



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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Celebrate distinguished faculty, alumni, staff, and students at the

Annual Alumni Assn. Awards Luncheon Saturday, February 5, 2005

12 noon
Multipurpose Room
College Nine and College Ten
on the UCSC campus
[Click here to R.S.V.P.](#)

Meet the 2004-05 award winners!

A gifted Spanish-language teacher, a public defender who successfully argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, and a dedicated scholarship adviser have been selected to receive the Alumni Association's highest honors for the 2004-2005 year.

M. Victoria González Pagani will receive the Distinguished Teaching Award; Roberto Nájera, the Alumni Achievement Award; and Cheryl Perazzo the Outstanding Staff Award.



Roberto Najera

Photo: Jim MacKenzie

The three will be honored at the Alumni Association Awards Luncheon at noon on Saturday, February 5, 2005 on campus at the College Nine and College Ten Multi-purpose Room. The cost of the luncheon is \$18; RSVPs may be made by calling (831)



M. Victoria Gonzalez Pagani

Photo: Jim MacKenzie



459-2530 or online

[\(Click here\).](#)

Student evaluations of teacher Maria Victoria González Pagani, a leader in the field of language teaching and technology, stress her “extraordinary



Cheryl Perazzo

Photo: Jim MacKenzie

commitment of time and energy” noted Gildas Hamel, chair of UCSC’s language program. “I have been impressed by the great respect students have for her.”

“She is so personally invested as a teacher that students cannot help but achieve for the sake of making her proud,” one of her students, Lisa Peake, wrote in nominating her for the award. “Several other students in my classes with her have remarked to me that they must do the assignment because disappointing such a dedicated teacher is unthinkable.”

Her colleagues describe her as generous in sharing her knowledge at professional gatherings, and note her numerous research projects aimed at increasing students’ level of linguistic proficiency. González Pagani received the Academic Senate’s Teaching Excellence Award in 1995-96 and was nominated for the award three more times.

Alumni Achievement Award recipient Roberto Nájera, who graduated in 1979 from UCSC’s Merrill College with a bachelor’s degree in sociology and later from Harvard Law School, was the child of a widowed farmworker, and spent much of his childhood picking vegetables on the Monterey coast.

A Contra Costa County deputy public defender in Martinez, Nájera was an unlikely choice to argue a case before the Supreme Court. The David-and-Goliath nature of the case, heard in spring 2003, became even more dramatic when Nájera was diagnosed with colon cancer. His tumor was removed, and he began chemotherapy shortly before arguing the case.

Propelling Nájera forward was the belief that a 1993 California law retroactively extending the statute of limitations for child sexual abuse was unconstitutional

because it violated the Constitution's stated ban on "ex post facto"—or retroactive—laws. "Even if it is for good intentions, you're rescinding the law," he told the Contra Costa Times. The Supreme Court agreed, overturning the law by a 5-4 vote.

Outstanding Staff Award recipient Cheryl Perazzo, scholarship coordinator for UCSC's Office of Financial Aid, has been described as "a miracle worker" for her efforts to help students. Perazzo, who has been at UCSC since 1984, organized and implemented the first-ever UCSC Scholars Day in 1996 for top high school students, resulting in record numbers of Regents Scholars being recruited to UCSC. She also works closely with re-entry students and the Page and Eloise Smith Society—named for Cowell College's founding chancellor and his wife--which helps homeless and runaway youths, foster youth, orphans, and wards of the court pursue higher education.

Perazzo "is also a miracle worker," wrote Anne Smith Easley, daughter of Page and Eloise Smith. "She helps the students untie the bureaucratic knots that are part of dealing with any unwieldy institution," Easley added. "Through her efforts, many students are able to stay in school."

One student who came to UCSC as a former foster youth told of the many ways Perazzo went "above and beyond the call of duty" to help her find scholarships and other assistance. "I know I will look back to my college years and see Cheryl Perazzo as my guiding light," Heather Hazen wrote in her letter of nomination.

The February 5 Alumni Awards Luncheon will honor González Pagani; Nájera; Perazzo; ten student winners of College Service Awards, funded by the Alumni Association; and twenty student winners of Alumni Association Scholarship Fund awards (scroll up to RSVP).

[Nominations](#) for the UCSC Alumni Association awards are accepted year-round.

Click [here](#) for more information about/to make a nomination for the Alumni Achievement Award.

Click [here](#) for more information about/to make a

nomination for the Distinguished Teaching Award.

Click [here](#) for more information about/to make a nomination for the Outstanding Staff Award.

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