Together We Zot!
A Natural Oasis for Learning

Co-reserve director and Instructor Peter Bowler teaches his Field Freshwater Ecology students using the experimental ponds of the San Joaquin Marsh Reserve. In spring quarter, the class identified flora and fauna (noting four species of emergent plants along with myriad birds and Pacific tree frogs), tested the water for nitrates, phosphates and salinity; and examined aquatic invertebrates captured in a net.

Steve Chang / UCI
Spring 2019
Together We Zot!

UCI Athletics Reveling In Its Shine: Historic March Madness win puts spotlight on a rich sports program that prides itself on making champions both on and off the court

Parallel Passions: These stellar student-athletes see connections between their sport and career pursuits

A Prescription for Exercise: UCI research into the mechanisms behind the physical and cognitive benefits of activity could enable healthcare providers to personalize interventions

An Eye for Sports: A portrait of alumna and illustrious photographer Robert Beck and some of his favorite shots

About This Issue: In this edition of UCI Magazine, we celebrate the recent March Madness win and highlight the campus’s robust athletics program. Our cover story, “UCI Athletics Reveling In Its Shine” (page 14), chronicles the department’s achievements in creating champions on and off the court, while “Parallel Passions” (page 23) introduces four of these exemplary student-athletes. “The Ultimate Anteater Parents” (page 28) shares the story of two superfans who are the namesakes behind UCI’s Santora Elite Training Center. In “A Prescription for Exercise” (page 30), we go beyond the athlete to focus on UCI scientists conducting pioneering research on how physical activity can prevent cognitive decline and help us all lead healthier lives. Finally, “An Eye for Sports” (page 36) showcases the work of one alumna, with his camera, captured a historic moment that landed on the cover of Sports Illustrated, helping inspire a whole generation of girls to pursue sports themselves. All of these pieces make clear that in Anteater Nation, Together We Zot!

On the Cover: Players celebrate moments before fans rush the court in jubilation as the Anteaters win the Big West Conference Men’s Basketball Tournament at the Honda Center in Anaheim to advance to the NCAA Tournament for just the second time in history. Photo by Nick Storm / UCI Athletics
Letter From Peter

Hello, fellow Anteaters!

Gearing up for commencement here in the Bren, there’s electricity in the air as we close out my 54th year of perpetual “studies.”

I was there in November when men’s soccer advanced in dramatic fashion in the NCAA Tournament with a thrilling victory at home! I was there in February to help UCI alumn Ben Orloff ’09 take the field as the new head coach for UCI baseball, which got off to the second-best start in program history! I was there in March when women’s basketball won their 20th game of the season, for only the second time in program history, on our home court in the Big West Tournament!

I was there this season to cheer as four Anteaters notched school records in track and field events!

I was there in April as women’s water polo defeated Long Beach State on their deck to win a conference championship and help propel us to a Black & Blue Rivalry Series victory!

I was there all season as men’s basketball set a new program record with 35 wins and captured the nation’s attention with their first-ever win in the NCAA Tournament!

And, of course, I was there when I won the Big West Men’s Basketball Tournament mascot championship and the San Jose NCAA Men’s Basketball Regional mascot championship in an epic dance battle against the Oregon Duck – with all of ‘Eater Nation cheering me on."

When you share…

With 28 national championships, 58 Olympians, 4,000-plus scholar-athletes, and more than 1,000 hours of community service and appearances each year, this is an athletics program you can be proud of.

We do it the right way. We do it the Anteater way. Zoot! Zoot! Zoot!

I invite you to join the parade (look it up… it’s what you call a group of anteaters). Get back onto campus for an event like homecoming, cheer teams on when they visit your area or just wear your UCI gear proudly in your community!

I can’t wait for next year to start and to see you again.

Together We Zoot!

Peter T. Anteater
Meeting Their Match

Students in Professor Derek Dunn-Rankin’s mechanical & aerospace engineering design class concentrate on their final exam: creating a functioning music box. Each of 36 teams builds a music module that will play a two-second measure emulating an instrument. When the modules are stacked together, they are intended to render a song “an amazing display of system integration and individual team spirit.”

“The experience gives you a ‘first’ person perspective. You see others while you act. Watching gives you a ‘third’ person perspective. You learn something about how others see you. I’d say this would ‘add’ to the memory … which in a sense is a kind of reshaping.”

Elizabeth Loftus, Distinguished Professor of psychological science and criminology, law & society, on how viewing video playback immediately after an event can alter memory

The New York Times
April 25, 2019

Brains and Brawn

The NCAA recently released its latest Academic Progress Rates, and UCI’s 18 athletic programs excelled, scoring well above the minimum requirement of 930. All had four-year tallies of 950 or higher; 10 were above 980, and five were over 990. Women’s cross country led the way with a perfect APR of 1,000, resulting in a Public Recognition Award for the ninth year in a row. The honor goes to programs that score in the top 10 percent of their sport. Men’s golf (996), women’s volleyball (994), men’s tennis (992) and men’s water polo (991) rounded out the Anteater teams above 990.

“Experience gives you a ‘first’ person perspective. You see others while you act. Watching gives you a ‘third’ person perspective. You learn something about how others see you. I’d say this would ‘add’ to the memory … which in a sense is a kind of reshaping.”

Elizabeth Loftus, Distinguished Professor of psychological science and criminology, law & society, on how viewing video playback immediately after an event can alter memory

The New York Times
April 25, 2019

Fall 2019 Applications Snapshot

117,000+ applications
32% increase over 5 years

almost 30,000 of UCI’s freshman applicants are underrepresented California residents – the UC’s largest number

#1 choice for first-generation freshmen applying to UC

almost 50% of in-state freshmen applying to UCI are first-generation students

"When you look at several decades, it is best to sit back in your chair before looking at the results, because it is a bit scary to see how fast it is changing.”

Eric Rignot, Donald Bren Professor of Earth System Science, on research findings that Greenland’s ice sheet is melting six times faster than in the 1990s

NBC News
April 24, 2019

News

UCI Magazine

Spring 2019
New Kidney Stone Technology Is a Force for Good

An older method of breaking up large kidney stones – shock wave treatment – has been updated with 21st-century technology that may make it more useful to patients, say UCI Health urologists. This spring, UCI unveiled the Gemini stone-busting machine – the first of its kind in the United States.

Typically, such stones are removed via an endoscopic procedure – called a ureteroscopy – in which a thin tube is inserted into the urethra to apply a laser that pulverizes the stone. Lithotripsy, which originally involved sitting in a tub of water while being treated, came on the scene almost 40 years ago as a noninvasive alternative. The UCI Gemini represents the latest advances in noninvasive stone treatment.

The Gemini system includes state-of-the-art imaging and stronger, precise shock waves. It’s housed in a customized surgical suite at UCI Medical Center, where stones can be removed via shock waves or ureteroscopy. Urologists, including Jaime Landman, Ralph Clayman, Ramy Yaacoub and Roshan Patel (left, from left), will evaluate the Gemini’s effectiveness over the next year.

Ultimately, however, the team hopes to help more patients learn how to prevent stones, such as through dietary modifications and medications, says Dr. Clayman, Distinguished Professor of urology and Endowed Chair in Endourology. “At our stone center, depending on the person, we have protocols to prevent another stone from coming back,” he says. “We’d very much like to put ourselves out of business.”

Kidney Stone Facts

About half a million people go to the ER each year for kidney stones.

Kidney Stone Prevalence in the U.S. has jumped from 3.8% in the 1970s to 8.8% in the 2000s for adults.

The lifetime risk of kidney stones is 11% in men and 7% in women.

Source: National Kidney Foundation and NIH Urolithiasis Consensus Conference

Workplace Injuries and the Opioid Epidemic

About 2.8 million Americans suffer nonfatal workplace injuries each year, especially back and other soft-tissue injuries. Workers may think a long-term prescription for opioid pain pills will help them return to their jobs more quickly. However, a new study from UCI shows that approach can backfire.

David Neumark, Distinguished Professor of economics, studied workers’ compensation claims and opioid prescribing patterns in 28 states. The study was funded by the Workers Compensation Research Institute and co-authored with WCRI’s Bogdan Savych and Dr. Randall Lea of Alice Peck Day Memorial Hospital in New Hampshire. It found that employees with prolonged opioid prescriptions had roughly triple the duration of temporary disability compared to workers with similar injuries who were not prescribed longer-term opioids for their pain.

The findings are fodder for officials who set workers’ compensation policies and must deal with the difficult question of providing adequate pain relief while avoiding contributing to the nation’s opioid epidemic. “What this study says is that with longer-term use of opioids, there really isn’t a benefit,” Neumark notes.

A Dance Serenade

Hundreds of hours of painstaking precision and practice went into the Dance Visions 2019 production at the Irvine Barclay Theatre this February. The creative collaboration among choreographers and performers in the UCI Department of Dance’s annual faculty-run show resulted in patterns of fluid motion and feats of astonishing athleticism onstage. Guest artists Nicole Corea and Tobin Del Cuore from the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company in New York joined UCI dance students in “Dvorák Serenade” (2007), an ethereal piece choreographed by Lubovitch, a UCI Distinguished Professor. It portrays a love story between the principle dancers set to movements 1, 2, 4 and 5 of Antonín Dvořák’s Serenade in E major, Op. 22. Says Lubovitch: “The UCI students excelled, with the level of artistry and commitment that I would expect from the best contemporary dance companies in the U.S.” About 2,000 people viewed the four shows, which were enriched by music, light and sound provided by other departments within the Claire Trevor School of the Arts.
The Perils of Plastic

The global fight against ocean plastic pollution came into sharp focus at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in March, with Joleah Lamb (at right), assistant professor of ecology & evolutionary biology at UCI, making a key contribution. Lamb, who studies how diseases affect coral reefs, is co-author of a report released at the event titled “Plastics and Shallow Water Coral Reefs,” which was based in part on her research from across the Indo-Pacific. The document spotlights current science on the subject and provides recommendations to policymakers for addressing and reducing the impact of plastics. Lamb is a marine disease ecologist who identifies strategies for mitigating outbreaks of infectious ailments that threaten ocean and human health. A pioneer in the field, she helped discover that plastics, which make up 60 to 80 percent of marine litter, can carry microbes capable of sickening and killing corals. Lamb is encouraged that the U.N. is taking the problem to heart. “We’re finding that countries which properly control the amount of plastic entering the oceans also have healthier reefs,” she says. “But it’s an issue the world needs to address together.” The report is just a start for Lamb, who’s planning a large-scale study of how pathogens move around in the oceans, with a focus on the biosecurity threat that plastic litter can present.
Dan Klatt’s life path has never taken him far from the chlorine-scented blue water of a swimming pool. He spent hours on the deck as a kid in Fresno, his father coached swimming and was part of the world record-setting U.S. men’s 4 x 200 meters freestyle relay team in the 1973 World Aquatics Championships in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Klatt took up water polo in seventh grade, finding it a happy blend of pool time and team camaraderie.

As a UCI student majoring in social science, he made the men’s water polo team and was named All-American in 1998. He also played defense for the U.S. Olympic men’s water polo team and was named All-American in the 1973 World Aquatics Championships in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Klatt took up water polo in seventh grade, finding it a happy blend of pool time and team camaraderie.

Today, Klatt—who graduated from UCI in 2001—is back on the pool deck in his 15th season as head coach of UCI’s women’s water polo team. The winningest coach in league history, he has built the program into a Big West powerhouse that has won seven of its nine conference finals appearances in 10 years. He has earned Big West Water Polo Coach of the Year honors seven times since 2009. And he is assistant coach of the U.S. women’s national team and head coach of the U.S. women’s junior national team.

The women on Klatt’s UCI roster get more than coaching on corner throws and backhands. They receive a little life coaching as well. This year’s team members read The Power of Passion and Perseverance, by Angela Duckworth, which explores the importance of resilience, ambition and self-control in goal setting.

Klatt sat down with UCI Magazine contributor Cathy Lawhon to talk about how UCI Athletics, leadership and academic programs work together to foster strong teams and student success.

Q: UCI is a force in women’s water polo. How do you build that kind of reputation and expertise? First, we’ve developed a value structure that speaks to our work ethic, competitiveness, recruitment philosophy and training. It took time to establish what was important to me, and the teams take part in it too. Once those values are established, it becomes evident in how you compete. People watch and listen, and we’ve gained a reputation. The bar is set high, and the players expect to win. UCI’s graduation rates, its GPAs, and the growth and excellence of certain academic majors—specifically, business and education—have helped us a lot in recruiting too, because many athletes aim for professions in those areas.

Q: What do you want your team to take away from participating in a competitive and demanding sport such as water polo? Women have better opportunities than they once did in the workplace, but it’s still not equal. Being part of a competitive team helps get them ready for competition in life in general. It teaches how to get along with people who believe differently from you. It provides leadership opportunities and a chance to represent what UCI is all about. Winning and losing helps them learn to appreciate the highs and lows in life, sometimes we forget to enjoy the journey rather than the result. It is demanding, the NCAA allows 132 days of full-time training, and those are 20-hour weeks. But I’m a big fan of “I choose.” I graph the practice time so I can show them visually how much time it takes. And yes, it’s tiring, but 20 is a good age to be tired. I want them to pick a tough major if they want, do research with a professor if they have the chance, push themselves academically, because if everything is going well, they’re happier. There’s so much here for them. Whether they “choose” to take advantage or “choose” not to, it’s up to them.

Q: What’s your most memorable moment as a coach? Last season in the 2018 Big West Tournament, we beat the University of Hawaii in sudden-death overtime. We scored a well-executed play that we had worked on. We played like a team that expected to win, even though Hawaii had beaten us earlier in the season. That won rewarded resilience.

Q: What’s the difference between coaching a university team and the national team? The national team women are older. They’ve been molded at UCI, and they’re in weekly swim lessons. At their age, they’re still working on lifesaving and floating, but it won’t be long before they can move through the water.

Q: Do you think the larger student body appreciates the excellence of UCI’s athletic teams? I think the success of our men’s basketball program is helping promote interest in athletics. But we could do a better job connecting with the campus in general. I’d like to see a robust integration of research and the athletics department—give the biological sciences students, for example, access to our athletes for research opportunities, which would also open our athletes’ eyes to what kind of research goes on here. We could also do more to utilize our events to interact with the rest of the students. And we’re only 54 years old, so with time we’ll be able to do so much more to show the entire community what’s going on with UCI Athletics.

“I’m a big fan of ‘I choose.’ ... I want [team members] to pick a tough major if they want, do research with a professor if they have the chance, push themselves academically, because if everything is going well, they’re happier.”

Q: You’ve been very loyal to UCI. What’s so great about this campus? In the last 15 years, I’ve seen so much growth—in the physical campus but also in the leadership and values. We have our ear to the ground as an institution in terms of sustainability, green energy, and services for Latino and first-generation students. We’re going up in the rankings, and we do the right things to get there. We’ve been called the “best-kept secret,” but I hope that will be replaced with “best-known success.” Campus pride in general is at the highest level I’ve ever seen.

Q: What do you like to do on your own time? My wife and I have a large family in Fresno, so we go up there a lot or take short trips to San Diego or the Central Coast. Right now, my 3-year-old twin boys dominate my life. They spend a good amount of time around the pool at UCI, and they’re in weekly swim lessons. At their age, they’re still working on lifesaving and floating, but it won’t be long before they can move through the water.
"One Shining Moment," a musical tribute played over a video montage of NCAA men’s basketball tournament highlights at the conclusion of the annual March Madness-capping championship game telecast, included a magical UCI moment.

After the No. 13-seeded Anteaters achieved the most noteworthy victory in the program’s history by upending No. 4-seeded Kansas State (70-64) in the first round of the South Regional on March 22, UCI joined basketball blue bloods Duke, Kentucky, Kansas and North Carolina in the reflective consciousness of one of college athletics’ most heralded events.

The Kansas State triumph, followed two days later by a second-round loss to No. 12-seeded Oregon, gave coach Russell Turner’s now perennial Big West Conference champions a school-record 31 wins. It also topped more than a week of revelry that enveloped and elevated ‘Eater Nation into the media spotlight. Fans caught the excitement too: A GIF of mascot Peter the Anteater doing the popular floss dance got over 25 million views.

It was hardly the first such visible exposure for athletics at UCI, a so-called “hidden” jewel that may not boast a football team but has captured 28 national championships in nine sports, including four NCAA men’s volleyball titles in a seven-year span, capped by back-to-back crowns in 2012 and 2013.

But Turner, a former assistant coach at Stanford and Wake Forest, as well as with the NBA’s Golden State Warriors, clearly savored guiding UCI to its second NCAA Tournament appearance. He also choreographed UCI’s first Big Dance, which featured a first-round near upset of No. 4-seeded and three-time national champion Louisville, in 2015.

“It’s meaningful to be on this platform,” Turner told assembled media in San Jose before the 2019 tournament began. “People joked in 2015 that we had put UC Irvine on the map. I always said, ‘No, we didn’t put [the Anteaters] on the map, but we put them on the bracket. And a lot of people notice when you’re on the bracket.’"

“It gives an opportunity for our university to have positive exposure through incredible representatives of our place, and that’s our players. I’m excited for that,” he added. “It is satisfying not just for our players, but for our fans and our community. This is special.”

By Barry Faulkner

UCI ATHLETICS
Reveling In Its Shine

Historic March Madness Win Puts Spotlight on a Rich Sports Program That Prides Itself on Making Champions Both On and Off the Court

Out. 8, 1965: At UCI’s first intramural athletic match, 700 students watch the men’s water polo team defeat Cal Poly Pomona, 22-6, as Randy Hisawt scores the first point in UCI Anteaters history. Al Irwin is the team’s coach.

Nov. 30, 1965: After weeks of serving as UCI’s unofficial mascot, the anteater is formally chosen in a student election to represent the school.

December 1965: Water polo players Bob Hudy and Pat Giangreco become UCI’s first All-American athletes.
consecutive NCAA regionals.

Dick Davis, advances to the first of two
March 1968:
Men's basketball, led by coach
Farmer, Bob Sharp, Bob Nealy and Dave

400-yard freestyle relay team of Steve
individual national champions. Also, the
(3-meter) emerge as the school's first

Swimmer Dave Belknap
competing in its first College World Series, earned a
win the program's first national title. The Anteaters
four in Omaha. The Anteaters, who claimed NCAA
Division II baseball championships
in 1977 and 1978, have
consistently shone on the diamond since, including a
top national ranking in 2009 and another College World
Series appearance in 2014.

Most Brilliant Moment
Perhaps the most gleaming spotlight to be trained
upon UCI Athletics was in 2007, the year the Anteaters collected the Division II-AAA Athletic Directors
Association All-Sports Trophy, given annually to the best
all-around sports program among non-football schools. One season after making its NCAA Final Four debut
in 2006, then-UCI coach John Speraw's men's volleyball
team defeated Indiana-Purdue Fort Wayne in four sets to
win the program's first national title. The every day the triumphant volleyball squad was being saluted at the White House, UCI's baseball team,
competing in its first College World Series, earned a
nearly six-hour, 15-inning victory over rival Cal State
Fullerton in what was at the time the longest game in
CWS history.

Then-baseball coach Dave Serrano's players –
representing a program reinstated just eight years earlier
by a student referendum that had halted nine seasons
of baseball dormancy – went on to win the top four in Omaha. The Anteaters, who claimed NCAA
Division II baseball championships in 1977 and 1978, have
consistently shone on the diamond since, including a
top national ranking in 2009 and another College World
Series appearance in 2014.

Despite being known more, perhaps, for scholars than ballers, UCI – which jumped from the
Division II ranks to Division I in 1977-
78 – has also earned six NCAA
crowns in men's tennis, three each
in men's water polo and men's
swimming, two in men's cross
country and one in men's golf. In addition, the campus has produced
six national titles in sailing and 540
All-Americans, as well as enough
Olympians to outnumber the
individual roster allotments for all of its current men's and women's
sports.

The UCI undergraduate student body passed the Athletics and Student Activities Referendum in
1999, which besides bringing back
baseball, introduced women's water
polo and women's golf – two of the
most successful women's programs. Women's water polo has won
seven Big West Championships and
made six NCAA appearances, while
women's golf has captured five
Big West titles and made three
NCAA appearances.

What's more, 15 of the 18 current
UCI programs have snagged regular-
season championships. One of them,
women's basketball, won the Big
West Tournament Championship to
advance to the NCAA Tournament.

All-Americans Brian Thompson (left) and laptop (alumni-UCI's first men's volleyball
national championship trophy in 2007.

UCI's 2007 men's volleyball team celebrates its victory in the Division II-AAA National Championship.

UCI Magazine

Spring 2019
Making the Grade

While proud of their student-athletes’ excellence in the athletic arena, UCI coaches are equally pleased by their passionate pursuit of academics.

“UCI has so many things to offer,” says women’s golf head coach Julie Brooks. “We recruit competitive athletes who also thrive in the classroom. Competing at the highest level, whether on the course or in the classroom, is what makes UCI impressive. World-class academics, the location, the facilities and a staff committed to the ultimate student-athlete experience – what more could you ask for?”

Jenni Pfeaner, a senior goalkeeper for the women’s water polo team, says that competing in the pool has helped raise her level of academic achievement at UCI.

“The way our coach [Dan Klaft ’01] arranged our schedule, he really does put academics at the forefront,” says the psychology & social behavior major, who plans to go to either physician assistant school or medical school. “In terms of us being athletes at a relatively elite level, I feel like we don’t have a disadvantage in academics. Once I got to UCI, the support for the student-athlete, the resources I was given and the structured schedule that I had really promoted my best learning. It was important that I perform well academically not only to my family, but also to my coach and the culture we had on our team.”

Pfeaner, MVP of the 2018 Big West women’s water polo tournament, says that she appreciates her decision to attend UCI even more now that she has had some time to experience first-hand all that the campus has to offer.

“UCI is kind of a hidden gem,” says the Santa Barbara native. “It has phenomenal academics and – as people have heard everywhere – it’s growing academically. That’s something that’s really exciting to be a part of.”

Intern athletic director Paula Smith, the senior woman administrator for athletics who began working at UCI in 2006 and has been deputy athletic director since 2012, says that academics help UCI stand out in the collegiate sports landscape.

“Obviously, we’re a premier research institution, and our students come here with the knowledge that they’re going to leave with a great education and degree,” she says. “Our graduation success rate for student-athletes is on par with the rest of the institution.”

The most recent statistics published by the NCAA (detailing freshmen entering in 2011-12) indicate that UCI’s overall graduation rate and student-athlete graduation rate (including transfers) were both 85 percent. For those entering the prior year, the student-athlete rate was 88 percent, while the overall rate was 87 percent.

“That’s close to unheard-of,” Smith notes. “We have student-athletes from every one of our schools. Some have double majors and some are in graduate school while still competing, so they take their academic endeavors as seriously as they do their sports. We have great student-athletes who are great ambassadors for our program.”
an assistant coach for the gold medal-winning women’s teams in 2012 and 2016. Men’s water polo standout Ryan Bailey ’99 was a four-time Olympian (2000 through 2012), while Peter Campbell ’83, a four-time All-American at UCI, was on U.S. Olympic water polo teams in 1984 and 1988.

Among other noteworthy Olympians: Greg Louganis ’83, who captured four gold medals and one silver medal in diving over four Olympic Games, and Steve Scott ’78, who competed in track and field in 1984 and 1988 and – like Louganis – was a member of the U.S. team that boycotted the 1980 Games. Scott won four individual NCAA championships in the 1,500 meters and the mile while at UCI. Charles Lock ’12, an NCAA champion in the 800, ran at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, where former men’s volleyball All-American David Smith ’07 competed in his second consecutive Olympics and won a bronze medal.

Two Paralympians are also Anteaters Olympians. Nick Scandone ’90, who was an All-American sailer and member of UCI’s 1988 national championship team, narrowly missed participating on the U.S. team in 1992. Later diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease, he began training for the Paralympics. He was selected by his peers to carry the flag for the U.S. delegation in the 2008 opening ceremonies and went on to win gold in the SKUD 18 class with crewwoman Maureen McKinnon-Tucker. John Morgan ’87, a blind swimmer, won 11 gold medals across two Paralympic Games, including five golds in 1984. At the 1982 Summer Paralympics in Barcelona, Spain, he set six world records and two Paralympic records in winning eight gold medals and two silver.

March 2001: The men’s basketball squad wins the Big West Conference Tournament title for the first time. Allah-mi

May 1999: Runner Jade Provato is named Big West Women’s Track & Field Athlete of the Year after winning the 10,000 and 5,000 meters and finishing second in the 10,000 meters.

March 1999: Women’s basketball wins its first Big West Conference Tournament title in Las Vegas and advances to the NCAA Tournament for the first time. Allah-mi in Las Vegas and advances to the NCAA Tournament in 1999.

March 1998: Women’s water polo coach Dan Klatt ’01, who competed on the U.S. men’s team in 2004 and was

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May 1998: Runner Jade Provato is named Big West Women’s Track & Field Athlete of the Year after winning the 10,000 and 5,000 meters and finishing second in the 10,000 meters.
“It’s not even close,” hoops coach Turner responded to a media inquiry during a March Madness press conference in San Jose. “We have the best mascot, I believe. There are no other anteaters anywhere. We’re unique. We’re fun. We get people’s attention, and I love that.”

And the critter seems to give student-athletes a special boost too. “The Anteater becomes part of you,” notes women’s volleyball head coach Ashlie Hair ’04, who helped lift UCI to two NCAA appearances as an athlete and over the last two seasons has guided the squad to two postseason appearances. “You embrace it and own the fact that you are unique.”

That’s all part of UCI’s special shine, some alumni say. “I wouldn’t be in the position I’m in now if it weren’t for UCI Athletics,” says Scott Brooks, former collegiate and pro basketball player and current head coach of the Washington Wizards, who came back to complete his degree in 1996. “My mom raised me to give back and don’t always take. Irvine has given me so much, enabling me not only to be an NBA player and an NBA coach, but also to have the life skills to be successful off the court.”

On the heels of its latest triumphant achievement, UCI Athletics is working hard to create many more shining moments and futures.

“My UCI experience has given me amazing opportunities to grow as a person physically, spiritually and mentally,” says senior women’s volleyball player Idara Akpakpa. “I’m excited for all of the adventures that I have ahead of me.”

Crât, stamina, drive. These and other qualities are required for star athletes to thrive. But they’re also key to success in the classroom. The four high-achieving individuals featured on the following pages – which provide a glimpse into UCI’s 313 living in double overtime.

By Greg Harderty

Snout Shout-Out

Among the elements that make UCI Athletics unique is its mascot. An anteater based on a character in the “B.C.” comic strip defeated the roadrunner and the unicorn, among others, in a vote by 1,000 students in November of 1965. Peter the Anteater has resonated with even casual college sports fans, spawning the dawn of ‘Eater tournament teams in 2019.

No. 1 among mascots for 68 NCAA men’s basketball references and Zot! Zot! Zot! chants and hand signals (based on the sound the “B.C.” anteater makes when snaring prey). Two digital platforms ranked him second NCAA Tournament victory. Ali Facey wins

May 2018: The men’s golf team wins the Big West Championship behind conference medalist John Chin, who is a Ping All-America first team selection, the first in UCI’s NCAA Division I era.

May 2018: The women’s soccer team makes its debut appearance in the NCAA Tournament and advances to the Sweet 16, where the 13th-seeded ‘Eaters fall to third-seed national champion Louisville, 5-0-5, in their opening round.

August 2016: UCI fields eight representatives at the Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro: Kevin Elise (France) and David Smith, men’s indoor volleyball; Charles Jack, 800 meters; student Paras William-Mensah (Ghana); 4X400 M relay; Eric Lee and student Phillip Chan, badminton; and Dan Blaft and Dave Dunfee, assistant coaches.

March 2015: The men’s basketball team captures the Big West Tournament title to earn its first spot in the NCAA Tournament, where the 13th-seeded ‘Eaters fall to three-time national champions Louisville, 57-55, in their opening round.

June 2015: In the Major League Baseball draft, national batting average leader Keston Hiura was selected in the ninth round, and 14th overall, by the Milwaukee Brewers, the highest pick in UCI history.

May 2018: In a span of two weeks, three UCI teams compete in NCAA championships: Men’s volleyball is an all-conference selection; women’s water polo makes its sixth NCAA trip; and men’s golf logs its 13th regional visit.

March 2019: Men’s basketball clinches its second NCAA March Madness berth after winning the Big West title. The 11th-seeded Anteaters notch the program’s first NCAA Tournament win with an upset over fourth-seeded Kansas State before falling to Oregon.

These stellar student-athletes see connections between their sport and career pursuits

Grit, stamina, drive. These and other qualities are required for star athletes to thrive. But they’re also key to success in the classroom. The four high-achieving individuals featured on the following pages – which provide a glimpse into UCI’s 313 student-athletes in 19 programs – say there are parallels between their sport of choice and their majors and career plans.

“My [pursuits] on and off the court are constantly intertwined,” says Dante Chokravarti, a standout volleyball setter and senior in computer science. “I think a lot of great athletes are really great problem-solvers,” he adds. “They come together, agree on a methodology for learning, and then pose questions and root out the answers. “When I’m on the court, I need to problem-solve quickly, with variables that are moving much faster than in the classroom.”

Read on for more insights from exemplary student-athletes.
Shelby Lee’s achievements on the soccer field are a product of trying to keep up with two older brothers who were super athletic. (One of them, Slater, 24, plays professionally for the Oakland Athletics baseball team.)

Lee, 22, has grown into a soccer talent with a passion for working to improve the well-being of student-athletes nationwide.

For the last two years, she has served as the Big West Female Scholar-Athlete Advisory Committee.

“It’s been an amazing experience and has allowed me to travel far and wide all over the country,” she says.

Meeting three or four times a year, Lee and other committee members discuss the lives of student-athletes and provide feedback on rules the NCAA is voting on.

Last summer, she was the only student-athlete to sit on a panel at an NCAA convention to address the need for a uniform time management plan for student-athletes.

“I was able to tie the importance of a stable schedule to their overall mental health,” says Lee, who has attended a U.S. Olympic Committee summit on sexual violence in sports.

She sees a strong parallel between playing soccer and nursing—her career goal. For two summers when Lee was in high school, she tended to seriously ill babies as an intern in the neonatal intensive care unit of the Tri-City Medical Center in northern San Diego County.

“It’s the teamwork aspect of it,” she says. “Everything that I’ve learned [playing soccer] as far as being a teammate in general and learning how to listen has really helped me. When you’re on the hospital floor, when you’re switching shifts, you have to check in with the nurse that was on the previous shift. You have to get in tune with what the doctors are saying. It’s a very team-oriented job.”

So is soccer.

“I definitely don’t want to close the door on it yet,” says Lee, who is applying to nursing schools. “In a perfect world, it would be great to play a couple of months abroad. If my soccer playing could line up with my nursing school timeline, that would be amazing.”

Dante Chakravorti grew up eating a lot of Indian food. He also spent a lot of time in Italy every summer.

That’s because his father is a native of India and his mother is from Italy.

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“I will get an agent and try to find a team that fits well with me and play a season and either try to move up the ranks over there or come back here and start working,” he says.

Chakravorti’s mother named him after the great poet Dante Alighieri, whose The Divine Comedy is considered the greatest literary work in the Italian language.

Chakravorti relishes the brainwork involved in his sport and major. “Both require a lot of problem-solving,” he says. “I think that’s what computer science and much of volleyball is about: problem-solving.”

Every point is its own little puzzle. You have things that you can do, and you’re trying to figure out how to win more of those little puzzles than the other team.”
BRIANNA VILLANUEVA

Hometown: Atascadero, California
Major: Public health policy
Year: Junior
Sport/events: Track and field/hammer and discus
Significant athletic achievement: Her personal records are among the top 10 of all time at UCI.
Fun factoid: She loves to bake, a passion that began in high school. Lemon bars are a specialty.
Mantra: “Everything happens for a reason.”

Growing up in Atascadero, in San Luis Obispo County, Brianna Villanueva loved to play softball. Understandably, she was crushed when she didn’t make the Atascadero High School girls softball team. Out of that disappointment, however, eventually sprang big achievements in another sport.

Darrell Killors, who coached Villanueva on the AHS girls basketball team and had a daughter who competed as a Division I discus thrower, told the teenager that she had the body type to excel in track and field’s discus and hammer events.

Killors was right. Villanueva developed her skills and got even better at UCI. In the 2018 Big West Challenge, she logged personal bests in the discus (155 feet, 8 inches) and in the hammer (179 feet). The marks rank among the top 10 in UCI women’s track and field history.

The weightlifter, who likes to clear her head by running, is interested in preventing the spread of diseases in lower-income communities. “I want people to be healthy and live better lives,” Villanueva says. “I’m looking to educate those people and increase their knowledge of health and what steps they can take to reduce their chances of disease in the future,” she says. “If I can help make a difference, I want to be able to.”

She too recognizes similarities between her sport and career. “They involve methods to refine little things. For instance, my sport requires a lot of fine-tuning to improve technique, and many times in public health, you’ll need to fine-tune policies to find something that works for all communities or people involved. You can’t always get it perfect, but that’s what we strive for.”

Villanueva says she’ll wait until the end of her discus and hammer competitions during her senior year before deciding whether to compete in post-collegiate throwing events.

A defensive specialist who emerged this season as a leader of UCI’s history-making men’s basketball team – which notched its first-ever win in the fabled March Madness NCAA tournament – Jonathan Calloway loves to slap away shots and pull down rebounds.

Off the court, he’s pursuing a career in which he’ll also be a “stopper” – a crime stopper. The future police officer, at 6-foot-10, certainly has the physical presence to intimidate would-be bad guys.

Calloway, 22, who earned a bachelor’s degree in criminology, law & society at UCI in 2018 and is working on his master’s, continues to nurture his hoop dreams beyond the Anteaters.

This past season was Calloway’s last year on the team (he redshirted as a freshman and so was able to play one year as a graduate student). His coaches have said that he’s definitely pro material.

“I’m trying to get an agent right now and play professionally as long as I can,” he says. “I see myself in Europe.”

His father, Kenny, who died a few years ago, was a correctional officer in the Bay Area – where Calloway grew up – for more than 15 years. And Calloway has several other relatives in law enforcement.

“I just really want to work with the community,” he says. “That’s the appeal of it.”

Calloway interned for UCI Public Safety during the spring quarter of 2018. “It took a lot of bike theft reports,” says Calloway, who as an Anteater logged 13 steals on the court in the 2018-19 season himself. He says he enjoys the daily interactions between officers and students.

“The men and women of that department use every opportunity they have to make a positive impact on the community,” Calloway notes. “This is something that reinforced my aspirations to become a police officer in the future.”

He says this year was so epic for Anteater basketball that it’s difficult to pinpoint just one defining moment.

“If I had to, I’d pick upsetting Kansas State during the NCAA Tournament. Once the buzzer went off, so many different emotions began to overwhelm my teammates and me. Being able to reach our goal of advancing in the tournament was special. That was something we set out to do before the season even started,” Calloway says.

“Having the whole university and the community of Irvine behind us made the win that much better. Accomplishing that with our team is a memory I will cherish for the rest of my life.”
The Ultimate Anteater Parents

Kathleen and Mark Santora are supercommuters. They may live in Silicon Valley, but there’s a special place in their hearts for UCI. And that means they’re in Orange County often. It’s not because they want to keep an eye on their college-age children. Yes, at one time, they shuttled south to see Kevin and Kristen, who were Anteaters. But the younger one, Kristen, graduated five years ago; Kevin graduated nearly a decade ago. Both now work in high-tech in the Bay Area.

So why are the Santoras still drawn to the school?

“Because it’s our daughter’s alma mater, she was in the class of 2014,” Kathleen Santora says. “We toured the Esports Arena recently, which was fascinating. We go to events at the UCI Sports Pavilion, campus events. In fact, we toured the Cove innovation center and to Shakespearean plays. There’s just so much going on.”

What she doesn’t mention is the role she and her husband play as mentors, activists and philanthropists.

They are the ultimate UCI parents – engaged, involved, and happy to share their talents and resources with the school and its students even though their own children moved on long ago.

Among their commitments, they are members of the UCI Foundation board of trustees, the Undergraduate Success Leadership Advisory Board and the Chancellor’s Success Leadership Advisory Board. Kathleen Santora was a member of the UCI Board of Trustees and a member of the UCI Foundation board of trustees, the Undergraduate Success Leadership Advisory Board and the Chancellor’s Success Leadership Advisory Board. Kathleen Santora was a member of the UCI Board of Trustees and a member of the UCI Foundation.

The gift evolved through their son’s interest in soccer. Kevin, who graduated in 2010 with a degree in business, wanted to make a difference. “As a child, Mark Santora moved along on long ago. His dad’s work with lifelong learners,” Kathleen Santora says. “UCI is one of the best environments for tomorrow’s leaders to work cross-collaboratively, developing their leadership and problem-solving skills.”

“The couple is also making an investment in something else that looks promising: UCI.”

“With UCI’s outstanding leadership,” he says, “it’s easy to see why the university’s future is so bright.”

The couple has had a rich and broadening experience at UCI, and my wife and I were extremely grateful and strongly motivated to give back.”

The five-star, 8,500-square-foot weight room, which opened in fall 2014, offers resistance training, speed development, conditioning and flexibility workouts. It also enables the more effective rehabilitation of injured student-athletes by providing access to non-impact exercise machines and cardiovascular equipment.

The gift evolved through their son’s interest in soccer. Kevin, who graduated in 2010 with a degree in business economics, played on UCI’s Division I soccer team, which in his junior and senior years qualified for the NCAA soccer tournament – the squad’s first appearances in campus history.

“We came down to watch all the games,” Mark Santora recalls. “We noticed that some of the facilities could use a refresher. We thought about what we could do, and the weight room seemed like it would have the greatest impact on student-athletes.”

“Since its opening, the Santora Elite Training Center has been instrumental in the sports performance achievements of our 350 student-athletes,” says Paula Smith, UCI’s interim athletics director, adding that it’s “a place that builds champions.”

David Kroeff, UCI head coach for men’s volleyball, says the facility “has been a game changer. It helps us recruit, retain and prepare our student-athletes for success.”

The Santoras were happy to be able to contribute, they say. “What was once a very tired office building was transformed into a modern, efficient and exciting space,” Mark Santora says. “It’s a very green space incorporating two retractable, 70-foot doors that go up during the day; it almost never needs air conditioning.”

“Our children had a rich and broadening experience at UCI, and my wife and I were extremely grateful and strongly motivated to give back,” he adds.

As a child, Mark Santora moved along with his parents in high-tech companies. “I’ve been involved with numerous startups over the years,” he says. “You analyze the people, the technology and the market and make investments of time and capital in the ones that look the most promising.”

“Our children had a rich and broadening experience at UCI, and my wife and I were extremely grateful and strongly motivated to give back.”

The ceiling of the Elite Training Center is an incredible amount of need and opportunity to give. “With UCI’s outstanding leadership, I have always wanted to make a difference,” Mark Santora says. “In today’s world, there is an incredible amount of need and opportunity to give.”

Steve Zylius / UCI
Richard Carpenter, 75, was going through the mail one day last year when he saw a postcard from UCI seeking participants for a study on whether exercise can help with age-related memory loss. “I almost put it into the recycle pile,” Carpenter says. “But I mentioned it to my wife, and she said ‘Wait!’ She knew I could use a program like this. For the last 20 years, I have not really been involved in exercise at all, and my memory is really bad.”

Today, the retired criminal investigator for NASA works out at the Huntington Beach YMCA four times a week as part of a 15-site national study on the effects of aerobic exercise on adults with mild memory problems. The Exercise Evaluation Randomised Trial is co-led by Carl Cotman, a UCI professor of neurology and neurobiology & behavior who’s a renowned expert on age-related dementia and exercise. “What we’re hoping to get with EXERT is compelling evidence that exercise can improve fitness and cognitive ability and help protect people from cognitive decline,” he says. “We would like to have enough solid evidence for physicians to write prescriptions for exercise.”

Across the UCI campus, researchers are exploring the impact of exercise on health from childhood until the end of life. That focus now includes a bachelor’s degree in exercise science that emphasizes the health effects of physical activity. The university has a long history in exercise science, says James W. Hicks, professor of ecology & evolutionary biology and director of the campus’s Center for Exercise Medicine and Sport Sciences. However, he says, the twin epidemics of obesity and diabetes have propelled research away from questions about exercise and sports performance toward the theory that “exercise is medicine.” “That concept has exploded,” Hicks says. “That’s where the future is: understanding how exercise alters disease trajectories and improves outcomes.”

UCI research into the mechanisms behind the physical and cognitive benefits of activity could enable healthcare providers to personalize interventions.

By Shari Roan

Exercise

Exercise may help prevent age-related cognitive decline, but according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only 53 percent of U.S. adults meet national guidelines for aerobic physical activity (at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous activity throughout the week).
An Antidote to Aging

If anyone has been at the forefront of exercise and health, it’s Cotman. More than two decades ago, his research showed that exercise increases production of a substance called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF aids in learning and memory and facilitates connections among nerve cells. It’s so critical to brain function that it has been dubbed “Miracle-Gro for the brain.”

“Exercise builds brain health,” says Cotman, a founding director of UCI MIND, one of 30 National Institutes of Health-funded centers for aging and dementia research. “It makes you more efficient. You’re thinking clearer. It introduces a state of readiness.”

The EXERT study will be a critical test of the theory that sufficient aerobic exercise can help stave off dementia. With the burgeoning number of Americans with Alzheimer’s disease, its findings are highly anticipated. While Cotman has pursued his research over the past 25 years, many other dementia theories and treatments have withered away.

“Since 2002, 420 clinical trials on drugs targeted for Alzheimer’s have been launched. All of them failed,” Hicks notes. “No drug will change its trajectory. But physical activity might.”

EXERT researchers plan to enroll 300 people, who will participate in either stretching and balance exercises or aerobic training. They’ll undergo testing for cognition, brain atrophy and inflammation, as well as amyloid-tau biomarkers linked to dementia in blood and spinal fluid samples. Results could be available in about three years.

“We’re entering an era in which we have to figure out how to build better exercise prescriptions. We can tailor exercise interventions. It’s very much consistent with the notion of precision, or personalized, medicine.”

“The Best Dirty Drug Around”

Michael Yassa, UCI Chancellor’s Fellow and professor of neurobiology & behavior, is known for his on-the-move meetings. Exercise is so important to health and cognition that the director of the Center for the Neurobiology of Learning & Memory and his students tackle agendas while making a loop of the campus or heading for coffee.

Yassa’s translational neurobiology lab focuses on learning and memory and their role in education, technology and disease processes. He calls exercise “the best dirty drug around.” In pharmaceutical science, a dirty drug is one that binds to many molecular targets in the body instead of just one. That’s usually a recipe for disaster in drug development. But exercise may be the perfect dirty drug formula for overall good health and the prevention of a wide range of ailments.

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“We’re entering an era in which we have to figure out how to build better exercise prescriptions. We can tailor exercise interventions. It’s very much consistent with the notion of precision, or personalized, medicine.”

“Exercise has myriad different mechanisms, and all of them are good,” Yassa says. “There’s something magical about it.”

Physical activity is underutilized as a health prescription, he says, in part because researchers can’t really explain why it works wonders for some people but not others. Nor can anyone describe the appropriate “dose” for specific conditions. That’s the frontier facing 21st-century exercise scientists.

“We’re entering an era in which we have to figure out how to build better exercise prescriptions,” Yassa says. “We can tailor exercise interventions. It’s very much consistent with the notion of precision, or personalized, medicine.”

He’s using highly controlled laboratory research to do that. In many of his experiments, the oxygen consumption of exercise participants is controlled, while brain function is gauged via functional MRI. In a study published last year in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Yassa and his colleagues found that memory, as measured by a test, improved in healthy young adults after just a 10-minute, light-intensity run on a treadmill. Using functional MRI, the researchers showed heightened activity in the hippocampus — the seat of memory in the brain — after the mild workout.

“People used to think, ‘If I can’t get out and do 30 minutes at the gym and break a sweat, it’s not worth it,’” Yassa says. “But even 10 minutes of walking can give you an extra boost.”

The UCI Health Pediatric Exercise and Genomics Research Center is one of the very few research facilities in the country with state-of-the-art pediatric performance labs to conduct exercise tests and evaluate the effects at the molecular level.
Physical activity at least five days per week, the amount recommended under national guidelines. According to the CDC, just 22 percent of children ages 6 to 19 engage in 60 or more minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day.

The UCI Health Pediatric Exercise and Genomics Research Center is one of just 11 sites participating in MoTrPAC—the only one focusing on children. There, you’ll find youngsters on treadmills or engaged in resistance training. It’s among the very few research facilities in the country with state-of-the-art pediatric performance labs in which to conduct exercise tests and evaluate the effects at the molecular level.

By examining children before and after exercise—for example, by looking at blood samples to analyze genetic and molecular affects—MoTrPAC will develop a database on how a child’s cells respond to exercise, a database that can be accessed by scientists around the world, according to Shlomit Radom-Aizik, PERC’s founder and executive director.

“I tried to be as active as possible,” says UCI’s exercise science executive director, Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health. In a blog post, Collins said the work illustrates the importance of an ongoing NIH-funded project exploring the molecular, or cellular, changes that arise with physical activity. The project is called the Molecular Transducers of Physical Activity Consortium, and UCI is involved in that project too.

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“I was a competitive gymnast as a child. I knew from very early on what I wanted to do in my life. I wanted to study exercise, and I wanted to do it on a molecular level.”

Michael Yassa

UCI’s exercise scientists practice what they preach

James W. Hicks

UCI’s exercise scientists practice what they preach

Cycles 60 to 120 miles a week; walks to campus every day; never takes an elevator less than five floors

“I have always been pretty active, but busy lives can get in the way of exercise. After I had a health scare, I got serious about my diet—and I got very serious about exercise.”

Shlomit Radom-Aizik

Rides bike to work one or two days a week; does Pilates once a week; completes circuit training twice a week

“This will bring exercise science to a completely different level,” she says. “Understanding the mechanisms is where we’ll have an opportunity to make a huge leap and be able to use exercise as medicine.”

The study, which is being undertaken in collaboration with the UCI Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, includes children between the ages of 10 and 17 from local schools. Nationwide, MoTrPAC will collect data from a diverse group of 2,700 people up to age 75.

Center experts also conduct other research, such as looking at the impact of exercise on youngsters with chronic conditions like asthma, autism and cystic fibrosis, as well as children who have survived cancer.

“Doubles tennis is a lot of fun. It’s social, and you get a fair amount of exercise if you play an aggressive game. But I have to talk myself into it sometimes. At the end of the day, I think: ‘You’re telling everybody else to exercise. Get out there, boy!’”

Carl Cotman

Works out at LA Fitness four times a week; plays doubles tennis once a week

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Center experts also conduct other research, such as looking at the impact of exercise on youngsters with chronic conditions like asthma, autism and cystic fibrosis, as well as children who have survived cancer.

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An Eye for Sports

You may not recognize his name, but you’ve probably seen Robert Beck’s work – particularly a photo of soccer standout Brandi Chastain that went viral before going viral became a thing and inspired countless young girls.

For more than three decades, the 1977 UCI history alumnus has been one of the nation’s premier sports photographers, a career he fell into almost accidentally while working as a middle school teacher and football coach.

Beck’s road to shutterbug stardom began in the early 1980s, a few years after he had earned a teaching credential at UCI. To pick up some extra cash while substitute teaching in San Diego, he borrowed his dad’s Canon AE-1 Program camera and started shooting high school sports, selling the prints to parents and students. He soon had enough money to buy his own camera and – because he was a surfer – a waterproof housing so he could photograph fellow wave riders.

The ocean action pictures led to gigs with surfing magazines, a stock photo agency and, eventually, Sports Illustrated. Since then, Beck has shot 10 Super Bowls; a half-dozen Olympics; and countless games, matches and athletic achievements, such as Wayne Gretzky’s record-breaking 802nd hockey goal. He has also developed a reputation for compelling portraits. Using such props as Fruity Pebbles cereal, underwater furniture, Navy jets and a herd of sheep, he has coaxed intriguing poses out of everyone from skateboarder Tony Hawk and pitcher Madison Bumgarner to hurdler Lolo Jones and Olympic sprinter Usain Bolt.

To date, Beck’s portfolio includes more than 150 cover photos for Sports Illustrated.

Curiously, the South Pasadena native has had little formal training. Although he took a photography class in high school and spent his first year at UCI as an art major, Beck’s skills are essentially self-taught. “I just have an eye for composition,” he explains. And for offbeat photographic equipment. He occasionally snaps pictures with Polaroid, Russian and even infrared cameras, the last producing what he calls “a dreamy black-and-white effect.”

“Sometimes you’ve gotta find something that sets you apart,” Beck says.

– Roy Rivenburg

Usain Bolt crouches near a makeshift reflecting pool that Robert Beck constructed from plywood, thick sheets of black plastic, a swatch of indoor-outdoor carpet (to mimic the feel of a track) and an inch of water. To help capture the Jamaican athlete and “fastest man in the world” in what turned out to be a difficult-to-hold pose, Beck played his favorite style of reggae music.
Surfing superstar Kelly Slater is seen frozen in motion—10 times—during a 2014 contest at Trestles, along San Onofre State Beach. Multi-exposure photos are “a great way to show the complete effort of an athlete during a maneuver,” Beck says. “Here, I’m showing how Kelly travels during an aerial. He’s not just going up and down and sliding; he’s traveling across and above the wave. It’s quite a difficult maneuver to complete.”

No, that isn’t a blanket of snow that golfer Jordan Spieth is playing on at the 2015 Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia. The photo was taken with an infrared camera, producing what Beck calls “a dreamy black-and-white effect.” It’s one in a series of dramatic infrared photos for look at the event. “At Sports Illustrated, we can experiment,” he says.
Beck’s most famous photo captures Brandi Chastain’s victory celebration after her history-making penalty kick at the 1999 FIFA Women’s World Cup final in Pasadena. Years later, she told him, “You don’t understand what that picture meant to thousands of little girls across the country. It conveyed that they could play sports and be on the cover of Sports Illustrated.”

This Sports Illustrated cover shot of teen snowboarding sensation Chloe Kim and her miniature Australian shepherd was taken after Kim won a gold medal at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea. “The web went crazy with that image,” Beck says.

At a high-profile 2012 match, boxer Juan Manuel Marquez delivers a crushing knockout punch to Manny Pacquiao in round six at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. After Pacquiao collapsed to the ground, “I thought he was dead,” Beck recalls. “His wife and family were seated behind me. I think his wife feared the worst as well. It was the perfect punch.”

While preparing for the 2012 Olympics, hurdles star Jones had her running and jumping mechanics analyzed via high-speed cameras set up along a track in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. “To illustrate what was going on,” Beck says, “we bought some wire at Radio Shack and little round Band-Aids at a pharmacy, then connected her to my laptop with a display of what the speed cameras saw.”

Shot with a macro lens and illuminated solely by a hotel window, this “interesting character study of Kobe Bryant without all his basketball trappings” was taken after a media event to promote the Lakers star’s Showtime documentary.

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The original image of teen snowboarding sensation Chloe Kim playing a piano. “But she was out of the music and it was all broken,” Beck says. While workers dismantled the set and Beck polished a piano, Hayman began leaping a rail around the studio. “I started taking pictures, and there were so many,” the photographer says.
Upset Alert

Evan Leonard leads the fast break with Max Hazzard (left) and Robert Cartwright (right) as the 13th-seeded Anteaters eliminate fourth-seeded Kansas State, 70-64, in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. UCI was the lowest-seeded team to win a game in this year’s championship – which also marked the first time the men’s basketball squad advanced to the second round.
My introduction to sports was early in my adolescent years. My love for it was shaped naturally—while playing—and I didn’t even realize it was happening. Being a daughter of a military family, I lived in several states and in Germany. It didn’t matter if you were the new kid on the block or if you understood the local language; you could connect playing sports. To me, it was simply adapting to a new environment and making friends.

I bowled with my family (mom, dad and two sisters). I enjoyed it so much that I joined teams with my sisters and, eventually, on my own. I played recreational sports, including fast-pitch softball and basketball, in city leagues and in high school. I entered in volleyball and basketball. I assumed these opportunities had always existed. It never occurred to me that there was a time when women were denied such access to sports. Thankfully, due to Title IX, the doors had been opened for women.

Coming out of high school, I knew I was not a recruitable athlete and that my playing days would likely be over. I went off to New Mexico State University—not sure what I wanted to do, like many freshmen. I chose to study accounting but quickly realized I was not interested in preparing and examining financial records; it just didn’t keep my interest. Again like many students, I changed my major—from accounting to marketing. This was lesson No. 1 on my journey. At the basic level, marketing is the business of creating relationships with and satisfying customers. Lightbulb moment: What connected this field of study to my love of sports? Relationships.

Since I had not been recruited to play sports and didn’t even contemplate doing so in college, the next best thing was the opportunity to work in the athletics department in a college work-study job. It was an extension of sports and an opening to realize a career in this field. Fast-forward four years and graduation was upon me. What would I do? Continue to study or work? I decided to take a break from studies and apply for jobs. I took my business law professor’s recommendation and applied for an internship. It was with the Big West Conference office and was created through an NCAA grant for minorities and women in sports.

That internship launched my career in athletics, and I never looked back. It’s hard to imagine a career in another field. This brings us to lesson No. 2: matching one’s passion with work. Athletics is more than a job that compensates me. My employment opportunities have provided me with experiences and education that fuel my current and future actions.

I have had a wonderful career working at the Big West Conference in the compliance and championships units as well as sports administration at two University of California campuses (UCI and UC Riverside). My passion for sports has been shaped through intercollegiate athletics, which fosters character, good sportsmanship, teamwork, health, physical fitness and safety, social skills, hard work, and perseverance. There is a value to sports in higher education that reaches beyond the classroom; it is woven into the fabric of campus life and extends into the community.

At UCI, the mission is to mobilize knowledge, serve the people and educate its students. UCI Athletics consists of 313 student-athletes and 125 coaches and staff who contribute to the student-athlete experience on campus. It aids the community through stewardship and produces the best and brightest on and off the field. It is all about people. This is my why. Why do I do what I do? Why I love what I do: Why I have passion for what I do. And it aligns with the institutional why.

Pivoting back to the beginning of my career and that internship brings me to lesson No. 3. Give back and pay it forward. The NCAA grant that created the internship was intended to increase the involvement of minorities and women in sports by developing an inclusive environment, thereby generating a culture that promotes fair and equitable access to opportunities and resources. People have to see someone like them participating to believe it’s possible.

Accepting and understanding the responsibility of having a seat at the table to influence policies and decisions is key. In my own journey, there were times that I delayed advancing my career for fear of failure or not being comfortable saying “I’m not sure I’m ready” and asking for support. This is something women do but rarely acknowledge. But men and women have encouraged and supported me countless times. For me, paying it forward is willing to be vulnerable, to share my fear and discomfort, with the intention of helping other underrepresented individuals take a leap of faith to advance and know that they’ll be supported.

Celebrating women in sports requires acknowledging UCI’s first female athletics director, Linda Dempsey, and the achievements of women’s programs at UCI, such as numerous Big West titles, NCAA appearances, All-Americans, conference Players of the Year and Lauds & Laurels recipients. After 30 years, I still think back to how oblivious I was about the opportunity to play sports or have a career in athletics. And I’m grateful for the lessons provided.

Smith is senior woman administrator for UCI Athletics and has been deputy athletics director since 2002. She’s currently serving as interim athletics director.

My why equals passion and that, in turn, makes all things possible. Thus, over the course of my career, I have given back by volunteering with various NCAA entities, such as the Minority Opportunity and Interest Committee, the National Collegiate Men’s Volleyball Committee and the Division I Council. Paying it forward is working every day as a leader to create an inclusive future for minorities and women in sports.

People have to see someone like them participating to believe it’s possible.”
Getting Into the Game

UCI Esports scholarship player Parsa Baghai (in hat) guides participants in last summer’s Girls in Gaming program on campus. This July, another 20 students from various middle and high schools throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties will attend the one-week day camp—which is hosted by UCI Esports in partnership with the North America Scholastic Esports Federation—in an effort to introduce teen girls to the types of workforce opportunities in the industry and to encourage early networking.
Mr. Go-To

Longtime UCI administrator (and eventual alumn) honored for behind-the-scenes influence on campus

By Roy Rivenburg

He calls himself “the accidental administrator,” the high-ranking UCI official who for most of his 40-year campus career didn’t have a college degree.

“I wore [the lack of a diploma] like a badge but also as a chip on my shoulder,” says Michael Arias, who started as a guide through the obscure dark wood of [UCI’s] central administration, “having my fingerprints on things without getting recognition for it.”

Arias’ original career goal, however, would have entailed jobs of glory. “Nobody grows up hoping to be a college administrator. I wanted to be a rock star,” says the Santa Ana native, whose University Hills home is outfitted with a dozen-plus guitars, mandolins and a ukulele.

Instead, after dropping out of UC San Diego because of family financial problems, Arias sold his Fender Telecaster, married a high school classmate and took a series of odd jobs: liquor store clerk, factory worker, restaurant employee and, in 1979, UCI copymaster.

Two years later, when a chance to move up the Anteater food chain arose, Arias had to borrow a sports jacket and belt for his interview. The looser attire helped him land a position as director of the academic budget.

He quickly fell in love with the campus, even joining the basketball team broadcast crew as a statistician so he could see every game without breaking the bank.

In the early 1990s, Arias briefly reverted to his hippie persona. It was after he had become assistant dean in the School of Social Sciences. Struggling to connect with his staff, he consulted an executive coach, who recounted a similar problem in her own past. To make herself more vulnerable, she advised Arias. “Find your own karaoke.”

Realizing that many social sciences professors at that time had second jobs, Arias stopped wearing suits to work, minus jacket and belt for his interview. “I wished my mom had handed me his diploma. “It was a garment I packed said ‘UCI baseball,’” he says.

At commencement, his boss at the time, Provost Michael Gottfredson, jokingly presented him with an honorary master’s degree. “I think of Mike as the consummate ‘fixer,’” Provost Michael Gottfredson told the Association for the Alumni of the UC Irvine Board of Regents, “the person who always knows what to do in a difficult situation.”

But Arias wouldn’t have it any other way. “UCI is like a giant bookmobile that brings the world to you,” he says. “I think of Mike as the consummate ‘fixer,’ the person who always knows what to do in a difficult situation,” says Bill Maurer, dean of social sciences. “He also advised me to always think about the next several steps beyond a particular decision, saying that how you solve a problem now will set other people’s expectations in the future. In other words, Mike was effective because he’s both a fantastic communicator and a savvy chess player.”

Despite his rise in the ranks, Arias says, he “often felt like a bit of a fraud.” So, at age 50, he enrolled at UCI as a social sciences major. In addition to filling a hole in his résumé, “it was good for my soul to walk a mile in student shoes, because administrators can be so out of touch,” he says.

Taking classes during lunch, at night and over summers, Arias finished his coursework in two and a half years, graduating magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in 2011. At commencement, his boss at the time, Provost Michael Gottfredson, handed him his diploma. “It was a profoundly moving moment for me,” Arias recalls. “I wish my mom had been alive for that, because she was always urging me to get a degree.”

Three years later, Gillman tapped him to join the chancellor’s office, where he played a major part in creating the Susan and Henry Samueli College of Health Sciences, two student dorms and the Interdisciplinary Science & Engineering Building, among other projects.

“I think of Mike as the consummate ‘fixer,’ the person who always knows what to do in a difficult situation.”

Since departing from Aldrich Hall, Arias has turned his energies to preparing for the arrival of his first grandchild, getting more exercise and traveling with wife Linda, a fellow UCI retiree who served as personnel director in The Henry Samueli School of Engineering. In March, the couple planned to embark on a train trip to Chicago, then return to California via rental car along Route 66. But not before Arias, now a longtime Anteater basketball season ticketholder, took a quick detour.

On the morning of UCI’s first game in the 2019 NCAA men’s basketball tournament, he flew to San Jose to watch the squad defeat Kansas State the next day. He’s similarly devoted to UCI’s baseball team. “I recently went on a cruise and realized that nearly every garment I packed said ‘UCI baseball,’” he quips.

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Collection of California art, the Sue & Bill Gross School of Nursing and Douglas Hospital. This spring, the UCI Alumni Association bestowed on him its highest honor, the Lauds & Laurels Extraordinary Award, citing his “substantial influence on the campus and his mentoring of numerous professors, staff members and Aldrich Hall bygones.” He was my own personal Virgil, a guide through the obscure dark wood of [UCI’s] central administration, says former Vice Provost Michael P. Clark. “I was after he had become assistant dean in the School of Social Sciences. Struggling to connect with his staff, he consulted an executive coach, who recounted a similar problem in her own past. To make herself more reliable, the consultant had invited her employees to a bar and sang karaoke in front of everyone. ‘Be vulnerable,’ she advised Arias. ‘Find your own karaoke.’”

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Laurence Jackson ’76, social ecology

An African philosophy shaped in spirituality guides Laurence Jackson’s work as CEO of the Progressive Life Center, a non-profit that offers child welfare, juvenile justice and counseling services in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. An L.A. native, Jackson traces his interest in mental health to an encounter with UCI professor Joseph L. White, a pioneer in the field of black psychology. “I set a new course of study – switching from computer science – and never looked back,” he recalls. After graduating with a master’s degree in counseling from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Maryland, College Park, he later opened the Progressive Life Center, a hub for African-based psychotherapy, and rose to its top post in 2008. Citing her dad, who taught at Cal Poly Pomona, and her 11th grade teacher, who encouraged her to incorporate humor into their work.

Jennifer Day dos Santos ’05, flute performance

A benign brain tumor transformed Jennifer Day dos Santos from woodwind professional to bodybuilding contestant. Along the way, she also married a former mixed martial arts fighter from Brazil and began making prosthetic hands at home. Raised in Hemet, dos Santos spent five years playing flute in various San Diego-based bands while working for UCI’s English department and battling exhaustion caused by an anti-tumor medication. Hoping to feel better, she put on her boxing gloves and took up competitive bodybuilding and opened a gym with her husband. She kept her job at UCI, where she currently manages the anthropology department. Outside work, dos Santos and her husband belong to the Savo Foundation, which provides free tuition and other aid to high school and college students in Cambodia.

Ryan Trainer ’08, physics

He’s a telesecope time traveler, observing galaxies so far away that the light they emitted millions of years ago is just now reaching Earth. The ancient glimmers enable astronomer Ryan Trainer to glimpse what the universe was like in its infancy and understand how it evolved. “From a cosmic soup of gas and matter into the complex array of structures we see today,” he says Trainer. Raised in Macleville, Trainer was initially intrigued by math but switched to studying stars as an undergraduate. After UCI, he earned a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in astrophysics at Caltech, where he also helped build Mosfire, a $14 million infrared camera, for the W.M. Keck Observatory in Hawaii. Following postdoctoral research at UC Berkeley, Trainer joined Franklin & Marshall College in Pennsylvania as an assistant professor of physics and astronomy.

Jennifer (Mong) Lau ’95, economics and Chinese language & literature

Tiptoeing through minefields and toiling in slave labor camps were a big part of Jenny Lau’s formative years. The ideal began in 1975, when Khmer Rouge soldiers stormed into her Cambodian hometown, and didn’t end until her eight-member family escaped to Thailand in late 1979 and eventually came to the United States under the sponsorship of a Michigan church.

Maurya Simon, M.F.A. ’84, poetry

Maurya Simon screwed her first poem. Decades later, she’s still at it, with an award-winning nervous that moves on everything from the origin of parentheses (in her chapbook A Brief History of Punctuation) to what lies beyond death (answer: “A fever of unknowing, a match-head struck in the darkness of the void. A blue door without a handle that suddenly swings open.”). Simon, a UC Riverside professor emerita who was raised in Western Europe and Herausa, created monoprints and composed an opera libretto. She’s now working on a young adult detective novel about a boy named Sam who’s been transformed into a match-head. Simon, a former member of the UCI’s men’s water polo head coach Edward “Ted” Newland died April 4. He was 91. Newland inspired integrity and demanded excellence from all of his “ghetto birds” (aka police helicopters). Abused by his stepfather as a youngster, he was placed in foster care and adopted by an older couple who had babysat him. At age 8, May’s took himself computer programming, a skill that began blossoming in middle and high school. He continued his digital development at UCI, where he also sang and played keyboard in a campus gospel choir. “God is the hero of my story,” says Mays, who recounts his zigzag life path in a short BuzzFeed video titled “How I Went From Compton to Google.”

Anthony D. Mays ’06, computer science

“A rose bush of beauty and pain” is how Anthony D. Mays describes Compton, where he grew up amid gangs and “ghetto birds” (aka police helicopters). Abused by his stepfather as a youngster, he was placed in foster care and adopted by an older couple who had babysat him. At age 8, May’s took himself computer programming, a skill that began blossoming in middle and high school. He continued his digital development at UCI, where he also sang and played keyboard in a campus gospel choir. “God is the hero of my story,” says Mays, who recounts his zigzag life path in a short BuzzFeed video titled “How I Went From Compton to Google.”
**Spring Fling**

A painted lady butterfly – one of thousands that flew across campus in March during their annual migration north – makes a stop on an Asteraceae in the coastal sage scrub demo bed at the UCI Arboretum. “Painted ladies feed on many different kinds of flowers and are common to observe every year,” says nursery manager Rebecca Crowe, “but this was a banner year for butterflies moving through our area.” Guided arboretum tours are available by appointment. For info, go to arboretum.bio.uci.edu.

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