

# THE *Current*

October 18, 2006

[Andrea Estrada](#)

## **UCSB Walter H. Capps Center Matches NEH Grant to Create \$2- Million Permanent Endowment**

The Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at UC Santa Barbara has successfully raised \$1.5-million in private gifts to fulfill the requirement of a \$500,000 Challenge Grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Together, the funds will establish a \$2-million permanent endowment to support visiting scholars, graduate fellowships, and public programming.

Awarded in 2002, the NEH grant required the Capps Center to raise \$1.5-million in private gifts, which would be matched by \$500,000 in federal funds.

"The \$2-million endowment will allow us not only to carry the Capps Center's current programming into the future but to expand what we are able to offer," said Wade Clark Roof, professor of religious studies and the Capps Center's director. "It will ensure that the center continues to serve as a forum bringing the University and community together in dialogue on important ethical issues of our time."

The endowment will support the Capps Forum on Ethics, which brings to the campus and community speakers who address major social and ethical issues; the Martin E. Marty Lectureship on Religion in American Life, established in honor of Martin E. Marty, the Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus at the University

of Chicago Divinity School; the Henry A. Schimberg Endowment in Ethics and Enterprise, which supports the advanced undergraduate course in ethics, enterprise, and leadership; research fellowships for advanced Ph.D. students with approved dissertation topics related to ethics, religion, and public life; and a variety of public lectures and conferences.

Established at UC Santa Barbara in January 2002, the Capps Center is dedicated to promoting study and civil discussion of issues related to religion, values, and public life through a variety of ways, including conferences, guest speakers, curricula, student internships, and fellowships. The center encourages civic participation in a non-partisan, non-sectarian manner and emphasizes maintaining strong links between the university and the Santa Barbara community, such as joint programming undertaken with La Casa de Maria, a Roman Catholic retreat and conference center in Montecito.

The Capps Center honors the legacy of Walter Capps, a popular professor of religious studies for 33 years at UCSB who was elected to the House of Representatives from California's 23rd Congressional District in 1996. An advocate of ardent but polite discourse who showed an uncommon commitment to civility and duty, Capps suffered a fatal heart attack in October of 1997, just 10 months after taking office. His widow, Lois, who continues to represent California's 23rd Congressional District, succeeded him in Congress.

In April 2001, a group of 52 members of the House of Representatives wrote to Congressional leaders seeking support for a request that funds be included in the U.S. Department of Education budget to help establish the Capps Center. In December 2001, Congress approved the appropriation – also \$500,000 – for that purpose.

With the permanent endowment in place, the Capps Center's next priority will be to expand the internship program for UCSB undergraduates who spend a quarter serving in government agencies of the State of California affiliated with the UC Center in Sacramento, or in Congressional offices and other federal or private agencies in Washington, D.C. affiliated with the UC Washington Center. The Capps Center is also exploring possibilities of an internship program placing undergraduate students in non-profit organizations in the Santa Barbara area with a service-learning academic component at the university.

Public programs planned by the Capps Center this year range from this week's lecture by political analyst Kevin Phillips to a conference on religion in California and a series of film screenings, including "The Rosa Parks Story" and "The Original Child Bomb," followed by discussions with their respective executive directors.

Related Links

[Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion & Public Life](#)

---

## **About UC Santa Barbara**

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.