

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Eileen Conrad

Endowed Chair in Taiwan Studies Established at UC Santa Barbara

An endowed chair in Taiwan studies has been established at the University of California, Santa Barbara with a \$500,000 gift from a number of individual donors associated with the Taiwanese American Foundation of San Diego.

The benefactors said they made the gift to help position the campus as an international center for the exploration of Taiwan literature, history, and culture.

The professorship will be named in honor of two major 20th Century Taiwanese literary figures, the late Lai Ho, considered the pioneer of Taiwan literature, and the late Wu Cho-liu, a writer whose work represents Taiwanese cultural, political, and social concerns. The endowment will support the teaching and research of an eminent scholar chosen to fill the position.

Endowed chairs are important to the future of the campus because they help anchor an academic program and enable the university to develop a field of study in a more comprehensive way. The newest chair brings the total number of endowed professorships at UCSB to 42.

"This endowed chair will bring increased academic distinction to the campus and further enhance the prestige of our Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies," said UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang.

"We appreciate both the dedication and the generosity of the donors."

The new endowed chair "will be the next step in a process of building expertise in Taiwan literature and Taiwan studies that has been going on in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies for several years," said Ronald Egan, chair of the department. "UCSB will likely become the focal point of scholarly specialization in Taiwan studies—unequaled elsewhere in the country."

Until the 1980s, when the social and political realities of Taiwan underwent fundamental changes, Taiwan and its distinctive culture had not been common subjects of academic inquiry, Egan explained.

Over the last 20 years, Taiwan-related studies have grown significantly, attracting international scholarly attention.

"As scholars increasingly approach the study of Chinese literature and culture from a global perspective, Taiwan studies becomes increasingly important," said David Marshall, dean of humanities and fine arts in the College of Letters and Science.

"This generous gift will build upon our strengths in this interdisciplinary area of study."

The Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies at UCSB is considered a leader in the study of Taiwan and its people, especially Taiwan literature. It is home to the first American academic journal devoted to Taiwan literature, *Taiwan Literature: English Translation Series*, published by the Forum for the Study of World Literatures in Chinese at UCSB.

The prestigious journal is co-edited by Kuo-ch'ing Tu, an acclaimed poet, translator, and critic, and a professor in the department.

In addition, Emeritus Professor Kenneth Hsien-yung Pai, considered one of the most celebrated living Chinese writers in the world, taught at UCSB for nearly 30 years and still resides in Santa Barbara, where he actively continues his research and writing.

The department offers majors in Asian Studies, Chinese, and Japanese, with emphases on literature, history, religions, and related fields in the humanities, as well as language instruction in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

The program in Asian Studies offers an undergraduate major leading to the B.A. degree and a graduate program leading to the M.A.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.