George Blumenthal named acting chancellor of UC Santa Cruz


PAUL SCHRAUF

Acting Chancellor George Blumenthal

Appointee has been on UCSC faculty since 1972

UC SANTA CRUZ PROFESSOR George R. Blumenthal has been appointed the campus's acting chancellor, assuming the responsibilities of Denice Denton, who died in June.

Blumenthal is expected to serve as acting chancellor for much or all of the 2006–07 academic year, UC President Robert C. Dynes said. A national search for the late chancellor's permanent successor will be conducted over that period of time.

"George is respected throughout the university, and he has more than 30 years of deep working knowledge of the Santa Cruz campus," Dynes said.

Blumenthal, 60, has been a member of the UCSC faculty since 1972. He has chaired the Astronomy and Astrophysics Department and the Santa Cruz Division of the Academic Senate. In 2004–05 he served as chair of the UC systemwide Academic Senate, and he was faculty representative to the Board of Regents for the years 2003–05.

"This appointment is difficult because it has come about through such a tragic circumstance," Blumenthal said. "But I have enormous respect for the faculty, staff, and students of UC Santa Cruz, and I am honored to assume this responsibility.

"Over the past decade, UCSC has been on a positive trajectory, moving upward among the top tier of our nation's universities. I am determined to continue that momentum."

UC Santa Cruz has been on a positive trajectory, moving upward among the top tier of our nation's universities. I am determined to continue that momentum.

—Acting Chancellor George Blumenthal

Blumenthal received a B.S. degree from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and a Ph.D. in physics from UC San Diego. The research of Blumenthal, a theoretical astrophysicist, encompasses several broad areas, including the nature of the dark matter that constitutes most of the mass in the universe, the origin of galaxies and other large structures in the universe, and the structure of active galactic nuclei such as quasars.

The new chancellor meets with staff and faculty (below); he has also met with members of the local community.


LOUISE DONAHUE

More information about Acting Chancellor Blumenthal can be found on his web page: chancellor.ucsc.edu. The page also provides a link enabling members of the UCSC community to share an idea, concern, or suggestion with the acting chancellor.

Acting Chancellor outlines his priorities

On his first day working in the Office of the Chancellor in mid-July, George Blumenthal issued the following statement:

Our primary mission as an institution is to serve the state of California through teaching, research, and public service. Therefore, the priorities on which I will focus include:

- Recruiting and retaining the outstanding faculty, staff, and students that characterize our campus;
- Building on our academic strengths as we refine and implement our academic plan;
- Expanding graduate programs and enrollments, and considering the creation of additional professional schools;
- Maintaining our distinction and achievements as an outstanding undergraduate institution;
- Ensuring diversity among all segments of the university;
- Building positive relationships with the local community and community leaders; and
- Spreading the word about our campus's distinctions to various groups around the state and the country.

George Blumenthal, *Acting Chancellor, UC Santa Cruz*


MATT PITT

Seven faculty members and 10 graduate teaching assistants who have demonstrated "exemplary and inspiring teaching" have received top honors from UCSC's Academic Senate. The 2005–06 Excellence in Teaching Awards were presented by the late chancellor Denice D. Denton (fourth from right) and Committee on Teaching chair Charles McDowell (far left) at University Center at the end of the academic year. Also pictured are the faculty winners (l–r): Ruth Hoffman, Kenneth Pedrotti, Hilde Schwartz, Ana Maria Seara, John Isbister, Dean Mathiowetz, and Martin Berger.

Prestigious academies select UCSC faculty

TWO UCSC FACULTY members were elected to the National Academy of Sciences, and three are among the new fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

David Haussler (biomolecular engineering) and Stan Woosley (astronomy and astrophysics) are among 72 new members elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

The three faculty members elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences are Haussler, Harry Berger Jr. (English literature/history of art and visual culture), and Harold Widom (mathematics).

Haussler, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, directs the Center for Biomolecular Science and Engineering at UCSC and is scientific codirector of the California Institute for Quantitative Biomedical Research.

Woosley, a theoretical astrophysicist, is a leading authority on supernovae and gamma-ray bursts, the most violent explosions in the universe. He directs the UCSC-based Center for Supernova Research, funded by the Department of Energy.

Berger was recognized for his contributions to literary criticism. A UCSC founding faculty member, he is known for an interdisciplinary approach extending past academic boundaries.

Widom has made contributions in an area of math called random matrix theory. His work with Craig Tracy of UC Davis led to the discovery of a new class of functions called Tracy-Widom distributions.

Honored: *David Haussler, Stan Woosley, Harry Berger Jr., and Harold Widom*


PAUL SCHRAUF


TIM STEPHENS


ANN GIBB


VICTOR SCHIFFRIN

Another UCSC grad, Dana Priest, receives Pulitzer Prize

DANA PRIEST, who visited UC Santa Cruz in March to accept the Division of Social Sciences' first Distinguished Alumni Award, has received a 2006 Pulitzer Prize.

Priest, who graduated from UCSC (Merrill College) in 1981 with a bachelor's in politics, received journalism's highest honor in the category of "beat reporting."

A *Washington Post* reporter, Priest was recognized "for her persistent, painstaking reports on secret 'black site' prisons and other controversial features of the government's counterterrorism campaign." The prize includes a $10,000 award.

Priest is the fifth UCSC graduate to receive a Pulitzer, following Hector Tobar (1992), Laurie Garrett (1996), Annie Wells (1997), and Martha Mendoza (2000).

JON KERSEY

Dana Priest lectured on "The CIA's Secret War" during her visit to UCSC in March.

Economics undergrad wins scholarship to fight TB in India

LIKE HIS GRANDFATHER, Saurabh Mishra is a visionary. Mishra, a senior in economics, wants to raise public awareness about tuberculosis (TB) and provide treatment to at least 10,000 sufferers in his native India.

With a $10,000 scholarship from the Donald A. Strauss Public Service Scholarship Foundation, Mishra is organizing a fundraising drive that will help him launch a major public health campaign in the Bihar region of India.

Mishra's work builds on the legacy of his grandfather, who opened a TB sanatorium in 1951. To date, the 100-bed facility has treated more than 80,000 people.

"In 1950, my grandfather left the luxuries of the United States for one of the poorest areas in India because he had this vision 50 years ago of eradicating tuberculosis," said Mishra. "But TB is still a problem. It is inspiring to me to see all his work and to try to complete his vision."


JENNIFER MCNULTY

Saurabh Mishra

Each year, the Strauss Scholarships fund at least 14 public-service projects proposed by California college juniors.

UCSC creates new major in computer game design

UCSC has approved a new major in computer game design, the first of its kind in the UC system. The new major, leading to a B.S. degree, provides students with a rigorous background in the technical, artistic, and narrative elements of creating interactive computer games.

"We are pleased to be able to offer this new degree program, which provides a unique combination of technical and artistic training," said Ira Pohl, professor and chair of computer science in the Baskin School of Engineering.

The Department of Computer Science will administer the new interdisciplinary program, which will also involve faculty in the Department of Film and Digital Media in UCSC's Arts Division. Students are able to enroll in the new major beginning this fall.

"Millions now play massively multiplayer online games, which constitute a new cultural force—a new medium. Digital media courses will provide students with the tools they need to understand this cultural transformation in conjunction with its technological and artistic possibilities," said Warren Sack, assistant professor of film and digital media.

A highlight of the major is a yearlong game design project in which students work in teams to develop and polish a substantial video game. The campus is creating a new instructional laboratory for computer game design to support these projects.

MICHAEL MATEAS/ANDREW STERN

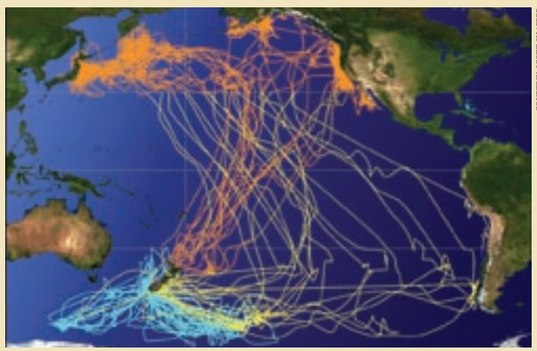
Trip and Grace are characters in Façade, *a computer game developed by Michael Mateas, who will be teaching students in UCSC's new program.*

Study documents marathon migrations of sooty shearwaters

Every summer, millions of sooty shearwaters arrive off the coast of California, their huge flocks astonishing visitors who may have trouble grasping that the dark swirling clouds over the water consist of seabirds.

Scientists have long known that sooty shearwaters breed in New Zealand and Chile and migrate to feeding grounds in the Northern Hemisphere. But the details of this remarkable transequatorial migration are only now emerging from a study using electronic tracking tags to follow individual birds.

The flights of sooty shearwaters documented in this new study represent the longest animal migration routes ever recorded using electronic tracking technology: around 65,000 kilometers (39,000 miles). Taking advantage of prevailing winds along different parts of the migration route, the birds trace giant figure eights over the Pacific, said Scott Shaffer, a UCSC research biologist and first author of a paper describing the findings. The paper was published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.*



COURTESY SCOTT SHAFFER

This map shows the tracks of 19 sooty shearwaters tagged in early 2005 and tracked for an average of 262 days during their breeding period (light blue lines) and subsequent migration.

Shaffer worked with an international team of scientists from UCSC and other institutions in the United States, New Zealand, and France.

Support for the sooty shearwater study was provided by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the National Science Foundation.

Still teaching, UCSC's pioneers honored for their service

Tradition was heralded with fond recollections at a May 19 Academic Senate celebration honoring 22 campus pioneers.

The pioneers—professors who are still teaching today and who were hired before July 1, 1970—recalled a smaller, vibrant, and growing campus community in which interests were wide and responsibilities wider.

"In those days, the scientists, the social scientists, the humanists in the colleges talked to each other and enjoyed each other's company," remembered literature professor Murray Baumgarten, hired in 1966.

"It was a great combination across disciplines, across international boundaries," he said.

Economics professor David Kaun, also hired in 1966, recalled that "we didn't just speak truth to power, we spoke to each other. We said what we wanted to say with a little bit of humor."

Baumgarten and Kaun were joined by anthropology professor Adrienne Zihlman (1967) and Earth sciences professor Gary Griggs (1968) in reminiscing with their fellow pioneers and colleagues who had gathered at University Center for a reception after the final Academic Senate meeting of the term.

The four speakers were selected from the 22 to speak on behalf of their fellow honorees.

Academic Senate Chair Faye Crosby and UCSC's late chancellor Denice Denton presented each pioneer with a plaque.

For a list of attendees, see currents.ucsc.edu/05-06/05-22/pioneers.asp

New deans lead three academic divisions

UCSC has appointed three new deans of academic divisions: Stephen Thorsett (physical and biological sciences), Georges Van Den Abbeele (humanities), and Sheldon Kamieniecki (social sciences).

Thorsett, a professor of astronomy and astrophysics, has served as physical and biological sciences' acting dean since 2005.

"Our students and faculty already make important contributions to environmental science, biomedical science, and the development of advanced technologies. An important goal for me will be to better connect our programs to partners both inside and outside our local region who share our interest in these societally important research areas."

Van Den Abbeele comes to the Humanities Division from UC Davis, where he was a professor of French and Italian and held a number of significant administrative appointments overseeing academic departments and directing local and regional interdisciplinary research centers.

"UC Santa Cruz is a wondrous exception in today's higher education—a distinguished research university that consistently maintains a high premium on learning for its own sake, whether through classroom teaching or scholarly inquiry," Van Den Abbeele said.

Kamieniecki, who has been a professor of political science at the University of Southern California, specializes in environmental policy, elections, voting behavior, and public opinion.

"I look forward to helping raise even higher the national stature of the departments, research centers, and programs of the division," said Kamieniecki.

JIM MACKENZIE

KAREN HIGGINS/UC DAVIS

JIM MACKENZIE

New deans: *Stephen Thorsett, Georges Van Den Abbeele, and Sheldon Kamieniecki*

UCSC receives gift of Brett Weston photos

UCSC has received a donation of over 200 photographs by acclaimed American photographer Brett Weston (1911–1993), valued at more than $1 million. The photographs are a gift from Oklahoma collector Christian Keesee, who acquired the Brett Weston archive in 1996 and describes Weston as "one of the true American masters of photography."

The gift enhances the university's substantial holdings of contemporary photography and greatly expands its photographic collection of the Central Coast's dynastic Weston family. The University Library's Special Collections photo holdings were initiated at UCSC in the late 1960s with the donation of more than 800 project prints by Edward Weston, Brett's father.

Brett Weston's 1950 White Sands *is among the photos donated to UCSC.*

NSF funds research on 'informal science education'

For many parents, taking the kids to the aquarium or a hands-on science museum combines fun and learning. "Museums make science accessible and engaging," says Doris Ash, an assistant professor of education at UCSC. "Visitors sometimes don't recognize they're 'doing science,' but they are."

Called "informal science education," the learning that takes place at aquaria, zoos, and natural history museums enriches classroom learning and engages people in ways that schools sometimes can't. Such venues have become laboratories for Ash and other researchers eager to gauge the impact of museums on the learning process.

Ash recently received a $1.8 million grant from the National Science Foundation to conduct a five-year study of informal science education with Judith Lombana, vice president of research and institutional development at the Museum of Science & Industry (MOSI) in Tampa, Florida.

"There's value in looking at real objects and living things," says Ash. "It enhances the quality of learning in ways we don't even understand." A trained biologist and former classroom teacher, Ash is especially interested in the impact of informal science learning on "nontraditional" visitors, including the poor and those with limited or no English skills.

Youngsters at the Seymour Marine Discovery Center have a chance for hands-on investigation of sea creatures.

MACKEY PFLEGER

SYGMA

Woody Allen *and his New Orleans Jazz Band is one of the featured artists performing in the 2006–07 academic year as part of UCSC's Arts & Lectures program. For information about the season's many A&L offerings, please go to:* artslectures.ucsc.edu

UCSC receives gift to support Hindi/Urdu language program

A consortium of donors has committed to funding Hindi/Urdu language courses at UCSC through spring of 2010. The combined gifts in support of the program total $75,000 and will enable the university to provide courses that would otherwise be eliminated due to budget cuts.

The gift was initiated by Silicon Valley entrepreneurs Kamil and Talat Hasan, who put together a group of 15 donors who have each committed $1,000 a year for the next five years to support the language classes.

Kamil Hasan noted that the Hindi/Urdu language program is the anchor for UCSC's South Asia initiative—a project established in 1999 to create an enduring resource for understanding the region and its cultures. "History, economics, literature, music—all depend on knowledge of these languages," he said.

The addition of second-year Hindi/Urdu courses provides the essential language preparation necessary for UCSC students who plan to continue their education in graduate programs. Funding for the classes initially began in January, and two UCSC students have already benefited from the generosity of the donors. Maia Ramnath, a graduate student in history, and Max Bruce, a 2005 graduate in philosophy, were awarded fellowships to study the Urdu language at the American Institute of Indian Studies program in India, after completing two years of Hindi/Urdu study at UCSC.

PHOTOS: RACHEL CLICK

Attending a donor recognition event were: (left photo, l–r) John Mock, lecturer in Hindi/Urdu; Kamil Hasan, UCSC Foundation trustee; and Gildas Hamel, director of the Language Program; and (right photo) fellowship recipient Maia Ramnath, left, with Anu Luther Maitra, president of the UCSC Foundation.

Engineering undergrads inspire high schoolers

The baskin school of Engineering hosted about 100 students from San Jose area high schools for a week of campus tours and workshops last spring. Teams of undergraduates organized and ran the workshops, which used fun and challenging projects to convey different aspects of engineering.

The "nanomouse" workshop involved a mobile robot the students had to program to make its way through a maze. The "clay building" workshop involved constructing a tower out of clay and toothpicks. The projects were designed to inspire the students and get them interested in studying engineering and pursuing careers in science and technology.

"The kids absolutely loved it," said Young Kim, undergraduate outreach coordinator for the engineering school.

Two Antarctica sites named in honor of UCSC biologists

Costa spur and Terrie Bluff, once nameless features of the austere Antarctic landscape, have been named in honor of Daniel Costa and Terrie Williams, UCSC professors of ecology and evolutionary biology. Both scientists have done extensive field research on marine mammals in Antarctica.

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names approved the names last year, but Costa and Williams only recently found out about the honor when they received official letters and photos of the sites.

Costa Spur, Antarctica, is officially described as a "prominent spur located 4 miles southwest of Quetin Head, Daniell Peninsula, Borchgrevink Coast. The spur descends eastward to the Ross Sea and marks the southern extent of Mandible Cirque."

Costa studied seals at McMurdo Sound, South Georgia, and Livingston Island for seven field seasons starting in 1978.

On the side of Mt. Terror overlooking a large penguin rookery, "Terrie Bluff is a rock bluff that rises to 1,000 meters in height. It is located 1.5 miles south-southeast of Ainley Peak, Kyle Hills on Ross Island."

Williams was a U.S. Antarctic Program coprincipal investigator of hunting behavior of free-ranging Weddell seals in McMurdo Sound sea ice areas for several seasons between 1984 and 2002.

COURTESY DANIEL COSTA

Costa Spur in Antarctica is named after UCSC professor Daniel Costa.

In Memoriam

PAUL SCHRAUB

Denice D. Denton, a trailblazing engineer who broke through numerous barriers in her academic career to become chancellor of the University of California, Santa Cruz, died June 24 in San Francisco.

Denton took the helm at UC Santa Cruz in February 2005 after serving nine years as the dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Washington in Seattle—the first woman to hold the post at a top research institution. It was one of many "firsts" Denton acquired throughout her career, and she became a powerful role model and mentor for women and minorities in science and higher education.

An accomplished electrical engineer who held three patents, Denton earned a Ph.D. and three other engineering degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. One of four children raised by a single mother in Texas, Denton discovered her passion for science and math during a high school summer program. That life-transforming experience fueled her passion for outreach programs and her commitment to making similar opportunities available to others. As her accomplishments catapulted her to the center stage of higher education nationally, she became an outspoken advocate for diversity in academia.

"Denice was an accomplished and passionate scholar whose life and work demonstrated a deep commitment to public service and to improving opportunity for the disadvantaged and underrepresented," said UC President Robert C. Dynes.

As he prepared to bestow the President's Medal during Denton's November 2005 investiture ceremony at UCSC, Dynes called Denton "a trailblazer in pursuit of equity and multiculturalism."

At UCSC, where she served for 16 months, Denton was remembered by Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor David S. Kliger for her dedication "to opening doors for countless young people, particularly for women and minorities who wanted to pursue careers in engineering and science."

"She led this campus with clear statements of the importance of education in transforming lives and in creating opportunities for all," said Kliger. "She, herself, had lived that experience, rising from modest means to achieve with distinction at every stage in her life."

Student leaders hailed Denton's openness and advocacy. "She was at the forefront of the UC Sweatshop Free Campaign, and showed her commitment to diversity by providing funding for student-initiated outreach programs," wrote representatives of the UCSC Student Union Assembly, Graduate Student Association, and UC Student Association.

This past May, Denton won the Maria Mitchell Women in Science Award for her work advancing opportunities in science for women and girls.

A campus celebration of the late chancellor's life was held June 29 in the UCSC Music Center Recital Hall.

At UCSC, a fund has been established to honor Chancellor Denton's vision and priorities for the campus. The Denice D. Denton Memorial Fund will pay tribute to her achievements as a leader in science and engineering, her advocacy for diversity, as well as her commitment to community.

To make a memorial gift, please use the enclosed envelope or go to: www.ucsc.edu/administration/denice_denton

SAMUEL THALER

ELIZABETH IRWIN

ROD SEARCY

ALL PHOTOS NOT INDIVIDUALLY CREDITED BY JIM MACKENZIE