

In This Issue

- Message from Humanities Dean Elizabeth A. Say
- Thai activist Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell will speak at Humanities Commencement this spring
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued
- Eloise Klein Healy, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
- Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit
- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant
- Mission

Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
- Chicana/o Studies
- English
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
- Linguistics
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
 - Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
 - Sustainability Studies

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Elizabeth A. Say,
Ph.D. Alum 1981

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Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell pictured in front

This May the College of Humanities will welcome social activist Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell as commencement speaker for the class of 2013. Elizabeth Say, dean of the College of Humanities, views the tireless champion for affordable housing development, small

row center holding sign. Photo courtesy of Martorell.

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Born in Thailand and raised from age 4 in multicultural Los Angeles, Martorell prefers not to define communities along ethnic lines. In fact, she attributes her roots as an activist to two episodes of unrest triggered in 1992 across the globe from one another: Thailand's military coup, during which Martorell helped mobilize Southern California's Thai community to protest atrocities committed by the military junta against civilian demonstrators in Bangkok; and L.A.'s civil unrest following the acquittal of LAPD officers involved in the Rodney King beating. Martorell responded to the latter by co-authoring the "Mid-City Plan for the Coalition of Neighborhood Developers" to help address the lack of inner city economic resources in Los Angeles.

Martorell was a teenager when she realized she was drawn to community service and civic engagement. "When I was in high school I served for two years on the Los Angeles Youth Advisory Council, which was the youth of the city's voice in City Hall," she says. "I absolutely loved it." After graduating high school, Martorell envisioned herself pursuing politics through a traditional path—by earning a degree in political science and proceeding on to law school—but while at UCLA she discovered her passion for urban planning. She would go on to earn her BA and MA in urban planning, specializing in urban regional and third world development. Along the way she also studied humanities at Chiang Mai University in Northern Thailand.

In 1994, Martorell founded the nonprofit Thai Community Development Center, uniting her pursuits of community engagement and social justice. The ThaiCDC provides services promoting cultural adjustment and economic self-sufficiency for Thai immigrants, and the organization played a pivotal role in the campaign that resulted in the 1999 designation of an East Hollywood neighborhood and business district as the first Thai Town in the nation. She sees the action as part of an economic development strategy to revitalize a depressed section of Hollywood while enriching the city's cultural and social fiber for all residents. Martorell has always believed that any sincere fight for social justice necessarily crosses community lines. "The struggle for justice is not a competition between ethnic groups to see who's the most oppressed or who has had it the hardest historically," she said in a keynote address at the 2008 Listen to the Silence Asian American Issues Conference, held at Stanford University. "Rather than defining ourselves narrowly as the oppressed minority we should think of ourselves as a part of the majority that is continually being undermined by the minority in power."

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Martorell, who is married with two children, has a 20-year service record to various boards and organizations with local, nationwide, and international reach. Her many awards and honors include a "Royal Decoration of the Most Admirable Order of the Direkgunabhorn," bestowed by King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in June 2012 for her service to the Thai community abroad. She says that receiving the honor was a "wonderful and strange experience," explaining that her campaigns for workers' rights were initially viewed as a challenge to Thailand's old and still very influential feudal society, a "rigid, hierarchical social orderwomen and poor peopleare on the absolutely lowest rungno rights and no voice whatsoever." As an immigrant raised outside of Thailand with no recognized wealth or lineage in the country, Martorell was at first seen as a troublemaker for assuming a leadership role and condemning power structures that failed to protect vulnerable Thais from abuse and exploitation. "Much of what ThaiCDC accomplished was either ignored, minimized, or attackeddenounced by opponents," says Martorell. "Naturally, we never quit, and even our staunchest opponents to realize that we really meant what we said and we're here to serve the Thai community—all of the Thai community." Being officially recognized by the king for her work after such a long journey was "an emotional, because it meant that we had come a long way and that there was hope for real change in our community's future and hopefully for Thailand itself."

Martorell was also honored in November 2012 at CSUN's Phenomenal Woman Awards, a Gender and Women's Studies biennial event that celebrates women who have made extraordinary contributions to local communities. Women's Studies chair Sheena Malhotra says that the selection committee was drawn to Martorell particularly "because her work brings together activism and real change that impacts the lives of women." The "transnational focus" of her work highlights the "global political connections" that GWS professors emphasize with students every day, Malhotra says. "Chancee's work brings out empowering stories of transformation for all women."

And to those graduating students who want to effect positive change in the world but aren't sure they can truly make a difference, Martorell advises, "The only true prerequisite to be an agent of change in this world is a sincere heart. Nobody can see victory at the start of any struggle; in fact you may feel completely hopeless. If you called a cause and you know there is no other life for you, then you simply have to hard and be persistent—with an open mind. All advocacy work is faith-based, regardless of what your belief may be."

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- **Thai activist Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell will speak at Humanities Commencement this spring**
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued
- Eloise Klein Healy, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
- Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit
- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant
- Mission

Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
- Chicana/o Studies
- English
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
- Linguistics
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
 - Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
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- **Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...**
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued
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- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant
- Mission

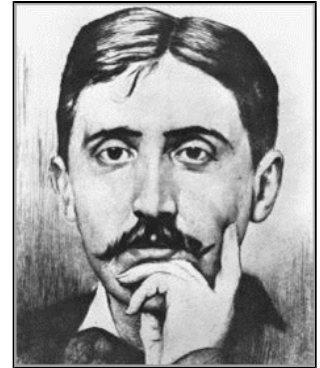
Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
- Chicana/o Studies
- English
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
- Linguistics
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
 - Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
 - Sustainability Studies



Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE... with apologies to *Vanity Fair* and Marcel Proust

This past fall the College of Humanities welcomed three new faculty members, who bring their talents to the Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Program and the departments of English and Religious Studies. As they settled into their second semester at CSUN, we asked them to respond to a brief, modified Proust questionnaire, so named for the writer Marcel Proust, who answered the somewhat probing set of personal questions twice during his lifetime.



Many thanks to our faculty members who so willingly shared with us their time, thought, wit, and honesty. And because our College grants officer is the one who pesters freshman faculty to participate in this exercise each year, the dean's office thought it only appropriate this spring that she should have to answer the questions herself.

Each answered the questions to which they most wanted to respond.

**Lauren Byler
Assistant Professor, English**

Dr. Byler earned her Ph.D. in English at Tufts University. Her primary area of study is Victorian literature. She also is interested in and teaches courses on film, literary theory, feminism, queer theory, and children's literature.



Photo courtesy of Lee Choo

What is your greatest fear?
Snakes. Even plastic ones.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

It's a tie between procrastination, self-doubt, and being chronically 10 minutes late for everything.

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Laziness and lack of pride in one's work.

What is your greatest extravagance?

Lately, since I have my first real job, I've been buying a lot of clothes and shoes. It felt cleansing to donate the high school-era clothing I had still been wearing in graduate school.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Completing my dissertation was pretty nice, as was becoming a two-time All American runner in college, but lately I've been pretty proud of laughing bemusedly at family members who tell me how pointless my career is rather than getting into arguments with them about academia.

What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

Losing the ability to read.

Which talent would you most like to have?

Patience. And maybe being a better cook. I don't have much in the way of imagination or an attention span when it comes to the kitchen.

Jennifer Thompson

Assistant Professor, Jewish Studies Interdisciplinary Program

Dr. Thompson earned her Ph.D. in ethics and society at Emory University. She is CSUN's first Amado Professor of Applied Jewish Ethics and Civic Engagement, a professorship created by a generous endowment from the Maurice Amado Foundation. Thompson teaches courses that focus on the Jewish ethical approach to communal and political challenges.



Photo courtesy of
Lee Choo

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Being penny-wise and pound-foolish.

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Refusal to listen to good sense.

What is your greatest extravagance?

Too many pets.

When and where were you happiest?

I don't know about "happiest" exactly, but growing up in Alaska I regularly got to feel awed and lucky to witness the Northern Lights and other incredible natural surroundings and to be able to go out on a hike in broad daylight at 10 p.m.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Having survived a 1,700-mile car trip across the desert in August with two dogs, two cats, and a child. Turning in a complete book manuscript to my publisher is a close second.

What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

Being woken up from a deep sleep by any of the aforementioned cats and dogs.

What is it that you most dislike?

See above.

Which talent would you most like to have?

Cooking well, reliably, and wanting, reliably, to cook.

continued on next page

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- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...
- **Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued**
- Eloise Klein Healy, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
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- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant
- Mission

Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
- Chicana/o Studies
- English
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
- Linguistics
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
 - Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
 - Sustainability Studies

Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE

continued from previous page

Claire White Assistant Professor, Religious Studies

Dr. White earned her Ph.D. in cognitive science of religion at Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland. She is a research psychologist with an interdisciplinary approach to religion, using the approaches of the evolutionary and cognitive sciences to understand human thought and behavior, especially folk concepts of personal continuity and representations of the afterlife.



*Photo courtesy of
Lee Choo*

What is your idea of perfect happiness?

Spending the day with my nieces.

What is your greatest fear?

Spending more than a day with my nieces.

With which historical figure do you most identify?

None, they're all dead.

Which living person do you most admire?

My husband—for putting up with me.

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Rudeness and entitlement.

What is your greatest extravagance?

I spend a lot of money on staying fit and eating healthy. I think it's important to invest in your health.

When and where were you happiest?

I am generally happy. Daily, I love the first cup of coffee in the morning.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Generally, not giving up. I think that quality leads to achievements.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?

Myself—it would be an administrative nightmare if I were anyone else.

What is your most treasured possession?

My diary from when I was 15–20. If anyone reads it I'm in big trouble.

Teresa Morrison Grants Officer, College of Humanities

Ms. Morrison earned her BA in English, concentrating in creative writing, at UCLA.

In the years since she has flirted with a number of graduate degree paths, but kept getting diverted by shiny objects and/or sheer panic. For this reason, she expresses deep admiration for the decisive perseverance of our faculty.

What is your greatest fear?

Being found out.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

Indecision?

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Arrogance. Or maybe entitlement. Arrogant entitlement? Entitled arrogance? It's so hard to decide.

What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?

Fremont Street in Las Vegas.

What is it that you most dislike?

Being interrupted. In a dismissive way, not in a "Fire!" way.

What is your motto?

The red flags aren't there to wave you to the finish line.



*Photo courtesy of
Tram Tran*

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- Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit
- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant
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Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
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- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
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 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
 - Sustainability Studies



Eloise Klein Healy, former lecturer in the English department and Director of the Women's Studies Program, named L.A.'s first poet laureate

The College of Humanities was delighted to learn last year that Los Angeles mayor Antonio Villaraigosa had determined it was time to institute an official poet laureate for the city. Even more delightful, the first artist appointed as L.A.'s poet diplomat—chosen from a list of 40 nominees culled down to three finalists—is Eloise Klein Healy, who taught writing and women's studies courses at CSUN early in her career.



Photo courtesy of Colleen Rooney

Now ready to publish her eighth poetry collection, Healy has also distinguished herself by establishing a book imprint dedicated to the work of lesbian writers and by founding the MFA creative writing program at Antioch University Los Angeles.

In addition to a record of literary excellence, the poet laureate post requires a strong connection to the city and a willingness to serve its citizens. Mayor Villaraigosa told the *Los Angeles Times* that he was moved by Healy's "belief in the power of poetry, and her commitment to sharing this power far and wide." In her two-year post, Healy will visit schools, libraries, and cultural centers across the metro area, offering readings, inspiration, and mentorship to people of all ages.

Former CSUN student Jeanine D'Elia wrote in response to a *Times* article about Healy's selection, "In the early 1980s, I was a restless transfer student at Cal State Northridge, an undeclared major and uncertain in most things. On a whim, I attended a poetry reading in a packed CSUN office. Eloise Klein Healy read from her book *A Packet Beating Like a Heart*, and I was set free." D'Elia continued, "The ache of my young life did not disappear, but I credit Healy with my decision to pursue a bachelor's degree in English. The craft of poetry is to this day my balm in a still uncertain world."

Healy generously took time out of her busy schedule to reflect on her decade at CSUN.

Can you speak briefly about your time at CSUN? How did CSUN students inform your instruction?

I taught at CSUN from 1980 though 1991. It was an interesting time in that it stretched across the years of the Reagan presidency, a time of considerable political conflict and much controversy over feminism and women's rights, the AIDS crisis, and U.S. involvement in Latin America. There was an influx of students from Iran whose families had escaped the country at the time of the revolution. Other students were among the "boat people" who faced great peril in fleeing from Vietnam. So, there was also

geographical and cultural dislocation and generational tension about what it meant to live in the U.S.

A large percentage of the student body worked 30-plus hours a week and it was often difficult to engage them in what wasn't going to speed them toward graduation. The Reagan years brought with them a heightened interest in business and in making money. Working with such different groups of people was challenging, but also rewarding because the students were in themselves courses of education for their peers. I think I, too, was somewhat challenging for my students because I "came out" in my classes the beginning of each semester, feeling that it was important that the students recognize that LGBT people were living and working among them. Some of my own colleagues were not quite sure what to make of me, especially when I started teaching in Women's Studies as well as in the English Department. Not everyone believed there was a need for a women's studies program at that time, even among faculty.

What are some of your thoughts about the meaning and value of studying or engaging in writing poetry, especially given that often vocationally driven degree "market" you alluded to?

In my English classes, I tried to introduce a diverse group of writers to my students. I felt it was particularly important for those who were studying creative writing to see the stories and poems from different cultures and races and sexual orientations. Although writers must develop habits of discipline and perception to tell the most complete truth, they must also become comfortable with the fact that there is more than one truth. The arts force us to sift through our values, our understanding of what matters and what doesn't, what we hold sacred and what we despise. We spend our real human lives in the same "stories" as characters in novels. We all react viscerally to language and writers spend their lives teasing out these strands of basic emotional reactions. The arts are important because they reveal ourselves to ourselves. Every one has expression as a birthright and it brings great richness to one's life to be able to read a novel or a poem or a play and feel comfortable there. It may not have much to do with "earning" a living to read a poem, but it may make "living" a living richer.

What are your thoughts on being asked to serve as L.A.'s first poet laureate?

To be honest with you, I wasn't really sure that I would have a chance at being selected as the first poet laureate of the city of Los Angeles. Of course, there were some obvious pluses in my history. I had taught in many kinds of institutions and settings. I had founded a graduate creative writing program so I understand how to make something new. I had also written a book of poems about Los Angeles, so my affection for the city was evident. But, I thought it might be a challenge for a lesbian poet to be chosen. I was happy to be a little wrong. As I settle into the work before me, I have had nothing but admiration for the people who work in city offices. They are very talented and committed people and it has been a great joy to begin to get to know them as I learn about the library system, the arts education system in LAUSD, and what is possible in trying to do something for students and teachers. People are often very delighted to know we have a poet laureate now, as if it is something the city needs. I like that thinking because I think L.A. does deserve some standing in literary culture. I feel comfortable so far, and I think some interesting

things can happen during the next two years.

What sorts of courses did you teach at CSUN?

I was originally hired to teach as an adjunct professor in the English Department in 1980, and within three or four years, I was invited to teach some courses in the Women's Studies Program. My work in the English Department at first consisted of basic writing classes, up to and including Freshman English. Over time, I began to get an Intro to Creative Writing course every now and then, and eventually I taught the writing of poetry at the 300 level. One of my favorite courses, though, was a team-taught course that I did with Kate Haake. It took us two years to get the course approved!!

How did you become involved in the institution of the Gender and Women's Studies Department at CSUN?

When I was appointed the Director of the Women's Studies Program, I felt that the time had come to once again address the need for a department instead of a program. A department has its own faculty, has a more fully developed curricular offering, and can hire faculty with special training in the field and can contribute to the field, as well. Luckily, there was much support among faculty who taught in Women's Studies to work toward putting together a proposal for a department. Many faculty contributed to the discussions of how to shape the kind of department that would suit our campus. And, very lucky for us, we had a dean of Humanities who also felt the time had come for the program to grow into maturity and become a department. It was ironic that a non-tenured adjunct professor gathered the troops together and helped make the final step happen. As for my own work, I always felt that departmental lines were often artificial, that our subject matters spilled across these boundaries, and that knowledge has a way of finding its own level, flowing over the dams academicians make for it.

What is your lasting impression of your time at CSUN?

Every day when I crossed the street from the parking lot to the campus, I took a deep breath and readied myself for the utmost challenge an educator faces—how to be present to the students, how to protect them from the winds that blow through departments and the conflicts that enter into everything in a university. Crossing that street put me on the front lines at CSUN and my time at the university taught me a lot about how to function under pressure.

Submitted by Teresa K. Morrison

In This Issue

- Message from Humanities Dean Elizabeth A. Say
- Thai activist Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell will speak at Humanities Commencement this spring
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued
- Eloise Klein Healy, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
- **Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit**
- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant
- Mission

Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
- Chicana/o Studies
- English
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
- Linguistics
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
 - Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
 - Sustainability Studies

Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit

Earl Greinetz's loyalty to California State University, Northridge, began as a parent of an alumna, Marcee Weiss '78 (Child Development). But it's his love of the San Fernando Valley that brings him continuously back to campus, allowing him to understand the important role of the university in the community. "I've been a valley resident since 1968 and I see the importance of such an institution for us in the San Fernando Valley," says Greinetz. "CSUN is a valuable resource for its residents."



Photo courtesy of Earl Greinetz

Greinetz's involvement in the CSUN community is expansive. He and his late wife, Toba, were generous donors to the Michael D. Eisner College of Education and have a classroom at the Education building named after them. In 2004, Greinetz was introduced to the Jewish Studies Program in the College of Humanities. He was amazed to find such a program at a large state institution. "The Jewish Studies Program at CSUN is a hidden secret," says Greinetz. "It's amazing how Jewish and non-Jewish students can get access to an outstanding variety of courses offered by a stellar group of faculty." Having been a generous donor to the program ever since, his dedication also led him to join the Steering Committee for the Friends of the Jewish Studies Program, a group of over 300 San Fernando Valley and Los Angeles residents who participate in events, lectures, and programs throughout the year. Underlining his commitment, Greinetz has recently designated a percentage of his estate to directly benefit the Jewish Studies Program.

Greinetz is also a loyal patron at the Valley Performing Arts Center. As he says, "Why make the trek downtown when we have such an impressive performance center right in our backyard?" The CSUN Foundation was fortunate to enlist Greinetz as one of a small group of volunteers who tirelessly reached out to other donors on behalf of the Valley Performing Arts Center Campaign, raising millions of dollars needed to fund construction and maintenance of the complex.

Greinetz's giving spirit extends beyond CSUN as well. An active volunteer at many organizations, he participates as a board member at the Providence Tarzana Medical Center, the Jewish Home for the Aging, and the Alzheimer's Association. The latter two organizations have very personal significance to him: Toba, the love of his life since age 12, suffered from Alzheimer's disease. The Greinetzes benefitted greatly from services provided by the Jewish Home and the Alzheimer's Association before Toba passed away in 2011.

CSUN and the College of Humanities are fortunate recipients of Greinetz's generous philanthropy, precious time, and boundless

energy. Partners like him ensure the success of the university in
perpetuity.

Submitted by June Penrod

In This Issue

- Message from Humanities Dean Elizabeth A. Say
- Thai activist Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell will speak at Humanities Commencement this spring
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...
- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued
- Eloise Klein Healy, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
- Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit
- **Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant**
- Mission

Departments and Programs

- Asian American Studies
- Chicana/o Studies
- English
- Gender & Women's Studies
- Liberal Studies & Humanities Interdisciplinary Program
- Linguistics
- Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures
- Philosophy
- Religious Studies
- Office of Interdisciplinary Studies:
 - American Indian Studies
 - Central American Studies
 - Jewish Studies
 - Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
 - Queer Studies
 - Russian Studies
 - Sustainability Studies

Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant to Address Economic Problems Facing Millennial Women

Millennial women who are just one year out of college are paid on average 82 cents for every dollar paid to their male peers, according to the 2012 research report "Graduating to a Pay Gap: The Earnings of Women and Men One Year After College Graduation," published by the American Association of University Women. The same report found that 20% of women working full time a year after graduation are devoting more than 15% of their earnings to paying back college loans.

Now, with the help of a grant from the AAUW's Campus Action Project, CSUN's Women's Research and Resource Center is presenting "The Difference a Dollar Makes," which seeks to raise awareness on campus regarding the impact this gender pay gap has on female graduates. Through a semester-long project embedded in the Gender and Women's Studies course Women, Work and Family, students will learn about and explore issues around women's pay inequity. At the end of the semester students will create campus installations using compelling imagery and informative signage to represent how the gap can limit a woman's ability to financially compete in today's society.

"The Difference a Dollar Makes" also presented Equal Pay Day activities on April 9. Originated in 1996 by the National Committee on Pay Inequity, Equal Pay Day represents how far into the present year women must work on average to earn salaries equivalent to what their male counterparts earned in the previous year. In tandem with these activities, the WRRC is presenting two \$start \$mart salary negotiation workshops to help students in their attempts to bridge this wage gap as they graduate into the workforce.

CSUN was one of 10 universities selected for the AAUW CAP grant nationally. During this fiscally challenging time, awareness of the gender pay gap is of utmost importance to our students. As they think about their career paths post-graduation, they must also consider ways in which pay inequity can impact their road to success. By the end of the spring semester, students from all over campus will have had the opportunity to consider realities and potential responses surrounding gender and compensation issues.

Members of the campus community should keep an eye out for installations between April 22 and May 3. Each installation will feature explanatory signage as well as a visitor's log and comment boxes, so please let our students know you stopped to consider their message!

Submitted by Shira Brown, with reporting by Lisa Goodnight



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- Not quite the PROUST QUESTIONNAIRE...continued
- Eloise Klein Healy, Poet Laureate of Los Angeles
- Earl Greinetz's Giving Spirit
- Women's Research and Resource Center Receives Grant

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Chicana/o Studies
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Gender & Women's Studies
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The College of Humanities

18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, CA 91330-8252
Phone: 818-677-3301

Newsletter Editorial Team

Elizabeth A. Say, Dean
Noreen Galvin, Assistant to the Dean
Teresa K. Morrison, Associate Editor

Contributing Writers

Shira Brown
Lauren Byler
Lisa Goodnight
Eloise Klein Healy
Teresa K. Morrison
June Penrod
Elizabeth Say
Jennifer Thompson
Claire White

The Mission of the College of Humanities is to create a community of learners who...

Explore and value the diversities of cultures, thought, perspectives, literatures and languages of humanity;

Critically reflect on and analyze multiple dimensions of human identity and experience;

Contribute to scholarship and creative production and innovation, and;

Act as responsible global citizens committed to principles of freedom, equality, justice and participatory democracy.