose, stating, "We sought to emblazon our building with art that captures our goals as humanities and social science scholars and that made it clear that all students are invited into our walls." This collaborative, highly visible public art project is the first of its kind at CSUF!

An interdisciplinary committee of HSS faculty, with research and teaching expertise in public art, worked closely with HSS and the commissioned artists to facilitate the 2.5-year process. The committee spearheaded the effort to ensure that each mural was rooted in dialogue and a grassroots approach. Students, faculty, and staff provided input via surveys, class visits, and design charettes, a range of stakeholders contributed thoughts on preliminary designs, and members of the campus community encouraged the painting artists. The mural project's positive ripple effects are already visible. Brian Peterson donated supplies to members of Project Rebound, who have used them to paint a mural in the community.

Each of the four murals distinctively celebrates themes of community, identity, belonging, and the spirit and value of the humanities and social sciences:

Cynthia Lujan's "My Journey", on the building's southwest corner, depicts joined hands, leaves, and other connective elements; the artist engaged students in several collaborative sessions. This mural includes the phrase "my journey" in 35 languages whose translations were offered by HSS students, faculty, and staff.

"We are Fullerton" by Brian Peterson is a stunning diptych that weaves a tapestry of proud faces from different backgrounds, harmoniously blended through the use of bold lines and vibrant colors. "We are Fullerton" welcomes those approaching Humanities from the quad.

Bodeck Luna's "Echoes of Insight" is a striking visual reminder of the importance of practicing mindfulness rooted in fact-based knowledge with respect to other worldviews. This mural is on the northwest corner of the Humanities building.



Welcome our New Faculty for 2025!

Frankie Bauer, History

Dr. Frankie Bauer is an enrolled citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and a recent Ph.D. graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the American Studies department. His research explores Cherokee intertribal diplomacy and nation-building in the nineteenth-century West. In addition, Bauer is part of the Choctaw Language and History Workshop, an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional group of historians and linguists collaborating to translate and analyze nineteenth-century court documents from the Choctaw (Chahta) Nation. Their research is featured in a forthcoming, solicited edition of the peer-reviewed academic journal *Native South*. Frankie's interests include learning Native languages, and he is learning Choctaw (Chahta anumpa) and Cherokee (ᎠᎯᏍᎦ ᎠᎵᏂᎠᎵᏍᎦ). Additionally, Frankie is fascinated with the history and evolution of punk rock music.



John Burnett, Political Science

Dr. John Burnett, born and raised in California, has been deeply involved in local politics throughout his life, fueling his passion for civic engagement. As a proud citizen of the Cherokee Nation, John's research centers on Indigenous identity and political behavior, with a particular focus on the nuances of indigeneity in the Americas. After teaching for a year in the Department of Administration of Justice at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, John is starting at California State University, Fullerton. His goal is to build a bridge between academia and tribes, so that traditional ways of learning, and the elders who teach us, are incorporated into our curriculum, empowering tribes in the education of their own.



Vanessa Calderon, Psychology

Dr. Vanessa Calderon is an incoming Assistant Professor in the CSUF Department of Psychology. Originally from East Los



Angeles, she completed her B.A. in Psychology at Yale University and went on to receive her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern California where she also completed a Master of Public Health degree in Community Health Promotion. Dr. Calderon received specialized clinical training in early psychosis as a NIMH-funded T32 postdoctoral fellow at the UCLA Semel Institute. Her research centers on understanding and addressing mental health inequities affecting Latine youth and families. She employs mixed-methods approaches to examine how sociocultural and structural factors shape mental health treatment utilization. Dr. Calderon is dedicated to mentoring and teaching students and advancing inclusive, community-engaged scholarship.

Sarah Chavez, Psychology

Dr. Sarah Chavez earned her Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Research on Substance Use from UC San Diego and San Diego State University, where she investigated adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among Latinx young adults and examined how mental health symptoms and social support influence the relationship between ACEs and heavy episodic drinking in this group.



Additionally, she has an M.A. in Clinical Psychology from CSU, Northridge, and a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Redlands. She completed postdoctoral training at Brown University's Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies and USC's eIRTI program.

Her research investigates the etiology of alcohol/substance use and mental health symptoms in Latinx young adults and college students, with a key emphasis on adversity, culture, and institutional belonging. She aims to develop culturally tailored interventions to mitigate these outcomes.

Hossein Karimi, Psychology

Dr. Hossein Karimi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at California State University, Fullerton. His research focuses the cognitive processes underlying human language processing, with a focus on memory, as well as the effect of cognitive aging on language processing and memory. He received his Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology from the University of California, Davis. Dr. Karimi's work has been published in journals such as *Cognition*, and *Journal of Memory and Language*. He will be running the Cognition of Language Lab (CoLLab) at CSUF.



Justin Lund, Anthropology

Justin Lund, Ph.D. (Navajo) is a biological anthropologist whose work focuses on Indigenous health, human biology, and the enduring effects of colonialism on well-being. His research integrates community-based methods and Indigenous research frameworks to examine how biology, culture, and environment shape health in Native communities. With a strong commitment to tribal sovereignty and health equity, Dr. Lund collaborates with Tribal Nations, health departments, and grassroots organizations on projects that prioritize self-determination and cultural relevance. His interdisciplinary work bridges anthropology, public health, and Indigenous studies to promote ethical and decolonizing approaches to science. As an educator, he mentors students to critically engage with the social and political dimensions of biological research. Dr. Lund is honored to join the faculty at California State University Fullerton and support community-rooted scholarship.



Jessica HyunJeong Lee, Political Science

Dr. Jessica HyunJeong Lee is an Assistant Professor of Political Science in the Division of Politics, Administration, and Justice. She received her Ph.D. in Political Science from UCLA and was previously an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts. Her research focuses on racial and ethnic politics, Asian American politics, immigration, citizenship, political behavior, and social movements. More specifically, her work explores questions at the intersection of policy and political behavior, examining how immigration policies shape identity, attitudes, and behavior among Asian and Latino undocumented immigrants. Her work has been published in journals such as *American Political Science Review*, *Research & Politics*, and *Social Psychological and Personality Science*.



JooYoung (Jewel) Lee, Psychology

Dr. Jewel Lee's research focuses on workforce well-being, with a particular interest in understanding what makes work worthwhile throughout evolving careers. Her work has investigated constructs including career crafting, meaningful work, and PERMA+4 (the building blocks of flourishing at work). Her current research centers on career capacity building, particularly among marginalized workers. Dr.



Lee has taught courses in Research Methods, Industrial-Organizational Psychology, and Personnel Psychology. Prior to academia, she held roles at global companies including Samsung, IBM Korea, and Microsoft Korea. She earned a Ph.D. and M.A. in Positive Organizational Psychology from Claremont Graduate University, an M.S. in Organizational Dynamics from the University of Pennsylvania, an M.B.A. from Yonsei University, and a B.A. from Ewha Womans University.

Anne (Andie) Reid, History

Dr. Anne (Andie) Reid is a historian of eighteenth-century Spanish borderlands, specializing in Indigenous, gender and medical studies. In addition to her doctoral training in history, Andie also brings the experience of building, contributing to, and assisting others in the use of digital humanities projects. A product of the California University System herself, she has been a proud, CFA-affiliated faculty member of the CSUs since 2013, having taught at Cal State Los Angeles, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and Cal State Dominguez Hills. She is excited to be joining the History Department at CSUF. She is especially looking forward to working with campus and community stakeholders in Native American Indigenous Studies (NAIS) program building.



Steven Tran, Psychology

Dr. Steven Tran was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, where he received his Bachelor's degree and Ph.D. from the University of Toronto. His doctoral research in Dr. Robert Gerlai's lab focused on characterizing the effects of alcohol on behavior and brain neurochemistry in adult zebrafish, establishing an animal model for studying alcohol addiction. Motivated by an interest in how genes and neurons regulate behavior, he pursued postdoctoral training in Dr. David Prober's lab at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), where he performed a genetic screen using larval zebrafish to identify genes and neural circuits that regulate sleep. As an assistant professor at California State University, Fullerton, his lab employs both larval and adult zebrafish to uncover mechanisms regulating sleep and to investigate how drugs of abuse disrupt sleep patterns.





"Many professions you aspire to rely on building connections with unique individuals—sociologist Allison Pugh calls these connective laborers, who include therapists, teachers, community organizers... Yes, clients seek knowledge, but to trust that this knowledge is being applied to their particular situation, they need to feel seen. Pugh describes the "unique emotional interchange with another human being, where we bring our baggage and we meet in the middle and we reflect each other... it's magic." Graduates, you are AI-proof because we have trained you to do this connective labor."

– Dean Jessica Stern

Parting Words from 2025 Commencement Speeches

"..[P]ractice listening to each other. It sounds simple, but listening to others, especially those who hold different worldviews from us, opens room for meaningful conversations. We don't have to agree on everything, but when we take the time to understand where someone is coming from, we open the door to empathy. In a world that often feels divided, that small act can make a big difference."

– Rocío Arroyo, Religious Studies

"We've studied stories; old and new, fiction and fact, and learned that language can shape history, comfort the lost, and challenge the powerful. We've met Shakespearean fools, modernist rebels, and voices on the margins who taught us that every sentence can change a mind and sometimes change a world. Beyond the books, this degree taught us to ask better questions, rethink easy answers, and understand people, especially those different from us. These skills matter in a world that moves faster than any author can write, in an age of conspiracy theories and artificial intelligence. Our stories matter. And it is up to us to tell them well."

– Shyamali Perera, English, Comparative Literature, and Linguistics



"Graduating from the humanities and social sciences give us a special advantage in this world: we are lifelong investigators. We study human behavior, thought, circumstances, and the complexities of society. To learn about the people around us is to actively engage in a society where humans are challenged, understood, and then accepted in the ultimate pursuit of happiness. So continue to question ideals, change the narrative, fight for opportunity, and care for the communities that make you, you."

– Alexis Seller, Psychology

"The humanities degrees you've earned are the result of years of hard work and a commitment to shaping a more equitable future. By being here today, you haven't just changed your own path forward, you've shifted the course of our collective history. We are all here together today as a community who values the power of education. The United States is far from being the kind of community I want it to be, but I am committed to making it better because I am so proud to call you all my fellow Americans."

- Alli Lappin Dubin, American Studies

"We study the humanities because the human experience is messy, complicated, and diverse. In a restless society that increasingly emphasizes productivity over creativity, efficiency over understanding, the humanities matter more than ever... A commitment to critical thinking, cultural diversity, and civic responsibility matter, now more than ever."

- Scott Terlouw, History

"I was never fed ideas, but was taught how to develop my own and given the confidence to voice them. Push back, advocate, and stand up... When human rights are on the line every day, when systems in place to protect us are under attack, and when it seems like the world couldn't be more divided, I urge you to keep learning. Listen to your neighbor, try to understand the people who are not like you, resist against hate and prejudice, and go forward with empathy."

- Blythe Ryther,
Women and Gender Studies



"Our resilience is not an abstract idea; it's a lived experience. It's the determination that pulls us out of bed on the hardest days. It's the courage to begin again and to keep moving forward. These moments have shaped us in ways we may not yet fully comprehend, but they have undoubtedly prepared us for whatever lies ahead. Our future starts today. Let's make it extraordinary."

- Noah Balderrama, Sociology

Upcoming Events

- **Thurs., September 25, 2025**
College of HSS Convocation
- **Thurs., October 2, 2025**
Passage to the Future Showcase and Alumni Reception
- **Sat., October 25, 2025**
Fall Alumni Tailgate
- **Thurs., November 13, 2025**
College of HSS Pub Fest
- **Fri., December 12, 2025**
IBII Kwanzaa Brunch
- **Sat., February 28, 2026**
Vision & Visionaries - Cal State Fullerton's Distinguished Alumni Ceremony
- **Wed., March 11 & Thurs., March 12, 2026**
Royce International Symposium
- **April 2026**
Philosophy Symposium
- **Spring 2026**
HSS Week & Student Research Symposium

For more information about HSS Events, visit our website at: hss.fullerton.edu!

CSUF

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Social Sciences**

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Pub Fest

NOVEMBER 13, 2025
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