UC SANTA BARBARA

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A Year of Milestones

Four are gold, one is ruby, one is pearl, two are china.

UC Santa Barbara has a lot to celebrate this year. Eight departments are celebrating landmark anniversaries in 2014 with a host of special events and activities.

Among the honorees, mechanical engineering, religious studies, sociology, and theater and dance hit the 50-year mark. The Department of Geography and the Department of Communication turn 40 and 30, respectively; and the Asian-American studies and East Asian languages and cultural studies departments are two decades old.

“Fifty years old is fairly young in the academic world and certainly 30 or 40 years much more so,” said Joel Michaelsen, UCSB’s interim executive vice chancellor and professor of geography. “And yet a number of these departments have grown to be world class, top-ranked departments. I think that’s indicative of the transformation that’s happened at UCSB all across the campus, where we have gone from essentially being a state teachers’ college to being a top research institution and a member of the American Association of Universities in a relatively short period of time.”

The anniversary celebrations begin at the All Gaucho Reunion April 24-27. The geography department gets the party started with a presentation by professor Keith Clarke. “Remote Sensing: The Missing Decade” will take place Thursday, April 24, at 3:30 p.m. in 1930 Buchanan Hall. The department open house follows at 5 p.m. in

Ellison Hall.

Friday, April 25, at 10 a.m., the department hosts its first-ever Gaucho GeoHunt, which combines elements of scavenger hunts and geocaching to provide a unique way to explore UC Santa Barbara. Teams assemble at Ellison Hall where they will receive maps before embarking on a campus quest. The department's 40th anniversary barbecue will begin at 1 p.m. at Stow House.

According to Michaelsen, the changes in the geography department since its inception have been dramatic. "The department really helped define what the role of geography is in the world nowadays with all of the geographical analysis and techniques that have become commonplace, like GPS and GIS. The underlying theories and procedures that make those things work were, in many cases, developed here or at least brought into wider applicability," he added. "There are many other programs, some celebrating anniversaries here, that followed similar paths and redefined their areas of the academic landscape in similar ways."

The Department of Religious Studies marks its golden anniversary with a workshop for alumni on April 25, at 2 p.m. The "Alumni Panel on Non-Academic Careers" will be led by five program graduates who work outside of academia. On Saturday, April 26, at noon, "The Vietnam Class and Beyond: A Report on War" will reflect on the impact of one of the most popular classes offered at UC Santa Barbara in the past 35 years. Two other roundtable events will review the history and the legacy of the department. Alumnus Gary Laderman (Ph.D., 1992) will receive the Distinguished Alumni Award at the Alumni Awards Dinner, which begins at 6 p.m. in the West Conference Center.

The 6th Annual Communication Career Day is also set for April 26, from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. at Corwin Pavilion. In honor of the department's 30th anniversary, this year's event will offer students an even greater opportunity to interact with alumni. In addition to three alumni panels — Entertainment, Marketing/Public Relations and First Few Years — speed mentoring will bring together undergraduate students and alumni. Please visit www.comm.ucsb.edu/news/event/647-030714 for details.

To honor the milestone of its 50th anniversary, the Department of Theater and Dance presents four events on April 26. At 3 p.m. on the Science Green, the Dance Company will perform an excerpt from its latest repertoire before going on tour in Italy. At 4:30 p.m. in the Hatlen Theater, a panel of alumni will share their

experiences in the profession in “Life after UCSB: What have you done since graduation?”

Evening activities include a reception for alumni, faculty and staff members and students with a special presentation by theater and dance chair Risa Brainin on the future of the department. The reception will begin at 5:45 p.m. in the Theater/Dance Plaza. An open house, where visitors can tour the facilities and pop into rehearsals, will follow at 7 p.m.

Anniversary celebrations continue throughout the year and into 2015. The 50-year-old Department of Sociology began its Ph.D. program during the 1964-65 academic year at the peak of the civil rights movement. In honor of this milestone, the department is planning a series of scholarly and social events, including an anniversary reception at the August meeting of the American Sociological Association in San Francisco. A research conference next February will bring together Ph.D. alumni, past and present faculty members, current graduate students and community members to consider the history of sociology as an academic department at UC Santa Barbara and its impact on the discipline and on local and national communities.

The Department of Mechanical Engineering will celebrate its 50th anniversary this fall. Events are in the planning stages and will be available later in the year on the department website at www.me.ucsb.edu.

“Our department was ranked solidly among the top 10 mechanical engineering departments in the nation in the 2010 National Research Council survey,” said department chair Francesco Bullo. “We intend to energetically continue to improve our rankings and our reputation. Mechanical engineering is one of the most selective majors at UCSB largely because we offer a vibrant research atmosphere in both our graduate and undergraduate programs.”

The very first department at a major research university dedicated to the study of Asian-American culture and history began at UC Santa Barbara in 1994. It was the first in the United States to offer an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts in that field, and will mark its 20th anniversary with a conference next spring.

“Our founding chair, Sucheng Chan, is leaving UCSB after more than 25 years as a faculty member,” said department chair John S.W. Park. “As a scholar for 45 years in the field, she left an indelible mark on Asian-American studies in general and on our

department in particular. In just the past 10 years, our current faculty members have published or edited over a dozen scholarly volumes on Asian-American history, cultural studies, literary theory and immigration studies, and so we look ahead to a very bright future here at UCSB."

The seed for the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies was planted 50 years ago with a course in Chinese language and literature. A course in Japanese language and culture followed a year later. These were augmented by courses in East Asian religions taught by faculty members from the Department of Religious Studies. It took almost 30 years from that first Chinese class for East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies to become a department in 1994.

"We started very small and we are growing," said chair Fabio Rambelli, professor and chair of East Asian language and cultural studies, whose department has been recognizing its 20^{th} anniversary with numerous events this year. "We have been quite successful in developing East Asian languages and East Asian studies here on campus both at the graduate and undergraduate level. Our department is also a hub of everything connected to East Asia here on campus because we have affiliated faculty in many other departments."

Michaelsen concluded: "The fact that we have a relatively young university makes it easier for us to work across traditional disciplines. Interdisciplinary study is one of our trademarks."

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.