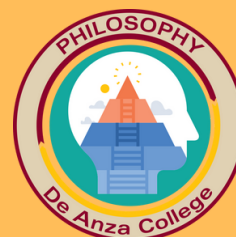
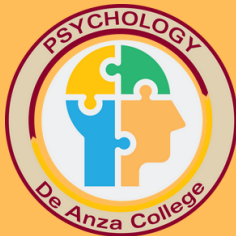




“BREAKTHROUGHS”



Winter 2024 NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 2



WHAT IS “BREAKTHROUGHS?”

“Breakthroughs” is a quarterly e-newsletter, created by De Anza College’s Social Sciences and Humanities Division, with the purpose of promoting the division’s success and achievements of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, community engagement, students’ journey, academic program advancement, and faculty scholarships. “Breakthroughs” is crafted as an e-booklet for everyone to view and is publicly available to the college, district, and beyond.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.deanza.edu/socialsciences
SSH_Division@deanza.edu



A LETTER FROM THE DEAN

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to welcome you to this latest edition of “Breakthroughs,” where we embark on an immersive exploration of the captivating and pioneering endeavors flourishing within our division.


I am thankful to all our colleagues who contributed and shared their stories. It has long been my steadfast belief that the act of sharing stories serves as a conduit for gaining a comprehensive understanding that surrounds us within the college’s ecosystem of excellence and progress.

The heart of the liberal arts is still centered on the humanity within us; therefore, it is important to remember that the core of our work is centered on “people and place” --- the very meaning of what community is about. As we approach the end of the academic year, I implore each one of you to embark on a quest to discover a nurturing “place” within the expanse of De Anza College, where your talents and passions can make positive change, all while taking care of your mental well-being.

Furthermore, I urge you to cultivate meaningful connections with the diverse array of “people” --- individuals whose presence enriches and can be an added value to your professional journey here.

Spring is here, so let’s embrace it and seize the opportunity for many new beginnings.

In Community,
Dr. Elvin T. Ramos
Dean, Social Sciences and Humanities Division
De Anza College

**BREAKTHROUGHS
THIS SEASON:**

**DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT:
POLITICAL SCIENCE – PG. 2**

**FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: PROF.
DERRICK FELTON – PG. 4**

**BEHIND-THE-SCENES:
FORENSICS LAB,
ADMINISTRATION OF
JUSTICE – PG. 5**

**OVERVIEW: NEH GRANT
– PG. 6**

**FEATURE: SSH EQUITY
CORE TEAM + STUDENT
VOICES – PG. 7**



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT: POLITICAL SCIENCE



Courtesy Photos



With the 2024 U.S. primary elections underway, the necessity of understanding the basis of politics has become important for many classrooms across the country.

For the Political Science Department within De Anza College’s Social Sciences and Humanities Division, faculty understand the significance of engaged learning for students, but also, take it a step further to have them actively engage in civil engagement.

“It’s important to be as informed as possible. If you’re not informed, you can’t make a decision,” said Professor James Nguyen, instructor and chair of the Political Science department. “Whatever we decide to do, we have to be as well-informed as possible.”

“There’s a lot of emphasis on deemphasizing political science and even pulling back on requirements of taking political science classes,” Nguyen continued. “However, we can see students and people are misinformed, especially with today’s social media. It’s vital for people to learn how to critically think and make their own critical decisions on what they research and look into, whether it’s the United States or the world.”

The political science department’s vision, mission, and values emphasize the following: “(1) evaluate how political decisions are shaped by institutions and processes; (2) assess the impact of political decisions on individuals and groups; (3) demonstrate the capacity to critically analyze and apply political values; and (4) demonstrate the capacity to participate effectively in the political process.” The department holds many different areas for students to learn, study, and get involved in, including the VIDA Public Policy School, the Faculty Association Political Action Committee (FA-PAC) internship program, civil engagement work (both departmental and VIDA), as well as liaising with student government on programs and initiatives.

The VIDA Public Policy School was created with the purpose of being a paid internship for students where they “will learn how to craft messaging, build lasting relationships through networking, and lobby effectively to create real change.” From Winter to Spring semesters, interns “learn about policy that affects California community college students, practicing lobbying and communication skills, and passing this knowledge to other students through intern-led workshops.” The student learning outcomes that the internship hopes to provide include the ability to craft precise messaging, growing public speaking skills, utilizing logistical planning techniques for events such as conferences, as well as building meaningful relationships with peers who are passionate about social change.

“The Public Policy School is also a student-faculty collaboration,” said Professor Robert Stockwell, an instructor in the political science department who has been teaching at De Anza College since 2004. “Its focus is more on public policy and advocacy, although it too promotes essential knowledge and skills for student empowerment and political efficacy.”

The FA-PAC internship program, initially created in the fall of 2012, is another option for students to “engage in volunteer recruitment and voter education around the key issues in each election.” Selected interns are encouraged to be actively involved in fighting for economic and social justice in both local and statewide elections, having civil engagements in De Anza College’s surrounding community. Interns also educate and register voters in the community, carry out presentations in the classroom, and recruit and mobilize volunteers both on- and off-campus.

“The political science department is committed to ongoing program development, including curriculum and staffing, and civic engagement work,” said Stockwell, who also is an officer, along with Nguyen, of the De Anza College’s faculty union and chair of the FA-PAC.

“This is an incredibly important time for studying political science,” Stockwell continued. “Our political system contains powerful anti-democratic forces who stand opposed to the development of a truly inclusive, multiethnic, more democratic politics. We need to educate and empower students to become agents of positive change.”



DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT: POLITICAL SCIENCE



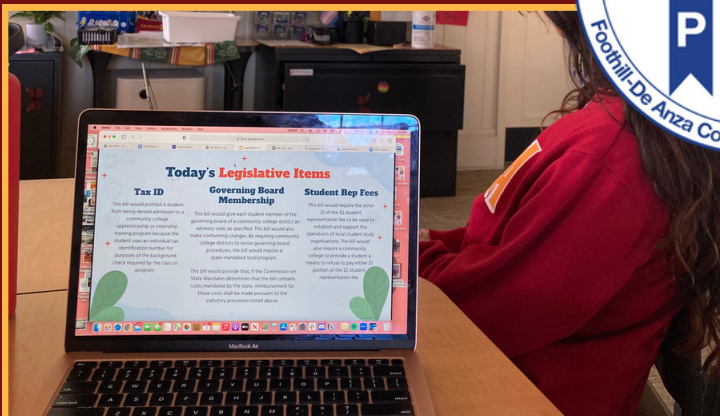
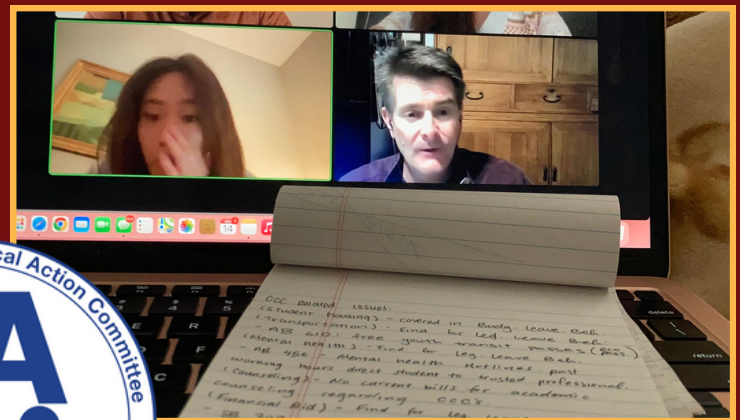
Nguyen highlighted that for students, the FA-PAC internship program provides a hands-on experience and teaches how political work is conducted throughout the semester. “We work by having anywhere between five to 10 interns on hand with an additional 80+ student volunteers for campaigns. We’re training them to be trainers, so then they can learn to train others,” said Nguyen.

Both Nguyen and Stockwell agree, along with their faculty colleagues, that the political science department within the Social Sciences and Humanities Division is committed to doing its part to “speak up, speak out, get in the way, and get in good trouble,” as former congressman John Lewis stated in 2020 during the 55th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Selma, Alabama.

“We don’t see ourselves as a niche field and we need people not to disengage. No matter what anyone does, [politics] are essential, similar to math or communication skills,” said Nguyen. “It’s a responsibility for everyone to be educated on some level...and the efforts will be added to improve society.”

“Politics is the struggle for ideas, values, and resources. It reflects the human condition - all that is beautiful and ugly, and everything in between,” said Stockwell.

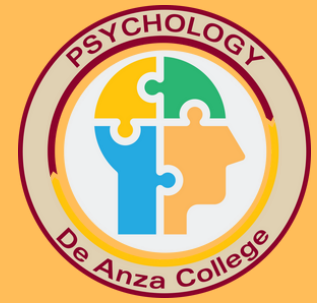
“For us, the biggest motivation here is working with students. De Anza’s students are truly great. They are compassionate and kind and deeply committed,” he said. “They inspire every day with their humanity and intelligence. De Anza College is a unique community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators committed to social justice. This vision embodied by these folks motivates me to do my part.”



Courtesy Photos

FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: PROF. DERRICK FELTON

MSW, MPA, MBA (Doctoral Candidate)



Professor Derrick Felton is a dedicated and experienced Army Veteran with a strong background in social work, education, and mentorship. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to serving Veterans and their families, particularly in the areas of mental health and end-of-life care.

Professors across the country all come from different backgrounds and upbringings. Some faculty decide to embrace the profession full-time, while others go the part-time route for both personal and professional reasons of their own.

For Professor Derrick Felton, an adjunct psychology instructor and mental health counselor for De Anza College's Social Sciences and Humanities Division, his calling to teach came in 2019. Felton strongly believes that he plays a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of professionals through mentorship and education.

With being one of the few African-American professors teaching psychology at De Anza College, Felton expressed that his initial decision to go into social work was his calling.

"I said I didn't choose social work, social work chose me," said Felton. "Teaching was part of the game plan later on. When an opportunity comes you can't wait. You have to take a leap of faith."

Felton's deepest passion related to social work is that he is representing those who cannot speak for themselves.

"For me, I think about that charge when I graduated with my master's degree because I had two separate graduations (an all-black graduation and a department-wise graduation)," Felton said. "My focus moving forward was helping the community who I served first in an ethical charge."

Before teaching at De Anza, Felton served as the Veteran Liaison at Vitas Healthcare to further his dedication to supporting Veterans facing end-of-life issues. Before this role, he served as the director for the Peninsula Vet Center in Redwood City, California, where he provided crucial counseling services to Veterans. As a fellow United States Army Veteran himself, his overall passion for mental health in underserved communities took him on his current path as a teacher. In addition to De Anza College, Felton also currently serves as a faculty instructor at Cal State East Bay and a per diem Medical Social Worker at Eden Medical Center.

Specifically for De Anza College, Felton said that one of the reasons why he teaches at the college is because the institution serves as a place to help underrepresented students.

"It not only helps to be someone who looks like them, but also it brings authenticity and realness related to the lack of Black mental health counselors and psychology teachers," Felton said.

With being provided the opportunity to teach at a public community college such as De Anza College, where the demographic of students ranges from recent high school graduates to older adults going back to school, Felton affirms that one of the most fun ways in his teaching is being able to challenge all of his students to be critical thinkers.

"People take psychology because they both want to learn about themselves and the world and figure out why people behave the way they behave," Felton said. "A testimony to critical thinking was one of my most recent students sat down with me and reiterated what I said in class about the need to follow your passion. As I do with most of my students, I encouraged him to continue to seek out his passion...and if and when he becomes famous, to just give me a small mention. That would make my day."

As Felton continues to navigate his many roles inside and outside the classroom, his hope by the time he retires is to continue to serve his community in the capacity of guest speaking, with the overall desire to make a lasting impact through his extensive years of experience and higher education knowledge.

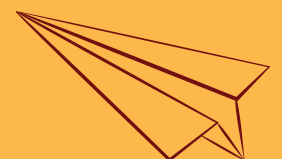
- Professor Felton's 5 Fun Facts**
1. Derrick is an accomplished bowler with a passion for the sport since the 1990s, boasting several prestigious awards for his bowling prowess.
 2. When he's not hitting the lanes, Derrick indulges his love for archery, honing his skills with a bow and arrow.
 3. Derrick embraces the nostalgic joy of roller skating.
 4. As a cycling enthusiast, Derrick explores some of California's most breathtaking bike trails, soaking in the scenic beauty and adventure of outdoor exploration.
 5. Derrick appreciates the finer things in life and enjoys unwinding with loved ones over a glass of wine, savoring moments of relaxation and camaraderie.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo





BEHIND-THE-SCENES: FORENSICS LAB

According to Law Insider, a forensic laboratory is defined as “a laboratory operated by the state or any unit of municipal, county, city or other local government that examines physical evidence in criminal matters and provides opinion testimony in a court of law in forensic disciplines accredited by American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)/Laboratory Accreditation Board (LAB).”

Within the Administration of Justice department at De Anza College’s Social Sciences and Humanities Division, the department uniquely holds a hands-on forensics crime lab, which the college boasts of being the most extensive lab students will find at any Bay Area college.

With the opportunity of hands-on experience with crime-scene tools and state-of-the-art lab equipment, including bullet trajectory kits, forensic stereo microscopes, fuming chamber for fingerprint detection, cameras, and evidence collection tools, students are able to be a step ahead of their peers outside of De Anza College.

Professor Jeremiah Garrido, a lecturer/adjunct instructor of forensic science and a criminalist assigned to the Forensic Biology Unit of the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Crime Laboratory, emphasizes that the equipment they have is what most educational institutions don’t have that is readily accessible, with also an online component that will be added to it.

“There is an academic theory method combined with hands-on learning,” said Garrido. “The course related to the forensics lab makes students think about psychology. The class is designed for students to think critically and give a proper background on performing these various examinations.”

Garrido’s primary duties at the Crime Laboratory include assisting law enforcement in processing crime scenes for physical evidence, performing forensic DNA analysis and providing expert witness testimony in court. He has provided analysis and expert witness testimony in various cases involving homicides, sexual assault investigations, property crimes, animal cruelty and cold cases.

“The class is designed for students to think critically and give a proper background on performing these various examinations.”

-Professor Jeremiah Garrido



Courtesy Photo

By having subject matter experts and professionals in the field able to directly teach the ins and outs of the forensics labs, Garrido said that students are at an advantage when it comes to grasping the logistics and processes of the many areas of forensic science.

“By using the applied science and techniques to the analysis of evidence to attempt to find truth and justice is an interesting concept,” said Garrido. “Once I allowed myself to see some of the methods and techniques used to associate a suspect to a crime scene or exonerate through science, it made me more intrigued to pursue a career in it.”

Currently, there are between 30 to 45 students each semester course with instructors who all are either current or former criminalists with local law enforcement agencies, including Garrido. According to De Anza’s website, the crime lab program has been endorsed by the Administration of Justice advisory board of local and state law enforcement officials.

Garrido expressed that the equipment that De Anza students can utilize includes different types of fingerprint powder, development techniques, presumptive blood chemicals, various microscopes, crime scene mannequins used to recreate crime scenes and sometimes stage a mock crime scene, both footwear and tire impressions, the ability to fully document evidence with Nikon cameras that are used in the field, and dental stone casting.

“The student body at De Anza has always been one of my favorite schools to teach at because the students capture what I am trying to emphasize in forensics,” said Garrido. “Through the opportunity from my leadership team, we have been able to talk better about the intersection of forensics and hands-on components.

For more information about the forensics lab, visit De Anza College’s website at <https://www.deanza.edu/admin-justice/crime-lab.html>.



Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo



OVERVIEW: SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES DIVISION AWARDED NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES (NEH) GRANT



On January 9, 2024, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) announced that they had invested **\$33.8 million in grants** to over 260 projects across the country. Among the projects selected, De Anza College made history in receiving its **first-ever grant from the NEH**, with **\$150,000** awarded to the Social Sciences and Humanities Division towards a three-year effort in both creating and expanding oral history programs focused on historically underrepresented communities.

The project, entitled “Voices of Silicon Valley: Using Heritage Discourse to Counteract Placelessness and Build Belonging,” is a multi-track project with goals to increase access to the underutilized, place-based oral histories of the campus’s California History Center (CHC), while also creating new oral histories, digital stories, and an educational walking tour, within a humanities context and curriculum.

Professor Lori Clinchard, chair of the Humanities Department and CHC’s faculty director, said that the process of applying for the grant was something that seemed like a very helpful and smart choice to look into. Clinchard said that she and Dr. Elvin T. Ramos, dean of the Social Sciences and Humanities Division, discussed looking into NEH grants and as they looked to see which they could qualify for, they decided to hone in on humanities initiatives at community colleges.

“Applying for this type of grant is not something that only one person could do,” said Clinchard. “This particular [NEH] grant we applied for is to be used for either new programs or to enhance existing programs to preserve diversity and strengthen projects in humanities.”

After identifying which grant they could hone in on to apply for, Clinchard, Ramos, along with retired history center director Tom Izu and other sub-project leads, were able to engage with an NEH advisor in terms of applying for the grant. Clinchard expressed that she believed the decision from NEH to award De Anza College with this grant was a culmination of a needed and valuable project, as well as being confident that the team presented a well-thought-through process.

The “Voices of Silicon Valley” project has a three-track element that Clinchard and project leads will focus on: 1. Making Archives Accessible; 2. Building Capacity; and 3. Raising Campus & Community Voices.

The first project track involves digitizing and processing more than 400 existing oral histories with the assistance of student interns from the Humanities Mellon Scholars program who will help catalog, transcribe, and digitize. The second project track will focus on developing workshops on the processes of accessing archives, oral histories, and digital storytelling with the assistance of other faculty members and classified professionals. This will include gathering stories that accurately represent minority groups and other historically, overlooked communities.

The third project track will focus on collecting new oral histories on three specific diversity subjects that will include partnering with both campus and community groups, as well as working with student interns. The subjects are:

- “Asian American Story-Telling in the Santa Clara Valley,” co-directed by instructors Mae Lee and Francesca Caparas, will curate stories of Asian American experiences, including a historical walking tour of San Jose’s Japantown, and the development of Asian American and Asian Studies at De Anza.
- “The Pride Project,” led by Pride Center faculty coordinator Jamie Pelusi, will explore the history of LGBTQ+ organizing and issues on campus, through interviews and student story-telling circles.
- “Spaces of Belonging,” led by sociology instructor Steve Nava and retired history center director Tom Izu, will include student interviews with activists and elder leaders in local Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), Black, Latinx, and other communities.

Clinchard said that all who participate in this, whether students, faculty, the surrounding community, or partners, will have an empowering experience in participating and will have a sense of engagement and enrichment in creating opportunities for others.

“It’s really a labor of love and everything that happens here is because the people care...it feels good to be a part of something monumental like this,” said Clinchard. “Students can not only gain valuable experience that can help with their employment upon graduating, but overall, whether moral, personal, or educational, they can be empowered.”



Photo: L-to-R: Lisa Christiansen, librarian/archivist; Matt Piasecki, CYLC student intern; Esteban Harkins, student employee; Anya Nazarova, student employee; Lori Clinchard, faculty director. (Courtesy Photo)





SSH EQUITY CORE TEAM + STUDENT VOICES

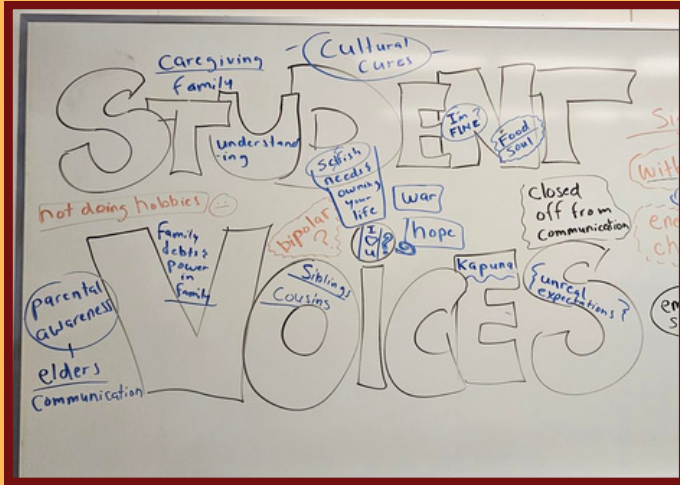


Photo Credit: Laura Chin



Professor Steve Nava, middle, with students during a Student Voices panel. Photo Credit: Laura Chin

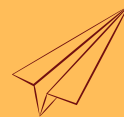
Topics such as housing, mental health, financial aid, diversity and inclusion, and accessibility are all what many students across colleges and universities across the country are discussing in terms of how to improve various important issues on campus. Specifically, De Anza College's Equity Core Team took it a step further to create its Equity Core Team with its goal to "enable divisions to work with their faculty on equity projects and to hold discussions across departments on how to improve equity and success rates for the students in our classes."

According to De Anza College's website, in 2015, the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) Equity Core Team introduced a series of student panels on campus, called Student Voices: A series of campus conversations focusing on equity issues like student housing, mental health, economic struggle, grading policies, changes in educational requirements, racial and immigration issues, course scheduling, and technological effects on student learning and faculty teaching practices.

"We started Student Voices because we saw that it was one of the most organic conversations for students to be able to engage with each other and faculty," said Professor Steve Nava, chair of the Sociology department at De Anza College and serves as the liaison for the SSH Equity Core Team. "We wanted to have students be able to have these conversations with transparency and honesty. We [as faculty] wanted to better understand the issues that are affecting them."

The benefits of the Student Voices conversation include the following:

- Allows students and staff to interact in non-traditional settings (outside of the classroom)
- Brave and mindful spaces where students and faculty can be authentic selves
- Provides an outlet for sharing ideas and concerns
- Allows for multiple perspectives for better understanding of each other and our challenges on campus
- Builds engagement, unity, and mutual respect
- Provides feedback loop for equity but also for other areas of campus



Courtesy Photo

"We can see certain topics through a different lens from students and can see both a therapeutic and structural desire for change, bring awareness, and to change areas to better improve their learning experiences," said Nava.

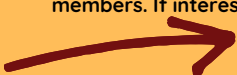
The Student Voices panels occur once per quarter on campus and involve five to 10 different students each time. Although the origins of the idea are faculty-led, Nava expressed that for faculty who have been teaching for many years, there are many blind spots in terms of generations who are coming into the classroom that they also learn from.

"It's good to hear perspectives of various demographics in terms of what students desire in terms of bettering their learning experiences," said Nava. "It's a humanizing process and helps raise all of our consciousness in terms of understanding each other better."

Some of the biggest discussions talked about in past Student Voices included social justice related to the death of George Floyd, to transfer students, to campus housing. There have been over 10 Student Voices events since its inception.

The current core team membership consists of the following: Dr. Elvin T. Ramos, dean of the SSH Division, Steve Nava, Student Voices liaison and chair of the Sociology department, Jim Nguyen, chair of the Political Science department, Ameeta Tiwana, chair of the Anthropology department, Mylinh Pham, History department instructor, Laura Chin, Political Science department instructor, Lori Clinchard, Humanities instructor and Faculty Coordinator of the California History Center, Susan Thomas, Psychology instructor, and Ramona Gabriel, Administration of Justice instructor.

The team meets weekly on Mondays at 1:30 pm PT through Zoom during the academic year. The team also warmly welcomes the participation of new members. If interested in joining the core team or have a topic that should be addressed, please email Professor Steve Nava at navaeve@deanza.edu.





James
Nguyen



Robert
Stockwell



Derrick
Felton

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS/NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS



Jeremiah
Garrido



Lori
Clinchard



Steve
Nava



HAVE A COMMENT OR SUGGESTION ON "BREAKTHROUGHS?"
PLEASE FILL OUT => [FEEDBACK SURVEY](#)

