



Friends of the International Center,  
at UC San Diego

# Newsletter

Volume XLIV, No.9

April 2017

## President's Column



Spring flowers are blooming and babies are all around—do not miss the adorable seal/sea lion pups at La Jolla Cove and Children's Pool, not to mention the adorable youngsters participating in Friends programs! Spring is the season I most associate with the Friends: the season of perpetual transition, the discovery of new life, and the fledgling optimism that accompanies new beginnings. For most of our international participants, time in San Diego is a constant state of transition filled with ever-evolving discoveries about life in America: optimism ebbs and flows.

Our participants confirm that the Friends provides much-appreciated support during all phases of transition, as well as provides a source of comfort and security as they navigate their new environs. But most of all, Friends nurtures and fuels optimism that their new beginning will be filled with ac-

ceptance, joy, sincere concern, respect, and friendship. Wow, how our gardens bloom!

It is with spring's jubilation that I am excited to write about our first post-International Center, Friends Dinner Social, to be held on Saturday, April 22, 2017, at 6:00 pm. My excitement stems from our ability to continue this valued program; our ability to introduce guests to a new venue at the much lauded "Meeting Rooms" on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor of the Village (#1); and our selection of a French-themed evening to provide just the right flavor to attract new guests and bring back loyal attendees.

The evening will begin with drinks and mingling on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor terrace, admiring views of the Pacific, before moving inside to enjoy a modern classic French menu consisting of: *Soupe à l'Oignon* (Onion Soup) as a first course, followed by *Poulet Cordon Bleu* (Chicken stuffed with cheese and ham), *Tarte Tatin aux Tomates et Courgettes* (Tomato &

Zucchini Pie), and *Salade Composée* (Mixed greens) as a main course, and *Mousse au Chocolat* (Chocolate Mousse) for dessert.

After dinner, guests will be treated to a string quartet concert, featuring "our" very own **Roark Miller**, Director of the IC's International Faculty & Scholar Office, on the viola (please see page 2).

Additional information, including maps, where to park, and ticket prices can be found online at <https://ficfrance2017.eventbrite.com> (flyer to come via email). Reservations are required, are payable online only, and are due by Thursday, April 13. Please note, that each of our previous Friends Dinner Socials sold out, so do not delay!

A final note that the Friends Nominating Committee has begun its work. If you, or someone you know, is interested in serving or learning about serving as an elected officer or on the Friends board of directors, please contact: **Barbara Fitzsimmons** at [ic-friends@ucsd.edu](mailto:ic-friends@ucsd.edu).

Wishing everyone a very Happy Spring!

*Katya*

Katya Newmark  
[PresFIC@mail.ucsd.edu](mailto:PresFIC@mail.ucsd.edu)

**Friends Dinner Social**  
**Saturday, April 22, 2017, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Reservation information on p. 11**

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# IFSO and the Friends

—by *Roark Miller*, Director, International Faculty & Scholar Office

This past year has been a turbulent one, both for our individual organizations and for the international students and scholars we serve. The closure of the International Center (IC) resulted in dispersal of the various IC units to different offices on campus and the Friends of the International Center programming to different locations. The International Faculty & Scholars Office (IFSO) is now located in McGill Hall (Suite 2126); McGill Hall also houses the Department of Psychology.

The cross-campus move was logistically very challenging to coordinate while maintaining our same level of service to our departmental and international scholar clientele, but our new space had been refurbished well, and we continue to enjoy the sleek new look of our glass offices and reception area.

Our new suite also has a programming space that can hold up to 49 people, and we are very pleased to be hosting the Friends **Mommy/Daddy & Me** program on Wednesday afternoons, as well as continuing to host FIC's **Family Orientation** on Wednesday mornings.

The Mommy/Daddy & Me program is seeing 20 to 30 participants each meeting, and taking advantage of the office's technology to project song lyrics on a screen for sing-alongs. Seeing the youngsters in the office is refreshing—both for me, as grandchild-eligible but no immediate prospects—as well as for our younger staff. Indeed, one of our student staff quite vociferously proclaimed her interest in setting up and taking down the event, so she could get her “baby fix.”

In a recent customer satisfaction survey done by the university, one of our international scholars singled out the Mommy/Daddy & Me program: “They helped me and my family to feel at home immediately and my family continues to use their services (play-group) every week.”

In these days of survey overload, I find it very touching that a scholar took the time to both take the institutional survey and comment specifically on FIC programming. If one scholar is taking the time to reflect in this way, I'm certain that the scholar is voicing what many others feel, so kudos to the Friends for providing wonderful programming that welcomes our international scholars and provides them with a sense of community—particularly in these troubling times.

Which brings me to another source of turbulence in our lives—the administration's executive order that initially banned visa issuance and admission to the U.S. of nationals from Iraq, Iran, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and Libya. UC San Diego has over 40 scholars and faculty from Iran currently, and many more international students, and this order made it unsafe for them to travel internationally and expect to be able to return to the U.S. We had one scholar who was prevented from boarding her flight to come to the U.S. With the federal court ruling that suspended that order, our stranded scholar was able to arrive and start her program, but the uncertainty of the situation, with the expectation of a revised executive order to be released soon on the same issue, continues to create anxiety not only among

scholars from these countries, but among scholars from many other countries not listed in the executive order.

While we may not be able to directly affect the issuance of executive orders, we can show our international faculty and scholars in various ways that we welcome them and their contributions to our community.

On a brighter note: I look forward to an upcoming contribution of mine to the **Friends Dinner Social** on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Some of you may know that I play viola in the La Jolla Symphony, but I also spend a lot of time playing chamber music, both as violist and violinist, and I currently play regularly in two different string quartets.



Roark Miller playing the violin

I am very excited to be bringing a quartet to the Friends Dinner Social. We will be playing Maurice Ravel's String Quartet, an early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century classic quartet that combines subdued French melodies and exotic new harmonic sounds within traditional formal structures from the previous century.

I hope to see you there!



Liz Fong Wills in her beautiful Chinese coat that for the first time she was able to wear at this year's Chinese New Year celebration, since for once she was not in the kitchen cooking



Joan Adamo, Georgina Sham, and Barbara Fitzsimmons welcome guests at the check-in table

## A New Era!

—by Liz Fong Wills with photos by Katya Newmark

I am delighted to report on the extremely successful Chinese New Year fundraising dinner in the Great Hall on Saturday, February 11, 2017.

The evening got off to a great start with lion dancers formed by a UCSD student group. The lions and the accompanying drummers were spectacular, as they leaped and weaved through the diners. As a bonus, they drove away all the bad spirits and brought good luck.

The Great Hall was transformed into a Chinese wonderland, decorated by **Marion Spors**, **Katya Newmark**, **Lanna Cheng Lewin**, **Jim Chase**, and a bit of help from me. We used Chinese New Year decorations that had been brought back from Singapore a few days earlier by Lanna, while the larger decorations were borrowed from **Campus Catering**.

**Georgina Sham** was responsible for the colorful programs and nametags and got help from **Joan Adamo** and **Barbara Fitzsimmons** distributing the nametags to the attendees. **Candace Kohl** made the floral centerpieces that graced the many tables.

Aiding the professional staff,

was our volunteer waitstaff, comprised of mostly UCSD international postdocs: **Emilie Branche**, **Eileen Collyer**, **Justin Costello**, **Sascha Duttke**, **Laurent Fattet**, **Lars Mueller**, **Malte Risto**, and **Marcelo Sepulveda**. **Jim Chase** also helped serve the food, and **Danya Costello** was our "girl Friday," helping in a myriad of ways.

As a wonderful reminder of why we have these Ethnic Dinners, **Ruth Newmark** arranged for two charming Friends scholarship recipients to speak to us after dinner: **Ruichen Sun** (a Chinese graduate student in Biology) and **Stella Yuan** (a Taiwanese-American undergraduate in Psychology). They told us about the difference the scholarships had made in their research/study programs.

My hubby, **Chris Wills**, showed photos from a month-long trip that we took to Argentina in December 2015. In case you were wondering, there is virtually no connection between Chinese New Year and Argentina. We rarely go to China, but we always have a Chinese New Year Dinner. Each year the enthusiasm grows, especially



Candace Kohl





Katya Newmark & Matthew Costello (photo by Lou Adamo)



Musicians and lion dancers



Prof. Chris Wills describes some amazing sights in Argentina



Great Egret in flight (photo by C. Wills)



One of the two lions

as the festival is rapidly becoming a part of American culture. Regardless of where Chris and I travel to, the dinners give Chris the opportunity / excuse to show his photos. They give us a naturalist's perspective on different countries.

And speaking of photos, **Katya Newmark, Lou Adamo, and Carol Smith** served as official event photographers. We enjoy documenting our activities and sharing photos with others.

Because we have lost our beloved International Center building, with its kitchen, we had to look for a new venue and use a professional caterer—in this case Campus Catering. This meant that, after ten years co-chairing the Ethnic Dinners with **Alma Coles** and **Georgina Sham**, and 21 years being the Chair, I did (or didn't do) something new! I didn't shop for ingredients, I didn't cook, and I didn't dragoon all my friends into helping. Instead I attended a



An iconic Argentine gaucho (photo by Chris Wills)



Spicy Dragon Shrimp, part of our 7-course meal

catered meal at the Great Hall as if I were a guest! The experience was disorienting but relaxing.

The whole affair would never have happened if **Katya Newmark** had not spent countless days negotiating the terms of our use of the Great Hall, help shape the 7-course menu, and discover the lion dancers. She even gave UCSD Catering copies of our past Chinese New Year banquet menus, with photos of each dish. The Great Hall rules required us to hire an outside vender to pour the wine. Whether it was her charm

or her law practice background, **Katya** was able to persuade the bar service's company to charge us less than half what I had been quoted!

We thank Student Affairs, in particular Vice Chancellor **Juan González** and Assistant Vice Chancellor **Jeff Orgera**, for underwriting some of the expenses.

We are off to a good post-International-Center beginning. We hope to find new ways to entertain, inform, and satiate you at future ethnic fundraisers.

Because the experience was very different from in past years, here follow comments on the February Ethnic Dinner from a variety of people. They begin with **Katya's** thank-you addressed to the team of Friends volunteers. Her note—still written on the night of the event—also included 19 photos of the evening! As if this weren't enough, she also sent a separate thank-you e-mail to our university colleagues that helped mount the Friends Chinese New Year celebration, this time adding 25 different photos that showed many of them in action. The quotes below are mere excerpts from longer messages that several of us received. We will let **Liz**, who has impressively chaired our Ethnic Dinner series for decades and had to adjust to a new venue with new rules and practices, have the last word.—Ed.



🌀 THANK YOU to each and every one of you for helping to make our 2017 Year of the Rooster dinner such a wonderful success. I hope that you received as many positive comments as I did: from the venue, to the decor, to the lion dance, to the food, to the scholarship recipients, to Chris' photos and presentation (as one person remarked: she could listen to Chris talk about anything, she so enjoys the sound of his voice). I also received many nice comments speaking to the delight in knowing that the Friends is continuing its many programs—so kudos to all!—**Katya Newmark**



🌀 Thank YOU, Katya! Your heartfelt thanks, written long after I was asleep, are much appreciated. And my thanks, too, to everybody for an outstanding event!—**Christopher Wills**

🌀 WOW! You must have worked hours to put this together! I thought the event was a great success on very many levels and most especially due to your continued leadership and perseverance. Many thanks.—**Candace Kohl**

🌀 Madam President, you did it again! You are a tireless marvel! I agree with Candace that the success of the event was due to your continued leadership and perseverance. Thank you!—**Georgina Sham**

🌀 Thank you Katya and Liz for a fab and most delightful evening. Everyone loved ♥♥♥♥ the venue, the vibe, the awesome dancers, the wine, the food, and I am, and will be, a lifelong fan of Chris' and Liz's travel presentations.—**Marion Spors**

🌀 Saturday was such a great success! Many thanks to you, Liz, and the others for managing to arrange the Chinese New Year celebration.—**Sally Ledden**

🌀 The dinner was one of the best; of course, they're always a wonderful occasion! The space was perfect—not too large at all and looking beautiful. Great success! I hope we made lots for scholarships.—**Barbara Fitzsimmons**.

🌀 Thank you again for inviting me, I definitely enjoyed the festivities and had a lot of fun meeting everyone. I will make sure to keep in touch.—**Stella Yuan**, Friends scholarship recipient (2016), UC Education Abroad Program, Taiwan

🌀 Thank you very much for inviting me to the dinner. It was such a lovely event:-). Please do let me know anytime you need my help.—**Ruichen Sun**, Chinese Ph.D. candidate in Biological Sciences, Friends scholarship recipient (2013 and 2015)

🌀 Thanks for including me in this program. I enjoyed it very much. Graduate scholarship winner Ruichen Sun served on a Graduate Advisory Committee to HDH and we have collaborated in the past. Small world! Your thoughtful thanks to me and our folks in Dining are very much appreciated. We look forward to collaborating with FIC in the future. *Gung Hay Fat Choy!*—**Russ King**, Associate Director, Strategic Initiative, Housing, Dining, and Hospitality

🌀 It was truly a WONDERFUL evening despite all our trepidations and worries. Campus catering has done an excellent job and everything ran smoothly, including bartending and food serving. You have to be congratulated for negotiating and achieving this remarkable and successful event. I know it has not been easy!—**Lanna Cheng**

🌀 Thank you so much for the kind words and appreciation, as well as at the event on Saturday. It's been truly a pleasure to work with you. Thank you for the photos, and an extra special thank you for the beautiful tulips! Such a thoughtful gift, and I can't wait to see them in bloom! I know the meal on Saturday was a departure from what your guests are accustomed to for this event. I hope they enjoyed themselves, even though it was different. After a few days when you've had time to get some feedback, I'd love to chat to hear any suggestions for improvement, if we were to do this event again.—**Joyce Almond**, Sales Manager, UC San Diego Catering, Housing, Dining and Hospitality

🌀 We had a very good time and the addition of the Lion Dancers capped it.—**Jean and Jeff Selzer**

🌀 Dear all, especially Katya. You did it again despite the incredible challenges this year. I know that it could not have happened without Katya's determination and persistence. I could never have dealt with the many campus intricacies or persuaded the alcohol server to drop his price to less than half what he quoted me. You are truly a miracle worker! The lion dancers got the evening off to a great start and put everyone in a happy mood. I have never seen the Great Hall look so good—the decorations and flowers made the place look magical. It was a good beginning to a new era!—**Liz Fong Wills**



## Scholarship and Other Donations



Dane and Penny Winkelman hold up a Chinese money envelope traditional to a celebration of Chinese New Year

February was a good month for Friends Scholarships. Our Ethnic Dinner fundraiser attracted 122 guests, not counting **Gail Fliesbach Maxine Bloor**, or **Paula & Manny Rotenberg** who could not attend the festivity, but made scholarship contributions instead. The traditional red Chinese money envelopes found at each dinner table reaped additional gifts of cash. A big thank you to all who aided in making the Ethnic Dinner such a happy and profitable occasion.

We received contributions to the *Teclé Mariam-Kidane Scholarship* from **Carol Robertson & Mihir Bellare**, **Carol Smith**, and from

**Katherine Hodges & Peter Thomas**, while **Ruth & Leonard Newmark** made a donation to the *Ruth Newmark Scholarship* in honor of their grandchildren, **Danya and Justin Costello**. **Jerry and Barbara Fitzsimmons** made a scholarship gift in memory of their respective mothers: **Nan K. Fitzsimmons** and **Helen M. Kilgore**.

**Marion and Kwan So** made a handsome contribution to Friends scholarships that goes beyond their endowment for study abroad scholarships and will allow even more students to enjoy an international education.

**Christa McReynolds** and **Laurette Verbinski** each made unrestricted donations, with Laurette adding: "Keep up the good work."

Thank you all!

The Friends Scholarship Committee will meet in late March and early April to select this year's scholarship recipients. Be sure to mark May 16 on your calendar for the Friends annual membership dinner with its traditional scholarship awards ceremony, so that you can meet the 2017 scholarship recipients.

## Friday Chatters Hit the Beach and Beyond

—by *Ellen Scott*



Finger painting in the sand



Saturday, February 25, eleven Friday Chatters, ranging in age from 4 to 72 years old and hailing from Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Korea, Slovenia, Taiwan, Japan, and the USA, trekked from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography pier to the Torrey Pines Gliderport. This year's onslaught of storms had swept away much of the packed sand and replaced it with slippery cobbles. However, that didn't deter this hardy band.

We stopped en route to view the shrimp swimming in the tide pools, to finger paint in the sand, and just enjoy each other's company.

After climbing the stairs built into the steep cliffs, we were treated to spectacular views up and down the coast from atop Torrey Pines.

Join us on our next adventure!

Make Your Reservation!

Friends Membership Dinner  
and Scholarship Awards Ceremony



Tuesday, May 16, 6:00 p.m.

Student Services Center, Multipurpose Room



RSVP: <https://ficannualdinner2017.eventbrite.com>  
Reservations must be received by Monday, May 8



## Resale Shop

—by Marion Spors

We have had busy days at the Resale Shop, even though the rainstorms forced us to close early a few times. We continue to decorate and improve our new home at UC Building 214 on Library Walk.

Our friends from Wednesday Coffee made the most wonderful pompoms and tassels for us. They are sooo awesome and fabulous! My thanks to head designer **Lynn**

**Jahn**, and thank you **Lynn**, **Georgina Sham**, and **Mary Woo** for donating the wonderful wool and making it happen. I cannot wait to hang them up, and hope we'll have a party with the Wednesday Coffee group to celebrate the new decor.

We welcomed new volunteers **Eric Taub** and **Daling Yi**, who are a great addition to our current team of 17 wonderful volunteers. We received some of the remaining potted plants from the International Center, and with Eric's help started planting a few in front of the Shop.

If you have interesting plants to give away, please bring them to us.

Through **Georgina Sham**, we received quite a collection of adorable animal sculptures, lamps, and household items that had belonged to **Madeleine Rast**. They did not have to wait too long until their new owners took them home. Our friend **Sandy Sherman** gave us a splendid collection of party dresses that sold even faster. We also started our new collection of professional attire for the upcoming Triton Spring Career Fair, so if you are preparing for an interview come on over, we will be happy to help you.

The Resale Shop will be closed for Spring break from March 25 until April 7. We will reopen our doors on Tuesday, April 11.



Ayako from Japan models a necklace made of coins, glass beads, and cowrie shells

## A Personal Jewelry Collection

—by Claire Harootunian

Since **Nori Faer**, our Tuesday English conversation group chair, was going to be in New York City, I was to be the group leader in her stead. Interest had been shown in different jewelry pieces I had worn in the past, and when I volunteered to bring some in and talk about them, the group thought that would be interesting. Thus, on February



Claire Harootunian

21, I brought in samples of my collection, selecting pieces made of wood, seeds, leather, and, of course, metal and gems.

My past life included making sculptures, which gave me access to many materials and friends who made jewelry. I talked about the materials and the making.

I love being with this group because the language brings us together and opens new avenues for them.



## Dear Chancellor Pradeep Khosla,

As a Visiting Scholar at UCSD, besides the amazing academic experience in this extraordinary University, I would like to let you know how important it was the support of the International Center Volunteers.

Three years ago, I came to UCSD as a Visiting Scholar for a 4-months period. My 6-years-old daughter and my wife came with me. Due to barriers of language and culture the initial adaptation was not easy. But it became much better thanks to the support we received at the International Center with their loving volunteers. The amount and kind of activities offered helped us to get integrated in the UCSD community, facilitating very much our adaptation to life in San Diego. My wife took part in cooking classes, activities for children, conversation groups, and also some rides around San Diego. It was also very useful to be able to rent temporarily some second-hand home items.

I, and my family, returned to UCSD as a Visiting Scholar for a six months period, which finished on January 31, 2017. Again, we had the so welcome support of the International Center volunteers, offering the same services, and again it was amazingly helpful.

I would like to express my extreme satisfaction with the work of the whole amazing team. The International Center makes a beautiful and very helpful work of citizenship and human host, no matter the race, religion, and gender of people.

Thank you very much for both the great academic experience offered by the UCSD team of professors and researchers, and the amazing service offered by the International Center volunteers.

*Jonas Coelho*

Visiting Scholar from Brazil, Department of Philosophy, UCSD

August 1, 2016 to January 31, 2017

*Jonas Coelho's wife, Cida Coelho, was an enthusiastic participant in many of the Friends programs, even becoming a regular volunteer in our Resale Shop. Shortly before her return to her native Brazil, the Friday Chat Group organized a brown-bag farewell lunch for Cida with Katya Newmark taking many pictures. This prompted the guest of honor to write: "Thanks for the amazing pics! And thanks for all of those who joined us for lunch, as well as for those that could not come. I miss you all so much! My Wednesdays were very special because of my time at Resale Shop. I learned a lot from you guys!"*



Many turned out to say good-bye to Cida.

**February  
Friends Volunteer  
Hours  
942 = 5.35 FTEs**

## Membership

We welcome Patricia Fleming and Icelanders Kristin Hannesdottir and husband Kari Kristinsson, a visiting faculty member in the Rady School of Management, to our community of Friends.

We are saddened by the death of Life Member Sonia Hamburger, who died in February at age 92.



## Wednesday Coffee

—by Gerogina Sham

We were almost not going to color eggs for Easter this year as we no longer meet at the same time as Mommy/Daddy & Me and thus will not be having an egg hunt. But we decided that rather than coloring many, many eggs, we will each decorate 2-3 eggs beautifully!

Emma Forin from France suggested that on Family Orientation days (1st and 3rd Wednesdays), we serve coffee and have a craft project that's easy to execute and fun to join in to welcome the newly arrived. Therefore, we will decorate eggs on April 5 and not wait until Easter week.

### April Calendar

April 4, 11, 18, 25: **Gus' Table, English Conversation**, 10:00-Noon

April 4, 11, 18, 25: **FIC Craft Circle**, 1:00-3:30

April 5, 19: **Family Orientation**, 9:15

April 5, 12, 19, 26: **Wednesday Coffee**, 10:00-Noon

April 5, 12, 19, 26: **Mommy/Daddy & Me**, 1:45-2:45

April 6, 13, 20, 27: **English Class**, 10:00-11:30

April 7, 14, 21, 28: **Friday Chat Group**, 10:00-Noon

April 11: **Board Meeting**, 10:00

April 13: **International Cooking Experience**, 9:00

April 16: **Easter**

April 22: **Friends Dinner Social**, 6:00



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# SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS

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Dear friends,

I want to thank you, especially the **Fung family and friends**, for supporting my dissertation research at UCSD. For the past two years I have been trying to make friends among members of another species, the honey bees. Our lab, led by Professor **James Nieh**, works on different aspects of honey bees' life, including their health and communication. Although they are small insects, honey bees are very smart creatures and studying their behavior has been a very rewarding line of research for over a century. What makes honey bees special is their social lifestyle that results from living in a hive. To organize the hive, bees need to communicate the different needs of the hive to each other, so they can coordinate and satisfy those ever-changing needs. Here are a few examples of the types of signals that bees transmit: When the colony wakes up (yes, bees sleep too!), the early birds (well, they fly too!) crawl up onto lazy sleepers and shake them hard, waking them up and sending them off to work. When the hive is too hot at summertime noons, bees cluster at the hive entrance, and by flapping their tiny wings, create an organic air-conditioning system for the hive. But the most interesting and elaborate piece of information that bees deal with, has to be, of course, about food.

Honey bees can tell each other where they found food through a motion called the waggle dance (see photo). As the hive is dark, the dance is not seen but rather felt through contact. In this dance, bees tell other bees the direction and distance of the great flower they have recently found. Since the dance is a movement pattern, we can see it and understand where the flower is, and basically eavesdrop on the bees. My research is doing just that.

You can see dances in a special



kind of hive, called the flat observation hive. Marked bees returning from artificial flowers dance, and I record their dances, and then determine where they are advertising as the location of the food source. I manipulate the settings of the artificial flower's surroundings to test how that affects the way bees perceive the direction and distance of the food source, and how they measure this spatial information. As the dance is an indication of information, I can study the process of memory formation in honey bees.

Just like the award that the Friends of International Center have given me, bees receive awards (or more accurately, rewards) at flowers, in form of nectar and pollen. We hypothesized that it is this reward that helps bees measure distance and direction to use in their choreography. Bees know their flight direction by seeing a clear sky, which refracts sunbeams in a unique angle (polarization plane) at any specific direction. They measure distances by observing how fast objects move in their field of view as they fly by.

In summer 2016, I studied how fast bees change their dance when food sources are exhausted and bees are forced to feed at different locations. In summer 2017, I will be conducting experiments to investigate how the rewards that honey bees col-

lect at multiple artificial flowers affect the distance they measure and advertise back at the hive.

The support of the **Friends of the International Center** and participating in events hosted by the International Center have meant a lot to me. I am looking forward to showcasing my observation hives at one of the upcoming Friends events, so that everyone can get a glimpse of the marvelous behaviors honey bees perform, hidden from our sight, deep in their hives.

*Bahram Kheradmand*  
Ph.D. student from Iran  
Department of Biology  
*Luna Fung Scholarship*

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*The letter below was sent to **Carol Robertson**, the prime mover behind the Friends scholarship named in memory of her former International Center colleague **Teclé Kidane-Mariam**, and Friends Scholarship Committee Chair, **Ruth Newmark**.*

Dear Carol, Ruth, and the Members of the Friends of the International Center, I would like to express my gratitude again for the generous support you provided me with the Teclé Kidane-Mariam Award to conduct research in Nairobi, Kenya.

I have returned to Kenya late last year to continue my field research. My work examines the emergence of policy-relevant legislators in emerging democracies. Using a combination of newly collected parliamentary speech text as data and information on individual legislators, I intend to explore under what circumstances some legislators become effective national policy-makers while others cannot. While in Nairobi, I have been doing archival research to complement the data that I have already collected, and

conducting interviews with politicians and their staff to better understand the nuanced context in which they operate. Information gathered will be incorporated into my dissertation, which I hope to turn into a book one day.

During the Scholarship Awards dinner, I remember Ruth mentioning how the support from the Friends of the International Center often opens the door to other opportunities for the recipients. That is exactly what happened to me. Since I have received the Teclé Kidane-Mariam Award from the Center and its generous donors, I have been lucky enough to be also selected for other fellowships, and that helped extend my field research.

This time, I am also travelling with my wife and two small kids thanks to a generous dependent support, which makes the field experience even more valuable in different levels, and which would not have been possible if it were not for the support I received from the Friends as I started out this journey.



I have attached a screen capture of me caught on Kenyan national television during one of the conferences I attended here, to assure you that I am working hard on my project.

I look forward to returning back to San Diego to share more stories in person. Thanks again for all the support.

*Inbok Rhee*

Ph.D. Candidate, Political Science  
Teclé Kidane-Mariam Scholarship

## The Promise of Nanomaterials

Nanomaterials introduce numerous novel properties that could profoundly benefit our life. In the active field of nanomaterial-based tissue engineering, many platforms aim to improve the material-tissue interaction. Nanofiber scaffold represents a major class of tissue-engineering scaffolds as it provides three-dimensional (3D), topographical cues to stimulate cell attachment and proliferation. In addition, nanofiber scaffolds are sometimes loaded with growth factors or functionalized with receptors to modulate cell function. Tremendous efforts have been focused on mimicking a 3D tissue scaffold that bodes close resemblance to the actual tissue matrix.

In this work, we took a different approach to developing a biomimetic scaffold. We focused on engineering a surface completely replicating all the surface proteins present on a cell membrane. Instead of taking the conventional method to modify the surface chemically, we extracted whole cell membrane and coated it on the nanofiber surface. This top-down modification approach elicited multiple benefits. Firstly, it introduced all the surface antigens that the cells are “familiar with” onto nanofiber scaffold surface in one simple coating step. Furthermore, because the modification process does not involve extreme conditions and reagents, the morphology of the nanofiber network, as well as the structure of cell membrane antigens, are preserved to the largest extent.

To demonstrate the benefit of our cell membrane-coated nanofiber scaffold, we seeded pancreatic  $\beta$ -cells into  $\beta$ -cell membrane-coated nanofiber scaffold. We found that the cells not only proliferate faster, but also produced more insulin, compared with cells grown on uncoated nanofibers and cover slip. This result indicates that our cell membrane-coated nanofiber scaffold can enhance cell proliferation, as well as cell function.

Cell membrane-coated nanofiber scaffold has broad applications for research as well as in the medical field. It can be used to generate an *in vitro* 3D cell culture system for simulating *in vivo* environment. More importantly, it can be used as medical implants to enhance cell proliferation and tissue regeneration. To our knowledge, this is the first work demonstrating cell membrane coating on nanofiber surface. We will keep pursuing more applications based on this platform. This research has been published in *Nanoscale*, a Journal of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Being awarded a Friends scholarship was truly a remarkable milestone in my life. When working on my projects, I always remind myself that the Friends of the International Center are supporting me and caring about my research and life. The honor and confidence that the Friends scholarship program offered me will always drive me to pursue the most translational and impactful research ideas.

*Qiangzhe Zhang*

Ph.D. candidate from China, Department of NanoEngineering  
Luna Fung Scholarship

## Islam in American Literature

I am a doctoral candidate in the Literature Department, and your Friends of the International Center award allowed me to inch towards the completion of my dissertation, “Secular Islam and the Rhetoric of Humanity.” This project examines representations of Islam in various sites of American culture. Specifically, I study rhetorical tactics by different communities: some that find Islam alien, and therefore in need of humanization, and others that find Islam empower-

ing, and therefore humanizing.

I am grateful for the opportunity to do this kind of research, particularly during a time when Muslim identity has become increasingly criminalized in this country. The degree of fear and misunderstanding about Muslim life is overwhelming and sometimes paralyzing for those of us affected by this climate. I hope my research can contribute in some way to alleviate those fears and misunderstandings.



I was initially motivated to do this research when I realized that Muslim humanity was under attack for no reason other than a narrow understanding of what humanity constitutes. Our understanding of humanity is descended from the Enlightenment ideal of the free, rational, democratic, and secular individual. Of course, that definition is limited: only free white men counted as human beings during the Enlightenment, and their freedom and humanity was contingent on the subjugation of others.

As a researcher and instructor of literature, my goal is to share literature that allows different worlds and cultures to be encountered and understood. We all benefit from the dissemination of values that are distinct from our own. The study of literature affords these opportunities to encounter different values that we come to appreciate rather than fear. It is my intention to uphold literature's capacity for global understanding over the course of my life. I am grateful to have had support from the Friends of the International Center to do so.

*Nadeen Kharputly*

Ph.D. candidate from Kuwait

## Friends Dinner Social

Date: Saturday, April 22, 2017

Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: Village, Building #1, 15<sup>th</sup> Floor

Theme: French

Music: String Quartet

Cost: International student/post doc

@ \$10; Friends @ \$15; Community @ \$20

RSVP by Thursday, April 13, 2017

<https://ficfrance2017.eventbrite.com>



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