“All the professors who join us this year enhance UC San Diego’s signature strength: a commitment to cross-disciplinary investigation and visible social impact.”

Cristina Della Coletta  
Dean, Division of Arts and Humanities
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I am proud to introduce you to the incoming faculty cohort in the Division of Arts and Humanities. Like our division, our new colleagues represent diverse trainings and disciplines. Some have just completed their Ph.D.s and others come to us after enjoying successful careers as practicing artists or join us from other academic institutions. Together, they bring remarkable accomplishment and promise in artistry and scholarship, teaching and mentoring, and engagement with communities both local and global. They reflect the foundational strengths of our division at the same time as they distinguish themselves for their scholarly and artistic talents. We are excited to welcome them into our growing professional family, and equally eager to introduce them to you.

Our Arts departments were founded on the principle that art production and theoretical analysis should share the same intellectual and pedagogical spaces, seamlessly connecting the classroom with the stage, the concert hall, and the studio. Interdisciplinary activities breed creativity and innovation, and this year we welcome a number of artists to our academic ranks. One is an experimental video maker whose videos have been screened internationally, from the Museum of Modern Art in New York to the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and another is an ethnomusicologist interested in afro-diasporic popular music and issues of conflict and globalization. Another is an award-winning actor, and founding member of a theatre company dedicated to producing classical and contemporary plays in unconventional spaces.
In the Humanities, we continue to build our distinction around a cadre of interdisciplinary scholars whose expertise demonstrates global reach, combining meticulous research with paradigm-changing interpretation. From the late medieval and early-modern Middle East and the Mediterranean to early America, and from the African diaspora to our own border in San Ysidro, our new faculty members investigate the sets of interrelated processes—both historical and current—that have shaped and continue to shape cultures and renegotiate identities in an increasingly interdependent and transnational world. This type of engagement requires cultural understanding, multilingual proficiency, archival competence, and the ability to look at persistent problems through novel perspectives.

In slightly more than five decades, UC San Diego has experienced a spectacular coming of age as a comprehensive university. Founded as an experimental lab for innovation in the basic sciences, our institution soon embraced the core values and diverse skills that the Arts and Humanities instill and develop. We believe in mentorship and learning by doing, which fosters faculty-student engagement. This vision helped propel us forward 10 spots to #23 in the 2016 U.S. News & World Report's Best Global Universities rankings.

While we celebrate the talents of our new faculty, we are aware that the growth of these talents depends upon the academic environment to which they now belong. Devoted to promoting the foundational, transferable, and enduring values of the Humanities and the Arts, this environment thrives on the unassailable principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. With the largest grant historically to our division from the Mellon Foundation, and with generous support from our Chancellor and Executive Vice Chancellor, the newly launched Institute of Arts and Humanities welcomes our new faculty by offering them a collaborative and hospitable space to think and act humanistically and relatively for the common good.

Please join me in welcoming the new faculty of 2016–2017 and accept my best wishes for a productive and joyful academic year.

Cristina Della Coletta
Dean, Division of Arts and Humanities
Jennifer Chang received her M.F.A. from the University of California San Diego in 2006. Her work has been the recipient of the Ovation Award and the Stage Scene LA award, among other honors. Chang is a founding member of Chalk Repertory Theatre where she has directed and acted in numerous plays. Her other directing credits include Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them for Artists at Play and Our American Story at the Japanese American National Museum in collaboration with East West Players.

As an actor, she has worked with South Coast Repertory, East West Players, Company of Angels, Mixed Blood Theatre, Fulton Opera House, and the National Asian American Theatre Company, among others, as well as performing for television and commercials. She has taught in the conservatory at the East West Players and guest directed at USC. As head of the undergraduate acting program, she both advises students and teaches core undergraduate courses in theatre as well as directing for productions.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? I am thrilled to be returning to UC San Diego, which has a world-class theatre department, having attended graduate school here. I am excited to bring the knowledge I have gained from over 10 years of professional work in many facets of the entertainment business to the students. I look forward to learning from my students as much as I will be providing training and instruction.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? Storytelling is a powerful and fundamental communication tool that activates not just language areas in our brain but whole sensory fields as if we experienced the events ourselves, whether we are a storyteller or story-receiver. This ability to reach our fellow human beings and communicate universal truths or events through theatrical techniques struck me as important and compelling work.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? I founded and ran a site-responsive theatre company in Los Angeles that has won awards and accolades and continues to produce today. I continue to be involved in creating art on a national level.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Do not underestimate the value of a creative mind no matter what field you study.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? You cannot separate the university from the community that supports it, especially since our theatre department is so intertwined with a regional theatre company. I am part of an institution furthering the education and training of current and future citizens. It is important to be looking for ways in which we can give back.
Karen Gocsik is director of the Division of Arts and Humanities Basic Writing Program at UC San Diego where she teaches first-year composition and a graduate-level training course for the program’s teaching assistants. Professor Gocsik previously taught first-year writing at Dartmouth College, where she was also executive director of the Writing & Rhetoric Program. In 2012, she was nationally recognized by The Princeton Review as one of the “300 Best Professors in America.” Her most interesting research has to do with figuring out how students construct and compose new knowledge—in other words, what processes and practices do students employ when they’re asked to write about something they know little or nothing about?

**WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO?** What excited me about coming to UC San Diego was its reputation as a premier public research university, whose bright and motivated students are eager to think critically and innovatively so that they can devote their considerable talents to building a better and more interesting world. However, I was curious as to whether some of the innovative work we accomplished at Dartmouth could “translate” to a large public university like UC San Diego. Now that I’ve taken a new position in the Division of Arts and Humanities as the director of Basic Writing, it will be exciting to see how well these innovations work. Teaching students to wrestle with and shape their ideas for diverse audiences is rewarding work.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY?** I chose writing as a field of study because I have always loved to write. From the time I read "Little Women" in fourth grade, I was fascinated by books—not only the stories they tell, but how these stories are constructed. As a literature major, I was one of two seniors asked to teach a class on grammar to first-year students—an experience that fascinated me, as I found myself carefully considering each of my individual students and the particular challenges they faced in composing sentences. I went on to graduate school, where...
I eventually earned my Ph.D. in literature. But I remained committed to teaching writing, requesting each semester to teach the international population. I chose this population because I’d found that these students were bringing wholly different concepts, practices, and habits to the endeavor of writing. I found this interesting. Teaching students to wrestle with and shape their ideas for diverse audiences is rewarding work.

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS?** 1) Don’t be afraid of writing! Writing is hard (even this blurb is taking a lot out of me). But writing is also a way of learning. A way of discovering. As the British Writer E.M. Forster said, “How do I know what I think until I see what I say?” Writing shows us both the brilliance in our thinking and its unfortunate flaws. It demands that we stare down these flaws—that we think harder, and write better, until at last we have a complete and elegantly crafted idea that we can present to the world. People who write are people who are heard. If they write well, they will have their ideas taken seriously. They may be chosen over others to be promoted to leadership positions. Learning to write is well worth the effort one puts into it. 2) Take courses in the humanities. The humanities are devoted to helping us better understand the human experience. Even if you are majoring in the sciences, you’ll want to take as many humanities classes as you possibly can. The habits and practices you will learn are important to any field in which you hope to excel.

**HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY?** I hope to learn more about how writing is being taught in community colleges and high schools throughout San Diego, in order to see how we can help California students transition from these institutions of learning to ours. I also hope to serve as a resource to anyone engaged in the teaching of writing, or the administration of writing programs. I would be pleased to be part of any conversation that moved our understanding of writing—and our understanding of students—forward.
Sarah Hankins received her Ph.D. in ethnomusicology from Harvard University. Her research deals with sound studies of conflict and globalization, Afro-diasporic popular musics, histories of sound technology, music and gender, and sonic dimensions of psychoanalysis. Hankins’ articles and review essays appear in a variety of humanities and social science journals; she is currently writing a book on musical nightlife and political aesthetics among African transmigrants in urban Israel.

Hankins has held teaching positions at Wellesley College, Brown University, and the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is the current co-chair of the Gender and Sexualities Task force of the Society for Ethnomusicology, and a recipient of the Society’s Marcia Herndon Award for writing on gender and sexuality. Her past fieldwork and research has been funded by the Anna Rabinowitz Fellowship at Harvard's Center for Jewish Studies. Ongoing projects include ethnographic work with the Black Lives Matter political movement, research on the intersections of sound, violence, and memory, and writing on ethnographic fieldwork ethics.

A member of the U.S. Foreign Service from 2002–2009, Hankins served in Tel Aviv, Washington, and throughout Latin America, winning Meritorious and Superior Honor Awards from the Department of State for her reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As a dance music producer and DJ, she has held club residencies in Boston and Tel Aviv, performed at the launch of Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation, and collaborated with electronic musicians and performance artists in a wide variety of idioms. Her remix collection Been in the Storm So Long (2009) was independently released in consultation with Smithsonian Folkways.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? UC San Diego’s music program is among the most progressive in the country, with faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates all working together to push the boundaries of contemporary musical practice and scholarship. I’m excited to contribute to this dynamic community with my work in sound studies—a multidisciplinary field of inquiry that moves beyond “music” as we conventionally understand it to encompass all kinds of sonic events and auditory cultural phenomena.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? I left a government job and committed myself to ethnomusicology and sound studies because I believe that music is one of the most life-giving, world-making forces in human experience. I see my work as promoting connections between music and social justice in a variety of globalized contexts.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? I’m proud of my award-winning research essay on the audible intersections of sexuality, ethnicity, and capitalism in drag performance, which was based on ethnographic fieldwork I carried out in queer Boston spaces. Separately, my current book project sheds light on an urgent but understudied phenomenon of globalization—the growth of African asylum seeker populations in Israel—by uniting perspectives in musical ethnography and critical race theory.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Stay present and curious. Get to know your professors as people, and your friends as scholars. Undergrad years go by faster than you might imagine, and you might never again have so much support to explore a diversity of ideas. Step away from your phone, TV, or computer as often as you can, and engage with the experiences right in front of you.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? I’m especially interested in developing courses on sound studies of the city and the San Ysidro port of entry, the busiest land border crossing in the world. Listening to our environments—built, natural, sociocultural—makes us more responsive to our fellow community members.
Hoang Tan Nguyen received a B.A. (with highest honors) in art and art history from the University of California, Santa Cruz, an M.F.A. in studio art from the University of California, Irvine, and a Ph.D. in rhetoric, with an emphasis in film studies, from the University of California, Berkeley. He has received grants and fellowships from the University of California Humanities Research Institute, the University of California Institute for Research in the Arts, and the University of Pennsylvania Humanities Forum.

His research interests include Asian-American visual culture, Southeast Asian cinema, queer cinema, experimental film, race and pornography, film programming, and video production. His experimental videos have been screened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Getty Center in Los Angeles, and the Pompidou Center in Paris. He has programmed film, video, and performance for MIX NYC: New York Queer Experimental Film Festival and the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival.

WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? After working for the past eight years at a small liberal arts college on the East Coast, I’m thrilled to be joining UC San Diego with its stellar reputation as a renowned research university. I’m excited about joining the literature department with a wide-ranging coverage of interdisciplinary fields, including film studies, cultural studies, and literatures of the world. Having studied at three UC campuses (Santa Cruz, Irvine, and Berkeley), it’s a lovely “homecoming” to return to the UC as a professor.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? Since my undergraduate years as a double major in art and art history at UC Santa Cruz, I’ve been interested in integrating critical studies with artistic production. I’ve always been obsessed with visual media, whether examining its ideological hold on us or responding to its seduction through my own creative practice. Film and media studies allows me to pursue both modes of research, in the seminar room and the screening room.
WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? Holding the physical copy of my book, “A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexuality,” published by my dream press, Duke University Press in August 2014. The genesis for the project came from a short experimental video I made 15 years prior, called “Forever Bottom!,” about the positioning of Asian men as sexual bottoms. The book expands on that topic to consider bottomhood in all of its racial-sexual manifestations, including the ways being located on the bottom of social hierarchies can constitute a vantage point from which to critique heteronormativity. Colleagues have told me that they’ve been teaching the book alongside my videos in courses on Asian-American studies, women’s studies, film and media, and queer theory. It’s very gratifying that the work is reaching younger, enthusiastic readers.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Your education is not only in the classroom, but also participating in political demonstrations, attending art exhibitions, engaging in heated Twitter debates, and even binge-watching TV shows on your laptop. Develop and apply your critical thinking skills in all areas of your life. Unpacking the gender politics of a meme can translate to taking an active stance in political elections. This is the perfect time to test out your ideas, both creative and scholarly. Take risks. Experiment and fail and learn and move on. My understanding of the world shifted many times over during my years as a student due to the extraordinary labor of my teachers.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? Having grown up in the Bay Area and spent a few years in Orange County and LA, I’m very happy to be back in California. I have only visited San Diego two times before, so I can’t wait to explore its food and film cultures. I look forward to living among and working with a diverse population, in terms of race/ethnicity, but also class, sexuality, and immigration status. One primary goal is to get actively involved with Pacific Arts Movement, presenter of the San Diego Asian Film Festival, through film programming, getting filmmakers to screen and speak about their work on campus, setting up collaborations between students and the festival, and cultivating more connections between the university and the community. And to do all of this in the glorious San Diego sunshine!
Jordan Rose received his Ph.D. in history of art from the University of California, Berkeley in 2013. Before joining the faculty at UC San Diego, he taught at The University of Vermont and UC Berkeley. He is currently working on a book, “The Spell of the Barricade,” which investigates the nexus of art and politics in France between 1830 and 1852. He is also writing a book-length study of the anarchist art journal La Liberté (1832-1833) and a series of essays that orient the caricatures of Honoré Daumier around the figure of money. At UC San Diego, Rose will be the resident "dix-neuvièmiste," teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on European art in the 19th and 20th centuries.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? I came up through the UC system, first at Santa Cruz and then at Berkeley. The university means a great deal to me. Having the opportunity to return to it, and at another UC campus, one that seems to blend the best of those other campuses—the salty air of the coast, the activity of city life, the robustness of UC’s intellectual community and its diversity, the California sun—fills me with the greatest joy and excitement, with a sense that I can at last give something back. Add to this mixture a visual arts department with such an esteemed history, and everything coalesces.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? Art history struck me pretty early as the right field for me. It was some combination, I think, of Jackson Pollock, Clement Greenberg, and T. J. Clark that initially got me going (I had to stare down those monuments in the first art-history course I ever took. It was a class on Modernism). Really, though, what drew me to art history was a sense, one which has only grown over the years, that the visual mattered in our world in ways it had never before, and that if I was to grasp that world, come to terms with its operations and contradictions, I had to sharpen my looking and seeing.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? This one is tough. I’m just getting going after all. But little of what I’ve done so far excites me as much as the work I’m doing on the art journal La Liberté, which lived a brief but explosive life in the early 1830s. I discovered the journal and its principal contributors while writing my dissertation and was immediately struck by how faint their appearance had been in modern-day art history. The journal—what it had to say about art and politics—seemed to me so important; it still does. Now, I’m preparing a book-length study of the journal, which will be called "Anarchy is the Inevitable Prologue."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Look. And then look again.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? If I can help to make higher education in San Diego stronger and more vibrant, I’ll consider that role at least partly fulfilled.
Charles Sebens earned a Ph.D. in philosophy and an M.S. in physics from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Before that he received an M.S. in the philosophy of physics from the University of Oxford. He has just joined the faculty at UC San Diego after spending a year at the California Institute of Technology as a postdoctoral instructor.

Sebens works on the philosophical foundations of quantum physics. He is interested in a variety of competing theories about how particles behave at the quantum level. In his dissertation work, Sebens used recent developments in epistemology to examine which of these competing theories are compatible with the data.

Sebens’ paper “Quantum Mechanics as Classical Physics” was selected by the Philosopher’s Annual as one of the 10 best papers in philosophy of 2015. At the University of Michigan, both his research and teaching were recognized by the graduate school which awarded him the ProQuest Distinguished Dissertation Award and the Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award. His graduate studies were supported in part by a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation.
WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO UC SAN DIEGO? UC San Diego has a world-class philosophy department with a wonderful group of scholars working on philosophical issues raised by the sciences.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? I was drawn to physics by the dream of understanding the fundamental laws that govern our universe. I have come to realize that discovering these laws may well require philosophical ingenuity in addition to experimental and mathematical work.

WHAT ARE YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS? I have put forward a novel interpretation of quantum mechanics in which quantum physics does not involve a very radical departure from classical physics. In a separate project, I argued that a popular move for understanding quantum physics introducing “collapse” may be refuted by data already available to us.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO STUDENTS AND THE PUBLIC? Philosophy courses require students to communicate clearly and precisely about extremely complex and abstract ideas. I want to train students in this skill so that they are ready to think carefully and creatively through whatever problems they may face in their lives.
Nir Shafir received his Ph.D. in history from UCLA in 2016. His research broadly explores the intellectual and cultural history of the late medieval and early modern Middle East (1200–1800). In particular, he examines the intersections of knowledge production, religious practice, and material culture in the 17th-century Ottoman Empire.

His doctoral research was supported by grants from a number of funding agencies including the Social Science Research Council, the National Science Foundation, and the Fulbright Commission. In 2017 and 2018, he will be a Mellon Mediterranean Research fellow at the Consortium of American Overseas Research Centers and a research fellow at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul under the auspices of the ERC Consolidator Grant Project: “The Fashioning of a Sunni Orthodoxy in the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1800.”

Shafir’s work has appeared in the Journal of Global History and the Journal of Ottoman and Turkish Studies. He is currently working on a book manuscript that uses the insights of material culture and the history of the book to reinterpret Islamic religious transformation in the eastern Mediterranean during the 17th century. His future articles include studies of antiquarianism in the Ottoman Empire, the significance of a medical procedure known as “hummus cauterization” in the 17th-century Middle East, and the impact of cheap and ephemeral writing on the archival order of the empire. He is a frequent host on the Ottoman History Podcast and curates the History of Science Series in addition to being the co-founder of hazine.info, a website dedicated to exploring the archives and libraries of the Islamic world. He is also a founding organizer of the Digital Ottoman Platform, which aims to create basic infrastructure for future data-driven analyses of Middle Eastern history. At UC San Diego, he teaches classes in the history of the pre-modern Islamic world, the history of science and knowledge, and global history.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? I am nearly a complete product of California’s public education system. I have completed my high school, community college, undergraduate, and doctoral education in California. I experienced firsthand the extremely stimulating intellectual and social environment of the UC system, and I am very excited to be able to return now as a faculty member.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? My choice to study history was initially motivated by my interest in contemporary Middle East and my involvement in social justice activism. As most students of history, I wanted to understand how human societies functioned in the present by studying the past. Later, I came to appreciate the importance of understanding past societies in their own terms as well as through the prism of present-day concerns.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? I have come up with a new way of understanding the course of Islamic intellectual tradition during the early modern era—a period of several centuries largely slighted by scholars as a time of “decline” between the medieval “golden age” and the westernizing modernity.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Be aware of how much UC San Diego has to offer you and make the most of your time here. Be brave, take courses in the fields you think you know nothing about, explore.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? UC San Diego is in some ways the center of social life in the city. Public events hosted by the university attract many people from the outside of the academic community. Taking part in such public events and projects, I hope to have many opportunities to engage not only my students and colleagues but also the wider San Diego community.
Brandon Som received his Ph.D. in literature and creative writing from the University of Southern California in 2014. He is the author of the poetry collection “The Tribute Horse” (Nightboat Books), winner of the 2015 Discovery Award, and the poetry chapbook "Babel's Moon" (Tupelo Press), winner of the Snowbound Prize. He is the recipient of Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Prior to joining the faculty at UC San Diego, he was the Anne Newman Sutton Weeks Poet-in-Residence at Westminster College. His teaching and writing interests include 20th- and 21st-century poetry, transpacific literature, Asian-American and Chicanx poetry, citational poetics, and sound studies. Som teaches undergraduate courses as well as workshops in UC San Diego's MFA Program in Writing.

WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? As a writer and professor of writing, I am interested in diversity and intersections of identity that help us to revise and rewrite the scripts we’ve been given. Coming to UC San Diego, I’m most excited about working with students and helping them to explore their own identity and their own unique relationship to language. The fact that we will do this work a short distance from the national border is significant. Gloria Anzaldúa writes that when living on borders “certain ‘faculties’... and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened.” I’m looking forward to the exhilarating and challenging work of writing about and in pursuit of “awakened” ideas and possibilities.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? The love for the mysteries of language as well as the mysteries of the self, led me to my chosen field. Thanks to dedicated teachers in my high school and at Arizona State University, I came to hear the music of language and to see its potentials. As a son of divorced, mixed-race parents, and respective families who spoke Spanish and Chinese, I found myself often between languages and between identities. It is no wonder then that lyric poetry in those early classrooms spoke to me. I was a student in search of a song for myself.
B.A., English, Arizona State University
Ph.D., Literature and Creative Writing, University of Southern California

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? Winning the 2015 Kate Tufts Discovery Prize for my book of poems, “The Tribute Horse,” is my top research accomplishment. However, more than the prize I feel the true accomplishment, for me, was writing a book of poems that engages my family’s complex history and identity. Writing work that connects to family and identity is one way for me to trace who I am and where I come from as well as celebrate underrepresented voices and lesser known histories.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? My advice to students is to be as open and curious as possible. To look for and be inspired by connections across their various classrooms and their disciplines. And, finally, to understand that the act of writing is central to both curiosity and connection-making. Indeed, I write to stay curious. I write to discover what ideas I might put together.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? The notion of the writer as solitary individual working in isolation is more myth than reality. Indeed, writers have always been a part of vital and sustaining communities. As a writing professor at UC San Diego, I see part of my role as connecting the community we build in the writing classroom with the larger community in San Diego. This work includes engaging with and listening to the larger community and its histories. It also includes participating and contributing to the vibrant artistic and literary communities in San Diego.
William Tronzo (Ph.D. Harvard) is an art historian whose main field of research encompasses the art, architecture, urbanism, and landscape of the medieval Mediterranean world. In addition to numerous grants, he has held research appointments at the American Academy in Rome, Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, CASVA at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Bibliotheca Hertziana, the École des hautes études en sciences sociales, the Huntington, the Clark Art Institute, and the Stanford Humanities Center. He has published extensively on art and architecture from Late Antiquity through the early Renaissance, as well as on the historical landscape as social network and mediator of images.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? I know the students, faculty, and staff at UC San Diego very well, having taught here for the past 10 years: they’re wonderful. It’s a great pleasure to continue to be part of the community.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? I always had an interest in history at school and my father taught me to draw, so also an interest in things visual. When I discovered the history of art and architecture in college (rather late, I must say), it seemed like a perfect fit, and we were off and running.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? I always feel it’s whatever I’m engaged in at the moment, including, most recently, two big collaborative projects: one a research seminar I directed at the American Academy in Rome, supported by the Getty Foundation, with scholars from North Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and America, on the theme of nationalism in the management of the material past of the medieval Mediterranean (museums and archaeology); and the other with a group of scholars in Palermo on an archaeological, architectural, and digital study and reconstruction of what is perhaps the most important secular building to have survived from the Middle Ages as a whole, the Palazzo dei normanni, funded by the Assemblea Regionale Siciliana. We are now preparing an exhibition on the medieval Mediterranean to travel to the U.S., which will present interesting possibilities for student involvement from UC San Diego.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Much of our time in the university is spent in a theoretical mode, which can be generalizing and abstract, but always try and play it off against your experience and values. One of the points of a university education is to understand others, and as a consequence, also yourself better.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? I find the San Diego area and southern California in general beautiful and fascinating as a landscape, natural and man-made, and I would like to incorporate this as a subject more directly in my teaching.
Manuel Vargas earned his B.A. in philosophy at UC Davis, and he received his joint-Ph.D. in philosophy and humanities from Stanford University in 2001. Prior to his appointment at UC San Diego he was a professor of philosophy and law at the University of San Francisco, where he remains until he arrives at UC San Diego next fall. He has held visiting appointments at the California Institute of Technology, UC Berkeley, and Stanford University. He has been a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard and a visiting fellow at the McCoy Family Center for Ethics in Society at Stanford University.

Vargas is a winner of the American Philosophical Association Book Prize and the inaugural Prize in Latin American Thought, given by the American Philosophical Association. His primary research focuses on the overlap of moral, psychological, and legal issues with human freedom and responsibility. In particular, he is interested in how empirical research can inform our understanding of blame, guilt, and desert. He will teach undergraduate and graduate courses on moral psychology, free will, and Latin American philosophy.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? Apart from the extraordinary colleagues in philosophy, the tremendous faculty throughout the university, our students, the job conditions, quality of life, and weather, I’d have to say that the proximity to ubiquitous and excellent Mexican food is pretty exciting.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? It was the hardest thing I loved to do.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? Philosophy is a field that is particularly dependent on producing interesting failures. We don’t have widespread consensus about what counts as a success, and a lot of what we say ends up being wrong. So, figuring out how and why our best proposals are wrong—and more optimistically, how they might be repurposed in productive ways—is an important part of the slow march toward understanding things. So, I don’t really know. I expect it will be whatever I’ve written that philosophers will still think is worth disagreeing with or re-purposing 10 or more years from now. Perhaps it will be my account of the normative foundations of moral responsibility or my recent work on the role blame plays in our life. I suppose there is an outside chance that my work on Latinx and Latin American philosophy might someday take on a life of its own. We’ll see.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Be open to learning new things, figure out what questions excite you, and then work, really work hard at figuring out the answers. Along the way, talk to as many people as you can.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? I look forward to finding out! San Diego is a big, diverse region, and I have a great deal to learn about it and the possibilities afforded by its communities.
Kathryn Walkiewicz received her Ph.D. in literature from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in August 2014. Prior to her appointment at UC San Diego she was an assistant professor of English and American studies at Kennesaw State University in the Atlanta metro area, and she currently serves as a member of the American Studies Association’s Committee on Critical Ethnic Studies.

While at Kennesaw State, Dr. Walkiewicz developed campus-wide programming to raise awareness and promote discussion of North Georgia’s significance as Cherokee homelands. Dr. Walkiewicz is a co-editor of the anthology "The People Who Stayed: Southeastern Indian Writing After Removal" (University of Oklahoma, 2010) and her article analyzing the significance of 2010 English-only legislation in Oklahoma is forthcoming later this year in the Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association. Her current book project, developed from her dissertation, focuses on U.S.-Indigenous relations and 19th-century narratives of territoriality and statehood. Dr. Walkiewicz’s research was supported by campus-wide fellowships while a doctoral candidate at the University of Illinois, namely a Nicholson fellowship through the Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities (IPRH) and an INTERSECT: Cultures of Law fellowship. She also received the IPRH “Best Graduate Student Research Prize” in 2013 for one of her dissertation chapters. Her research interests include 19th-century literature and culture, Native American and Indigenous studies, and formations of U.S. empire.

At UC San Diego she teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in early American literature and culture, Native American literature, Indigenous studies, and colonialism and empire. Dr. Walkiewicz has received numerous awards for her teaching; the Gunter Starkey Teaching Excellence Award at the University of New Mexico (2006-2007) and the Department of English Teaching Award and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences’ Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (2011-2012) at the University of Illinois.
WHAT EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT COMING TO UC SAN DIEGO? Being part of a dynamic environment that advocates innovation and interdisciplinarity in our shared academic pursuits.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE YOUR FIELD OF STUDY? Literature is a way to make sense of the world(s) we live in, but also a way to imagine other worlds. For me this has always been the primary appeal of literary studies.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENT? Co-editing an anthology of southeastern Native American writers. It was the first collection of contemporary Native writers living in the U.S. South and helped to develop the field of Native South studies. I worked on the book early in my career, and it marked a key moment in the development of my research and teaching interests.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR STUDENTS? Find ways to further educate yourself about things you already feel passion for, but also take intellectual risks. Engage in coursework, campus programming, and community activities that push the limits of your comfort zone and help you think in new and different ways.

HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE RELATIVE TO THE GREATER SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY? As a public university UC San Diego has a commitment to the communities it serves, and as a professor I feel that I do as well. I hope to find numerous ways to build meaningful connections with the community—it’s one of the things I love most about my job—through collaborative projects and outreach. However, I think the first step will be listening and learning more about the greater San Diego community, since I am still new to the area.
Before coming to UC San Diego, Jennifer worked at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She received her Ph.D. at MIT, followed by a postdoc at the University of Leeds. Jennifer works primarily in epistemology, including epistemic utility theory, belief modeling, and normative uncertainty. She also works in philosophy of language, in particular modals and conditionals.

Professor Carr was not available to provide responses to questions before publication deadline.
Ameeth Vijay received his Ph.D. in comparative literature from UC Irvine and has taught at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Turkey. He specializes in global anglophone literature, modern and contemporary British literature, postcolonial studies, and urban studies. His current book project examines the intersections between literature, urban planning, and architecture and tracks the persistence of colonial relationships in the development of contemporary spaces, including in global cities.

Professor Vijay was not available to provide responses to questions before publication deadline.