

In this issue:

- ◆ Student Profile: Gardenia Juarez p. 1-4
- ◆ Faculty Profile: Jean Schuldberg p. 4-7
- ◆ Faculty Profile: Neil Schwartz p. 7-8
- ◆ Student Profile: Rod Thomson p. 9-11
- ◆ Graduate Equity Fellows p. 12-14
- ◆ Awards and Recognitions p. 14-17
- ◆ Community Engaged Students p. 15

Articles by Carson Medley
CSU, Chico Thesis Editor

Our mission is to provide quality post-baccalaureate programs, set and maintain high academic standards for graduate courses and degree programs, and serve the North State region.

[Donate Now](#)

Office of Graduate Studies
California State University, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, CA 95929-0875
Student Services Center 460
Phone: 530-898-6880
Fax: 530-898-3342
www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies

MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN: GARDENIA JUAREZ



Gardenia Juarez, back row and center, is a graduate student in the kinesiology department.

Where are you from?
Waterford, California.

Tell me about your journey to graduate school?

Well, it was a struggle. I'm the youngest of eight. We were raised by a single mom. She was always working and would take whatever jobs she could get—usually cannery work. She worked at nights and slept while we were at school. I never saw her that much. If she hadn't been working all the time, we wouldn't have had food on the table.

How has that inspired you?

A lot. My siblings all worked. Everybody worked and sacrificed to keep our family afloat. We all chipped in for rent. I didn't understand we were living in poverty until I was in the fourth or fifth grade. I didn't think I was different until I got older. That's when I realized there were so many things I couldn't do that my friends did. Yeah, I opened my eyes and realized I didn't want to live like this anymore. I wanted to be someone.

So what was that first step?

Going to college.

Did you come straight to Chico State for your undergraduate work?

I went straight to CSU, Stanislaus after high school. I could have gone away to college, but my mom was still struggling. I wanted to stay home and help. My nieces were also going to school. I was able to help them out a lot. So I lived at home. It was convenient. My family is close like that.

What was your undergraduate discipline?

I was originally studying physical therapy because I love sports and thought I wanted to work in athletics. But then, I discovered that my real passion was to work with senior citizens. I started looking around and noticing elderly men and women who had been injured and were trying to go back to how they had used to physically be. I watched their struggles and started thinking: Is there something I can do to help them? That's when I switched to kinesiology.

Tell me more about this inception of your academic interests in the elderly population?

My mom was 65 and having health issues. She had a major vertigo attack. It was the scariest moment I've ever encountered. She had always been there for us. I woke up my senior year in college. She had just gotten home from working the graveyard shift. Later that day I went to pick up my nieces from school. I got a strange text from my sister. She said birds had been crashing into the windows at our house. I got to campus. My other sister called me. She was panicking. Are you in class? Where are you? Then my brother called and said mom was in the hospital. I left class and went straight to the hospital. Sitting there in the waiting room was nerve racking. I was sitting there thinking how lucky I am to have a family like the one I

have. We all dropped everything we were doing and gathered at the hospital to be with her. When I saw her hooked up to wires and struggling to breathe, I had a turning point in my life. After that day, I started thinking about what I could do in the kinesiology field. And that was the birth of my academic interest.

Turning point?

Yes. My experience helping my mom with the basic duties of daily living confirmed the passion that had been building within me to help other senior citizens. I fed mom and helped her get dressed and showered and helped her use the bathroom. My siblings thought it was a lot of work, but for me it was

just something you do to help someone get better who is incapable of helping themselves. If I could do this with my mom, I thought, I knew I could do it with other senior citizens. So that's when I started thinking about graduate school and looking around for the right graduate program.

Is this how you found the kinesiology graduate program at Chico State? If so, why Chico State and not any of the other universities?

I looked at several schools in the CSU system. I wanted to study in a small town. Cities overwhelm me, and I wanted an environment that would allow me to focus on my studies. I visited Chico. It reminded me of back home in Turlock. The people were so nice when I visited. The town was gorgeous. But it was the kinesiology department that sold me. They offered a program in adapted

physical activities.

Can you tell me more about this program?

It prepares students to work with individuals who have physical impairments. Graduate students are trained how to create activities for this specific population, and we learn how to modify activities to suit their needs.

What's the best thing about getting your MA in kinesiology with an emphasis in adaptive physical activity?

I love this program for so many reasons. The small classes are great and really allow you to bond with the other students in the program. Graduate students also get teaching experience. This semester I'm teaching volleyball to kids. I've also gained experience working with programs like the BE: WEL Community Program for teenagers and adults with disabilities.

What is BE: WEL?

It stands for Beyond Exercise: Wellness Enhancement for Life. We help provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities. I was the coordinator of that program last semester. I never imagined I'd be able to oversee programs like this. I'm still like: 'Wow, I'm actually the one in charge. I never imagined doing things like I'm doing now. I'm currently running the Kids Integrated Development Skills: Parental Leadership and Advocacy for Youth (KIDS: PLAY) program. We work with children to improve their physical activity and social interaction by helping develop their motor skills, improving their self-esteem, and creating new learning experiences for them. KIDS: PLAY is partnered with the Chico Sports Club. It's in conjunction with the Service

Learning Programs offered by kinesiology. Undergraduates who need volunteer hours take an introduction to adapted physical activity class. They have the option of earning one unit. I

train and teach the undergraduates by giving them a refresher of what they have learned in class and work with them

"I was sitting there thinking how lucky I am to have a family like the one I have. We all dropped everything we were doing and gathered at the hospital..."

"Beyond Exercise: Wellness Enhancement for Life. We help provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities."

to learn how to teach kids that have special needs. Many of the kids in the program have been here for ten years or more.

What kind of disabilities do the children have?

All kinds. Autism. We have a couple of kids that have cerebral palsy. Some have motor development delays. Some have Down syndrome. Some kids have verbal impediments on top of being autistic. And some of our kids are developmentally delayed. The kids and their families are amazing. The parents love seeing how the program changes their children’s lives, and their parents see how their children actually change the lives of the students who work with them. Being in charge of that program and seeing how my students grow, and watching the kids participate, has been life changing.



Jaurez, right, giving a high five to a participant in the KIDS: PLAY program.

What is the biggest difference between working with the elderly and working with children?

I often compare the similarities. Both

populations have all of this energy and passion to have fun and be active. The difference is in the fact that the older adults are more willing to do new things than the kids are. The elderly population are more willing to talk and show me what they can do. I was surprised by this. I always thought it would be the kids who would be like that and not the older population.

Tell me about your research. How did you get interested in the service learning experience of seniors living with disabilities?

My thesis is about the perspective and experience in the senior citizen section of the BE: WEL Community Program. My interest is mainly in the exercise program. I will be presenting my thesis proposal in a couple of weeks, then collecting data and interviewing in May. I will be conducting qualitative research to learn about the experience of our participants.

Why do we need to care more about senior citizens?

Your parents are going to get old one day. So are you, and so will your siblings and so will I. People should care. This is what happens. Time goes by. If your parents and siblings want to still be active when they are elderly, there is a way to help them stay active. Walking with a dog around the block or practicing Tai Chi. Gardening. There are so many ways to live life in a way that will keep us from withering away when we’re old.

What are some of the important findings from your research on staying active?

We all have deterioration and muscle loss. Slowly we lose the flexibility we had as young adults. I have also learned that to stave off depression, we need to be active—even if it’s joining a social group and taking walks in the park. Senior citizens want to be active just as much as young people do.

What has surprised you the most about graduate school?

Thinking that I have learned all I could as an undergraduate, then coming to graduate school and realizing there is

“The difference is in the fact that the older adults are more willing to do new things than the kids are...I was surprised by this.”

so much I have not learned and don’t know. So many ideas I didn’t know existed. I have also been surprised by all the opportunities I’ve had to teach. And there are the people I’ve met and bonded with. I’ve developed lasting friendship. I didn’t expect to meet some

of the best people in my life here. It still blows my mind.

Was there one class or professor that really blew your mind?

Yes, there is a class called KINE 681. I took it with my thesis chair Josephine Blagrove. We learned about strokes, depression, and all the common diseases in the elderly population. Professor Blagrove brought in elderly persons who had experienced these diseases. They shared their stories with us. We had a stroke survivor and his wife come in, and they talked about how she took care of him. We had someone come in who had survived a car accident in high school but was wheel chair bound. And we had a woman come in and share her experience surviving polio.

What is a day in the life of your graduate school experience like?

There’s the before and the after. Right now I’ve finished all of my classes. I’m just focusing on my thesis. But before all that, when I was just doing my coursework, the week was super busy. If I was not teaching or working then I was doing homework or studying for class. I also had tons of presentations. This was, believe it or not, my favorite part of graduate school. I thrived on showing others what I’m so passionate about.

What about being a graduate student immersed in your research and writing your thesis?

I still feel pressure only it's different. Now I have to set my own schedule. For example, during Christmas break, I needed to finish my draft so I could submit it to my committee and move on to collecting my data. Yep, still the same pressure, just all these new deadlines.

What do you plan on doing after graduate school?

I love teaching undergraduates, so I want to continue teaching. I would also like to create a community program back home similar to the BE: WEL Community Program here. I want to continue working with senior citizens. I also want to start a summer camp for kids with disabilities.

What advice do you have for future graduate students?

Just keep going. Even when you think you've hit your lowest point, and you have too much on your plate, just keep going. I felt like this last summer. It was a weird point in my life where I was supposed to be completing my thesis. I had an emotional experience that really threw me for a loop. I had to find myself again. It was the lowest point in my life and graduate career. I didn't know who I was. Why did it happen like this? Why was I feeling like this? I had to pause, recharge, and refocus. I had to figure out a way to get through life and graduate school. Moments like this either build you up or destroy you. I used it as motivation to propel myself even more. It built me up. So keep going. At the end of the day, you do this for yourself. You'll look back and be so proud. 📌

▲ **More information about the MA in kinesiology can be found on the web at <http://www.csuchico.edu/kine/top-nav/academic-programs/ma-kinesiology/index.shtml>.**

► **More information about the Master of Social Work program can be found at <http://www.csuchico.edu/swrk/ma/index.shtml>.**

THE MSW PROFESSOR WHO MOONLIGHTED IN A CANDY STORE: JEAN SCHULDBERG



Jean Schuldberg served as Director of the Master of Social Work program from 2006—2017.

When and how did you get the calling to become a professor of social work?

I was initially a nursing student. Similar to today there was a lottery system for nursing students because the field was so impacted. I was number one on the waiting list. Two weeks into the semester they told me I had to come back the following year. I thought I would be in, but it turned out I was number 50 on the waiting list. I took the year off. I realized I wanted to stay in the helping profession, so I received my BA in social work from the University of Oregon. I was interested in psychiatric social work and helping individuals with severe mental health challenges.

How did you become interested in psychiatric social work?

Social Work requires that you have extensive internships. I was interning in an outpatient day-treatment program. I then spent two years working in a psychiatric unit. I was really interested in the medical aspect, so I worked in the emergency room and psychiatric unit doing intakes and crisis intervention. For someone just working towards a BA degree, this was way beyond my scope. Under the supervision of a psychologist, I administered neuro-psychological batteries for people who had brain injuries. I had an amazing experience, so I decided to get my master's. I attended Indiana University School of Social Work. I got into their one-year program and was trained as a family therapist and administrator. My internships were in mental health centers. The thing about Social Work is that it affords opportunities that allow you to do anything—from the clinical to one-on-one to working with families to developing programs with community groups to working with legislature. Social workers are everywhere. Social work allows you to do just about anything, which is something I really love about our program. We have a generalist program, which means we teach students from the micro to the meso to the macro practice so they can enter a number of positions. Social work is holistic. We don't look just at the person but also the environment and the cultural aspects.

What is your specific field of interest?

I work primarily in behavioral health. When I first moved to Chico, I attended our local chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and asked my new colleagues if they knew of any employment

opportunities. I left that meeting with leads on seven contract jobs. I worked in hospitals and home health and migrant education. I

“I studied genocide in Rwanda. When I retire, I plan to go there...and teach English.”

was on the cleft palate panel. Through these experiences, I became particularly involved with home health and hospice. In our region, this represents a large population of older adults. I unintentionally fell into gerontology. I was a hospice social worker for ten years. 10,000 people are turning 65 each day in the United States, and 1,000 people each day in California. We need more social workers who have knowledge and training with the growing older population. I’m also interested in mass violence and genocide. I studied genocide in Rwanda. When I retire, I plan to go there and volunteer in a school for orphans and teach English which has been declared the only language to be spoken there. I’m working on my TESL right now. I have two more course and an internship before my training is complete.

What kind of students does social work attract? How many students are in the graduate program? And what kind of students are you looking for? Any advice for students thinking about applying?

We attract caring and compassionate people. Many social workers have experienced challenges in their own lives, which lends to great empathy. Our field has an amazing code of ethics that many claim is not far behind the clergy code of ethics. Our code of ethics is taught throughout our social work education. The focus is on empowerment, equity, service, self-determination, social justice, and protection from harm. There are conflicts at times with our code

“You need to know yourself, and if you have challenges, address those.”

of ethics. We frequently have dilemmas and teach these in our programs. Social workers develop thoughtful, mindful ways of addressing our work that is caring, compassionate, realistic, and strength based. We look for individuals who have a desire to work with individuals in their communities, persons lacking the advantages and privileges of others. We teach every aspect of social work in our program. We teach clinical, counseling,

group work, family work, social policy, social justice, and research. We are called a professional school because it’s specific training for specific work but in a broad range of areas.

We are always telling our graduate students to get grants. You’ve had a lot of success doing this. What’s the trick?

I learned early on that one grant leads to another. Get the first one going and keep a track record. You need community collaboration. You also need support from your colleagues. My colleagues in social work share. We share accreditation with other schools. We share research to create a feeling of the common good. I could not have succeeded getting any of these grants without the help of others. For the Hartford Foundation grant, every resource we used to get the grant is now on our website for everyone else to use. In our program, all the professors use the same syllabi for each section. Sure, professors can tweak them, but we’re training our graduate students in a way that wherever they go in the this country, future employees will know if the applicant received their MSW

from an accredited program then they have received training that addresses specific competencies and skills.

“I learned early on that one grant leads to another. Get the first one going and keep a track record.”

What exactly do graduates from this program do?

Many of our graduates stay in the North State. Some are homegrown meaning their agencies send them to graduate school. Our distance-learning program has afforded individuals who live in rural regions or have family commitments to earn their MSW. Our students go on to do great things. One student of mine had a challenging childhood and history of substance abuse, and she was not sure she should could handle the MSW program. We created an alternate plan that slowed things down for her and did not overwhelm her. She graduated with a 3.8. She recently wrote me and said she’s now an administrator of a large agency. Our graduate students are persistent and committed.

What advice would you give to anyone who is thinking about pursuing Social Work at the graduate level? What do they need to know will be coming at them emotionally and mentally?

You need to know yourself, and if you have challenges, address those. Know that the graduate program and the work is difficult. We as social workers are witness to humans at their most vulnerable times. Sometime we feel powerless.

What would happen if tomorrow all the social workers disappeared?

Society would be in big trouble. We'd lose the people who go out and visit older adults who are stuck in their homes and can't leave. The elderly would die from self-neglect. We'd lose advocates for families trying to recover from substance abuse. We'd lose the worker in the hospital who meets with the patient and family and helps them navigate the system and get the resources they need. We'd lose the legislature who don't understand the perils of the human condition—a necessary force to advocate for policy change. We'd lose the protection of children from abuse and neglect. Social workers are an integral part of our society, and people don't really know what we do. We have an interesting role. We work in conjunction with clergy and doctors and nurses and housing authority. We work with the community. We work in every setting you can imagine with interdisciplinary environments. We're never working alone.



“Society would be in big trouble.”

Where is the hope, those teaching moments, in a profession so grounded in the part of reality many of us try and avoid? What drives social workers?

Well, in hospice, for example, you're working with a family who has someone who is dying. We do a genogram that is much like a family tree and chart out the family history. It's detailed about employment, the person's history, and any substance abuse issues the person had. When someone is dying, conflict arises and all these issues bubble up, so we create this genogram, this family tree, to look at the history of the family. Having the family be together and share stories and discuss their challenges helps them come together and create understanding and appreciation and acceptance. I work with a lot of grief. I think it's enlightening. Grief never goes away. It just goes into a special place in your heart. The problem with our society is that we deny grief. We give people three days to grieve. A frequent question I get from family members is when will we quit crying? I tell them the grief doesn't go away. It's a process. You always have the grief, but it lessens. You have to acknowledge it. If you don't, it becomes an obstacle, a barrier.

How do you help people acknowledge this grief?

I allow them to talk about it. I was once told I was the best social worker the hospice ever had. I asked why, and was told it was because I listened. People have a hard time listening. We just want to fix things. Really, though, people often just need

an opportunity to talk about something. We need an opportunity to talk about a trauma. You have to talk about it over and over again until it's processed. That takes time. Social workers listen. That's what we do—we listen.

How do you teach listening?

Our graduate students practice listening. We practice reflective listening, and we teach the techniques of communication. Our MSW students have to be in internships their first year and serve 16 hours a week, and in the second year it's 24 hours a week. Our students are practicing all their skills. They're also learning therapeutic tools about how to provide counseling and support through those methods. We are teaching the awareness of feelings. We are teaching how to empower ourselves. We are teaching how we can reframe situations that seem hopeless. There is always an option.

What are some of the biggest problems you want our social worker graduate students to know they will encounter if staying—as most seem to do—in the North State?

Poverty. Substance abuse. Lack of resources. We also have a lot of remote places in the North State. Old statistics used to call our area the "frontier." There might not be someone around for 100 miles. I'm optimistic because the MSW program has educated many social workers in these remote regions of the North State.

If you could wave a magic wand and you and your graduate students could make one change in the world of social work, what would that change be?

I would increase our budget for social services and for education by billions. I would push for smaller case sizes and smaller programs. I would push for treatment programs that are comprehensive substance abuse programs that provide interdisciplinary teams that follow individuals for the year. I would push for a change in health care and an entire change in the way our society views people.



MSW programs are ubiquitous throughout California. What separates Chico State from other MSW programs?

It's Chico State. This is a wonderful university. Our focus is on the students. If a student needs something, I can call someone in any office on this campus and get an answer. Social Work is considered a moderate program with around 125 students. We have a cohort model. Our students know each other. Classes are in a regimented format. Our faculty is small, so our

students and faculty all know each other. The agencies in the community are extremely dedicated to training social workers and they take on student interns for a year—usually three days a week. The region is vast yet close. The community works together to support our programs by providing internships and being on our board. Our graduate students get individualized caring.

What should current and future graduate students know about the future of the Social Work field? How, and has, the field changed since you first entered it?

The biggest change is self-care. I think social work programs now provide more of a generalist perspective, realizing the need for flexibility in social worker roles. I do worry about funding and budget cuts and how this will impact social workers and ultimately our society and the support that we all need in crisis. We're all just trying to make it through the day.

You served as a Graduate Coordinator for 13 years from 2004-2017. Can you tell me about some of your most memorable experiences working with graduate students?

It's so wonderful to see a graduate student coming in who doesn't have the knowledge of what social work is really all about—our code of ethics, our involvement in social policy and research, the breadth and depth of our field. To witness them struggling with all the writing aspects, and then, two years

later, to see the competence and the knowledge gained from their studies and the employment of their internship. This growth I contribute to the student because this is such a demanding program.

Your CV is 19 pages long, single-spaced. How have you sustained such a work ethic over these years? What drives you?

Social work is like a candy store. We have so many options and exciting opportunities, particularly working in academia. Our field is about collaboration and innovation. Our faculty are supportive, and our department is a climate of support and collaboration. We all have unique ideas and work together, and working in such a tight group or with others leads to interesting outcomes.

What are some of your proudest accomplishments?

I'm proud of my work in hospice for ten years. I'm proud of all the teamwork. I'm proud of our School of Social Work and how it's grown and become so respected throughout the country. It was the community who wanted the MSW program, saying they wanted one that represented our region. I'm proud of our community. We hire so many of our graduates to become field instructors. I never thought I could have done all this. Social workers don't work in a vacuum. And we don't take no for an answer very well. We advocate. We make change. We always find a way. 

“Social work is like a candy store. We have so many options and exciting opportunities.”

THE ROMANTIC SCHOLAR: NEIL SCHWARTZ



Neil Schwartz—a renowned scholar in the study of graphical displays and their influence on learning, comprehension, perspective, and persuasion—recently served as the U.S. Coordinator of the International Cognitive Visualization Program.

Tell me about your calling? And what exactly have you been called to?

Well, I'm a licensed psychologist in Arizona. I keep my license up to date. But at the end of the day, I really see myself as a researcher and a research mentor. I'm romantic when it comes to the academy and its place in society and the role I play within it. It's deeply private and forms my professional identity.

What do you mean romantic?

I mean it in a literary sense. I think being a scholar, academician, researcher, teacher, and mentor—those things are not only who I am, but I think they form the essence of what the academy actually is. I think the pursuit and development of knowledge and understanding the world and our place in the world is a fundamental human endeavor.

You not only teach but are also always publishing in addition to mentoring so many graduate students and helping them get into prestigious doctoral programs. What drives you?

I arrived at Chico State in 1987. Since then I have turned down four positions at essentially more auspicious places. The reason is because Chico State gives you the

opportunity to flush out the academic role with students. That's the key for me. Doing research is an opportunity to teach and mentor graduate students and in turn create future researchers. This, I believe, is the essence of teaching.

Can you tell me more about how you get graduate students involved with research?

Well, it starts with getting undergraduates involved in research. I bring in my undergraduate students and they volunteer and become a part of my research group. I have a research group that consists of anywhere from six to 12 students a year. I typically have four to six undergraduates and four to six graduate students. I interview them and then assign graduate students to the undergraduate students in a tiered model. I also share my office with these students. Every graduate student has a key to my office. I have a graduate student that works in each corner of my office. Graduate students are in and out of here all day long, every day. They are always on the computers. I will often walk into my office and there will be several graduate students meeting and, for example, deriving a scoring rubric for data and cross scoring the data. Graduate students end up teaching the undergraduate students. Meanwhile, the senior graduate students teach the beginning graduate students. This really isn't my office. It's my graduate students' office. The only thing they can't take is my chair.

Tell me more about the success you've had getting so many graduate students into first-rate doctoral programs.

I don't pick students. The students pick

me. I have a reputation for being extremely difficult—not difficult to work with but being a tough professor with high expectations. It's fascinating because it's that kind of reputation that attracts these talented students. I'm fortunate.

What advice can you give graduate students who want to also become professors someday about developing the kind of reputation you have?

Let me tell you a little story. I have three

children—one is a doctor, one is an actor, and the other is the director of development for the actor Alec Baldwin's production company. They all turned out really well. We have an office at the house, and when they were little they each had their own desk in the office. My children would walk across the street from Notre Dame to my office here at the university, and they would

"This really isn't my office. It's my graduate students' office. The only thing they can't take is my chair."

work at the table in this office. If they didn't finish their work here, then we would go home and finish our work in the home office. We would all finish our work together at the same time. This always gave me a chance to talk to them about their learning. Things would come up and we would discuss the issue. I would later facilitate the degree to which each older child would help the younger child. It was a collective, cascading mentoring environment. So when my children went off to college, I literally replicated my home office environment here at my Chico State office, and treated my graduate students like I had treated my children. There's really no difference.

My graduate students become part of my family. My goal here is to help my graduate students reach their highest and fullest potential and get them into the highest-level doctoral programs.

Was there something in your own childhood and family life that helped you create this successful system that you used with your own children and transferred to your graduate student children—this culture of getting young people to reach their full potential?

It's what I always wanted my own childhood to be like. My father, a dentist, died when I was seven. I was the youngest of three. He died in a plane crash a month before he turned 41. As you can imagine, his death completely changed my life. I never, ever got that fatherly kind of mentoring that I so craved as a child. So I created this world of mentoring in my own life with my children and eventually my graduate students. To give someone the gift of their own potential is the greatest gift to me. There is nothing more satisfying than

to watch a student leave and step into exactly what they want to do. I can't express how overwhelmingly satisfying that is. It's academic progeny.

Any advice for potential graduate students who are considering what you earlier called a life of academic romance?

When I was working on my doctorate at Arizona State University, I had the finest mentor on the face of the earth—Dr. Raymond W. Kulhavy. He helped produce 42 PhD recipients in his career. He told me that being an academic is the only profession that lets you travel internationally, hang your hat, and never have a lot of money to do it. He also said that raising graduate students is like raising children. And I've never had a favorite child, and I've never had a favorite graduate student. 

FROM *DICK AND JANE* TO THE HISTORY OF ISLAM AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY: ROD THOMSON



Rod Thomson is a faculty member in the history department and winner of the 2017–2018 Outstanding Thesis Award.

Tell me about your path to graduate school?

I first came to college in the 80s because it was expected of me. I had no idea what I wanted to do. I started in reverse order by first going to UC San Diego then leaving and coming up here and attending Butte Community College. I took tons of units with no degree. I left, worked some odd jobs, and landed work in public facilities architecture working as a consultant between education facilities and the government agencies that fund them. I spent twenty years doing this until the most recent recession when about 50 percent of architects were out of work. I was facing unemployment. I had some money and told myself it was time to do something that I wanted to do. I've always loved history and considered myself an amateur historian. So I decided I was going to spend the rest of my life doing something that I liked and decided to go pro. That's how I came back to college. It's been a totally different adventure than the first time. I started back at Butte Community College in 2011. I got involved in the honors program there. I stayed an extra semester and wrote a community college thesis on Mesopotamian literature. I learned Latin. I came to Chico State

in 2014 with the intent of becoming an historian of religions. I have an extensive background in the history of Christian religions. I got here and started taking Dr. Najm Yousefi's courses about the Middle East so I could learn more about Islam. The level of challenge was much greater. I jumped ship and focused on Islam—not as a religious study but as an historical object of historical study.

You also just won the 2017–2018 Outstanding Thesis award for your thesis titled *THE KHAWĀRIJ AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY FORMATION IN EARLY ISLAM*. Dr. Yousefi, whom you just mentioned, was the chair. Can you tell me more about how you got interested in Islam and identity?

One of the things that fascinates me about religion in general is how when a religion forms under its founder-figure it will be functionally monolithic. However, after that founder-figure passes on the religion will quickly fracture into multiple things. I am interested in what that process is like—how everybody is claiming sort of that orthodox position and the debates that transpire. I encountered this repeatedly in my study of Christianity. When I started taking courses studying the Middle East with Dr. Yousefi, I was able to encounter those first fractures in Islam. The more sources—and they are voluminous and problematic—that I looked at revealed that the fractures were not so much about doctrine or religious questions but political questions being debated. So I wanted to explore that. I wanted to understand how several hundred years later the political problem was defined in religious terms. And that's at the heart of why I got into this.

What inspired you to be an historian?

I get my inspiration from others historians. Also, I was a precocious reader when I was a child. After I finished the *Fun with Dick and Jane* series when I was four, I segued to the *Golden Book of the American Civil War*. I've been reading history ever since. I have not read a work of fiction in thirty years. The exploits of real people are far more interesting to me than any fantasy or fiction.

Why history?

History always comes back to people and relationships. That has always fascinated me—particularly how identities are formed both internally and externally and in opposition with

other groups and how that impacts a society. I believe history is at the root of everything. I just proposed a course on the history of food and human culture, looking at how food has played a major role in social identity.

Why history at Chico State?

I was at this interesting point in my life where I was reinventing myself. My child was just graduating from high school and becoming independent. I had worked for the California state government as a consultant for twenty years. Really, I wanted to get as far away from California as I could. I was looking all over the world for a history program. I figured my money would go a lot farther if I wrapped up my undergraduate degree here at Chico State. I came back to college with some trepidation, but I started taking courses in the history department and the faculty was so caring and so good about what they were doing. When I came to Chico State, that first semester my fiancée had just been diagnosed with breast cancer. Nobody knew me. It was the first week of school, and I'm already having to make excuses. But all the faculty members were so trusting and my relationship with them just built from there. Not only are the faculty here accomplished scholars, but they really care about their students. That's why I decided to stay and get my MA here.

You have a lot of courage leaving a twenty-year career and going back to school to change your career. What advice do you have for others who might be considering doing the same thing?

I was worried about age discrimination when I came back, but I didn't run into anything like that. I had a clear goal that I wanted to enter the world of academia. I wanted to be a teaching, writing, and researching professor. So having this vision in mind, I acted like the kind of professor I wanted to become all the time, from day one. I strove to produce the highest quality work at all times. I was always engaged with my professors, constantly asking for advice and feedback from them. Really, if I wanted to be treated like a legitimate historian, from the beginning I knew I would have to act like one. This just meant working hard and putting sincere effort into everything I did. I've never worked harder in my life.

Many professors in the history department have remarked that you have continually produced PhD level work, particularly with your recent thesis that won the 2017—2018 Outstanding Thesis award. I find this not only inspirational but also proof of the infinite possibilities for MA graduates. Can you tell me about this?

I did get a very generous offer from UC Davis to pursue my PhD, but the circumstances just weren't practical. As an MA graduate, I've been accepted into the history department as a full-fledge member. This is my second semester as an adjunct faculty member, and I've also been asked to serve on a thesis committee. I have a course proposal that's in the works. I taught upper-division courses in Islam my first semester and plan to teach more going forward. I have a full teaching load, and I'm also the Director of the History Writing Center—a position that people fought very hard for me to get.



“Really, if I wanted to be treated like a legitimate historian, from the beginning I knew I would have to act like one.”

Can you tell me more about the History Writing Center?

Jason Nice and Kate Transchel came up with the idea, and they both really advocated for both the center and for me. They approached Jerrad Benedict, a fellow graduate student who was also hired out of the MA program to teach, to start the center with me. History is a writing discipline. There were history students who

were getting to their capstone course but couldn't write to save their lives, so we started the center to reverse that trend. Originally, we edited papers because we didn't know what else to do, so we looked around at what other writing centers were doing. We then started tutoring and teaching students how to write like historians and conduct research like historians. We have two tutors who see several hundred students a semester, and it's open to any undergraduate or graduate student enrolled in a history course. K—12 history is all about memorizing facts, right, but college level history is about analyzing facts and making interpretations. Student have not been taught those critical thinking skills in K—12, and this is the problem that History 130 students run into. Most of us newer to the history department focus on teaching those critical thinking skills, and we use United States history as a means to teach those skills—how to be critical thinkers and analysts.

What are the greatest struggles you think graduate students have with writing?

Procrastination and just not starting early enough. Writing is a lifetime development. I don't think there is one specific struggle, but the challenge is for graduate students to keep up with everything. Graduate students have a tremendous reading load. As a history graduate student, I was reading two to three books a week and writing about each one.

What was the greatest thing about graduate school?

There was nothing that *wasn't* great about graduate school. It was a uniformly positive experience. I came into the program with a few other graduate students who were willing to work just as hard with me. We had great discussions, and then more people followed. And the faculty were amazing. It's one thing to take a survey course from a professor, but then sitting there with a professor in a seminar when it's their specialty—oh, man. It's just amazing. Every class night was so rewarding, so awesome. It was a universally fantastic experience.

What's next for you?

I've written a history, a 450-page manuscript, of Chico State in the 1960s and 1970s. It turns out our campus was a hub of student and faculty protests that regularly received nationwide media attention. There was a riot here. There were acts of terrorism. Faculty for a long time were pushing the anti-war movement. There was a landmark ACLU case that originated here for academic freedom and free speech that ended up overturning some of the old blue laws regarding obscene language and ultimately led to them being tossed out in California. I'm currently looking for a publisher. Now that I've finished that, I plan to do a comparative study of separatist religious communities in the Abrahamic traditions: Why would a group not only split-off from its parent tradition, but also actually socially divide itself and create an apocalyptic or millennial community?

Can you tell me a little more about some of the protests?

How about I just send you an excerpt from Chapter 1: Oasis of Unrest:

On December 5, 1969, someone firebombed the Faculty Club at Chico State College. What makes this event remarkable is not that it was the first act of terrorism in campus history, but how quickly it passed from local memory. A similar event today would attract the attention of local law enforcement, the FBI, CIA, and National Security Agency in a manhunt that spared no expense. But 50 years ago this event was all but forgotten by most shortly after its occurrence. It would have vanished from contemporary conscience even sooner had not someone attempted to firebomb the Sociology

Department the following week. In the end, the culprit remains unknown, the bombings—one an unfortunate success, the other a lucky failure—received only brief media attention, and the story faded from memory almost as quickly as firefighters extinguished the blaze. The reason that an event, which today would constitute a mountain, was considered a mole hill in 1969 is because it was precisely that: an unfortunate event to be sure, but one of little immediate consequence in the face of more pressing issues. No individual or organization claimed responsibility, and the only message the bomber left for the public was the by-then hackneyed phrase “student power,” hastily scrawled in black spray paint on the sidewalk behind the Administration Building. Thanks to the unhesitating generosity of Chicago philanthropist W. Clement Stone, the damage caused to the Faculty Club was soon repaired, but other issues on campus could not be rectified with any amount of money. 

▲

More information about the MA in History can be found on the web at <http://www.csuchico.edu/hist/academic-programs/ma.shtml> and more information about the History Writing Center can be found at <http://www.csuchico.edu/hist/history-writing-center.shtml>



◀◀◀

Interested in the research of Neil Schwartz and the Psychology graduate students (pp. 7-8)? Information about the Master's programs in Psychology can be found at <http://www.csuchico.edu/psy/graduate/index.shtml>.



Future Editions

If you have any ideas for future stories you would like us to consider, or any notable events in your life, please contact either Carson Medley (cmedley@csuchico.edu or 530-898-5392) or Dean Sharon Barrios (sbarrios@csuchico or 530-898-4473) directly. We would love to hear from alumni. Thank you for all that you do.

OH, THE PLACES THEY *WILL* GO

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS: GRADUATE EQUITY FELLOWS

The Graduate Equity Fellowship Program (GEFP)—which has been around since fall 1985—is sponsored by the Chancellor’s Office and CSU, Chico to help broaden and expand the pool of academically talented CSU graduate students interested in pursuing careers in university teaching and research. The GEFP program currently provides a \$2,720 research assistantship and a \$1,050 stipend per semester for graduate students. Students selected as fellows are eligible to receive the fellowship for four semesters as long as they continue to meet the requirements of the program, including completing at least six units of graduate work per semester and demonstrating satisfactory progress toward their master’s degree. We would like to take a moment now to share some of the stories from our current fellows with you, and hear how the research assistantship has helped them.

Carina Guterrez, Psychology

I am from Manteca, CA, but this is my seventh year living in Chico. As a student in the school psychology program here, I’m interested in research conducted with K-12 students. My thesis is about the work I did last year with elementary



Carina Guterrez

students. I taught a mindfulness-based social emotional learning curriculum in a school. My thesis will be about the

outcomes for those students. The Graduate Equity Fellowship has allowed me to be more involved in research while still keeping up with all of my work. This has been a great opportunity for me to dedicate time to the academic work I’m interested in without worrying as much about my income. Throughout most of my education here, I have worked at the Student Learning Center. However, I can’t keep up with the hours I used to work, and the Student Learning Center has been amazing in being flexible with both my hours and me. The opportunities I’ve had here at Chico State have made tremendous contributions to my educational experience.

Advice

The best part of my graduate school experience has been connecting with the other students in my program and having the opportunity to travel to conferences with them. They are an incredible group of people, and I’m excited to attend another conference with them next semester. As a graduate student, I think it’s important to find people in your field that you connect with. It helps to always have people that know what you’re talking about and understand your experience. After graduating, I hope to work as a school psychologist and possibly work toward a doctorate later in my career.

Tamara Maxey, Anthropology

I grew up in the Bay Area and the Sierra Nevada foothills. I attended UC Merced as an undergraduate. It was there that I developed my interest in public history, memorialization, and memory. My thesis topic relates to the incorporation of World Trade Center artifacts into community-built

memorials dedicated to the events of September 11, 2001. I am exploring the meaning of the artifacts to memorial creators and visitors while also analyzing the symbols contained within the memorials in order to understand the role of memorialization in the creation of national historic narrative and identity formation.



Tamara Maxey

The Graduate Equity Fellowship has helped me in many ways, particularly strengthening my research skills that will serve me well in my thesis work. I have learned to read and write much more effectively, manage my time efficiently, and communicate with faculty and colleagues more fluidly. The sharpening of these abilities will aid me greatly in the self-motivated thesis writing process.

Advice

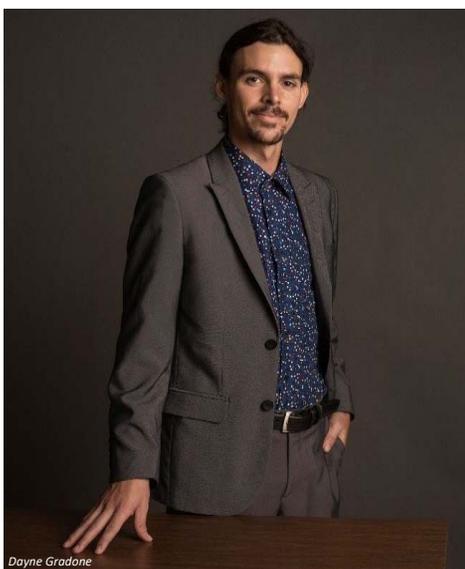
The best experience of graduate school so far has been finding out how much I don’t know. In all aspects of life, not just academics, graduate school has opened my eyes to alternatives and possibilities. My world expanded enormously. My advice to other graduate students is the advice that a friend in a doctoral program told me: Trust yourself. There will be many stressors and demanding people you encounter, but never let the criticism get you down or distract you; you are here for a reason, and you know what is best for you. The first year is the hardest, but know that it *will* get easier

as you learn that what you need to make it through is already inside you.

After I graduate from Chico State, I would like to enter a doctoral program in socio-cultural anthropology where I can broaden my research into other countries and contexts. I do not yet know what program I will attend, but I am excited about traveling all over the world and becoming an expert in my field. I hope to one day be able to transmit my knowledge and passion to a younger generation of anthropologists and contribute to my discipline.

Dayne Gradone, Anthropology

I'm from Watsonville, California. I came to Chico State as an undergraduate student-athlete. I was a member of the cross country and track programs where I was fortunate to run varsity for four years and claim an All-American in cross-country. I'm currently conducting thesis



research in Kenya and exploring traditional medicine. Specifically, I'm exploring the important role indigenous herbalists play in providing medical services in the highlands of Western Kenya.

The Graduate Equity Fellowship has offered me the tools to enhance my scholarship and engage in meaningful research that is honing my skills as an anthropologist and researcher. The fellowship has made the dream of a PhD and a career in academia a concrete

reality. The best part of graduate school has been the connections I've made with professors and colleagues, both in my department and the university at-large. I've really enjoyed learning from and working with students and professors at CSU Chico. The intellectual experience has been liberating and mind opening.

Advice

After graduate school, I aspire to pursue a PhD in cultural anthropology and continue to develop as a researcher, colleague, teacher, and resource to the community around me—wherever that may be. My advice to current and future graduate students would be to not forget why you came to Chico State to pursue a degree, and to remember that when things get difficult and chaotic (as they often do when your neck deep in school work!) to pause and see the bigger picture: There are many things your education and experiences at Chico State will allow you to do after you earn your degree.

Cory Tondreau, Psychology

I am from the Antelope Valley in Southern California. I am currently conducting research with a team in the psychology department's Learning Cognition and Instruction Research Laboratory. My investigation will test if attitudes can be shifted when individuals read a text that is accompanied by graphics. The amount of engagement applied when individuals read a text increases comprehension. Therefore, I predict that the amount of engagement an individual has when reading a text will shift attitudes. In addition, pictures are also known to influence text comprehension. However, less is known about pictures influencing attitude change. I predict that when pictures are added to a text there will be an attitude shift. Furthermore, there will be a larger shift in attitudes when an engaging text is accompanied by a graphic. My study is relevant since people develop attitudes when encountering information available in various sources

(news, textbooks, and social media) which utilize text and graphics combinations.



The Graduate Equity Fellowship has helped me to focus more of my attention on research rather than being overworked at another job. Focusing on research is important to me since I plan to further my education in a doctoral program. The best part of graduate school so far has been studying abroad in Germany. Last summer I went to Germany to work on my research. The experience was life changing and opened me up to the academic world.

Advice

My advice to current or future graduate students is to put yourself out there: Get to know all of the faculty members and jump on as many opportunities as there are in your department. Further, do not be afraid to ask professors for help. The professors know you do not know what you are doing. You are in graduate school to learn. The professors don't expect you to have everything figured out yet. Mostly, relax. We all feel like imposters, but never forget that you worked hard to be here.

Alison Saechao, History

My name is Alison Saechao. I'm from Oroville, CA. I attended Chico State as an undergraduate and received my bachelor's in both general history and Asian studies in 2016. I want to combine both these interests and conduct research involving Asian history and Asian-American studies. When I studied abroad in South Korea in 2014—2015, I



Alison Saechao

managed to travel to other Asian countries like Japan, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. I was fascinated with seeing Western influences in Asia and how the history of colonialism and imperialism continues to impact the East to this day. As of now, I have no specific research topic established for my master's thesis, but a focus in Asian history will most likely be one factor.

Fortunately, I have a very supportive and resourceful department that has provided so much help with my research. It is also the reason why I wanted to continue my postgraduate education here at Chico State. My department and the faculty has given me the recognition and encouragement I need. They believe in my academic capabilities and continue to push me to grow and better my research and writing skills.

I learned about the Graduate Equity Fellowship through the history department. Last spring, one of my professors informed me of this opportunity and encouraged me to apply for the program. The fellowship has provided me with both academic and financial assistance this past semester. I have been working closely with one professor in the history department as a graduate assistant; she has provided me chances to learn more about East Asian history and historical methodology. The opportunity to engage in research and writing with her has helped me tremendously in these last four months:

The experience has definitely confirmed my research interests in Asian history.

Interacting with my department and the faculty has been the best part of my graduate school experience. Also, I attribute my professors' care and support for my academic and professional well-being as having eased my anxieties as a student and validated my goal to become a professor one day. After graduate school at Chico State, I plan to pursue my doctorate. I hope to attend a PhD program that focuses on Asian history, and I'm looking towards one of the major institutions here on the West Coast. Overall, the process of attaining both a master's and eventually a PhD will be long and difficult (there have been times already where I've questioned my potential and will to continue further), but the endless support and guidance from my department and peers remain consistent and continues to give me the drive to not give up.

Advice

My advice for both current and future graduate students is to acknowledge and understand that postgraduate education requires endless dedication and commitment. Before even applying for a graduate program, students should seriously consider factors like faculty support, academic expenses, and research opportunities at the university they want to attend. While the extensive reading and writing may be overwhelming at times, so long as continued validation and recognition from the graduate program and faculty remains constant and ever present, then students will have reassurance that their academic pursuit is meaningful. This is especially important for first generation college students, and I can relate to many who identify as the first in his or her family to attend college. Attaining higher education seems like an ambitious dream, but with much academic discipline and passion, it is possible and very much worthwhile. ✍️



More information about the Graduate Equity Fellowship Program can be found on the web at <http://www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies/current-students/fellowship-awards/equity-fellowship.shtml>.



GRADUATE STUDIES AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

2017—2018 Outstanding Thesis/Project

Rodney Thomson, History, has been selected by California State University, Chico as the *Outstanding Thesis Winner* for 2017—2018. His history master's thesis *THE KHAWĀRIJ AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY FORMATION IN EARLY ISLAM* is exceptional and reflects the level of scholarly work and faculty mentoring we strive for at CSU, Chico.

Daria Booth, English, has been selected by California State University, Chico as the *Outstanding Project Winner* for 2017—2018. Her master's project *QUEENS OF SHEBA* is exceptional and reflects the level of scholarly work and faculty mentoring we strive for at CSU, Chico.

Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program

CSU, Chico student **Michael Huston** was selected as a 2017—2018 Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) recipient. The competitive program aims to increase the number of promising doctoral students applying for future CSU instructional faculty positions by offering financial assistance in the form of a loan and mentorship by CSU faculty. The CDIP offers loans up to \$10,000 per year over 5 years, with a maximum amount of \$30,000 with two options: (1) Repayable over a 15-year period commencing one year after completion of, or withdrawal from, full-time doctoral study or (2) Forgivable at the rate of 20 percent for each year of full-time postdoctoral teaching

Continued on page 15

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: PAYING IT FORWARD

Town Hall 2.0

Students become more engaged scholars and gain confidence about their capacity to do meaningful work when they have an opportunity to share their research in public dialogues with others who share similar interests. The bi-annual CSU, Chico Town Hall Meeting provides students with a public arena for discussing current policy issues with other students, faculty, and community members. Students research and prepare talking points for topics such as



Karyn Cornell, left, and Amy Rhoades, right.

immigration, freedom of speech, and homelessness; they receive feedback on their ideas from community consultants. Afterward, they write an action plan based on their conversations at the event.

Town Hall 2.0 was an idea hatched by Karyn Cornell, a student in the Masters of Public Administration program. The goal is to enlist college students to mentor high school students in other communities in the North State, using all of the civic engagement skills they have

learned as participants in the Town Hall meeting. Along the path of researching and developing a project proposal, Karyn was introduced to Amy Rhoades, an undergraduate in Social Work working on her honors project. Amy attended Salisbury High School, a Red Bluff continuation school, many years ago as a teen mom. She credits the school staff for seeing her potential and helping her graduate high school. At the time, Amy didn't think college was an option for her. Now, for her honors

project, Amy wants to return to her home community and support more students from Salisbury in getting to college.

When Karyn and Amy met to discuss their shared interests, they decided that *Town Hall 2.0* should make its stage debut at Salisbury and the principal of the high school, Barbara Thomas, agreed. *Town Hall 2.0* is designed to provide young people from North State communities and Chico State students the opportunity to interact and learn from one another. The goals are to provide all student participants with skills

in collaboration, research, and community engagement, and potentially encourage more young people to attend college and then return to their communities to continue their civic work. The hope is that *Town Hall 2.0* will be coming to other North State communities in the future.

**This article was featured in Civic Engagement Spotlights and can be found here:*

<http://www.csuchico.edu/civic/news/index.shtml>

GRADUATE STUDIES AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Continued from page 14

employment in the CSU or 10 percent for each year of part-time postdoctoral teaching employment in the CSU.

Huston attended CSU Chico as a graduate student in the Political Science program after receiving his Bachelors of Arts in Political Science at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 2015. He is attending a dual doctoral program in Political Science and Social Data Analytics at Pennsylvania State University where he intends to focus on American politics and political behavior. His research interests include education reform policy, national drug policy and the DEA, the use of social media in elections, and the growth of partisanship in American politics, with his thesis focusing on the differences and similarities between millennials and generation X. While at CSU Chico, Huston was a teaching assistant for Introduction to American Government, served as Vice President for the Council of Graduate Studies, and coordinated efforts for various propositions in the 2016 elections. His faculty mentor was Dr. Lori Weber, the Masters of Public Administration program's graduate coordinator.

Huston notes that he "learned about [CDIP] my first year, and decided to balance out the actions of a future PhD student by emulating the aspects required of faculty in tenure track paths: research, service to the institution and service to the community, and teaching." His short-term goals are to complete his PhD program at Pennsylvania State and then teach for some time at a university with a large survey research center or similar program. His long-term goals are, as he says, "admittedly ambitious: to become the Director of the Census."

CSU, Chico student **Robert Lester** was also selected as a 2017—2018 Chancellor's Doctoral CDIP recipient.

Continued on page 16

GRADUATE STUDIES AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Continued from page 15

Lester completed his Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy at CSU Chico in the 2017 spring semester after receiving his Bachelors of Arts in Psychology in 2014. Lester credits his faculty mentor, Dr. Arthur Sanchez, and the process of applying for the CDIP with helping him to figure out his long-term career goals and interests. He states that the application “required that I not only consider my academic vision, but consider and write out concrete steps towards achieving that vision.” After carefully considering all aspects of his educational journey thus far, Lester concluded that “I realized that I am passionate about finding ways to include spirituality in the training of marriage and family therapists.” He describes his thesis as being a creation of “a small community of supportive students to meet the call of mental health issues on campus.” This became a mentorship program that paired Marriage and Family graduate students with undergraduate students who struggled with anxious and depressive symptoms. On the effects of this program, he notes that “while decreased symptoms in the students who participated was a part of the hope of the research outcomes, the real aim of the program was to further the work of creating community on campus.”

Lester is attending the Counselor Education and Supervision PhD program at North Dakota State University. He hopes to continue his studies and research on aspects of spirituality, specifically focusing on how it is expressed at the level of community, with the hope of transforming his research into a practice that can be taught to students in Marriage and Family Therapy programs. His ultimate goal is to have Marriage and Family Therapy students leave “their programs with the belief that psychotherapy is more than symptom reduction, but an opportunity for moral revelation and

poetic storytelling.”

Lester expresses a deep gratitude towards the Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program, saying the following: “I do not want to leave Northern California, my home, my family. This is often how adventures begin—with not wanting to leave and feeling imperiously called to do so all the same. The CDIP is more than a generous loan; it is a vote of confidence and belief that supplants the worry and dread of moving far away to somewhere cold.” He concludes by expressing his hopes to repay the program with “more than the money it lends, but with civic excellence and academic stewardship.”

KINESIOLOGY AWARDS

Xiaoping Fan (MA '17) has been accepted as a doctoral student at the University of Northern Colorado.

Andrew Well (MA '17) has been accepted as a doctoral student at the University of New Mexico.

Sean Smith (MA '17) is the head cross-country coach at the Gillette College and the recipient of National Championship Coach of the year (2017) NJCAA Division I.

MPA AWARDS

MPA student **Victoria Padilla** was one of three Chico State students to take part in the regional NASPAA-Batten competition on the campus of San Jose State University in spring 2018. The competition, which included 116 teams at 15 sites around the world, required public administration students to respond to a simulated global health pandemic. Victoria was a member of the **global winning team** of this year’s competition! According to the Global Simulation Director for NASPAA, Supriya Golas: *500 students competed at the regional level in 116 teams at 15*

sites across the globe on February 24 and March 3. Regional judges identified winning teams at each competition site that would move on to the global super judge round. The final super judge round was extremely competitive with 22 teams competing to become this year’s competition champions. Our three super judges were faced with the difficult task of identifying the competition winners. They evaluated teams based on the policy memos and presentations – and were thoroughly impressed by the high-quality materials that were produced by students despite the time constraints faced on competition day. Victoria’s team clearly stood out as the global champion of this year’s competition and California State University, Chico should be incredibly proud of her accomplishment. Victoria will receive \$1,500 USD in prize money as the member of the global winning team.

MPA student **Ashira Solomon** has been awarded the prestigious and competitive **Boren Fellowship** to study in Israel this summer. According to the website for Boren Awards: *Boren Fellowships, an initiative of the National Security Education program, provide funding for U.S. graduate students to study less commonly taught languages in world regions critical to U.S. interests, and underrepresented in study abroad, including Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East....Boren Fellows represent a vital pool of highly motivated individuals who wish to work in the federal national security arena. In exchange for funding, Boren Fellows commit to working in the federal government for at least one year after graduation.* <https://www.borenawards.org/fellowships/boren-fellowship-basics>

GRADUATE STUDIES AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Continued from page 16

RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE FUND AWARDEES

The following graduate students were awarded funds for conference presentation or travel to enhance their research.

Xiaoping Fan, Kinesiology

Presented at the 93rd Annual Conference of Western Society for Physical Education of College Women at Asilomar, Pacific Grove, California.

Carina Gutierrez, Psychology

Presented research at the National Association of School Psychologists Annual Convention in Chicago.

Mary Gibaldi, English

Presented a paper at 39th Annual Meeting of Southwest Popular/American Culture Association Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Kevin Click, Psychology

Presented research at the annual meetings of the American Educational Research Association and the National Consortium for Instruction and Cognition in New York, New York.

Jennifer Rogerson Jennings, Anthropology

Attended the 2018 Society for Historical Archaeology Conference in New Orleans

Ashlyn Weaver, Anthropology

Conducted Research at Hawaii State Archives, the Bishop Museum, and the Hawaiian and Pacific Collections at the University of Hawaii Manoa Archives in Honolulu.

Wolfgang Rougle, Public Administration

Competed in NASPAA-Batten Student Simulation Competition in San Jose, CA.

Carmina Vital, Psychology

Present research at the National Association of School Psychologists Annual Convention in Chicago.

Holly Cochran, Biology

Presented at the 2018 Western Section Wildlife Society Annual Conference in Santa Rosa, CA.

Brett Butler, Communication Studies

Presented a paper at the Western States

Communication Association Conference in Santa Clara.

Kelley Cammorata, Communication Studies

Presented a paper at the Western States Communication Association Conference in Santa Clara.

Vanessa Reeves, Anthropology

Presented a paper at the Western States Communication Association Conference in Santa Clara.

Katherine Jorgensen, Anthropology

Attended the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Washington, D.C.

LOCAL STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION GRADUATE STUDENT WINNERS

The 32nd Annual Student Research Competition in March saw 53 students vying for a chance to be 1 of 10 student researchers from our campus selected to compete against hundreds of other students at the CSU Statewide Research Competition held at CSU, Sacramento, May 4 and 5. In addition, the top 3 presenters in each of the seven sections were awarded for their outstanding work.

Both the local and statewide competitions are held to promote and recognize excellence in student scholarly research and creative activities. The participants submit a 5-page research description and give a short presentation before a panel of judges. Their work is judged on clarity of purpose, appropriateness of methodology, interpretation of results, clear articulation of the research, and ability to field questions from the jury and audience.

The following graduate students were top presenters in local sessions, and asterisks denote delegates to the Statewide Research Competition.

- Rebecca Belmonte***, Biology
- Dayne Gradone***, Anthropology
- Jeanette Adame***, History
- Carina Gutierrez* and Carmina Vital***, Psychology
- Sommer Casady***, Geology
- Valerie Sgheiza**, Anthropology
- Catherine Wilcox**, English

- Megan Leever, Andrea Avina, Natalie Crum, and Elizabeth Greenman**, Communication Sciences and Disorders
- Jolene Moore**, Communication Studies
- Ashlyn Weaver**, Anthropology
- Alison Saechao**, History
- Ginger Alonso**, Political Science
- Brett Butler**, Communication Studies

STATEWIDE STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION GRADUATE STUDENT WINNERS

Jeanette Adame took First Place for her presentation “Free and Enslaved African and Afro-Creole Women in the New Orleans Cabildo, 1769–1800.”



Sommer Casady took Second Place for her presentation “Characterization of an Epithermal Deposit within the Antelope Valley Volcanic Center, Sierra County, CA.”

