

A Culture of Learning: Why the Preuss School Succeeds

By **Bud Mehan**

Professor Emeritus of Sociology

UCSD's Preuss School, founded twenty years ago, is a success by any measure, even though it only admits applicants by lottery from low-income families in which parents have not had the benefits of college. Its students post the highest reading and math scores of any high school in San Diego County. For the past three years, about 90% of graduating seniors have been accepted by four-year colleges, including every single one of the 95 in the class of 2018. These accomplishments are especially impressive because Preuss serves a significantly higher percentage of low-income students of color –96.29% this year -than other high-performing schools.

People unfamiliar with the reasons for the school's success are sometimes skeptical of this record. They suppose that the school must "cherry pick" applicants, taking "the cream of the crop," or that it deliberately inflates students' grades. Some also accuse UCSD of a blanket policy of accepting all Preuss graduates. None of this is true, and the suppositions betray an unwarranted refusal to believe that low-income students of color can perform at the highest levels when the learning environment is organized for their success.

Why has the school been so successful? The answer begins with the



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engagement of parents. The rest stems from an innovative and rigorous approach to education by the school's dedicated administrators and teachers.

Preuss parents are highly motivated. First, they have to learn about the school. This is no easy task. The San Diego Unified School District does not advertise Preuss or other charter schools to "regular" elementary schools. Parents must learn about them by word of mouth, including from teachers. Next, they must complete a complicated application packet, which requires letters of recommendation, statements of purpose, and financial information. Once their youngsters are accepted, parents face transportation challenges. Most Preuss families live in Southeastern San Diego, near or even across the border. Bus rides are 45 minutes or more each way.

Parents must rise early to ensure their children make the bus before going to work. If students stay after school to participate in extracurricular activities or sports, they will not arrive home until 5:00 p.m. or later when they then face lengthy and demanding homework assignments.

Parents face cultural challenges as well. Unfamiliar with advanced education, parents have reported in interviews that they do not know enough to help their students with homework or special projects. Conflicts arise in families when youngsters must miss a trip home to Mexico for a weekend, or a *quinceañera*, because of a pressing school assignment. Preuss students report that their parents do not understand how hard they have to work in college-prep classes or to prepare for SATs, or why they want to go away to college instead of staying closer to home. →

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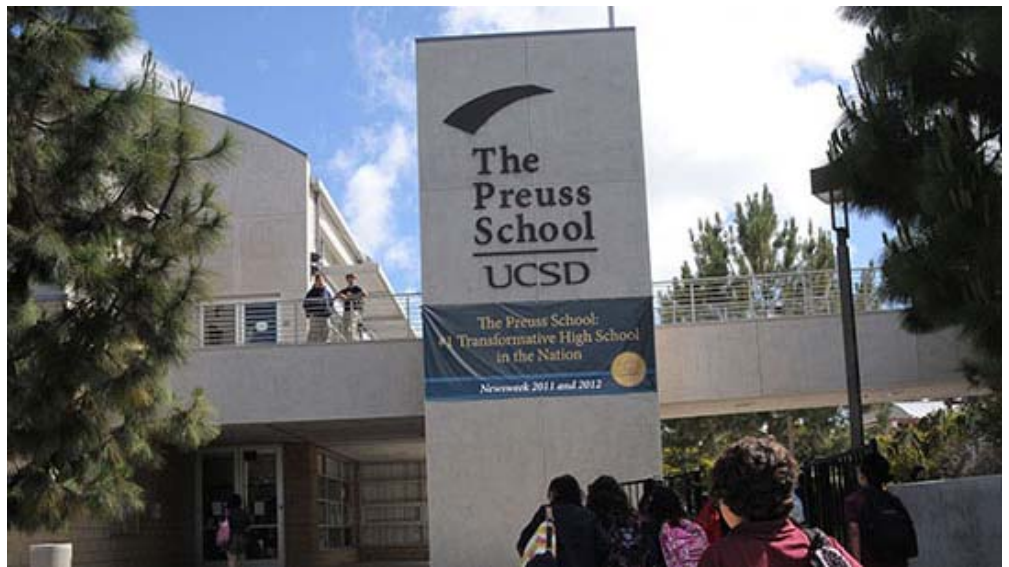
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Once their children gain admission, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school. The principal holds monthly parent meetings, attended, on average, by approximately 200. Parents are non-voting members of the School's Board of Directors. They are invited to assist with after-school clubs and sports.

Next, innovative structural features contribute to the success of the college-bound culture at Preuss. The most visible is the addition of eighteen instructional days each year. This extension of learning time places Preuss on a par with nations like Finland and Singapore that traditionally lead international academic comparisons such as PISA (Program in International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in Mathematics and Science Study). Extended learning time enables teachers to dig deeper into subject matter and provides more opportunity for individualized instruction and systematic tutoring -- often provided by UCSD students.

The flexibility afforded by charter school status enables Preuss to modify the school calendar in other ways. School starts later one morning a week to allow teachers to review students' progress and discuss proposals for improvement. Students are invited to use this time for individual tutoring. This in-school, teacher-led learning model has been shown to contribute significantly to improvements in students' learning and the development of a professional learning community among teachers.

Rigorous courses are a fixture at Preuss. High school courses are certified "A-G" (those that UC and CSU accept for college admission). Upper division courses are Advanced Placement (AP) certified. Students also take AP tests that offer college course credit. This



The Preuss School, UCSD

policy was instituted to give Preuss students access to a demanding course of study as an end in itself and at the same time to prepare them for college courses. AP courses have the additional benefit of adding points to students' GPA. An A in an AP course counts as a 5 on the 4-point GPA calculation; a B counts as a 4, etc. (This scheme accounts for US students accumulating 4.5 GPAs and higher on a 4.0 scale.)

Preuss seniors participate in a three-part program ("the wheel") composed of community service, an internship, and a research project. Students often return to their home communities to tutor younger students or assist public service organizations. They serve as interns in UCSD academic departments, the theater, or administrative offices. The topics of research projects are often drawn from course work, new experiences, or public service. Near the end of the school year, seniors present a review of their work to a panel ideally composed of a Preuss faculty, a UCSD faculty, and a community member. The oral and written preparation, the actual presentation, and the ensuing question-answer period strengthens students' oral and written communication skills in an environment that imitates the exchanges students will

encounter in college courses.

The Advisory Program, composed of a class period dedicated to academic advice and personal guidance, is ideally led by the same Preuss teachers from 6th to 12th grade. Having consistent Advisory Teachers is intended to foster trusting relationships between students and teachers. Advisory Teachers provide strategies for mastering course material; they arrange for individual or group tutoring for challenging courses (especially calculus and AP European History). As college application time approaches they offer college information, test prep, financial aid information, and guidance in preparing statements of purpose. They play an important role in preparing their advisees for their year-end "Presentations of Learning."

Students also engage their advisory teacher in personal issues, such as fears/reluctance about going to college. Neighborhood peers may mock them for wearing uniforms, or starting school earlier in the year and ending later. They may have difficult interactions with a particular teacher.

These interpersonal relations are less visible but equally if not more important than the structural dimensions of the school's college-

going culture. Teachers and staff are selected because they are subject matter experts and believe that low-income under-represented minority (URM) students can succeed at the highest levels. They manifest this caring in day-to-day interactions with students.

Preuss educators realize the value, indeed the necessity, of an extensive support system to ensure the success of their students. To this end, the student:teacher ratio (20-25:1) is lower than the average in low-income neighborhoods that can reach 30-35:1. Smaller class size promotes opportunities for more intense teacher-student interaction that include expanding access to advanced material, clarifying misunderstandings, and demystifying troublesome course topics.

In addition to a general academic counselor, students benefit from a college counselor who is conversant with the admissions process. This counselor takes a per-

sonal interest in graduating seniors, assisting each one with financial aid applications, statements of purpose, and soliciting letters of recommendation. A grant from the Hirschman Fund – established in memory of **Lisa Hirschman** by her husband Professor Emeritus **Peter Gourevitch** -- provides clinical psychologists to assist individual students. The school has a full-time nurse. (The teachers' union in Chicago is the most recent group to recognize the value of similar support services when bargaining with their district.)

At the outset, the founders of Preuss hoped it would prepare low-income youth for admission to college and become a model for public education. The first goal has certainly been met and exceeded. The second had has a more limited but tangible success. Gompers Preparatory Academy, a "UCSD Partnership School" in Southeastern San Diego has incor-

porated many Preuss features into its college-prep program. So, too, UCLA and Berkeley have built "university assisted schools" like Preuss and Gompers in nearby disadvantaged communities.

Interviews with educators who have visited Preuss report that financial cost and rigid bureaucracy in most school districts prohibits adoption of extended learning time, within-school day professional development, and other worthwhile modifications of their schools' structure and practices. It seems that decision makers and the public have to be convinced that increasing funding for public education is necessary in order to adopt the distinctive features of the Preuss model for a college-going culture to benefit low-income youth on a larger scale.

Mehan was Director of the UCSD Center for Research on Educational Equity, Access, and Teaching Excellence from 1998-2011.

"Dare to be Dull", (Part II) The Evolution of UCSD TV

By **Mary Walshok**

Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Programs and Dean, University Extension, and General Manager, UCSD-TV

By 1995, UCSD-TV became a much more structured enterprise as **Lynn Burnstan** became Station Manager. Under Lynn's leadership, we have been able to create a sustainable and scalable television service that is the envy of universities across America. That appointment came at the time when foundations like Carnegie, the Century Fund, and Haas were looking into new civic roles for broadcast organizations. **Larry Grossman**, the former director of NBC News and of PBS, was investigating the promise of new digital technologies to transform broadcast media into resources for arts, education, and in

particular, public affairs and civic engagement. Because UCSD-TV was up and running, we began to participate in forums and conversations across the country. We had developed a unique business model. We were capturing and producing public affairs programming. We had collaborators across the campus, at SIO, CONNECT, in the Arts and Humanities, as well as such community partners as the San Diego Opera, the Natural History Museum, and the City Club, all of which were interested in sharing their cultural, educational, and research content with a growing public audience. The early 2000s were a very heady time indeed.

Another pivotal moment came when **Richard Atkinson** became UC President. Within a year, he began discussing with the team at UCSD how to launch a UC-wide network

on the model of what we had done here. An opportunity to secure a channel on the Dish Network presented itself. And as of 1999, the Office of the President invested substantial funds enabling UCSD-TV to work with campuses across the UC system on the C-SPAN model we had adopted. Over the Christmas break, the enterprising UCSD-TV team, with the help of **Sherman George** and a number of on-campus IT leaders, scrambled to



Mary Walshok

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get us on The Dish Network and to package an initial offering of primarily UCSD-TV programming so that we could go “live” January first. Within a few years, working now with a system-wide advisory committee, UCTV developed important strategic partnerships: UCLA, UC Santa Barbara, Cooperative Extension, and UC medical schools, as well as the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley. Many of the campuses were already producing broadcast-quality programming so we were able to harvest work they were doing and to build a robust 7/24 television service which today represents only about 30% of UCSD campus programming and 70% from across the system.

The infusion of resources and connections enabled by UCTV benefited the UCSD campus station enormously. The ability to represent the full panoply of academic talent and across the UC system opened doors to foundations and national conversations and funders, all of whom were keenly interested in digital technologies. One such was Google, who in their early days approached us about being a beta site because of our content-rich program. They provided us with financial resources, but just as importantly, advised us how to think about the web shaping our broadcast programming. One of the most obvious tips today, not as obvious more than a dozen years ago, is the importance of using “key words” to attract visitors. Universities typically lead with their name. They then direct you, if you’re interested in a particular topic, to a school or department. What we learned from Google is that if we tagged our programming with key words such as “the brain,” that would stimulate many more visitors who would then dis-

cover that the program and expertise were actually in the Medical School in the Neurosciences Department at UCSD.

What we also learned from Google is that the more responses and viewers you get from key words, the earlier your programming will appear on the search screen. A wonderful example of how this succeeded for us is a program we captured at UC San Francisco with the then not very well-known faculty researcher, **Robert Lustig**. He gave a lecture in 2009 on the impact of sugar on disease (“Sugar, the Bitter Truth”). To date, his program has attracted 10,287,940 viewers, one of whom was a reporter at the New York Times which eventually featured his work on the cover of its Sunday magazine for which he has been eternally grateful to UCTV.

These experiences led us to understand that our future as a TV station was not tied so much to broadcast as it was to our ability to establish a presence on the web. For the last decade, UCSD-TV and UCTV have been leveraging the early knowledge we acquired from Google and then YouTube to create thematic websites that attract visitors from not only California, but across the country and around the world to thematic sites such as The Brain, Motherhood, and Public Policy. We produce and capture more than 200 new programs annually and showcase an equal number of faculty annually.

The most recent tipping point for UCSD-TV was the decision more than two years ago to enter our broadcast spectrum into a high-profile FCC auction. For the years preceding the auction, we had many approaches from both commercial and not-for-profit broadcast entities offering us anywhere from one to five million dollars for our license. These offers made us suspect that we had an asset that was going to be increasingly valua-

ble because the growing demand for spectrum in the digital age exceeded the available space. We were correct. When we learned that the FCC was about to buy back licenses from existing stations in an auction which they would then turn around and sell at a higher rate to commercial and not-for-profit broadcast entities, we called our attorneys in Washington. They and other advisors suggested that it was the right time for us to put our broadcast spectrum into an auction. All of this occurred as Chancellor **Pra-deep Khosla** was taking the reins. At the most senior level we agreed, based on professional input, that we would enter the value of our station’s spectrum at \$40 million in the initial auction. Over a more than six-month period, many wider-reaching licenses were sold and we eventually were able to act on a bid for the license for \$24 million. Thus, two years ago, we closed down all of our broadcast capacity and the LPTV license secured in 1988 was transferred to the FCC.

We have continued to build and expand because of the extraordinary reach and value of our television service on the web. The resources secured from the license sale were transferred to the campus for purposes so the station continues to be highly entrepreneurial. After nearly 30 years of enormous effort, the team was able to make an extraordinary financial contribution to UCSD while retaining the substantive public service role. This continued growth is a remarkable testimony to the early advice provided by Brian Lamb that there is an audience for content-rich programming and that it is worth “daring to be dull.” The numbers speak for themselves. The future continues to be very bright for UCSD-TV.



2019 Dickson Awards to Dimsdale and Powell

Two distinguished UCSD emeriti – **Joel Dimsdale** and **Henry C. Powell** -- have been awarded this year's Edward A. Dickson Professorships. This award, given annually on each UC campus, honors faculty who have made exemplary post-retirement contributions.

Edward A. Dickson served as a regent of the University of California from 1913 to 1946, the longest tenure of any regent. In 1955, Mr. Dickson presented the university with an endowment to support and maintain special annual professorships to be awarded to retired academic senate faculty members. The award is described in the gift document as follows.

"For the support and maintenance of special annual Professorships in the University of California to which shall be appointed by the President, with approval of The Regents, persons of academic rank who have been retired after service in the University of California and who shall receive such awards in addition to their retirement or pension allowances. Awards shall be made upon such conditions of service, research, or teaching as The Regents may require. Professorships so awarded shall be known as the Edward A. Dickson Emeriti Professorships."

Joel E. Dimsdale, MD

Since retiring as Professor of Psychiatry in 2010, Dimsdale has been co-author of 93 published papers on medical psychology. In 2016, his book *Anatomy of Malice: the Anatomy of the Nazi War Criminals, based on psychiatric examinations of defendants tried and convicted at Nuremberg*, appeared from the Yale University Press. It received highly favorable reviews and has been translated into seven other languages. For many years he worked on the edition that ap-

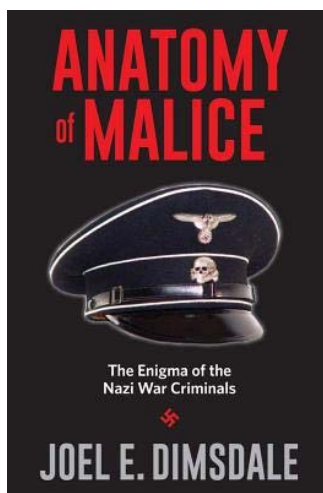


Joel Dimsdale

peared in 2013 of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)* – the standard professional psychiatric sourcebook. From 2012 to 2013 he chaired the Council on Psychosomatic Medicine of the American Psychiatric Association. From 2013 to 2016, he was Editor at Large of the *Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine* and continues to serve on the editorial board of *Up-toDate*, one of the most influential medical textbooks.

At UCSD, he served from 2009 to 2018 as founding director of a highly successful program designed to identify and mentor young faculty in the health sciences. As of September 2018, 92% of those mentored had gone on to become principal investigators and co-investigators, producing a total of 511 scholarly papers.

In addition, Dimsdale has continued to lecture extensively in psychiatry here and at many other academic institutions, in this county, Germany, and South Korea.



Henry C. Powell

Harry C. Powell, MD

Powell, Professor of Medicine Emeritus, who holds both the M.D. and D.Sc. degrees, and is a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathology of London, was a major contributor to all the pathology programs of the UCSD Medical School. Since retirement in 2012, he has continued to teach in the School of Medicine and the Skaggs School of Pharmaceutical Sciences. He also continues to provide clinical services at the UCSD Medical Center Hillcrest, the Veterans Administration Medical Center, and as a consultant to the Kaiser Foundation Hospital, and serves as co-editor of one academic journal and on the editorial board of another.

Powell has also played an exceptionally active role in university affairs, serving as representative to and chair of the UC Academic Senate, and after retirement as a member of the UC Press editorial board, the Academic Council of the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, and the the Academic Center on the National Laboratories. He has served the Emeriti Association as Vice President and President and on its nominating and award committees. He has played a leading role in the Emeriti Mentoring Program, serving as Director for two years.

Freer than previously to indulge long-standing cultural interests, Powell serves on the board of the Bach Collegium of San Diego and has offered “*Face the Music*,” a highly popular series of Retirement Association events focusing

on the life and works of classical composers. He has also taken part in its International Film Series presentations.

As **Suzan Cioffi**, RRC Executive Director, has observed: “Rarely has there been an individual who has been so singularly impactful on all of the programs for which I am responsible here at the UCSD Retirement Resource Center. With his post-retirement voluntary work spanning every aspect of our programs, he is a true Renaissance

Man with skills and expertise in a broad array of subject areas, and a willingness to share his knowledge and insights with members of all of our constituent groups.” To which accolade the editor of *Chronicles* adds: “Harry’s accounts of the history of the University of California and the cultural landscape of his native Dublin have instructed and delighted our readers.” As his Med School colleague **Jack Fisher** put it, in nominating Powell for this award, Powell “represents a gift to our university community who keeps giving...and giving.”



Anecdotage

You’ve Got Your Crust! And so do I.

By **Sandy Lakoff**

Bread has been a dietary staple ever since the first flat versions emerged from earthen ovens in the region aptly known in French as the *Croissant Fertile*. It’s not everyone’s “staff of life,” to be sure, and we all have to curb our carbs. Some societies rely more on rice and some people have a problem digesting gluten. Personally, I am not addicted to all its forms – just most of them. Let me count the ways:

When you and I were young, Maggie, the most common form in this country was the packaged sliced white one, introduced in 1928. The brands I remember were Bond, Taystee, Wonder, and Silvercup. They were cheap, good for pb-and-j sandwiches, and the

fresh loaves, even in their wrappers, gave off an inviting aroma. But they were hardly very exciting to the palate. (Healthier cracked or whole wheat at least restored the nutrients removed for the sake of whiteness.) And, let’s be honest, they were as bland as so much else of Anglo-American cuisine. (Who can forget the scene in *Annie Hall* where **Woody Allen** prepares to meet Annie’s WASPY family by grimly stuffing himself with slices of packaged white bread slathered in mayonnaise.) I pass over burger buns and hot dog rolls with the silence they deserve.

Fortunately, there were better options. In my hometown in New Jersey, I would jostle with the grown-ups on Sunday morning to pick up a loaf of our Pride Bakery’s fabled round corn rye – celebrated in New York Magazine as the best version in the

entire metropolitan area. And who could resist its “salt sticks,” horn-shaped rolls topped by caraway seeds, and the soft buns you could poke into and fill with jam?

Other places had options just as good. In Philadelphia, Freihofer’s would leave a little bag of freshly baked breakfast rolls every morning on home



doorknobs. Bostonians had Parker Rolls and Southerners their beloved biscuits and cornbread. New Englanders had Anadama (cornmeal and molasses); Buffalo its *weck* rolls, best for roast beef; San Francisco, glorious sourdough. Thomas's English Muffins, with their patented "nooks and crannies," invented in Manhattan in the 1880s, were becoming widely available. And in the 1950s, Hawaiians were introduced to the sweetened King's Hawaiian rolls and bread. Greater New York took for granted a "Glutenberg Galaxy" of irresistible Eastern-European-style baked goods: The "bulkie" roll (also popular in New England) and the similar Kaiser roll, crisp on the outside, soft on the inside, altogether unlike the counterfeit mushy versions sold here by Vons and Ralph's (shame on them both); Stuhmer's and Pechter's pumpernickel, round, tan, proudly sporting a union label showing a sheaf of wheat, and waiting to be sliced, buttered, and devoured; Caraway-seeded Jewish rye (advertised in the subway stations by ads reading: "You don't have to be Jewish to love Levy's Rye Bread") indispensable for corned beef and hot pastrami. On Fridays *challah* loaves were favored, rounded for the Jewish High Holidays, and you were even encouraged to pull off chunks. Lucky Brooklynites had *pletzels* -- utterly delicious flat rounds baked with slices of onion. Zabar's still sells its famous Russian Pumpernickel. Bagels have now

become commonplace, though too many are fake versions, never having been boiled like a proper bagel, and New York's H&H's are still the best, though too big.

I'm not sure that *matzoh* -- alias unleavened bread -- should count. It is properly referred to in the Passover *Haggadah* as "the bread of affliction," but I admit to having a yen for it too on occasion, along with Scandinavian flatbreads and Mexican *tortillas*.

In San Diego. D. Z. Akins does a decent job with rye bread and *challah*, and we have good Mexican *bolillos* and Italian *ciabatta* and *focaccia*. Several markets now sell *brioche* buns. Our best overall bakery is Bread & Cie in Hillcrest. Thanks to their imported French ovens, they produce very good *baguettes* and *batards* (though not as perfect as those from the *boulangeries* of France; maybe it's the flour or the water or some mysterious *je ne sais quoi*).

The most welcome recent surprise has come from the

Middle East and beyond, via our exile communities. Arabi-an *pita* can be good, especially the house-made version at Aladdin with its heavenly *baba ganouzh*. So is Indian and Pakistani *naan*, when enjoyed with Indian food. Ditto Armenian *lahvash*. The biggest treat for me has been *sangak* -- pronounced *san-jack* -- the yard-long Iranian flatbread, flecked with sesame seeds, baked in a huge oven with a circulating disk. I first tasted it fresh and still warm in Irvine, at Wholesome Choice, a great stop for lunch (at Culver Drive and Michelson) midway between San Diego and LA. People wait in line for it, and for good reason. It's also baked now at International Market (Balboa and Genesee) and Atlas Market on Poway Road. A student who took my Middle East politics class recommended that it be cut into squares and kept in the freezer to be taken out and toasted so that it retains its crispness. It is addictive and pleasantly so forget your diet for a bit and enjoy!



Irish Soda Bread



Hot Cross Buns



Kulich

A few choices offered by Bread & Cie.



Chocolate Cherry Challah



Round Challah

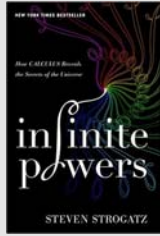


Panettone

UCSD Emeriti Association

Book Club

All EA Book Club Meetings are held at the
UCSD Faculty Club, 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM



Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Infinite Powers
by Steven Strogatz

Monday, January 27 2020

TBA



Chronicles

Newsletter of the UCSD Emeriti Association



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Mark your Calendar!



Emeriti & Retirement Associations Festive Holiday Party
(\$10 per member \$50 for non-members)

Saturday, December 7, 11:45 AM - 3:00 PM

The Abbey, 2825 5th Avenue

Please mail in your check today.



Wednesday, February 12, 3:30 - 5:00 PM

Ida & Cecil Green Faculty Club

Professor Steve Schick, Music

"Muros Pintados: Being Human at the Border"

"In January of 2018, nearly 75 percussionists met at the US/Mexican border near San Diego to perform John Luther Adams's iconic Inuksuit. Half of the percussionists performed on the Tijuana side of the border and the other half on the San Diego side. As the sounds mixed, much emerged about the nature of sound, the role of percussion in the humanness of communal music-making. And, a personal memory came to mind: as a Fulbright student in Germany at the height of the Cold War, I was once asked by an East German friend whether there was graffiti on the western side of the Berlin Wall. The communist side was painted in flat gray. I answered that, yes, the western side was covered in riotous color. Nearly forty years later, in the midst of the performance of Inuksuit, I was struck suddenly that the US side is flat gray—the Mexican side is covered in graffiti—and I wondered, what side of history we Americans are now on."