

Public-service awards honor those who ‘honor this institution’

By [Cathy Cockrell](#), NewsCenter | May 6, 2014

BERKELEY —

The public-service contributions of faculty, staff and approximately 10,000 campus students yearly “honor this institution,” Chancellor Nicholas Dirks said Monday at an annual event to honor, in return, outstanding exemplars of that civic-minded spirit.

A lively crowd was on hand in Sibley Auditorium to celebrate the winners of the 2014 Chancellor’s Awards for Public Service and five prestigious public-service scholarships and fellowships.

“You are the bridge, you are the inspiration, you are the role models,” Julie Sinai, director of local government and community relations, told the many public servants in the room.

They included two winners of staff awards for civic engagement: Tanaiia Hall, of Audit and Advisory Services — who has volunteered in the community for more than 20 years and has helped institute regular community-service events for staff in her department — and Andrew Park, of Physical Education, who moonlights as a community organizer and youth mentor in Oakland’s San Antonio neighborhood.

Wendy Hernandez, a fourth-year American studies major, received the Mather Good Citizen Award, for her work to address mass incarceration. Hernandez co-leads “Get on the Bus,” a fall DeCal class on the prison system, which is paired with fundraising in the spring to bring children to visit their incarcerated parents on Mother’s and Father’s days.

Berkeley alum Winn Mather, whose father established the Mather Award in 1983, came to see Hernandez accept the award, which comes with a \$1,500 stipend — up from \$25 when it was first established, he noted.

Hernandez said she grew up in a neighborhood where “more people are involved in the criminal-justice system than in colleges.” Behind that reality are “structural issues I didn’t realize were structural until I took a lot of American Cultures course,” she added.

The American Cultures Engaged Scholars (ACES) program — which joins classroom learning in American Cultures courses with service projects developed in conjunction with community-based organizations — figured prominently in the awards ceremony.

A Service-Learning Leadership Award went to Victoria Robinson, who directs ACES and teaches ethnic studies. “This is a collective award. It sits on the shoulders of giants,” she said.

Faculty member Sean Burns was honored largely to recognize his ACES course “Social Movements, Urban Histories, and the Politics of Memory,” which connects undergrads with Bay Area activists.

“I’ve been at this for 20 years, at this and other campuses,” Burns said. “I have always aspired to do something at this level of ambition,” and was able to at Berkeley because of the ACES program.

The ceremony also featured, for the first time, the Robert J. and Mary Catherine Birgeneau Recognition Award for Service to Undocumented Students. The former UC Berkeley chancellor and his wife were present to see the award go to social-welfare grad student Nalleli Sandoval, who began her advocacy at a time when undocumented students were fearful to talk openly about their immigration status, and has worked to support comprehensive immigration reform, AB540 and the DREAM Act.

“This is dedicated to my family, who I have the fortune to have with me, but many do not because of a very unjust immigration system,” said Sandoval.

The five public-service scholarships and fellowships mentioned at the ceremony were the John Gardner Fellowship Program, the Shinnyo Fellowship, the Donald A. Strauss Public Service Scholarship, the Judith Lee Stronach Baccalaureate prize and the Peter E. Haas Public Service Leaders Program.

The Chancellor’s Awards for Public Service and their 2014 winners include:

- Research in the Public Interest: Edward Miguel (economics)
- Service-Learning Leadership: Khalid Kadir (international and area studies, engineering) and Victoria Robinson (ethnic studies, American Cultures)
- Faculty Award for Civic Engagement: Sean Burns (international and area studies, Blum Center)
- Staff Award for Civic Engagement: Tanaia Hall (Audit and Advisory Services) and Andrew Park (Physical Education)
- Student Group Award for Civic Engagement: Richmond Excellence Serving Our Community
- Undergraduate Student Award for Civic Engagement: Melissa Padilla (political science)
- Graduate Student Award for Civic Engagement: Justine Kentla (Berkeley Law)
- Mather Good Citizen Award: Wendy Hernandez (American studies)
- Robert J. And Mary Catherine Birgeneau Recognition Award for Service to Undocumented Students: Nalleli Sandoval (social welfare)

Related information:

- [UC Berkeley Public Service Center](#) website
 - [With a foothold at Berkeley, ‘engaged scholarship’ goes where it’s needed](#) (NewsCenter article)
 - [Taking stock, at ACES symposium, of ‘why engaged scholarship matters now’](#) (NewsCenter article)
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