Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It’s the season of giving, when our thoughts turn to all the ways in which we are blessed, and the many ways in which we can, and do, make a difference in the lives of others. This holiday approach and we enter this season of sharing. I am inspired by how much our alumni give every day. We are a culture that confronts the biggest issues of the day, provides solutions that build healthy communities, and creates a lasting legacy for generations we may never personally know.

I am forever grateful for the profound influence of my time at Cal. First as a wide-eyed undergraduate, growing strong from a strong foundation, and then as the beneficiary of the rigorous training I received at the UC Berkeley School of Law, I was equipped through my Cal education to engage the extraordinary challenges and opportunities of my generation. Now, I am privileged to lead the Cal Alumni Association as its Executive Director, a position that allows me to give back to this great institution, and to continue the rich Cal legacy for future generations.

My heart belongs to Cal—both Berkeley and Golden Bears. I believe that together, we can keep Cal thriving.

I do not do this alone. I serve beside an outstanding staff of talented people who work hard to fulfill our mission to keep alumni connected and ensure a place for generations to come.

Grace Tong Bartoo ’83 and Edward C. Bartlett ’91 and Anonymous

Wang Tian-Yu ’70

Note: The Cal Alumni Association gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the donors who contributed $1,000 or more to The Cal Fund between January 1, 2016, and December 31, 2016. The Cal Fund project is a group of alumni and friends who create a lasting connection to Cal through their commitment to and affinity for the Cal Alumni Association. An annual contribution of $1,000 or more establishes membership.

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Residents at the restored Bowles Hall gather to celebrate a new generation of community at the oldest residential college in the US.

“Bowles Hall is a brilliant synthesis of the old and the new.”

— Paul Faichney, director of Historic Places, University of California, Berkeley

Faichney—retrofitting and renovations cost $45 million, all shouldered by the Bowles Hall Alumni Association in partnership with the Bowles Hall Foundation.

With a long-term university agreement in place, Bowles’s future includes financial stability, economic health, a clear succession plan, and an improved student experience.

“Our students want a strong connection with alumni...especially regarding professional fields,” says John. Current mentors an engineering student and works to connect others with alumni. “You don’t get this in big dorms,” he adds. Students also participate directly in the Bowles community’s decision-making process.

“Today’s students are incredibly bright. Not just academically, but socially and politically,” he says. “Our freshman chats show them to be a lot more challenging. They ask tough questions. They are up to speed on the current events. They vote. They are very passionate. They are very serious.”

“We are so lucky to have them. We want to do everything we can to make their experience as fantastic as can be.”

Making Your Own Berkeley Way

Running and cycling. Both are frugal leisure activities for the Beta Rappa Cal graduate Glenn Kelman ’93, who operates a warp-speed business. Now the busy CEO of Redfin, an online real estate broker —he was a math kid, Glenn couldn’t decide between physics and comparative lit when Cal called to clarify his major. The pitch that worked on me at Cal was the legacy of Berkeley. “It was the best public university in the world, my best friend in high school introduced me to it. He had studied in England...I saw Bowles as a gladiator academy for discourse—a lesson in how to talk about race and gender.”

Ultimately, Glenn’s destiny wasn’t medicine or literature. Enter the Stanford Technology Group (STG). “Three Stanford professors, three Berkeley people, three Stanford professors, three Berkeley people, three Stanford professors, three Berkeley people...around all these nerdy, ridiculous, and very smart people. I felt at home,” describes Glenn. Meeting Kirill Shyamkhalia M.B.A. ’86 inspired him. “It was already a contradiction. Kirill always did what he wanted, he was excited by ideas,” says Glenn, inspired by Kirill’s ability to “do it all, I’d never heard an adult tell me this. She took me out of the box,” recalls Glenn. As a reporter for the Daily Cal, Glenn covered Berkeley events similar to the LA race riots. “I was a scared kid. The whole town was getting torn apart. I was trying to call my sister on a pay phone and people were hitting the glass. Berkeley was a wild, exciting, scary place. You had to make your own choices.”

Berkeley introduced Glenn to the legacy of Mario Savio and the Free Speech Movement. “Outside Stath Gare, there were arguments with a student of people. He recalls, “Berkeley was a gladiator academy for discourse—a lesson in how to talk about race and gender.”

“Learning to ask for help was a challenge...[a] is not common in my culture. It’s a weirdness. Everyone needs a hand. A Cal is very accepting, very helping. Accepting help and saying ‘thank you’ were growth steps,” shares Pedro.

Pedro went on to present a paper on the lack of resources for non-traditional community college students at the UC Irvine’s Honors Transfer Council of California Student Research Conference. He also created a non-traditional campus student union. “Transfer rates are increasing rapidly, especially among non-traditional students, who now have better resources.”

When the opportunity to attend Berkeley presented itself, Pedro was concerned about bridging the money gap it would take to attend. Earning a KASPHP scholarship helped solve this problem, along with the campus job he held mentoring and guiding community college transfer students through the university admissions process.

While modest about his success, Pedro is frank about the challenges he faced as his first generation Cal student and father. “Given my background, it was hard to find a community. Everything was new to me and navigating the university system was difficult.” He found guidance through resources like CAA’s Alumni Scholars Program. “I had to get over the mindset that I didn’t belong here. CAA provides this space and people to guide me.”

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