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Mellon Foundation awards \$100,000 grants to four UCSB social science departments

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Through its multimillion-dollar Affirming Multivocal Humanities initiative, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded \$100,000 apiece to four social science departments at UC Santa Barbara. The gifts are part of the initiative's commitment to advance the study of race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality.

For the Department of Asian American Studies, the funding supports the launch of a student-run online magazine, an alumni board and a high-profile speaker series on campus, starting April 20 with Chinese American novelist and UC Berkeley Professor Emeritus Maxine Hong Kingston.

In the Department of Black Studies, the award will support undergraduate research projects and establish a guest-speaker series.

In Chicano and Chicana studies, the prize will be used to increase the visibility of the department's doctoral program — this year celebrating its 20th anniversary — and

highlight the work of its graduate students.

Department of Feminist Studies chair and professor Jane Ward said, “We are using the funds to provide world-class training to our PhD students, with a focus on public-facing, high-impact writing.” Specifically, she added, the funding will support the Write to Change the World program, a writing retreat, and will help bring experts to campus to help students prepare for the job market.

The prizes awarded to UCSB were part of \$18 million in Mellon funding across 95 public college and university programs at 66 institutions nationwide.

“The study of race, gender and sexuality has become ever more central to work in the humanities over the last thirty years or so,” said Phillip Brian Harper, the foundation’s director of higher learning. “And it is important that inquiry in these areas — which is of perennial interest to students — continue to enjoy robust support.”

Established in 1969, the [Mellon Foundation](#) is the nation’s largest funder of the arts and humanities.

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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.