PART II: The Student Gender Gap at CSUF

# Closing the Student Gender Gap at CSUF

Mark Shapiro

Mark Shapiro, Professor of Physics Emeritus, has served several terms on the Academic Senate. His first article on the gender gap was published in 2000.

The gender gap has been with us for a long time. For the past decade or so, female undergraduates have comprised approximately 60% of college enrollments, while male undergraduates have accounted for only about 40%. The gender gap is a surprisingly ubiquitous phenomenon. It affects nearly all post-secondary institutions whether they are open-enrollment community colleges or highly selective Ivy League universities.

Even though the magnitude of the female-male gender imbalance in higher education is startlingly large, little attention has been paid to the problem. It is a phenomenon that largely developed "under the radar" of most observers of post-secondary education. In fact, until very recently, it was not even talked about much except by college admissions officers. The reasons for the lack of attention are not completely clear. However, as Michael Gurian points out in his recent *Washington Post* article, the attitude in educational circles that "boys are privileged" while "girls are shortchanged" that has prevailed over the past two decades or more may have something to do with the problem. It simply was not politically correct to address the issue.

The gender gap did not happen overnight. It was a long time in the making. Nationwide, female

college enrollments began to exceed male enrollments in 1978. At that time, however, male students generally had a greater persistence to graduation than female students. It was not until a decade later that the graduation rate for female undergraduates began to exceed that for males

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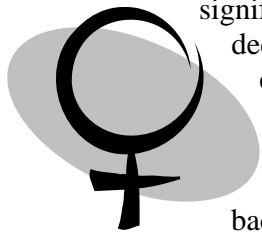
significantly. For roughly the past decade the gender gap in enrollments has held steady at 60% female, 40% male; in addition, female students have continued to obtain bachelor's degrees at a significantly higher rate than their male counterparts. More significantly, in the last decade males have lost their edge in persistence to graduation. Now it is not only less likely that male high school students will go to college, but those that do go to college are less likely to obtain a bachelor's degree than female students.

Although the gender gap is present for all ethnic groups, the magnitude of the gap varies significantly from one group to another. It is smallest for students of Asian background, somewhat larger for white students, and most pronounced for underrepresented minority groups – blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Part of the reason for this is that female students from the underrepresented minorities now are much more likely to go on to college than they were a few decades ago. While the absolute number of minority males going to college also has increased in the past few decades, the increase in male minority enrollment has been much smaller than the increase in female minority enrollment.
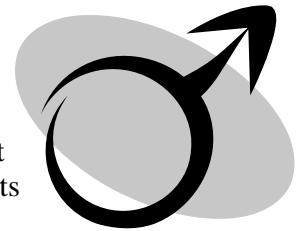
Here at Cal State Fullerton, Dolores Vura and Ed Sullivan have completed an extensive study of enrollment data relevant to our own gender gap (Editor's note: See the last issue of the *Forum* as well as the addendum herein.) They note that over the past two decades our campus has become much more ethnically diverse. However, even when this trend is accounted for they find that the gender gap here largely mirrors national trends. Female undergraduate enrollment began to exceed male enrollment in 1978 and by 2000 female enrollment accounted for approximately 60% of the total.

When questions about the gender gap first began to be raised in the late 1990s, they often were dismissed with the observation that the booming economy provided computer-savvy young men with many opportunities for high-paying jobs in the rapidly growing "dot.com" industry, so they did not need to go to college. However, when the dot.com bubble burst there was no subsequent change in the gender gap.

Clearly, the reason for the gap lies elsewhere. Unfortunately, because the gender gap had so little visibility, very little definitive research was available until recently that would help us understand the origins of the gap.

Vura and Sullivan's research on the gender gap here at Cal State Fullerton provides some very important clues that point to the causes; and, perhaps to find ways to remedy the gap. They find that local male high school graduates who meet the eligibility requirements for CSUF enroll here at a rate that is proportional to their eligibility. This implies that the gender gap already exists by the time these students

graduate from high school. Males are being lost from the eligibility pool from the time they enter high school. Many just drop out. Nationwide the dropout rate for male high school students far exceeds that for females, and the same is true for our service area.

Those boys who do remain in high school often are struggling academically. On average, boys trail girls in basic skills such as reading and writing. That trend starts in the elementary grades. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but in the last few decades elementary and secondary education in the United States has become increasingly a feminine enterprise. According to recent NEA research, the percentage of male elementary school teachers dropped from a high of 18% in 1981 to about 9% today. The percentage of male teachers in secondary schools (35%) is the lowest in decades. Boys have few male role models in the elementary schools; moreover, their teachers often have not been trained to accommodate the well-known developmental differences between girls and boys.

"Although the root causes of the gender gap at the K-12 level can't be eliminated either quickly or easily, we can address very quickly the retention and graduation problem here at CSUF."

Vura and Sullivan also have observed that the male students who enroll at CSUF are not as well prepared for college as their female counterparts. As we might expect from their lower eligibility rates, they enter CSUF with grades that on average are lower than their female counterparts. The poorer preparation of the male students who matriculate at CSUF then is reflected in a significantly lower graduation rate.

These findings can help us to develop programs that should eventually have an impact on the gender gap. Although the root causes of the gender gap at the K-12 level cannot be eliminated either quickly or easily, we can address very quickly the retention and graduation problem here at CSUF.

We already have a variety of programs in place that are aimed at helping new students make the transition to the academic demands of the university. We need to focus more sharply some of these programs so that they fully engage newly-arrived male students in the process of adjustment to university life. We need to ensure that all the incoming male students acquire the basic study and time management habits they will need for success in college-level classes. We also need to help them improve their reading and writing skills so that they will be more likely to succeed in their introductory courses. It may seem that we have been working on these remediation problems for a long time, but we now need to focus on the special needs of the male students.

We can make inroads at the K-12 level through enhanced outreach efforts that are aimed not only at recruiting high school seniors, but which also work with students throughout their high school years to reduce the dropout rate. Though we may think of the dropout problem as a K-12 problem, the gender gap makes it our problem. We can and should provide male high school students with the role models and support that they need to stay in school. We encourage our students to engage in service learning. Directing some of that effort towards tutoring at-risk male high school students could help substantially.

Getting at the root causes of the gender gap will take considerably more work. As Michael Gurian noted in his *Washington Post* article, K-12 classrooms are not friendly places for boys these days. To make them friendly for boys as well as girls, we must take a close look at how we prepare the teachers, mostly women, who will staff those classrooms in the years to come. We need to ensure that all prospective elementary and secondary school teachers understand the

different developmental paths that boys and girls typically follow as they mature. Prospective teachers need to know how to cope with the more rambunctious behavior of the boys in their classrooms without thinking that it is abnormal. They need to know that young boys may not learn at the same rate or in the same way as young girls; they need to have a broad enough array of teaching skills so that they can reach both the boys and girls in their classes. Most importantly, teachers need to understand the difference between behavior that is normal "boy behavior" and behavior that might be caused by genuine psychological problems. Too many boys are labeled early on as having ADD, ADHD, or other learning disabilities without careful investigation and diagnosis simply because they may seem difficult to deal with in the classroom.

However, it will take years to effect change in the K-12 community if we only address the problem of educating new teachers. We also must formulate "in-service" programs that will help teachers who are already in the classroom learn how to address the needs of young boys more effectively. We are fortunate that we have good relationships with our colleagues in the K-12 community in our primary service area. We can use those relationships to effect positive changes. ❧

K-12 Education and the Gender Gap in College

Patricia Keig

Musing on the role of experiences and influences at the K-12 school level on the gender gap in colleges calls for humility, an open mind, and a willingness to accept uncertainty. It's a worthwhile, if speculative, exercise. Whatever understanding we

can develop may lead to tentative recommendations and these may have potential to reduce the higher education gender gap.

If the decisions that women and men make to attend college are shaped by their attitudes toward education, are we somehow more successful developing women's educational aspirations than men's? If the decisions are influenced by the learner's non-cognitive skills, including behaviors that contribute to school success, should schools and universities make their programs more hospitable to males or alternately increase efforts to inspire more docility in them? Perhaps decisions to enroll in higher education are shaped by the life options of our not yet egalitarian culture. A recently published effort to model the returns on the investment in college education for men and for women suggests that women have a higher financial incentive than men (Jacob, 2002).
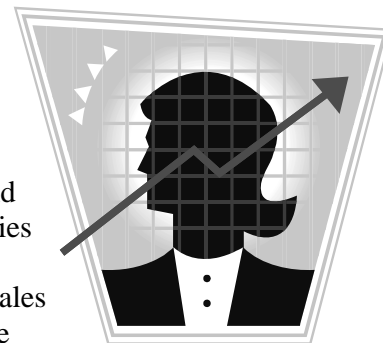
Taking a broad perspective on the antecedents to the college gender gap, we could consider anything from the early childhood realization that one is a boy or one is a girl; the experiences of sorting out what that means to the culture and what, at a practical level, one's choices are within or beyond the culture's expectations; to the clarity or lack of clarity that young men and young women have about what it means to be an adult in our society. The school's role in shaping the child's worldview is substantial, but it is secondary to family influences in the preschool and early school years and then secondary to the influences of peers by the time most students reach the end of middle school. In broad terms, the peer factor reflects the age cohort's interpretations of its culture and its options. The K-12 schools' greatest influence on the higher education gender gap may be in shaping children's attitudes toward schooling and skills related to schooling, including emotional maturity and cognitive abilities. Society's

influence during the K-12 years also contributes to children's attitudes toward adult roles and their educational aspirations.

Three snapshots offered below of girls and boys in the school years hint at some of the mechanisms at work. The first is the experience of children at school entrance age, the second relates to upper elementary school students' capacity to envision their futures, and the third relates to subcultures and peer pressure. In each case, there are implications for action in K-12 schools that might contribute to reducing the gender gap.

Role Conflict at School Entrance

At school entrance, the demands of the kindergarten on the child are not the same for boys and for girls. Schooling requires the child to learn a new role, and boys typically experience more role conflict with their previous roles than girls do. In other words, our culture's expectations for a well developed *student* at school entrance match the expectations for a well developed girl better than they match the expectations for a well developed boy. As an example, and with apologies for oversimplifying, the girl is typically more ready to sit on a rug and wait. Obviously, many boys come to school with the "non-cognitive abilities" that facilitate their success in school, but a pattern is established early that involves a circular reaction of teacher expectations, child behavior, and teacher reactions, all shaped to some extent by cultural norms. The typical experience in schools widens the gender gap in non-cognitive abilities that contribute to school success.

Teachers are wonderful people, but teachers as a group could be more conscientious about their

"The K-12 schools' greatest influence on the higher education gender gap may be in shaping children's attitudes toward schooling and skills related to schooling, including emotional maturity and cognitive abilities."

impact in implicitly identifying winners and losers among their students. Many teachers could develop greater task persistence in working with personalities unlike their own, and in facing and addressing their own tendencies to reason from stereotypes. These changes could go a long way to improve the emotional climate in classrooms. They might also increase the quality of boys' education, making more young men college eligible and improving attitudes toward higher education.

(Lack of) Children's Awareness of the Adult World

Now let's revisit a time-worn interaction, an adult asking a child what he or she will be when grown. The child's answer is one word. If we happen to ask the follow-up question, "What does a ___ do all day?" it's very, very unlikely that the child will have a satisfactory response. The child's understanding of the adult world is very limited. In the past, when most occupations were conducted in the home or very close at hand, the children had better opportunities to learn of the responsibilities and experiences of adults in their society.

Today's children are less well informed about specific work roles and similarly under-informed about educational requirements for them. Children typically cannot distinguish well between the occupations that require college education and those that do not. Yet children make decisions regularly that shape their futures, in their approaches to knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It seems likely that if children in the K-12 schools learned more about their own futures, higher education would appeal to some students who are not now choosing it.

Perhaps the school and the culture might become more conscientious about these needs of the child. Why don't children get larger doses of reality or more structured induction into adult responsibilities in our society?

One of the methods credited with reducing the gender gap in earnings may pertain here. The United Nations has prepared statistics on the income differentials for full-time employed men and women in its member countries. The women's average is divided by the men's average, and the highest result was from Sweden at 89%. Surely there are many reasons why earnings are so nearly equal there, but one that has been named is that students do not have elective courses until age 18. This results in all the young women having taken the math and science classes that make them eligible for career education in science and medicine. In other words, it is possible that giving options to our youth too soon can result in decisions that may hurt them. So when we identify a realm where young people's choices show a pattern we might consider self-destructive, we may be able to anticipate these decisions and assist them in establishing a better foundation for their decisions.

Peer Pressures and Values of Youth Subcultures
Our final observation occurs at a middle school. There's generally a contrast between the norms, behaviors, and commonplaces of the classrooms and those outside of class. Among the boys, somewhere around 70% of the nicknames they have for one another are derogatory, and outside of class they're quick to humble one another. The popular slurs and the characteristics that structure the social groups drift from one decade to another, and currently boys are likely to be dismissive (among other things) of those who are seen as too smart, too cooperative, or too willing to study. The British have a name for this: the anti-swot culture, and substantial research on the phenomenon has been conducted there. Where boys establish norms

of resistance to school authorities and ridicule achievers, equal opportunities for boys are eroded. If these norms are strongly developed in the school, they will also be expressed in classrooms.

Teachers who accept these negative behaviors in their classrooms or ignore them on the school grounds sometimes do so because they are not convinced of their own power to make a difference. Where do high expectations come from, after all? Teachers could benefit, in my opinion, from a greater conviction that they make a difference. It's a daunting challenge to set a standard that put-downs are not acceptable in a classroom, and many teachers let things go that should be confronted either because they believe that it does not really matter or because they are not confident of their ability to establish a higher level of civility. The anti-swot culture is not inevitable, and schools or teachers need not abdicate their responsibility for creating community and a healthy culture in the classroom. To encourage better outcomes, we may want to help teachers take the steps that both build community and that convince them, through successes, that they can and do make a difference.

Conclusion
The entire matter of the gender gap in higher education illustrates the annoying generalization that everything in education is multi-causal. Yet some of the influences that arise during the K-12 school years may be accessible to our interventions. We ought to do what we can to support teachers in becoming more conscientious and intentional in facing and overcoming their own stereotypes and in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work more effectively with students who are different from themselves. We should make a commitment to help children learn more about adult roles, work, and life planning. We should be
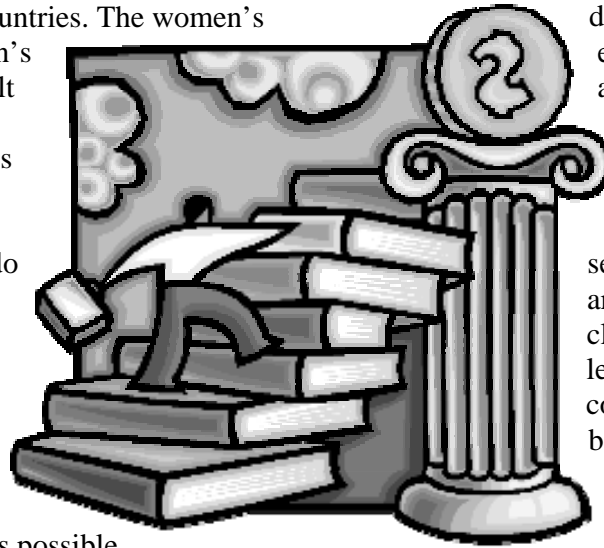
intentional about building respectful communities in schools where cognitive ability, emotional maturity, and social capital are not denigrated but are hallmarks of our classrooms. Whether these changes would reduce the gender gap in higher education is completely unknown, yet the effort would be constructive. ❧

Reference

Jacob, B. A. (2002). Where the boys aren't: Non-cognitive skills, returns to school and the gender gap in higher education. *Economics of Education Review, 21*, 589-598. Retrieved from Elsevier Science Direct database.

Pat Keig teaches science methods and a variety of other courses in the Department of Elementary and Bilingual Education. She enjoys her role as a utility in-fielder in the department.

Research Addendum: More on the Student Gender Gap at CSUF

Dolores Vura

In this addendum, I report our exploration of two more questions that push the analyses presented in the last issue of the *Forum* on the gender gap a little further. In that issue, Ed Sullivan and I showed that both sex and end-of-first-term GPA had significant effects on likelihood of graduating. We also showed that freshman men and women enter CSUF with significantly different high school GPAs.

Continuing the search for an explanation of the sex differences, we asked: Does high school GPA explain the end of first term GPA differences by sex? The following tables suggest that the answer is "partially".

Table 1
Fall 1999 First-time Freshmen:
High School GPA and End-of-First Term GPA
for Women and Men

Gender	High School GPA	Percent with GPA 2.00 or higher at end of first term
Women	Less than 3.00	69%
	Greater than or equal to 3.00	88%
Men	Less than 3.00	68%
	Greater than or equal to 3.00	80%

Table 2
Fall 1996-1999 First-time Freshmen:
High School GPA and End-of-First Term GPA
for Women and Men

Gender	High School GPA	Percent with GPA 2.00 or higher at end of first term
Women	Less than 3.00	63%
	Greater than or equal to 3.00	87%
Men	Less than 3.00	62%
	Greater than or equal to 3.00	80%

For those whose high school GPAs were below 3.00, there is no statistically significant sex difference in avoiding probation at end of first term: whether we observe a single cohort or four cohorts summed together, the outcomes are similar for men and women.

However, for those whose high school GPAs were at or above 3.00, sex differences in avoiding probation at the end of the first term persist. Eighty-seven to 88% of women avoided probation, but only 80% of men did so. The sex difference in the end of first term probation is not fully explained. When high school GPA is left out of the model, the sex difference is amplified by the fact that 47% of men had high school GPAs below 3.00, but only 31% of women had the lower incoming GPA.

We also took a second look at discipline mix over time to try to estimate its effects on the gender gap in enrollment by examining two imaginary scenarios. The figure below, replicated from the last issue, shows that an increase in new academic programs that are generally female-typed, combined with women's achievement of parity in business and the sciences, contributed to the lower percent men and higher percent women we have today. The question is, by how much?
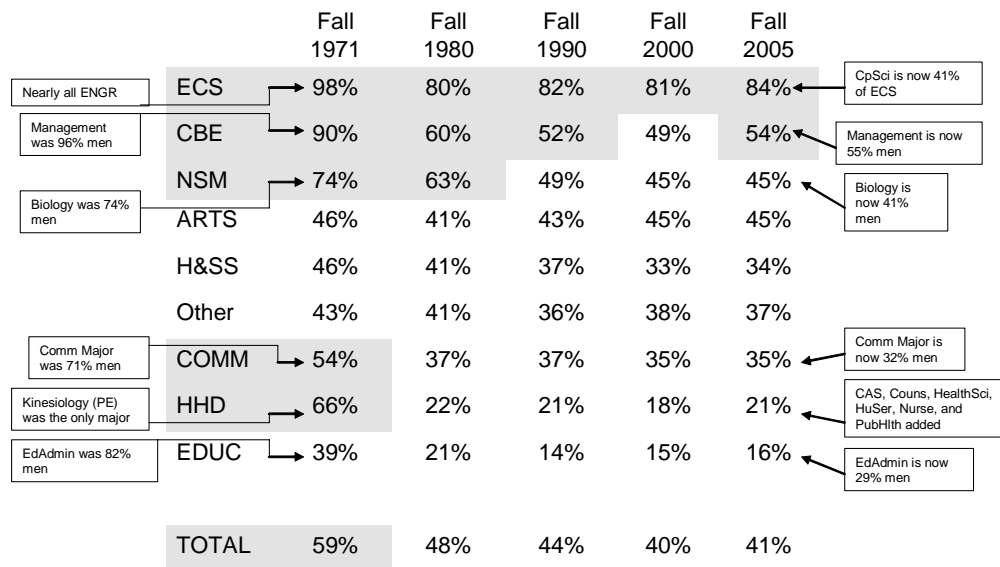
Imaginary Scenario 1
Imagine that between 1971 and 2005 no new female-typed academic programs were developed, *and* that women did not achieve parity in business

and science. Essentially, we apply the earliest years' percent men by college to the 2005 total students by college, and sum the results to get a hypothetical total percent men. As an example, CBE was 90% men in 1971, and currently has 7,974 total students. Applying 90% to 7,974, we get 7,177 men in this imaginary case. Each college in turn is calculated on its 1971 percent men and 2005 total students, and then the numbers of men are summed across college and divided by the total students in 2005 to get a total percent men.

When we apply the 1971 sex distribution to the 2005 numbers of students, we end up with 63% men! When we apply the 1980 sex distribution to the 2005 numbers of students, we end up with 45% men, or only four percentage points higher than the current actual 41% men.

Thus, the advent of new female-typed academic programs and women's achievement of parity in business and science made a huge difference in the distribution by sex. Interestingly, most of that difference occurred between 1971 and 1980. It is indeed ironic that we are looking at this "problem" now, 26 years after most of the change occurred!

Figure 1
Percent of Men by College Major (Total Students)

		Fall 1971	Fall 1980	Fall 1990	Fall 2000	Fall 2005	
Nearly all ENGR	ECS	98%	80%	82%	81%	84%	CpSci is now 41% of ECS
Management was 96% men	CBE	90%	60%	52%	49%	54%	Management is now 55% men
	NSM	74%	63%	49%	45%	45%	Biology is now 41% men
Biology was 74% men	ARTS	46%	41%	43%	45%	45%	
	H&SS	46%	41%	37%	33%	34%	
	Other	43%	41%	36%	38%	37%	
Comm Major was 71% men	COMM	54%	37%	37%	35%	35%	Comm Major is now 32% men
Kinesiology (PE) was the only major	HHD	66%	22%	21%	18%	21%	CAS, Couns, HealthSci, HuSer, Nurse, and PubHlth added
EdAdmin was 82% men	EDUC	39%	21%	14%	15%	16%	EdAdmin is now 29% men
	TOTAL	59%	48%	44%	40%	41%	

Dolores H. Vura, Assistant Vice President for Institutional Research and Analytical Studies, came to CSUF in 1986. She is an active member of the University Planning Committee.

Imaginary Scenario 2

Now imagine that the growth in shares by the more female-friendly (if not female-typed) colleges (in total students) and the resulting increases in percent women did not occur. Here, we apply the earliest years' percent distributions across colleges of all students to the total students we have now, but keep our percentage of men per college at the 2005 levels.

For example, CBE was 27% of the total enrollment in 1980. Taking that percentage of our current 35,040 total students, we get 9,461 total CBE students for this scenario. Then, we take the current percentage of men (54%) to get 5,109 men in the CBE. Each college is figured in the same way, with the numbers of men per college summed and then divided by our current total students to get the new hypothetical percentage of men.

When we use the college distribution from 1971, the resulting hypothetical percentage of men is 41%, or exactly the same as what we have now. When the college distribution of 1980 is applied, the resulting percentage of men is 44%. The increase relative to 1971 is to be expected given that ECS and CBE were at peak shares of total that year. Neither the 1971 nor the 1980 distribution by college makes much difference in the 2005 distribution by sex.

Two more pieces added to the puzzle, but surely there is more to analyze and discuss. ✍

The Places in Between: Creating the Community-Friendly Campus

Jay Bond and Vince Buck

In response to sporadic and sometimes intense (but collegial) interchanges we have had over the past several months, we were asked by the editors of the Senate Forum to collaborate on an article concerning the functional and aesthetic aspects of our campus landscape, in its broadest sense. Collaborate?! Many who have followed our e-mail "conversations" might assume that we could never do that. However, not surprisingly to us, our dialogue, of which e-mails are but a part, confirmed that we agree far more than we disagree on what our campus should be like in the future.

Recently, in the *Boston Globe*, Robert Campbell, wrote an article entitled, "Universities are the New City Planners." He posits that planning agencies in most cities are underfunded, weak, and reactive. Universities not only plan themselves, but have a profound influence on the cities surrounding them. This is a responsibility we need to take seriously.

A student hurries to his evening class. Palm trees line the walk near the newly-opened Performing Arts Center.

Along with many of our colleagues, we believe that much of the college educational experience takes place outside of the classroom. We have an entire division, Student Affairs, which supports these activities and experiences. Many of these experiences are not structured but are rather the serendipitous informal meeting of faculty, staff, and students throughout the campus. This component of college education is perhaps most accessible at small liberal arts colleges where everyone lives on campus and the campus is the center of social and intellectual life. At the other extreme is the community college where the word "community" refers to the larger community and not the college community. In that respect, large commuter campuses such as ours are closer on the spectrum to the community colleges than residential colleges.

"Our campus is not rich in places where people can informally meet, but we are making good strides in that direction."

Our campus is not rich in places where people can informally meet, but we are making good strides in that direction. Recent planning efforts have eliminated roadways and parking lots in order to maximize open space—even while we grow rapidly. Other work has created pedestrian malls, added seating, and revised major pieces of our landscape, like the Commons.

To provide that informal out-of-classroom component of education on this campus, we need to create both community-enhancing architecture and landscape architecture. We need to create an environment where people want to stay on campus rather than leave. We need to create an environment that draws people in rather than one that encourages people to leave. We need an environment that encourages people to stop and talk and visit, hash over Plato and evolution and education philosophy rather than rush on because the setting is too stark.

In this article, our intent is to focus on the campus landscape and the spaces in between and adjacent to buildings. However, it should be noted that in

recent years we have gotten much better about finding ways to create lobbies and gathering spaces within our buildings, despite very restrictive state planning formulae. The new Performing Arts Center has a generous lobby. The new building for the College of Business and Economics will have a generous lobby and food service, as well. The Student Recreation Center will be a magnet. We may soon be able to create a Faculty/Staff Center in the south end of the first floor of Pollak Library South. This will help further a sense of community, especially since President Gordon has constantly reminded us that it needs to be open to both faculty and staff.

In 2003, following a participatory planning process which included many opportunities for discussion with, and input from, the campus community, Cal State Fullerton completed a Master Development Plan to guide the physical development of the campus into the future. The six principles on which the plan was based are as follows: (1) to reinforce the existing functional organization of the campus; (2) to preserve and protect campus open space; (3) to use building mass and placement to establish an efficient use of land; (4) to enhance the campus landscape including plant materials, hardscape, site furnishings and lighting; (5) to expand the campus parking capacity; and (6) to maintain and enhance the University's positive relations with the community. It is easy to see how prominently the out-of-classroom experience played in our minds during the development of the Master Plan. The landscape features of every campus affect the academic climate and are critical to student, faculty, and staff interactions.

The concern with making this a pedestrian-friendly campus is evident in recent construction. Take the completion of the Nutwood Parking Structure and the Performing Arts Center. The traffic patterns on campus are transformed. Automobiles are kept to the perimeter, opening up opportunities for people-oriented spaces. A

roadway bisecting the College of the Arts was removed, replaced instead by a major pedestrian mall. We can argue about its execution (Vince thinks there are too many palm trees, Jay thinks there are too many light poles), but the goals of the master plan were achieved.

> *"We need to create an environment where people want to stay on campus rather than leave."*

More of the same will be realized upon completion of Steven G. Mihaylo Hall, the new home for the College of Business and Economics. The awkward automobile circulation patterns along the south side of the campus near Nutwood Avenue will be replaced by a new, clear entry west of the Marriott, removing roadways and simplifying the arrival sequence. For the first time, pedestrians will be accommodated along the north side of Nutwood Avenue. This may even be the first step toward the narrowing or closing of sections of Nutwood to automobile traffic, again creating a mall for pedestrians where a roadway once was.

Creating new and inviting community-enhancing spaces between buildings is extraordinarily difficult to fund and complete. Our campus has benefited of late, though. This includes the serendipitous pieces of funding which all came together to allow the transformation of the Commons, which is that area in between Performing Arts, the Bookstore and the Library. In this area, we now have a clear pedestrian path (Titan Walk) where none existed previously and have provided a well defined space for student clubs and organizations in an area where table placement had always been haphazard. We even added trees (although the removal of existing trees caused some unhappiness). It is a pleasure to see students and others using the seating provided there.

Although great progress has been made in making the campus more pedestrian friendly, more could be done to make it "sitting and stopping friendly"; that is, creating small spaces throughout campus where individuals can sit and chat or study or just hang out. Spots like MJ's or the second floor entrance to Langsdorf Hall are relatively sparse on a campus of 35,000 students. And these places are essential to a rich campus life. They encourage people to stay on campus and not just hurry from their cars to their classrooms and back.


Titan Walk before (left) and after (above) renovation in summer 2006.

On campus since 1990, Jay Bond now serves as the Associate Vice President for Facilities Management and Campus Architect. Facilities Management is responsible for the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all campus facilities.

Vince Buck, Professor of Political Science and former chair of the Academic Senate, is a representative of CSUF on the system-wide Academic Senate.
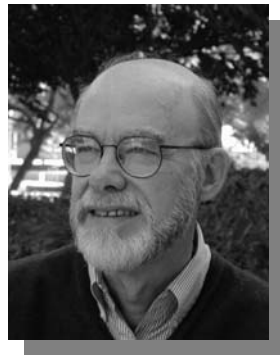
It is no secret that one of the primary keys to successful gathering spaces is the provision of food service…or at least coffee. In addition to preserving and enhancing places like MJ's coffee, the campus plans to add food service to the next phase of student housing, to the library, and to the new building for the College of Business and Economics.

A few years ago, Facilities Management developed a complete campus seating plan for exterior benches and the like. The timing of this was certainly poor, in that it was offered up at a time when campus funds were particularly tight. Maybe the time is now. Additional, updated, pleasing, well-located signage would also help enhance the campus environment. Facilities Management has a plan for that, too, and together, we look forward to its realization.

Our campus is not rich in space, but there are numerous locations where meeting and sitting spaces could be placed and use of these locations should be maximized for these purposes. For instance, a redesign of the quad could create many possibilities. Renovation of the area north of

Humanities would be a welcome change and could include more friendly seating areas. The master plan for the Commons area includes some very nice spaces. A new phase of student housing is being pursued, and it includes a dining complex which would be open and accessible to all and may include outdoor seating. It takes vision to see that these meeting spaces are essential to campus life, and it takes commitment to identify the funds to create them.

It takes a village to make a village. All members of the campus community have a role in determining the quality of our built environment. We have done some very good things of late, but there is more that can be done. If you care about these in-between spaces of the campus– and if you have some great ideas about creating gathering spaces -- let someone know. Start with the authors of this article, who can be reached at jbond@fullerton.edu or vbuck@fullerton.edu. ✍

For More Information
The entire content of the campus's master plan can be reviewed at http://fmsc.fullerton.edu/. Click on the tab entitled "Master Development Plan" that is in the upper left side of the page. Please take a look and share your thoughts with us. As an indicator of the importance of the campus landscape in the master plane, that section is 35 pages long.

Comments from the Editorial Board
1. The Academic Senate recently passed a proposal to form a new standing committee: Committee on Campus Facilities and Beautification.
2. Concerns about the increasing amount of hardscape (concrete) in renovated areas have been raised.

The area north of Humanities is a location that could be renovated to create an informal gathering place for students, faculty, and staff.

Student Ratings of Instruction: Revisiting Current Practices and Planning for the Future

Phil Gianos and Mike McGee

Student ratings of instruction (SRIs) are well established at CSUF and other CSU campuses. They are mandated by the Collective Bargaining Agreement (sections 15.14 through 15.17) and enshrined in UPS 210.00 (section VI.D.1 through 6) and department personnel documents.

Supported by a Missions and Goals initiative, an ad hoc committee was established to examine the process by which SRI forms are administered, propose possible changes in their administration, and explore longer-term issues related to the SRI process. Committee members were Vilpin Agrawal, Margaret Atwell, Jo-Anne Andre, Paul Deland, Phil Gianos, Ellen Junn, Susan Kachner, Mike McGee, G. Nanjundappa, Roberta Rikli, Tony Rimmer, Kristin Stang, Patricia Szeszulski, Fred Zandpour, and Amy Alspaugh (staff). The committee began meeting in May 2005.

Committee Agenda
Three matters quickly emerged as a primary agenda for the committee:

- First, concerns were expressed by both students and faculty regarding the security and integrity in the administration of SRIs. For example, we heard anecdotes about such practices as instructors taking forms home after night classes, keeping them over the weekend, and also concerns about the open availability of completed forms placed in staff mailboxes in the evening.

- Second, the loss of the university's mainframe computer in 2008—this is the computer that processes all our SRI forms—means that we need to begin to plan for alternative ways to process paper-and-pencil SRI forms.

- Third, the committee discussed the viability of online administration of SRIs—not just for existing online courses, but conceivably for all CSUF courses.

On the first matter, the committee—after looking into practices at other campuses (which, unsurprisingly, vary) and after extensive discussion and revision—created a draft UPS document on the administration of SRIs and a draft document on suggested instructions to be read to students prior to the distribution of the forms. We wrote the proposed UPS in such a way that it should be applicable either to present paper-and-pencil forms or to online forms, should the university elect to do that. That draft was submitted to the Senate in early March.

Highlights from the Proposed Documents
The proposed administration process is as follows: After the faculty member has left the classroom, the person administering the forms identifies a witness to assist, provides information of the course and instructor codes, reads instructions, collects and counts the forms,

> *"…concerns were expressed by both students and faculty regarding the security and integrity in the administration of SRIs."*

records the number of completed and blank forms on the envelope, places the forms in the envelope, seals and signs and asks the witness to sign the envelope, and deposits the envelope in a departmentally designated location in a "timely and secure" manner.

The proposed statement to be read to the class is as follows:

> Student Ratings of Instruction provide valuable information to the faculty and to the University. Your responses are anonymous and faculty will not have access to the forms or the data until after final grades have been officially submitted. We encourage your written comments. Please refrain from talking until all forms have been collected.

Mainframe Computer Obsolescence
On the second matter—the loss of the mainframe—the committee explored several proprietary systems for the analysis and display of the results from paper-and-pencil SRI forms. The proprietary systems we examined were expensive, and they seemed to lack flexibility. None of them provided complete solutions for our needs at CSUF.

Collecting SRIs Online
On the third question—the possible use of online SRIs—the committee received the approval of the Senate Executive Committee to launch a pilot program on campus in Spring 2006 to assess online evaluations. Amir Dabirian, Chief Information Technology Officer, met with the committee several times and developed a system for the pilot study based on the now-familiar campus process for online voting.

This spring we will implement the system in all current online courses, and we will work with a test group of volunteer full professors in non-online courses. If all goes as planned, this system should feature all the functionality of our current system with the benefit of quicker access to results and less burden on department staff who supply clerical support for SRIs.

One of the main concerns regarding online versus paper-and-pencil SRIs is that there will be a significantly reduced rate of response from students. The data the committee examined about online SRIs suggest that one of the most powerful incentives for encouraging students to respond to online SRIs is having faculty stress the importance of the process. Some universities have also successfully implemented other incentives such as early access to grades or, in a few cases, prizes. In our initial trial we will ask professors to communicate to students the importance of the process. ✍

Phil Gianos is Professor of Political Science and chair, Division of Politics, Administration and Justice. He has been on the CSUF faculty since 1971.

A professor in the Art Department, Mike McGee is the art gallery director for the university. He is also the founder of the CSUF Grand Central Art Center in Santa Ana.

Pandemic Preparation: What is Faculty's Role?

Joanne Gass

If a pandemic influenza occurs, higher education will likely be among the industries most severely impacted because of risks resulting from open and accessible campuses and travel by faculty, staff, and students. Impacts may include lengthy periods of campus closure, unprecedented demands on student health and counseling services, relocation or evacuation of students in residence halls, the establishment of community isolation areas or hospitals, debilitating sickness among staff and faculty causing severe reductions in force, the unavailability of essential services, and significant loss of revenues and students.

T he above prediction, made by Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc. in its January 2006 white paper entitled "Blueprint for Pandemic Flu Preparedness Planning for Colleges and Universities" outlines in stark, concrete terms the possible effects the current H5N1 virus (what has been described in the media as the "Avian flu") could have on the "business" of CSUF if a pandemic occurs. Because of the potential for such an event and the current spread of the H5N1 virus, the Chancellor's office has directed each of the CSU campuses to formulate a business continuity plan. A committee

"If a pandemic influenza occurs, higher education will likely be among the industries most severely impacted…"

headed by Cheryl Perreira is currently formulating such a plan for Cal State Fullerton, following Chancellor's Office guidelines. Although the likelihood of such a pandemic is remote, it seems prudent to have such a plan in place. Therefore, in the next few weeks, the committee will be presenting its completed plan to the various campus communities bound to be affected by a pandemic.

The current, under-construction plan focuses on the challenges the University is likely to face. Those challenges are:

- Maintaining students' progress to degree and faculty research despite absenteeism rates that may reach as high as 50% to 75% of faculty, staff, and students during the height of the pandemic.

- Managing faculty, staff and student exposure to infection both on campus and while engaging in learning/research activities off campus.

- Complying with local, state and federal mandates and coordinating with local, state and federal agencies.

- Caring for the emotional and physical well-being of faculty, staff and students who become ill or symptomatic while on campus.

Faculty will be both involved in and affected by the challenges listed above. The health and welfare of our students, faculty, and staff are, of course, the paramount concern. But protecting our human resources could mean a prolonged closure of the campus lasting until the pandemic has run its course. No one knows how long that might be. A key component of the University's ability to continue its operation is the ability and willingness of every faculty member to develop alternative means of delivering course material that are not reliant on face-to-face contact. Thus, although the campus might very well be closed, classes could be continued electronically. Faculty, then, would necessarily be needed to

> **"…although the campus might very well be closed, classes could be continued electronically."**

facilitate this part of the plan—keeping students informed, combating rumors, monitoring attendance, and maintaining the continuity of their courses. In other words, healthy faculty would be responsible for maintaining the continuity of our students' education during such a period of crisis.

What can faculty do to be prepared? Here are a few very simple suggestions:

- Be fully informed and aware of the campus plan. Preliminary information is available on the campus webpage (click on emergency preparedness) and will be updated regularly.

- Make sure that your department has a plan and that each faculty member is aware of it.

- Take advantage of the internet and Blackboard so that courses can be continued off campus. (You do not have to be teaching an online course, nor do you have to go through the process of turning your courses into online classes; all students enrolled in courses at CSUF are automatically registered in your class in Blackboard.)

- If you have not already done so, learn to use Blackboard to communicate with your students. (This could mean that you will need to ask your students to update their email addresses in Blackboard to the one they use most frequently.)

- Make plans to protect your research, now. (The Northridge earthquake and Hurricane Katrina destroyed lifetimes of research; making contingency plans now is crucial.)

We may very well never be confronted with an event so drastic as a pandemic; nevertheless, we need to be prepared.

Joanne Gass is professor of English and Comparative Literature and currently serves on the Academic Senate and the Senate Executive Committee. She will spend next semester teaching in London.

For More Information
Visit the campus website at the following URL: http://www.fullerton.edu/emergencypreparedness/avian_influenza.htm.