

BIG BOLD

HOW DO WE PREPARE THE GREAT LEADERS OF TOMORROW?



JAY MECHLING, WINNER OF THE 2006 UC DAVIS PRIZE FOR UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AND SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT.



POP-CULTURE CURRICULUM AMERICAN STUDIES PROFESSOR JAY MECHLING IS QUICK TO TELL HIS STUDENTS IN AN AMERICAN POP CULTURE CLASS THAT THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT THE TOPIC THAN HE DOES.

But this nationally renowned scholar and respected campus teacher promises his classes that they will learn from him, just as he learns from them.

His students say Mechling helped them develop a set of new lenses to see their culture.

“Thousands of movies and television shows have been forever ruined, since I no longer think, ‘Gee, that was a neat show,’ but instead delve into a folkloric examination of the plot and allegories,” explains Jesse Friedman ’04.

Among his tricks in teaching, Mechling reveals, are both the dedicated act of listening to his stu-

dents and an ability to express his own enthusiasm for ideas and issues in American culture.

Former student Jacqueline Curran says she is amazed by how Mechling can find depth and meaning in almost any topic.

“Any conversation topic from the *X-Files* to graduate school, he managed to make academic and cite several books and papers in the course of a train ride or a run-in at the Coffee House.”

Mechling was recognized with the 2006 UC Davis Prize for Undergraduate Teaching and Scholarly Achievement, which is funded by the UC Davis Foundation.

ONE THOUSAND TEACHERS ONE MILLION MINDS

CALIFORNIA PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE DESPERATE FOR MATH AND SCIENCE TEACHERS. CLASSES IN THOSE DISCIPLINES ARE OFTEN TAUGHT

by non-credentialed instructors, and students rank at or near the bottom nationally in both subjects. To address the problem, UC Davis has created the Mathematics and Science Teaching program (MAST) to help undergraduate students prepare to become teachers. MAST, which began last year, gives students like second-year mathematics major Alan Bare access to academic advising services and information about teaching credential programs and financial aid. Even more importantly, the program offers seminars in which students learn about and visit elementary and junior high school classes. Interim MAST director Arthur Beauchamp hopes this

opportunity to work in a classroom will prepare undergraduates for the next step in their education. “To get into credential programs, you need to have experience in the classroom, and we’re providing that experience,” he said. The program was created by the UC Davis School of Education and the College of Letters and Science in response to a compact made between Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the University of California last year. Under the “California Teach” initiative, the UC system will work to quadruple by 2010 the number of credentialed math and science teachers it annually graduates in an effort to expand the state’s skilled workforce.



UC DAVIS LAW STUDENT ANNA SLOTKY IS ONE OF THE MANY UC DAVIS STUDENTS WHO GIVE THEIR TIME TO HELP THOSE IN NEED.



LEGAL LEADERSHIP

JESUS RIOS BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF. WITH UC DAVIS LAW STUDENT ANNA SLOTKY AND AN ATTORNEY AT HIS SIDE DURING AN

administrative hearing, he now had every reason to believe that his disability insurance would be restored.

“I’m glad it’s over,” Rios said. “They were a big help.”

The Woodland man is among the hundreds of people helped each year as students from the School of Law put their growing skills to work throughout the region.

Committed to public interest law and practical skills training, the law school has offered unpaid “externships” for more than 20 years.

Managing attorney John Gianola said Legal Services of Northern California’s Woodland office

uses UC Davis students to serve its low-income and senior clients.

Rios was on disability insurance after seizures forced him to quit his job busing tables. But when another person used his Social Security number, he was asked to repay hundreds of dollars.

Slotky represented Rios at the hearing under the supervision of a Legal Services attorney. “The best part of it is you get to work with clients and deal with real-life problems,” she said. “This is why you go into law. You’re there to help people.”

FUTURE EDUCATORS COURTNEY DANIEL (LEFT), MONIKA LIN (MIDDLE) AND ERIN BASEL ARE LEARNING NEW WAYS TO TEACH MATH AND SCIENCE IN THE UC DAVIS MAST PROGRAM.

