Another good year

Every year leads to new growth for the Smith Society. 2013–2014 was no exception. Thanks to your wonderful loyalty, our tireless volunteers, inside and outside the University, and our dedicated mentors, with emeritus professor Gary Miles (in his second decade in the lead), this year has been smooth sailing and steady as she goes:

- We served ninety-one Collegiate Fellows; if trends hold, we will pass a hundred next year.
- We matched all thirty-nine students who requested one with a mentor, our largest number ever.
- Our students reached out to more than a hundred pre-college/community college youths.
- We doubled the number of our community service internships.
- We added a faculty research initiative.
- We began the transition to new leadership.
- Our graduates continue to thrive.

Small is beautiful

Our Smith students routinely stay in school and graduate at a significantly better rate than the UCSC student body as a whole. Very few fall by the wayside. If you were to ask them why, the most common response might have to do with our small community: to thrive, most students in a complex bureaucracy like UCSC need to know that they are not on their own.

This fits what its founders had in mind. Said founding Chancellor DEAN MCHENRY, in 1966, “If we are to be fulfilled, if we are to be satisfied, it we are to be really human, most of us have to be known by someone, we have to feel that we can influence the nature of our environment by responsible means, we have to know that we are not taken for granted, not thought of as cyphers or statistics, not counted among the unimportant, the unintentional, the unconsidered.”

PAGE SMITH, our namesake, writing in Killing the Spirit, concurs, “True learning is clearly incompatible with immensity. Formalism, lifeless routines, bureaucratic obtuseness, coldness of heart, and impoverishment of spirit are the invisible consequence of excessive size.”

SHAWN CERVANTES, an MSW candidate at the University of Southern California, and our new president-designate, gives it a maternal spin, “I want the Smith Society to continue to love and teach our scholars valuable life lessons. We need to do what we can to prepare them for life after college. We are always finding ways in which we can serve our students better. We do this because we truly care about our kids.”
Friendship Profiles

In addition to her studies, June graduate LUCERITO CARILLO worked in student affairs, served on the Student Fee Advisory Committee, and laid the groundwork for a peer mentoring program in her college. She plans to get a Master’s in Education and teaching credential. Her eventual career goal is to work in educational administration.

In another Smith first, in June she and her mentor, UCSC alumna DONNA CEHRS, celebrated her graduation over dinner in Rome! Says Lucy, “My relationship with Donna has been one of joy, support, and a learning experience. Having a conversation about classes, trips, arts, at the same time having homemade Italian food in the middle of the table has been a joyous aspect of our relationship. Aside from having very good cooking skills, Donna is also a great listener. From boyfriend drama to family issues to class anxiety and stress Donna has heard it all. She gives me advice that I take to heart. A relationship like this is very unique. In an institution where it is beyond challenging to succeed without a support system, Donna has been the person I’ve needed most to get me through my rainy days.”

Adds Donna, “Going into this relationship, I think that neither Lucy nor I knew what to expect. We come from very different backgrounds, and it took a while to get to know and appreciate each other. It was during numerous car trips out of town, to the Apple Store, to the consulate in San Francisco, to and from the airport in San Jose, that we really started to find out about each other and trust each other. The most important thing I have done, I think, is to listen to her and affirm her decisions as she figures out what she needs to do. I’m eager to follow her progress and hope we will keep in touch. She gives me faith in what young people can accomplish.”

CARL EADLER, who enters his junior year in the fall, a charming, straight-A math and computer science student, takes more than a full academic load every quarter. He also finds time to take the lead with programs in his college and will be a Smith student leader in the fall. His life dream: “Accomplish everything I possibly can. Probably a computer scientist. Maybe a professor, maybe a high school math teacher. Keeping the door open to anything and everything.”

Says Carl, of his relationship with his mentor, engineering manager ERIC BRAUN, “I wasn’t sure what I was getting myself into and I think that applies to Eric as well. As it turns out, Smith can match people well. We have lunch or coffee every week or two and are pretty compatible, with lots of overlapping interests such as music, science, and, of course, computers. He’s deeply involved with a choir, Pacific Voices, and has invited me to every concert they’ve performed as well as to his house for movies. He’s also helped me through some rough emotional times. It’s been a really positive experience in my life and our friendship keeps growing.”

Eric’s take: “I have found this to be a very enriching experience and great use of my time. Mentoring allows me to give back, to be a friend, a support, a guide, and that feels great to do. In particular, getting to work with Carl, watch him grow and exceed the high challenges he sets for himself has been very rewarding. I like knowing that in a small way I am contributing to Carl’s success and I look forward to a lifelong relationship with him. I commend Smith’s matchmaking process because it was certainly a big success in our case.”

Moments of grace

More than ever, this year our generous-spirited students provided valuable service to pre-college students and to
local community agencies. They hosted campus visits for youths from as far away as San Diego’s San Pasquale Academy (a boarding school for foster kids), Los Angeles City College’s Guardian Scholars Program, and Ventura County’s stellar program for college-aspiring foster youths, including them in our weekly Cowell lunches. They brought local foster youths to the campus for the annual College Camp, a few days to experience college life and encourage kids to see it as a viable option. This year’s Music Day, a fun annual event for which our students raise all the funds, had a record turnout.

We doubled the number of students doing community service internships, from seven to fourteen, with most serving at Walnut Avenue Women’s Center, a local crisis intervention agency. Says Shawn Cervantes, “Everyone who works or volunteers at WAWC is trained in how to assist people who have been traumatized. It is a safe, loving environment that is always uplifting and encouraging. Given Walnut Avenue’s mission—‘to provide support and services so that women, children and families have the skills and tools to thrive’—it is a perfect environment for our Smith Scholars.”

HUGO MALDONADO served as a mentor and helped with WAWC’s Phlight club: “I was assigned to mentor a young boy who I admire a lot. My role is to support him emotionally, to be a role model and a listener. Phlight club is a three day weekend camping trip where youth are taught the importance of having boundaries with adults, which can affect their life in positive ways. Through these two programs I have improved my social skills, learning how to listen and accept people for who they are. As a sociology major, this will help me since I have learned that a strong family is built on strong individuals. When I graduate I would like to work as a social worker in order to help families, especially children.”

Faculty research fellowships

As a UC San Diego undergraduate, STEPHEN GAUDIO, now a mechanical engineer at Varian Medical Systems, was able to do research with a faculty member. Crediting that with setting him on the path to professional success, he and his wife, UCSC alumna MARIA SEGARRA, an immigration lawyer, provided funding to launch an exciting new faculty research fellowship program. Smith research fellows must have at least a 3.0 grade point average in their major and find a faculty partner. The first four are investigating Alzheimers, astrophysics, Salvadoran political activity in Santa Cruz County, and the effects of launching a middle school nutritional program.

Says SALLY LESTER, Lead Program Coordinator for Services for Transfer and Re-entry Students, our administrative home base, “The Smith Research Fellowship is a tremendous opportunity for Smith collegiate fellows to be part of the university as a ‘knowledge factory,’ generating new knowledge that can be used outside of the institution. It also allows them to work alongside faculty where they can be encouraged and their skills can be sharpened. We hope our collegiate fellows will develop competencies and networks that can propel them towards graduate schools and influence their professional lives.”

Where are they now?

Currently doing a summer internship at the Department of Agriculture, 2011 history graduate DAVID BUROS recently completed his first year at Hastings Law School, where he is thriving. David’s decision to become a lawyer was sparked by his experience with a non-profit family law attorney who helped him.
navigate tough challenges not faced by most fourteen
year olds. He says this taught him that law is more
than just words, but a tool to change people’s lives.

Says David, of his Smith experience, “The Smith Society
shaped my character. From my first year at UCSC I
was exposed to its motto: “the pursuit of truth in the
company of friends” a maxim not merely said but lived
by everyone in the organization. I was surrounded by
authentic experiences that opened my eyes to the world
around me and helped create my identity. I’m especially
grateful to my mentor, GARY MILES, who showed me,
by being so real, what kind of man I want to become.
Being with him I felt I could be real, too. I want to
walk in his footsteps and emulate his best qualities.
But it doesn’t stop with Gary; Smith is a community
of people who reveal their true selves to each
other in ways that let you be yourself and feel connected. Amidst the complexity
of life, I continue to look toward my
time in Smith and strive to shape my
life to its motto.”

One of our early student leaders,
2005 psychology graduate GLADYS
MACARIO GARIBALDI, worked for
several years for agencies serving home-
less people. During this time she got married
and recently became
a mother and received
her MSW from Virginia
Commonwealth Uni-
versity. She currently is a
social worker providing
therapy and long-term
management for se-
verely mentally ill adults
in the south harbor area
of Southern California.

Says Gladys, “I would like to give the Smith Society
some credit for my success. When I first heard about
the Smith Society I wondered why a group of people
would want to help me get through school. I quickly
found that it was made up of a lot of other students
like me. It made sense that we would become a fam-
ily, trying to help one another succeed. I am especially
thankful for my mentor, ANITA HARTEN-KROEBER,
a lovely woman who was always willing to listen and
provide much needed support over a nice lunch. It
was nice to have a mentor who cared about me while I
figured out my future in a big university.”

Graduating in 2005 in
community studies,
YENLY THACH spent
two years in the Peace
Corps in Costa Rica,
where she met her hus-
band, Eric. After two
more years as a case man-
ger and counselor for at-
risk youth, she went on to
earn a Master’s in global and international relations at
UC Santa Barbara. She currently works for the Depart-
ment of Homeland Security’s US Citizenship
and Immigration Service.

Says Yenly, “My UCSC years would have
not been the same without the support
I received from the Smith Society. I
had leadership opportunities, such as
a campus tour guide, made life-long
friends, and had an amazing mentor,
BETH REMAK, a remarkable lady and
tion model. I enjoyed our weekly din-
er get togethers, tutoring in English, and
advice on boys! She took me in to her home
and made me feel like a part of her family. She was a
stranger, yet cared enough for me to help me succeed in
life. This is one of the reasons I decided to give back.”

For more information about Smith,
call (831) 459-4968, write to smithsociety@ucsc.edu,
or see our web site: smithsociety.ucsc.edu.
To make a gift, call (831) 459-1792.