

# THE *Current*

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## **UCSB Students, Faculty Member Receive Chancellor's Research Awards**

Three graduating seniors, two graduate students, and a faculty member have been recognized for their outstanding contributions to undergraduate research at UC Santa Barbara.

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research for 2008 has been awarded to Luciana Gonzalez, a double major in Chicano studies and sociology in the College of Letters and Science from Fillmore; Amanda Gustafson, a religious studies major in the College of Letters and Science from Santa Barbara; and Kyle Jacoby, a biology major in the College of Creative Studies from Van Nuys.

Gonzalez, whose research focuses on Latina women's health, was nominated by three faculty members to receive the undergraduate research award.

She co-authored a paper on the "Perceived Roles of Fathers in Teenage Pregnancy" that was presented at a meeting of the Western Psychological Association, and delivered her findings on Latino mother-daughter communication about the Human Papilloma Virus before the National Association for Chicana/Chicano Studies.

In her research, Gustafson uses myth to explore a common phenomenon of our times--"Hookup Culture." Her senior thesis, titled "The Myth of the Liberated

Women: Hookup Culture and the Persistence of the Warrior," has been described by faculty nominators as "extraordinary" and "original in every respect."

Catherine Albanese, chair of religious studies, noted that Gustafson's level of research competence "has turned the tables in her relationships with her faculty mentors.

She is working side-by-side with them and helping them to rethink their own work."

Jacoby has been described by his research mentors as "one of the best undergraduates ever encountered with regard to his potential to be a stellar research scientist."

Already, he has made a major contribution to a collaborative research project involving scientists at UCSB and at the Silhavy Laboratory at Princeton University. Jacoby has been cited as the third author on the project's forthcoming journal publication, and is writing a second research paper of his own.

Doctoral candidates Aubrey Cano and Claudia Kouyoumdjian have each received a Fiona Goodchild Award For Excellence as a Graduate Student Mentor of Undergraduate Research. Cano, of Santa Barbara, is a Ph.D. candidate in marine science.

Kouyoumdjian, a Ph.D. candidate in education from La Verne, has been appointed assistant professor at California State University, Los Angeles.

Richard Hecht, professor of religious studies, has been given the Chancellor's Award for Undergraduate Research, which is bestowed annually upon a faculty member with a distinguished record of mentoring undergraduate students in their research projects.

Hecht received the award in recognition of his outstanding teaching and research contributions and for his tireless devotion in guiding numerous undergraduate research projects on a variety of topics with compelling results.

Approximately 25 percent of all UCSB undergraduates are involved in organized research efforts, often working on teams with faculty members and graduate students. The campus each year awards about \$200,000 in research grants to undergraduates.

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## **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.