Donna Di Grazia: Making Music at Pomona for 14 Years

On a recent evening in Lyman Hall, the Pomona College Choir works its way through two difficult pieces: Borodin’s *Polovtsian Dances* and Mozart’s *Vespers K.339*. It’s the night before spring break starts, which could be a major distraction for this 70-plus-member ensemble—if Donna Di Grazia weren’t leading the way. Pomona’s choral conductor and David J. Baldwin Professor in Music, Di Grazia brings a brisk energy and deft touch to the proceedings, keeping the chorus on task.

>> Continued on page 3

Focusing On Faculty

At the heart of the Pomona College experience is its faculty. In this issue of the journal, we profile three professors—Donna Di Grazia, Ami Radunskaya and Fernando Lozano—who embody the remarkable education provided by the dedicated men and women who teach, mentor and do research here.
The historian Henry Adams once wrote that “A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” As a shepherd encouraging student minds to mature over four very formative years, I affirm this assertion with delight and gratitude. The influence is deep and real. How amazing to see the young people who step into our college community blossom from insecure and awkward late adolescence to young adulthood full of eager promise and a sense of adventure about what comes next. As they graduate ceremonially in the beautiful late spring on Marston Quad, many—perhaps most—project a sense of civic responsibility and citizenship, thanks to the broadly penetrating way of thinking and the personal ambition they develop at Pomona.

I recall my first day of college teaching. I was only 26 years old and scared out of my wits as I stepped into a classroom full of, well, peers. The dynamic that seemed apt to me at the time was a stereotypical model of one-way knowledge transmission: John Hopkins on a log with Jane and Johnny at the far end, slates in hand. (“Sit down, shut up, take notes”). I have since mellowed and learned to get it “right,” thanks to Pomona—a great educator of its faculty as well as its students. The relationship is truly a dialectic—a self-reinforcing feedback, no matter the topic, in which an instructor shares a deep interest with a class and students respond instinctively. Their growing interest and enthusiasm return to the teacher through frequent questions, beautifully incisive homework essays, going the extra mile with discussion and undertaking unassigned extracurricular study. It becomes an exercise in passion and care, a quest to fire students up so that in fact they teach themselves, even after the semester ends. You can feel the group mood when this develops—an “aha!” moment difficult to convey to people who have never experienced it. I assure you it is more emotionally rewarding than anything else you do as a professor.

Driven through the stage of undergraduate research, in which students become partners or leaders in the process of discovery, the reward is especially rich. I have been fortunate to work with students in a variety of formats and environments that have taught them a lot about themselves and the challenges of studying the messiness of nature outside of the classroom. We have camped next to active lava lakes in Hawaii to study lava flow development, established research camps and fished for salmon in the remote Aleutian Islands, studied wildlife and the interaction of !Kung peoples with conservation in the Kalahari Desert, and met with survivors of apartheid to discuss the meaning of that seminal international event. Moreover, I’ve shared with them the precious experience of crafting a new program at the College seeking to understand and find solutions to the world’s great environmental problems.

Pomona is truly an incredibly rich gateway to the world. Sometimes that gateway comes through a test tube and microscope, sometimes through a telescope, sometimes in the classroom or while conducting research out in the field or in the community. We applaud and celebrate what we’ve accomplished as a community of students and scholars, thanks to the generous support of our alumni, family and friends. And now, through the Daring Minds Campaign, we seek to sustain and expand these gateway opportunities that make all of this remarkable interaction possible.

Having begun with one venerable quote, I must end with another. This one is a personal favorite from John F. Kennedy: “Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource.”... Please read on!

LETTER FROM RICHARD “RICK” HAZLETT

Stephen M. Pauley M.D. ’62 Professor of Environmental Studies and Professor of Geology

Rick Hazlett first arrived at Pomona College in 1987, following a stint of teaching at the University of Hawaii. He is the author or co-author of a number of books and articles, including The American West at Risk, Volcanoes: A Global Perspective, Joshua Tree Geology and Geology and the Environment. The latter will be published this fall as a National Geographic book. Hazlett helped establish the Environmental Analysis Program and became its pioneer coordinator. He also launched academic teaching at the Pomona Organic Farm, providing instruction in agroecology. He is a four-time Wig Award winner and was recently ranked as one of America’s “Top 300” professors by the Princeton Review.

“Pomona—a great educator of its faculty as well as its students.”
She prods and praises the singers (“That E-flat sounds wonderful”), stomping her feet in rhythm to the music. A longtime choral singer herself, Di Grazia stops often to demonstrate breathing technique and precise punctuation.

“The words have to come out of your mouth as naturally as if you were saying your own name,” she tells the group as the 90-minute rehearsal comes to a close.

Katie Bent, a Pomona junior, has sung in the choir, as well as the school’s Glee Club, since her freshman year. She admires Di Grazia’s dedication, work ethic and responsiveness.

“I think that if Donna ever failed to respond to an e-mail within 24 hours, the glee kids would probably call search and rescue,” says Bent.

Di Grazia has headed up Pomona’s choral program since 1998. The Choir, which draws its membership from across The Claremont Colleges and the community, generally presents two concerts of major choral works a year. The Glee Club, a chamber choir of 25 to 30 singers, performs music from many periods and styles. Meeting in the spring semester only, it ends the term with a 7- to-10-day tour (on the schedule this year: England, Poland and Germany).

Most Pomona students in the choral program don’t pursue careers in music. But as Di Grazia notes, the life skills you learn in a musical ensemble benefit you in any profession: working with other people to achieve a common goal, developing self-discipline, gaining the ability to focus, overcoming challenges and using your creativity to produce something worthwhile.

So don’t tell Di Grazia that music is just an “extracurricular activity.” It is vital. “If you strip out liberal arts from the schools,” she says, “our society is in trouble.”

When it comes to performing music, she adds, a college conductor and his or her students are in it together—literally. They are all on the stage, dependent on one another to each do their part. That builds a great sense of trust, says the professor.

“You form a very close bond with your students, one that often lasts three or four years,” says Di Grazia, who teaches music history courses and independent studies with choral conducting students. “It’s a very close relationship and a very special one.”

It’s that caring attitude toward her students that Katie Bent says she appreciates most about her musical mentor. “Donna always seems to have time to get lunch or coffee with us and catch up on life in general,” says Bent, co-president of the Glee Club. “Even when I don’t take her up on the open-door offer, just knowing that I could talk to her if I need to is very reassuring.”
Before joining Pomona College as a mathematics professor in 1994, Ami Radunskaya spent years as a professional cellist. But the shift to academia didn’t close her cello case. Instead, it gave her a new venue to further explore the fusion of two lifelong passions: math and music.

“Both have always been a part of me,” she says. “As a child, during rehearsal, I’d keep a math book under my chair in case I got bored, so my intellectual development in both areas went hand-in-hand. In my head, they are very much the same thing.”

In her classroom, Radunskaya creatively entwines the two, helping students understand mathematical concepts via musical structures, and vice versa. She might play a cello piece to “portray mathematics through music,” or challenge students to represent a mathematical formula through a musical composition—something she has delighted in doing her entire life.

For Radunskaya, however, mathematics goes far beyond enjoyment—it means saving lives. In 1998, she began creating and analyzing complex mathematical models of tumor growth and immunotherapy to help oncologists determine how much treatment to administer, how often and how the malignant cells may react.

“If you have functions and formulas that describe how things happen, you have a formula for the most effective treatment strategy,” she says.

Pomona students, and even a high school sophomore, have assisted Radunskaya with this research, attracted to the real-world application of mathematics. The high school student, a leukemia patient, began volunteering in Radunskaya’s lab after participating in the Pomona College Academy for Youth Success (PAYS), a summer academic program for underrepresented and low-income youth. Among other activities, Radunskaya helped PAYS participants use mathematical formulas to solve a murder mystery.

“It was fun,” she recalls.

Since 1998, Radunskaya has also worked with Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education (EDGE), a mentoring program that helps female mathematicians successfully complete their master’s or Ph.D. Currently co-director, Radunskaya will welcome 22 EDGE participants to campus this summer. She ran a similar program for minority undergraduates while completing her doctorate at Stanford University. Radunskaya credits growing up in Berkeley in the “vortex of the Civil Rights Movement” for driving her desire to equalize opportunities for all.

“Individual by individual, you help people get where they want to go,” she says.

This outlook encapsulates Radunskaya’s philosophy for working with students. She strives to know them well and appreciates the campus culture that makes it easy to do so. “The more you can get to know each student and what’s bugging them and what motivates them and how they feel about themselves, the better you can teach them. I’ve come to believe it’s the best way.”
Staying after class is one thing—associate professor of economics Fernando Lozano takes student engagement to another level. Ask around, and you'll find that he is universally described as a generous and gregarious presence on campus, the sort of guy who regularly grabs lunch with advisees and invites students over for dinner at his Clark I residence with his wife and two kids. He chaperones international-student trips to Joshua Tree, serves as a mentor in the Questbridge Scholars program and can occasionally be seen playing games of pick-up soccer on the quad.

Josh Rodriguez '13, who does independent research with Lozano and is one of his 24 advisees, meets with the professor at least three times a week, often just to catch up on life outside his coursework. “He’s not simply trying to get through the academic stuff he needs to cover,” Rodriguez says. “He truly cares about me as a person.”

For Lozano, student advising is a pleasure and a privilege, and something that he humbly attributes to an actual selfishness on his part. “I don’t think that I am doing anything extraordinary,” he says. “I view it as an act of consumption—something that makes me a better scholar.”

In the classroom, he strives to make microeconomics accessible for majors and curious souls alike. His 8 a.m. section often meets over breakfast in Frank Dining Hall to foster a more conversational atmosphere. He has explained game theory by splitting classes into “soccer goalies” and “kickers” to discuss penalty shot probabilities. “He tries to make economics more than just supply and demand,” says Rodriguez. “He challenges us to think about how it applies to everyday life.”

Lozano’s career in academia almost didn’t happen. He showed up in Claremont in 2004 to teach one course, for one year, while he finished his dissertation at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He had never considered teaching and didn’t expect to stay on, but at the end of his final spring-semester class, as he was placing the cap back on the whiteboard marker, he experienced an unmistakable moment of clarity. “I realized that I really enjoyed doing this, and wanted to stay at a place like this for the rest of my life,” he recalls.

His research focuses on issues of labor, immigration and education, particularly as it applies to Hispanics in the U.S. In 2008, he earned a one-year Steele Fellowship that sent him to work at the University of Michigan’s National Poverty Center. “It was a great opportunity to collaborate with senior faculty at other institutions,” he says. “But most importantly, having a research job made me realize how much I missed my students.”

In 2009, Sagehens presented Lozano with the prestigious Wig Award for Excellence in Teaching. “I consider that to be the highlight of my career,” he says.

“My role is to create an atmosphere where the student can comfortably explore the different transformative opportunities that a liberal arts education provides,” he says. “Some students will achieve it within economics, but most won’t. And that’s fine—I recognize that the value added in one is as important as the other.”
At Pomona, the professor explaining statistical errors in the null hypothesis may also be the coach helping you fine-tune your fastball. Gabriel Chandler, assistant professor of mathematics and Burnett C. Meyer Fellow, performs both functions.

“I can go into his office anytime and talk about baseball and our next game, and also talk about a project I’m working on for his class,” says Guy Stevens ’13, a mathematics and economics double major and a pitcher on the Pomona-Pitzer baseball team, which Chandler helps coach. “It’s definitely made me feel more connected with him as both a coach and a professor.”
Chandler sums it up: “It helps that the kids can look at you as if you’re a real person.”

Chandler was hired at Pomona two years ago as part of a drive to endow positions for new faculty. His specific fellowship was made possible by a generous bequest from Burnett C. Meyer ’44.

Another fellowship, for a faculty member in international relations, has been funded with a gift from the estate of Richard Steele ’41. The search for a faculty member to fill that position is under way.

Endowment support for faculty positions has previously focused on attracting more experienced educators with established careers. The new faculty fellowships will concentrate on those just starting out.

“The fellowships allow us to accelerate our response to some of the changes and needs in the curriculum and in student interests,” says Vice President and Dean of the College Cecilia Conrad, who also is the Stedman-Sumner Professor of Economics. “We wouldn’t be able to hire faculty for these new positions without the fellowship program.”

For instance, there has been an increasing demand for computer science classes, forcing the College to hire visiting professors for the past five years, Conrad says. Pomona needs to hire a tenure-track faculty member who will “build long-term relationships with students that persist beyond their graduation.”

Although the quality of Pomona’s visiting professors is high, investing in young faculty members’ futures with tenure-track positions provides ample return in their commitment to the college community, says Chandler.

“There’s a good number of faculty who show up at sporting events or at plays or the orchestra or the choir. Certainly, with a full-time, tenure-track job, you are part of the College and there’s no doubt about that,” he says.

The fellowships also help Pomona, as a small liberal arts college, to compete more effectively with large research universities for the top candidates. “We are looking for people with a unique combination of skills,” says Tzu-yi Chen, chair of Pomona’s Computer Science Department. “We want great teachers and mentors who are also strong researchers. Faculty need to be able to do this in an environment that differs significantly from their Ph.D. institution. More time will be invested in teaching, they will not have the ability to recruit graduate students or postdocs, and they may be the only person in Claremont who works in their area.”

“I think these fellowships will help convince candidates that we are serious about helping junior faculty succeed as teachers and researchers,” Chen says.

Pomona previously often had to wait for faculty members to retire before hiring new ones. As a large number of baby-boomer retirements approaches, the faculty fellowships also will help provide a smooth transition and transfer of institutional knowledge.

“We don’t want to have a big bulge of people we suddenly have to go out and hire,” says Conrad. “Having some overlap allows for the opportunity for mentorship from the senior faculty member to the younger faculty member. It can be a very valuable relationship between those two people.”

“It’s part of a long-term plan for shaping the faculty, for making sure that we have high-quality teacher-scholars, people who want to be in this kind of environment, who are committed to one-on-one relationships with students,” Conrad continues. “So it sometimes can take a while to find these people, and you want to be able to move when you’ve found them.”

A Longstanding Commitment to the College

The Harry and Grace Steele Foundation, the late Richard Steele ’41, and his family have supported Pomona College across the spectrum for over 35 years. From facilities to financial aid, the Steele family has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to the College. They provided student support through the Harry G. Steele Foundation Scholarship, and faculty support through the Richard Steele ’41 Professorship in Social Sciences (held by Jill Grigsby) and the Harry and Grace Steele Foundation Junior Faculty Leave program. They also established the Harry and Grace Steele Forum in the Smith Campus Center and the Harry G. Steele Astrophysical Laboratory; supported renovations to Brackett Observatory, the Peter W. Stanley Quad and junior faculty housing; and endowed a faculty fellowship for International Relations (faculty member is now being hired).
THE DOROTHY AND FRED CHAU
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

Extending Postdoctoral Opportunities at Pomona

By Lorraine Wang

Here’s a new way of looking at things:

Claremont has more in common with San Bernardino than upscale South Pasadena.

The residents of the community surrounding Pomona College like to look westward, but “in terms of environmental and transportation impacts, Claremont’s problems and concerns are more similar to those of Riverside,” says Anna Joo Kim, a postdoctoral fellow in the Environmental Analysis Program at Pomona.

Kim’s fresh take on urban planning has been brought to Pomona through a fellowship initially funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and which will continue in the future as the Dorothy and Fred Chau Postdoctoral Fellowship. The fellowship currently focuses on candidates in the humanities and social sciences, with the goals of introducing them to the milieu of the small liberal arts college, diversifying Pomona’s faculty, and providing students with new, interdisciplinary approaches to knowledge.

Such new approaches may mean that theatre and dance students get to learn about Bodyweather, a post World War II approach to dance that emerged in Japan, and about the Feldenkrais method of somatic education, a holistic approach to working with the body and the nervous system, with Professor Joyce Lu. Lu was the previous Mellon Fellow and has since been hired as a permanent member of the faculty.
The fellowship, which allowed for a half-time teaching load and funding for research, enabled Lu to broaden her knowledge and connect with members of the Los Angeles theatre and dance communities. She then brought back what she had learned to the classroom.

She has also helped students connect with opportunities to pursue their aspirations in the community at large. “A lot of the seniors who come to me are people who are interested in using theatre in society, toward social justice or social change,” Lu says. “A lot of these students go on to work for non-profit organizations, very innovative ones.”

One of the other stated goals of postdoctoral fellowships is to show top candidates who may not have experience with small liberal arts colleges what those colleges are like, says Cecilia Conrad, Pomona’s Dean of the College and a professor of economics. Many of them are graduating from Ph.D. programs at large research universities (sometimes referred to as R1 universities) and also from countries that don’t have the equivalent of America’s liberal arts colleges. And Pomona must fight against the bias that these R1 programs perpetuate.

“People coming from some of the top R1 programs frequently have advisors who are telling them, ‘You need to go to an R1.’ … People who are advisors in R1 institutions want to replicate themselves.

“If you talk to the faculty, many have had somebody who’s tried to discourage them from coming to a small liberal arts college, because we do have heavier teaching responsibilities,” Conrad says.

The Chau fellowships try to set the record straight. With the fellowship, Lu discovered “the space, the time and the resources to explore and strengthen my passions and then translate them to students.”

Kim agrees. “It’s really made me grow as a teacher, which I don’t think is separate from growth as a scholar.”

“Professor Englebert’s passion for teaching and enthusiasm for learning significantly impacted all of his students. Whether you are learning about African politics, grappling with a chi-squared test or discussing life over a cup of coffee at the Coop, Professor Englebert is able to make his students feel supported and respected while simultaneously challenging them to realize their full potential; both in the classroom and in life.”

—Emily Ferrell ’07

“When I met the late Richard Harrison, my first instinct was to run and hide. He ruled with an iron fist, but guided me with a gentle heart. I am grateful to him, not only for teaching me about our country’s history, but for pushing me to think for myself. He taught me courage, to stand up for the principles in which I believe, regardless of popular opinion. I still try to follow his example and miss him greatly. Thanks, Rick Harrison.”

—Adrienne (Fan) Harkins ’91

“Sandy Grabiner is a mathematician’s mathematician. He has such a passion and enthusiasm for math and for teaching. As my advisor, he really pushed me to write a thesis that was way above my pay grade. Professor Grabiner continually challenged me to tackle harder problems and to keep at something until I found the answer, which are skills that are definitely applicable to what I do today.”

—Jeff Parks ’02

“I benefitted from Lisa Beckett’s tutelage both as my tennis coach and as my P.E. teacher. She taught me many tennis-specific skills that I continue to use today on the courts, but more than that are the skills that also translate to my life off the courts, such as how to focus and relax and dedicate myself to an end-goal, not to mention how to create synergy within a team in a world where most of us are in it for ourselves. I consider Lisa a friend and as she insists, “coach for life,” and continue to seek out her advice regularly.”

—Brenda Peirce Barnett ’92

If you have a favorite professor, let us know. Post your comments on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pomonacollege, where you can always find the latest news about the College.
TUITION-FREE DAY

On March 21, Pomona College celebrated its first “Tuition-Free Day,” the approximate day that tuition “runs out,” and the generosity of the Pomona College community kicks in. Students turned out to sign thank you cards at the Smith Campus Center and the dining halls and leave their handprints on Walker Wall in honor of the almost 9,000 donors who give millions of dollars each year to make up the difference between the actual cost of a year at Pomona (approximately $79,000) and the amount that students and their families pay ($55,160). For the 52 percent of students receiving financial aid, the amount of aid provided by donors is even higher.

Chris Bergeron ’14 was one of the several students who worked on the Tuition-Free Day planning committee, chaired by Director of Alumni Relations Nancy Trese-Osgood ’80. “Tuition-Free Day serves as a reminder that the generosity of thousands of donors makes our Pomona experience possible,” says Bergeron. “I think students need to be more appreciative of those gifts and hopefully pay it forward after graduation.”

Inside the Quad, Beyond the Gates

Pomona College hosted “Inside the Quad, Beyond the Gates,” a three-day event in March that gave about 40 alumni, parents and other guests the opportunity to meet with faculty, trustees, students and senior administrators. Presentations included talks about student research and co-curricular activities, a sneak preview of the museum’s Native American collection of artifacts and a tour of campus, as well as discussions about the future of the College and its relevance in the world today. “It was a first-rate opportunity to get current about Pomona,” says Glenn Pascall ’64. “The College has a great story to tell alumni and other interested parties.” The parent of a recent Pomona grad agrees. “It was a very good way to get to know Pomona better and to understand the planning that goes on and where the resources are directed and why,” says Luisa Hunnewell P ’11.

Photos by Carlos Puma

Photos by John Lucas and Carrie Rosema
State of the Campaign

**Campaign Pomona: Daring Minds** has raised $157,473,923 in gifts and pledges toward its goal of $250 million.

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<th>Campaign Initiative</th>
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**Campaign Goal**  
$250,000,000  
$157,473,923

As of April 19, 2012

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Some of the 40 guests who attended “Inside the Quad, Beyond the Gates” in March.

David Oxtoby with Cheryl and Andy Friedman P’13, P’16

David Hirsch ’59 and Glenn Pascall ’64

The College was saddened to learn of the passing of renowned civil rights attorney John Payton ’73, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. An enduring friend to Pomona, Payton had been a member of the Board of Trustees since 2005 and was co-chair of the Daring Minds campaign. A full obituary will appear in the spring issue of Pomona College Magazine.

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**Campaign Pomona**

**DARING MINDS**

**Giving to the Campaign**

[www.pomona.edu/daring-minds/giving](http://www.pomona.edu/daring-minds/giving)

**Campaign Pomona: Daring Minds** offers a unique opportunity for alumni, parents and friends of the College to play a role in launching an exciting new era in Pomona history. The success of this ambitious effort will depend upon gifts of many types and every size, from people from all walks of life.

**Annual Fund Gifts**

Gifts to the Pomona College Annual Fund touch the lives of every Pomona student through scholarships, support for faculty, and funding for programs that bring faculty and students together. Strengthening the Annual Fund is essential to maintaining Pomona’s place among the finest liberal arts colleges in America.

**Endowment Gifts**

Gifts for endowment provide lasting support for Pomona’s people and programs and play a key role in ensuring that Pomona will always be true to its promise to provide a world-class education to its students, regardless of their ability to pay. This campaign offers numerous naming opportunities for endowments to support student scholarships, faculty fellowships, student research and student internships and a range of programs and opportunities.

**Capital Gifts**

Capital gifts fund the construction and renovation of up-to-date facilities that play a crucial role in the educational process. This campaign offers a range of naming opportunities for those who want to see their contribution transformed into spaces and equipment that will help educate future generations of Pomona students.

**Planned Giving**

The Pomona Plan offers donors the opportunity to make significant charitable gifts to the College while taking advantage of current tax incentives and meeting the future needs of their own families. Planned gifts include bequest provisions and a range of income-providing annuities and trusts.

**Pledges**

Pledges allow Pomona donors to make a generous commitment to the campaign over a period of up to five years.

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**Whom to Contact**

**Gifts to the Annual Fund:**
Craig Arteaga-Johnson ’96, director, 1-888-736-9425;  
[www.pomona.edu/give](http://www.pomona.edu/give)

**Gifts to Endowment or Capital Projects:**
John Norton, assistant vice president, 909-607-7441

**Planned Giving (The Pomona Plan):**
Robin Trozpek, senior director, 909-621-8143 or 1-800-761-9899;  
pomonapl@pomona.edu

For more information about the Daring Minds campaign and to track our progress, go to: [www.pomona.edu/daring-minds](http://www.pomona.edu/daring-minds)
See inside for our Daring Minds Focus on Faculty

Professor Fernando Lozano