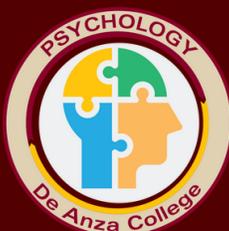
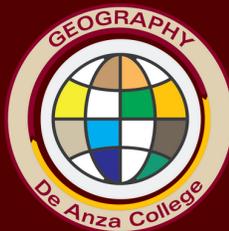




# “BREAKTHROUGHS”



Fall 2023 NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE 1



## WHAT IS “BREAKTHROUGHS?”

“Breakthroughs” is a quarterly e-newsletter, created by De Anza College’s Social Sciences and Humanities Division, with the purpose of promoting the division’s success and achievements of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, community engagement, students’ journey, academic program advancement, and faculty scholarships. “Breakthroughs” is crafted as an e-booklet for everyone to view and is publicly available to the college, district, and beyond.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.deanza.edu/socialsciences](http://www.deanza.edu/socialsciences)  
[SSH\\_Division@deanza.edu](mailto:SSH_Division@deanza.edu)

# A LETTER FROM THE DEAN



During one of this year's MOMENTUM events, we spotlighted author Curtis Chin, renowned for his book "Everything I Learned, I Learned in a Chinese Restaurant." Curtis delivered a compelling talk on the art of storytelling and emphasized the importance of documenting significant events, whether through writing or videography. His words resonated with me, sparking contemplation on how we could expand the impact of our work within the Social Sciences and Humanities Division.

While taking a substantial break from the college over the summer, I envisioned the creation of a quarterly e-newsletter that would dive deeper into showcasing the endeavors of faculty and students in our cherished division. I named this initiative "Breakthroughs."

In this newsletter, we aim to showcase noteworthy developments in academic programs, faculty experiences, and student achievements — real 'breakthroughs' that underscore the immediate impact within the realms of liberal arts and humanities. Teaching, to me, is a profound human interaction, a dynamic narrative of influence and creation. It's an incomplete tale without shedding light on the dedicated individuals passionately contributing to their work in classrooms and beyond. This inaugural issue proudly presents stories that showcase the hard work and accomplishments of those deeply committed to their craft.

I am very excited about the release of this inaugural issue and would greatly appreciate your feedback and ideas on additional stories worth sharing. Let's collaborate to showcase these narratives in our upcoming publications.

Wishing you all a wonderful and prosperous 2024.

In Community,

**Dr. Elvin T. Ramos**

**Dean, Social Sciences and Humanities Division**

**De Anza College**



## BREAKTHROUGHS THIS SEASON:

**DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT:  
GEOGRAPHY – PG. 2**

**FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: PROF.  
RAMONA GABRIEL – PG. 4**

**ARTICLE FEATURE:  
LEVERAGING THE W.H.O.L.E  
EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK  
TO ELEVATE INCLUSIVE  
LEARNING – PG. 5**

**OVERVIEW: RA SURVEY  
RESULTS – PG. 6**

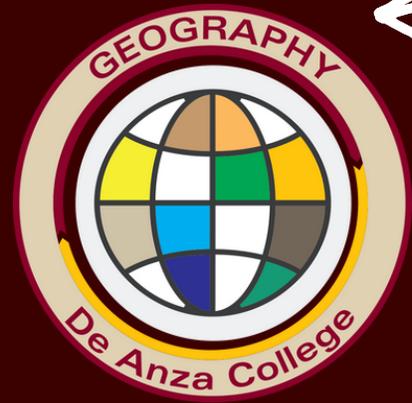
**NEW: CDE MANDARIN  
COHORT – PG. 7**

# DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT: GEOGRAPHY

*“What is your role in a place and a space?*

*How does that space shape  
one's experience?”*

*-Professor Purba Fernandez*

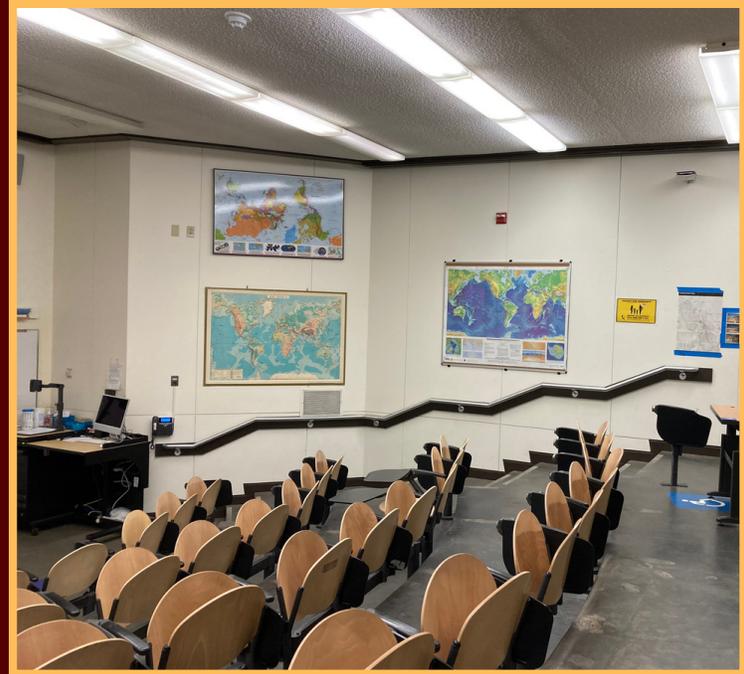


[WWW.DEANZA.EDU/GEOGRAPHY/](http://WWW.DEANZA.EDU/GEOGRAPHY/)

Geography is a subject that many may look over during their educational journey; However, at the Department of Geography within De Anza College's Social Sciences and Humanities Division, Professor Purba Fernandez expresses that the goal for the department is to have students think spatially with understanding place and space.

Fernandez, who is the chair of De Anza College SSH's Department of Geography, says that it is more than just learning about the physical features of the Earth.

“We teach physical geography, which deals with weather and climate, earthquakes and landforms, and the way the natural world works. We teach cultural geography, which is about human cultures, livelihoods, refugee flows, religions, languages, what people do for a living around the world and actual trade. And then we offer another one, which is really called World Regional, and it looks at the whole world.”



Courtesy Photo

The faculty of the Department of Geography consists of a small, but mighty team whose purpose is to help students “explore the linkages and interdependencies between physical and cultural landscapes to offer insights into the spatial organization of the earth's surface.”

As an educator, Fernandez says that her department seeks to inspire, challenge, and work with students to deepen their understanding of the interactions of people and places.

“As a geographer, I am trained to think both as a physical scientist and social scientist,” she said. “We aim to foster curiosity, empathy, critical thinking, and innovative approaches to problem-solving in students as they grapple with challenges in our globally interconnected world.”



Courtesy Photo

Professor Purba Fernandez (left) and Dean Elvin Ramos (right) at Fall 2023 College Opening Day.



# Geography



- **GEO 1: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, 4 Units**

An introduction to the basic physical elements of geography and the diverse physical environment in which we live. Topics include the global patterns of weather and climate, landforms, soils and vegetation along with human modification of natural environments.

**Transfer:**

- De Anza G.E.: Area B
- CSU Breadth : Area B, Sub Area 1
- IGETC (UC/CSU): Area 5, Sub Area A



- **GEO 10: WORLD REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY, 4 Units**

An introduction to the major distinctive regions of the world; their natural environment, people, resources, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, cities and the problems relating to contemporary society in each of the regions. Understanding the increasing interdependencies among and between regions.

**Transfer:**

- De Anza G.E.: Area D, Sub Area 2
- CSU Breadth: Area D, Sub Area 5
- IGETC (UC/CSU): Area 4, Sub Area E



- **GEO 4: CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY, 4 Units**

Examining the location of people and activities throughout the world and understanding the reasons for their distribution. Topics covered include population and migration, human impact on landscape, the geography of language, religion and ethnicity, economic activities, political organization and settlement patterns including the urban environment.

**Transfer:**

- De Anza G.E.: Area D, Sub Area 2
- CSU Breadth: Area D, Sub Area 5
- IGETC (UC/CSU): Area 4, Sub Area E





# FACULTY HIGHLIGHT: PROF. RAMONA GABRIEL

***If you asked Professor Ramona Gabriel if teaching in higher education was a long-term career goal of hers, she would tell you that growing up, she had not planned on being a teacher.***



Courtesy Photo

"I actually did not grow up saying I was going to be a probation officer, either," Gabriel said. "You know, when I was 19 [years-old], I [first started] working at Mrs. Fields Cookies."

"My mother was in charge as a nurse at the jail in San Mateo County," she said. "She called one day and said, 'hey, there is a job over across the street that I want you to apply to.' Now at 19, I'm living at my parents' house. You can't really say no, although I did. Imagine my surprise, when I got a phone call, telling me, 'hey, we would like to hire you.' So that's kind of, you know, where my career in criminal justice got started."

Born in San Francisco, California, but raised in Pacifica, California, Prof. Gabriel has an older brother and younger twin sisters. A wonderful middle child, as she describes herself, she does not have any children, but has four nieces and a nephew. Her educational career first stems back to working in the criminal justice system. She began when she was 19-years-old getting hired by the San Mateo County Bar Association Release on Own Recognizance Program, where she worked for 15 years. From there, she began working for the San Mateo County Probation Department, where she worked for 18 years. She retired from the department in 2021.

While she worked as a probation officer, she worked as part-time faculty member with De Anza College. It wasn't until an opportunity for a full-time role opened up that she considered making teaching her next career.

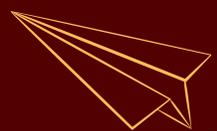
"One of the reasons that motivated me was that I thought that we needed more diversity, especially in our particular department," she said. "I didn't think I was going to get hired to be honest with you. But I think all of the preparation that I had with the program with probation. I think that catapulted me to this place and prepared me to do what I'm doing now. So it's kind of a cool thing."

Prof. Gabriel currently serves as a full-time professor for the Administration of Justice program at De Anza College's Social Sciences and Humanities Division. She expresses that during her tenure, one of the biggest challenges she had to learn and adapt to was how to create an original syllabus and curriculum for her students. Creating something from scratch was not necessarily the hardest part for her, rather, it was more so how to create both to the highest quality for the department in order to show what lessons would be best to serve the program. She also expressed that in terms of her own teaching method, she teaches from a perspective mix of historical factors and real-world situations.

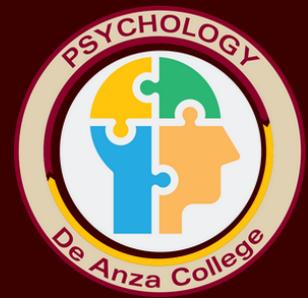
***"We can't teach 21st-century students from a 20th-century perspective. These students are inquisitive and motivated to learn," Ramona said.***

"You gotta be honest with them and with yourself. I tell [students all the time: 'I don't have all the answers,']" she said. "I'm sitting here as a professor with multiple degrees, telling you, that I don't know everything. I think students can relate to you being open and honest...and you [also] got to have a little bit of humility."

While Prof. Gabriel still pinches herself to this day in being a professor, at the conclusion of this fall semester, she will continue to be a public servant and plan to gather several friends to prepare and pass out bag lunches to the homeless in certain areas of San Francisco for the holidays.



# ARTICLE FEATURE: LEVERAGING THE W.H.O.L.E. EXPERIENCE FRAMEWORK TO ELEVATE INCLUSIVE LEARNING



This Fall, the [Journal of Educational Research and Practice \(JERAP\)](#), a forum for studies and dialogue about developments and change in the field of education and learning, recently published an article titled "[Leveraging the W.H.O.L.E. Experience Framework to Elevate Inclusive Learning](#)."

The [article](#) was co-authored by Dr. [Morris Thomas](#) from Howard University, and De Anza College's very own [Professor Susan Thomas](#), a full-time instructor within the Department of Psychology of De Anza College's Social Sciences and Humanities Division. Prior to teaching at De Anza, Prof. Thomas was a consultant and corporate trainer who facilitated, trained, and taught a variety of groups and individuals for over 25 years. Her specific area of expertise is in interpersonal interaction, including topics of communication, problem-solving, values clarification, leadership, stress management, team building, and conflict resolution.

Referring to why she decided to pursue higher education, Thomas said, "When I came out of graduate school with my master's degree in counseling psychology from Northwestern, I really wanted to find a job on a college campus. I wanted to be working with students, I wanted to be in a learning area, as I'm a lifelong learner myself. And I really wanted to be on a lively campus where students are engaged and motivated to learn."

"I never dreamed that I would be an instructor. I really thought that I would be doing something in student services," she said. "But I ended up getting the job in the psychology department and I have loved it ever since I've been here."

The journey to this diversity and inclusion article was not a rushed process. Thomas noted that the relationship between her and Dr. Morris Thomas started as a mentor/mentee relationship after engaging in a few sessions of what he called the "DEI Institute."

"The W.H.O.L.E. Experience Framework is something that Dr. Morris has developed. We met four or five times at what he called the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) studio," she said. "We had conversations about how to introduce some additional DEI strategies into the way that I teach my courses, and implement them using this W.H.O.L.E. Experience Framework so that we could provide a more whole experience for students inside the classroom."

"Coming out of our conversations, I considered implementing these strategies and took a look through my courses to find ways to greater emphasize the aspects of the W.H.O.L.E. Experience Framework," she continued. "I really wanted to see whether what I was doing was working, so I decided to run an evaluation and get some feedback from students about their experience of the different aspects of the framework in my courses."

Soon after, Prof. Thomas asked Dr. Thomas to consider the creation of writing the published article together to further get the framework out to the world. Starting from March 2022 to October 2022, both Prof. Thomas and Dr. Thomas worked continuously on the article, which included a literature review, outlining the method to results to analysis, in addition to student perspectives related to main focus of the article.

Student comments from the article reinforce that this is the case, including "I feel very humanized by this course. I feel like I am working to within an inch of my studious life, in the absolute best possible way. I am being held to a standard that is both challenging and within my reach."

After initial peer reviews in October 2022, revisions were sent back to both professors in December 2022, in which they made further edits to resubmit later in February 2023. After further reviews, it was finally approved for publication in June 2023. Between June 2023 and September 2023, there were formatting aspects that went into place to finalize it on September 12, 2023. The entire process, from writing to actual publication, took about a year and a half.

For Prof. Thomas, one of the biggest takeaways related to the published article is that can be applied to any discipline and any teaching modality.

"Regardless of discipline, regardless of teaching modality, it's an effective framework that can help you as an instructor," she said. "We believe that this article can assist in improving your DEI strategies that you already may be doing, but just may need a simple tweak."

**W. = Welcoming.**  
**H. = Holistic.**  
**O. = Open.**  
**L. = Liberating.**  
**E. = Empowering.**

**\*\*\*[CLICK HERE FOR THE PUBLISHED ARTICLE DIRECT LINK/ DIGITAL LOCATOR \(DOI\)](#)\*\*\***

***"The results of the study emphasize that implementing the various elements of the W.H.O.L.E. Experience framework, in whole or in part, does in fact positively impact each student's experience. That small, intentional changes or adjustments in instructional strategies can ultimately increase student learning, motivation, engagement, sense of belonging, and overall success."***  
**-Professor Susan Thomas**



Prof. Susan Thomas (right) with other faculty during Welcome Day in the Social Sciences and Humanities Village Center.

Courtesy Photo



# OVERVIEW: RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION (RA) SURVEY - SPRING 2023



Course Scheduling: Modalities, Cancellations & Student Preferences

## GOAL:

PROVIDE GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHEDULING AND DATA-BASED INTELLIGENCE TO SCHEDULERS, CHAIRS, DEANS AND SENIOR STAFF

### Focus on LatinX Students

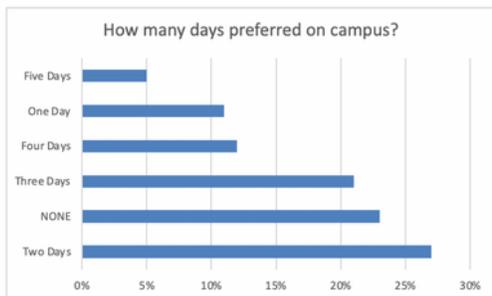
- 23% unwilling/unable to come to campus. Almost identical to rest of sample.
  - Two days: 25%
  - Three days: 21%
    - Similar to overall group
- **Working:** 76% report having a job, vs. 55% in rest of sample.
- **Dropped** a class at least once: 66% vs. 57% of rest of sample.
- Day/time preferences **similar to rest of sample.**

## TAKEAWAYS:

- 1,000+ STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN SURVEY
- STRONG PREFERENCE FOR ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS REMAIN ACROSS STUDENT POPULATION
- DESIRE FOR IN-PERSON SECTION OFFERINGS THAT MEET 2 OR 3 DAYS PER WEEK. LESS DESIRE FOR ONE DAY AND ALMOST NO DESIRE FOR CLASSES MEETING 4 OR 5 DAYS/WEEK.
- DESIRE FOR MORE LATE START, AFTERNOON AND EVENING CLASSES AND MORE SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE LEARNING OPTIONS.
- GROWING NEED FOR HYBRID OFFERINGS AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYFLEX CAPABILITY AND POLICY.
- COURSE CANCELLATIONS HAVE ENROLLMENT CONSEQUENCES AND HAVE AN EFFECT ON FOLLOWING PROGRAM MAPS (GUIDED PATHWAYS.)
- SPECIFIC SUB-POPULATIONS OF STUDENTS ARE ASKING FOR MORE SECTIONS OUTSIDE OF "PRIME TIME" (AFTERNOON AND EVENING.)

### Results: Modality Preferences

Q: "For future quarters, how many days per week are you willing or able to come to campus for your classes?"



### Results: Day/Time Preferences

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30	7:30
8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30
9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30
10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30	10:30
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12:30	12:30	12:30	12:30	12:30	12:30
1:30pm	1:30pm	1:30pm	1:30pm	1:30pm	1:30pm
3:30pm	3:30pm	3:30pm	3:30pm	3:30pm	3:30pm
5:00pm	5:00pm	5:00pm	5:00pm	5:00pm	5:00pm
6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm	6:30pm

**Tier 1:** Monday – Thursday: 9:30am – 1:30pm. (42-58% of students chose)

**Tier 2:** Monday – Thursday: 8:30am, 3:30pm & later. Fridays: 9:30am – 1:30pm (21-33%)

**Tier 3:** Monday – Friday: 7:30am. Fridays: 3:30pm & later. Saturday (7-18%)

Presented by: Ravjeet Singh - Chair, Economics | Mark Healy - Chair, Psychology | Mari Tapia - Chair, Sociology

**OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE:** The Resilience and Adaptation (RA) Survey is conducted in the Social Sciences and Humanities Division at De Anza College. It is a form of student satisfaction survey specific to the interests, requests, recommendations, and needs of our students as they transition from “virtual to campus.” The 2.5-year impact of the COVID-19 pandemic drove and created new lifestyles for many students, especially marginalized and students of color. The survey is purely qualitative and was created to capture an understanding of how to shift the division’s scheduling structure and course opportunities to better accommodate the student’s post-pandemic era.



# NEW: CDE MANDARIN COHORT

Written by: Professor Li Wei Sun



Courtesy Photo

Professor Li Wei Sun (middle standing) with a full classroom of the CDE Mandarin Cohort.



Courtesy Photo

Professor Li Wei Sun (left) with Dean Elvin Ramos (middle) and a student of the CDE Mandarin Cohort.

At De Anza College, it is a consistent mission to provide academically rich, multicultural learning opportunities that challenge students of diverse backgrounds to develop their own knowledge, identity, and abilities. The Child Development and Education Department from the Social Sciences and Humanities Division has a diverse group of students and has been strong in responding to their equally diverse needs. The CDC department has been successful in the past in supporting our second language learner students by providing courses conducted in their primary language. Thus, the department has once again started offering Child Development Courses with Mandarin Support in Fall 2023. It has been a great success as the course is fully enrolled. The students in this class have expressed sincere appreciation and excitement for the opportunity. Some of these students have never taken a CD course prior to this class due to the language barrier. With the support of their home language, students gain more confidence in their abilities and thus have more motivation to engage with the material and master the knowledge presented in the course.

The department plans to offer five required courses with Mandarin Support including CD10G: Child Development- the Early Years (Fall 2023), CD12: Child, Family, Community Interrelationship (Spring 2024), CD50: Principle/Practices for Teaching Young Children (Summer 2024), CD10H: Child Development- Mid Childhood & Adolescence (Fall 2024), and CD54: Introduction of ECE Curriculum (Spring 2025). The completion of these five CD courses will qualify the students to be ECE teachers in licensed childcare programs.



Courtesy Photo





PURBA  
FERNANDEZ



RAMONA  
GABRIEL



SUSAN  
THOMAS

**SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS/NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS**



RAVJEET  
SINGH



MARK  
HEALY



LI WEI  
SUN

DeAnza  College

FEEDBACK SURVEY

