

A full-page background image of a red brick wall. The bricks are arranged in a standard running bond pattern. The color of the bricks varies slightly, with some being a deep red and others a lighter, more orange-red hue. The mortar joints are a light tan color.

OccuPoetry

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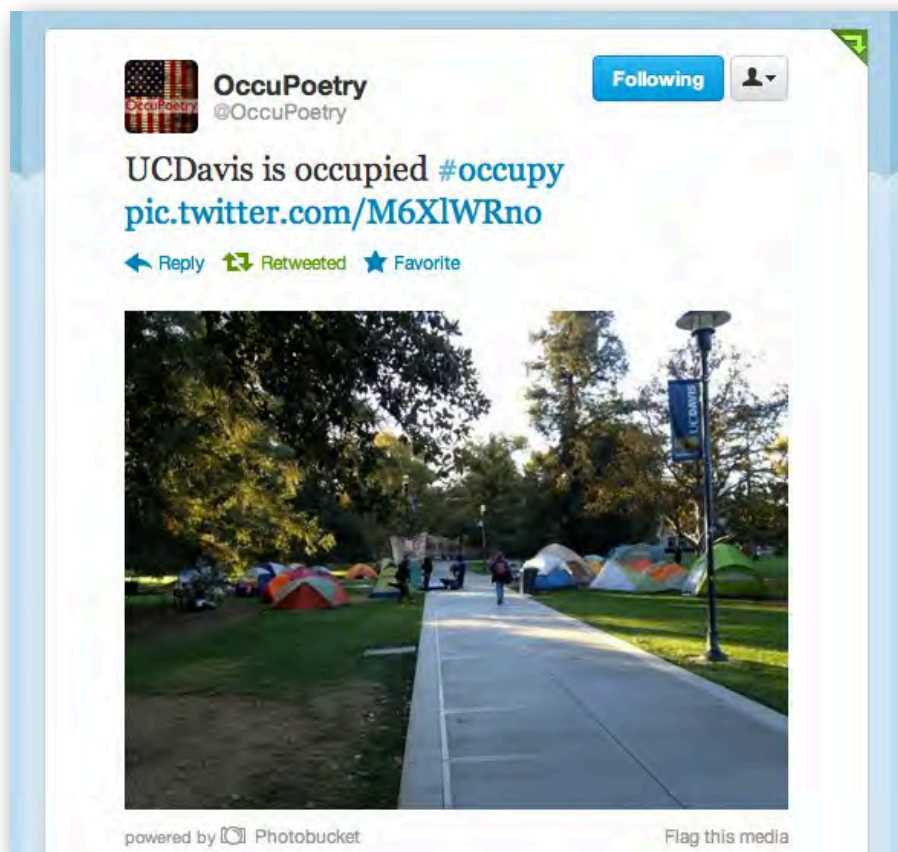
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Say it. Don't spray it.

On the afternoon of Thursday, November 17, 2011, tents went up on the central quad at the University of California, Davis, to support the Occupy movement. Many of the UC Davis students who encamped did so to express solidarity with UC Berkeley students and professors, notably the poet Robert Hass, [whom campus and county police had beaten with batons just days earlier.](#)



The next afternoon, a confrontation between UC Davis campus police and Occupy UC Davis protestors also ended violently.

A UC Davis campus police officer, Lt. John Pike, fired a canister of pepper spray at seated, nonviolent students. The captured image went viral, and his became the face of cruelty. This was only the most recent incident in which police used excessive force against Occupy protestors who, in turn, captured the force on film, pixel, and byte.

While it may be tempting to cast Pike as the enemy, it does nothing to alter the conditions that put a pepper spray can in his hand. Drawing from the great work of James Baldwin, Alexis Madrigal argues in *The Atlantic* that [there is reason to show some sympathy, even empathy](#), for John Pike, who is a product of the very industries of cruelty that we have come to accept as necessary to every day life.

The potential trouble with the 99% rhetoric is that, while it usefully brings to light the disproportionate influence over government and policy enjoyed by a wealthy 1% of the population, it also hinges on the polarity of "us vs. them." Unless attended by a clear commitment to transform existing ways of thinking, to move in the direction of compassion and justice, this language can reinforce systems of oppression and antagonism. To recognize this danger is not to dilute Occupy's basic structural analysis: a few are monopolizing the resources of the many.

Our ability to create social and political change is limited in many ways, not the least of which is our ability to imagine alternatives to the status quo. The art that arises from the Occupy movement offers needed vision, drive, and possibility; it documents and inspires action. It results from and contributes to imagining a less violent, more just world.

In its second issue, *OccuPoetry* features poetry and art that emerged from an orange cloud of pepper spray. Poetry collected in this issue comes from UC Davis students and faculty as well as poets from afar. In addition to verse, this issue contains a special section titled FORCE: The UC Policy (pages 19 - 29). FORCE was an artistic installation on campus at UC Davis, curated by undergraduates, examining the recent history of violent confrontations between University of California campus police and students. This issue recalls to us what collective struggle can envision and achieve, what James Baldwin called the "perpetual achievement of the impossible."

Phillip Barron and Katy Ryan

The editors of OccuPoetry

Feel Threatened?



Design by Theron Brown

When In Riot Gear



Design by John Emerson

On Revolution

Julia Halprin Jackson

The mice at Rodent College are unhappy. The school is demanding an extra whisker off every animal's face. The mice gather, assemble a wheel so complex, even the Rodent Board of Directors can't quite jump aboard – it's too fast, too new. The High Queen wants to protect the health and security of her students. So when the group reaches its critical mass, she summons the cats, who pad back and forth, tails twitching. The mice spin faster and faster until the cats collectively hiss. The force of their breath knocks every last student down. Days later, the wheel still spins.

In Theory

Julia Halprin Jackson

In theory, I should have known better. Rhetorically speaking, I should have had the right words. I'd studied all the greats—Marx, Kant, Hegel, some guy named Jon—and yet when it was time to protect myself and my comrades, their philosophies offered no solace. Apparently when the police come, no amount of literary analysis helps. We tried appealing to their innate need for power, criticizing their violent opposition to the “other,” even questioning how their personal and political code of ethics might be the result of a much larger occupation. They didn't listen. They kicked our asses. In theory.



Image appears courtesy of Louise Macabitas

Spraying at UC Davis

Francisco X. Alarcón

people use sprays
to get rid of pests

cockroaches running
with the kitchen light

insects eating up
flowers in the garden

could somebody tell
our university police

students in the sit-in
on the Quad sidewalk

engaged in peaceful protest
and civil disobedience

are not bugs nor vermin
but real human beings

thank you now, who is
cleaning this big media mess?

all those responsible could
help by stepping down

please pass on the mops
red pepper spray stains

on the cement and minds
are so hard to wash off!

Saunter and Spray

Phillip Barron

Thinking to himself, he has
No choice but to use
A tool from his belt of prior
Restraint, because talk, talk, talk
Is putting no more chalk in classrooms
He picks the cayenne canister
And holds it high
For all YouTube to see
How to handle
Tricky chains of students.

With all the cameras watching
You could reconstruct his lesson
From every angle. Another
Reconstruction is just what
America needs.
We did not finish the first.
This time, let us start with
Some basics:

Embodied beings, human
Beings must always be
Someplace. Everything
We do we do
In space.
And if we are
To be free, then there must be
Someplace we are free to be.
But making private public
Space, the space

Supposed to be
Open to anyone, and
Suppressing sidewalk sleep,
When so many seeking
Solvency can't
Find meaningful
Work,
Makes crisis.

This poem originally published in Dean Rader's project, [*99 Poems for the 99 Percent*](#).

Lt. Pike Protecting Corrupt Power

David S. Pointer

The cop walked the peaceful line,
insecticide slayer ergonomics in
each step as he delivered orange
pepper spray like projectile vomit,
or a post industrial spitting type
chemical spill to fill the eyes with
more post-confrontation wound
provocation while protecting all
unsharable resources everywhere

Double Vision



Design by Glenda and Jesse Drew

OccuDavis

Sylvie Truong

It's just so frustrating to see
the amount of unrest that has come to be.
It's like someone pressed rewind
back to a time when the American kind
was still stuck in that racist state of mind.
Can we please press play back to this day?
Listen to this message I'm trying to convey.
Turn your tv on and tell me what do you see-
Students, brutalized for messed up reason,
Trying to bring change, not trying to treason.
We link arms to bring fairness and equality,
So tell me, who brought chaos onto this society?
I'm a student by day and artist by night
Now is our time to set things right
Shed some light on this plight in which we fight for our rights
Look I spit rhymes and lines to protest these corrupt times
I just want to keep my right to write and protest fee hikes
Without getting sprayed, betrayed by the hand
of whom I should remain unafraid
But wait.
Now where do we go from here?
Do you overthrow or do you let love grow?
It's the key question posed in this flow.
Don't let bitterness devour your soul.
I said,
Don't let bitterness devour your soul.

Peppers in the Fall

Danny Friedman

Voices carry chants
Louder than sirens
As our footsteps march over concrete,
History is the dust that hasn't settled.

I used to love sweet bells;
The flavor carrying melodies when cooked right,
Yellows reds dark reflective green.

But now I see men with guns
When I think of them
And riot gear
And masks,
They absorb nothing,
Only the fear created with them,
In Cairo in Greece in Davis in Oakland.

Covering my eyes
I sit in the circle of imagination
Dreaming.
I see some blind, burned.
That dream is orange now
Rubbed onto faces, like poison.

Walk that same lucid dream
Keep walking, the illogical nightmares shadow beneath us.

Peppers sweet in the Fall
From the garden; the ones I grew,
Will grow again.

FORCE: The UC Policy

The following ten pages represent an art exhibit originally co-curated at the University of California, Davis by the students from the course Art History (AHI) 401: Giana Belardi, Liz Church, Ashleigh Crocker, Maizy Enck, Susan Fanire, Megan Friel, Cindy Gieng, Bianca Hua, Lizzy Joelson, Mitzi Matthews, Monica Mercado, Bryant Pereyra, Kyle Taylor, Jennifer Urrutia, Ariana Young and Kevin Zhou. AHI 401 is a course on curatorial methods taught by Professor Susette Min.

FORCE: The UC Policy is made possible, in part with the support of the Undergraduate Instructional Improvement Program, The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Anne Reynolds Myler, Associate Director of Campus Unions Center for Student Involvement and the UC Davis Art History Program.



FORCE: The UC Policy

FORCE:

THE UC POLICY

On November 18th 2011, a group of seated students were pepper sprayed during a non-violent protest on the UC Davis Quad. This event has raised questions regarding the use of force by University of California police departments and has brought to light a clear disconnect between the stated mission of UC campus police and the recent actions of the UCPD. The UCPD was established in 1947 with the stated mission of protecting individual rights and reducing fear of crime on all UC campuses. In recent years, numerous incidents have occurred in which the police have used brutal force to contain students who are expressing their right to freely assemble. FORCE: The UC Policy looks closely at three recent campus protests: UC Santa Cruz in 2005, UC Berkeley in 2009, and UC Davis in 2011. These three protests illustrate not only incidences of police brutality, but also share a common cause: to stop the privatization and corporatization of higher public education. At each protest, UC police officers employed excessive force to break up student demonstrations, raising the question: are the UC campus police and the UC administration upholding their stated mission of preventing violence and protecting student rights?

Amid public anger following the incidents at both UC Santa Cruz and UC Berkeley, each campus formed a task force to investigate the behavior of the UC campus police. These task force reports highlight a recurrent use of excessive force by the UCPD as seen with the recent UC Davis protests. By displaying these reports, the exhibition also highlights a change in the UC Administration's perception of civil disobedience and what it means for students to engage in public dialogue through protest. Under the current UC guidelines for policing and crowd control, student protests are perceived as hostile and antagonistic, rather than expressive of an informed and responsive student population. This new perception defines student protest as inherently violent and has led to changes in the way police address and handle protestors. Reflective of a nationwide trend towards a militarized police force, UC campus police now arrive at protests dressed in riot gear and heavily armed, invoking a combination of fear and aggression.

We invite the UC Davis community to engage with the recently released task force report examining the events of November 18th, 2011, through the concerns presented in FORCE: The UC Policy. The question remains however, will this new investigation lead to significant changes in the way the UC Police and UC Administration respond to student protest or will the investigation do nothing to end the use of force which serves a larger yet unacknowledged agenda?

FORCE: The UC Policy



M26C TASER



SIG SAUR 4



12 GAUGE SHOTGUN



WEAPON ZIPTIE



SIG SAUR P239



RIOT BATON



UNUSED WEAPON UCB



RIOT HELMET



PEPPER SPRAY

FORCE: The UC Policy

UC SANTA CRUZ

Photographs courtesy of Josh Sonnenfeld,
Santa Cruz Indymedia and © Bob Fitch Photography



FORCE: The UC Policy

On April 18th, 2005, UC Santa Cruz campus police arrested nineteen individuals who had been demonstrating as a part of the movement known as Tent University. A student-organized movement, Tent University Santa Cruz (TUSC) demanded not only that the Administration "democratize university procedures, [but that they] include students in decision-making on spending priorities..." (Senate Executive Committee Tent University Report, February 2006). Protesting against student fee increases and the exploitation of AFSCME workers, students proceeded to create an encampment at the main university entrance without a permit and without the approval of the UC Santa Cruz administration. On the evening of April 18th, administrators warned the roughly 200 protesters that if they did not vacate the site they would be arrested for trespassing. At this time, the police were ordered by Chancellor Denton to arrest those who did not comply with the request. Two rings of students formed, an inner group seated, with arms linked, and a standing outer group. Students in the outer ring were hit with police batons while seated students were subjected to pain compliance methods, which utilize pressure points, in order for police to separate their linked arms. A total of nineteen students were arrested and charged with both trespassing and resisting arrest.



FORCE: The UC Police

UC BERKELEY

Photographs courtesy of Erich Iveans

FORCE: The UC Policy

On November 20th, 2009, forty-one demonstrators were arrested at UC Berkeley during a protest of the proposed 32% tuition increase that would raise the yearly tuition to above \$10,000. Part of a three-day protest, the demonstration began on November 18th with a rally that called for an end to student fee hikes, program cuts, layoffs, and other cutbacks. On the third day of these protests, UC Berkeley police discovered the doors to Wheeler Hall had been barricaded and that protesting students were occupying the building unlawfully. Refusing to remove the barricade and vacate the building, the demonstrators were informed by the UC police that they were under arrest. Though threatened with the use of pepper spray in a "ruse" by police to convince them to open the doors, the students held their ground. Outside Wheeler Hall, a large crowd had gathered, breaking through makeshift police lines and barricades. It was at this time that a physical confrontation ensued between police and protestors. Both UC police and officers from the Oakland police department were deployed in full riot gear, beating protestors with batons in an attempt to reestablish order in the area surrounding Wheeler Hall. Following this altercation, UC Berkeley police arrested a total of forty-one protestors.



UC DAVIS

On November 18th, 2011, ten students were pepper-sprayed at point blank range and arrested on the UC Davis campus while protesting the privatization of public higher education and supporting the Occupy Movement. The events leading up to the arrests began with a rally on November 15th to protest the proposed UC tuition increases. Following the rally, protestors marched to Mrak Hall and occupied the building overnight. After being asked to vacate Mrak, protestors began to set up an encampment on the UC Davis quad. Citing health and safety concerns, the UC Davis administration requested in writing that the encampment be removed by 3pm.

When protestors did not respond to this request, the administration called in the UCPD to dismantle the encampment. At this point a number of students removed their tents and vacated the area, but some protestors remained, seated with arms linked, blocking a walkway. It was at this time that the seated students were informed by police that they would be pepper sprayed if they refused to move. Shortly following this warning, Lieutenant John Pike of the UC Davis campus police pepper-sprayed the seated students at close range. The seated protestors were then forcibly removed from the area and a total of ten students were arrested.



FORCE: The UC Policy



SIGNIFICANCE

Administrative Recommendations/Civil Disobedience

UCD 26

Administration and Leadership Recommendations

The Task Force recommends the campus develop a broadly accepted agreement on rules and policies that regulate campus protests and instances of civil disobedience.

UCB 18

In a written policy that is developed specifically for responding to group acts of civil disobedience, set forth clearly the allocation of authority and responsibility between the civilian Administration and UCPD.

Police Recommendations

UCD 28

The Task Force recommends the University of California study, evaluate, and adopt policies involving the training, organization, and the operation of UIC Police Departments to ensure that they reflect the distinct needs of a university community and utilize best practices and policing adapted to the characteristics of university communities.

UCB 13

Re-evaluate the size and organization of UCPD to determine the levels of staffing that will be sufficient to enable our police force to respond appropriately to large scale group acts of civil disobedience.

UCSC 9

Police Procedures: Police should explain arrest options, define resisting arrest, use non-invasive arrest techniques, and avoid pain compliance in the event of arresting nonviolent demonstrators.

Campus Recommendations

UCSC 8

Reaffirm UCSC's Principles of Community

All members of the UCSC community – students, faculty, staff and administrators – should review and carefully consider UCSC's "Principles of Community" (Appendix 5). We believe that it is imperative that we respect each other and strive to maintain the quality of the academic environment and social climate.

UCD 29

Recommendations for the Campus Community

The Task Force recommends that all members of the campus community adhere to the Principles of Community, respecting members of the campus community and acting with civility towards others.

FORCE: The UC Policy

FINDINGS FROM REPORT

In May 2005, the Senate Executive Committee formed the Tent University and Restructuring Emergency Response Procedures Task Force to "review the decision-making processes leading to the events of Monday, April 18 in connection with Tent University Santa Cruz (TUSC) ...[and] to provide guidance to the campus as a whole to better respond to similar events in the future." The Task Force's conclusion was that "the university administration must learn to communicate constructively" with students. The report additionally recommended a change in the climate of the campus through student education and forums, and the restructuring of emergency response procedures, including police procedures for dealing with nonviolent demonstrators.

Following the demonstrations of November 20th, 2009, UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau and Associate Vice Chancellor Ron Coley requested an investigation by the Independent Police Review Board into the events surrounding the occupation of Wheeler Hall. The report, which was chaired by Wayne Brazil, a professor at UC Berkeley's School of Law and former magistrate judge for the US District Court, finds that neither the Berkeley Administration nor the Berkeley campus police were prepared to deal with a large-scale demonstration and building occupation. The report suggests that the protestors were civil and initially non-violent and that the violent confrontation between police and protestors was caused by a series of "miscalculations, missteps and inaction," by the administration and campus police.

Following the demonstrations of November 18th, 2011, UC Chancellor Linda Katehi requested an investigation into the pepper spraying of seated students by the UC Davis Campus Police. The task force was headed by former California Supreme Court Justice Cruz Reynoso and was released, after numerous delays, on April 11, 2012. The report stated that, "the pepper spraying incident that took place on November 18, 2011 should and could have been prevented." The task force cited failures by both the UC Davis Administration and the UC Police and recommended more, "proactive communication and consultation," as well as the development of "broadly accepted...rules and policies [to] regulate campus protests and instances of civil disobedience."

Each of these reports contained much of the same findings. All three task forces concluded that the events at UCSC, UCB, and UCD could have been avoided and were the result of ineffective communication and inadequate policies regarding student protest and civil disobedience. However, with the release of the UC Santa Cruz report in 2005, little seemed to have changed by the 2009 UC Berkeley protests. The same can be said in regards to the events at UC Davis last year, which occurred nearly two full years after the UC Berkeley task force recommendations were released. Will the recommendations of the recently released Reynoso report truly make a difference? Or will the policies governing student protest remain unchanged?

Sit In



photo by Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science (PLOTS)

Peace and Reckoning

Laura Lee Washburn

i. Of Whom to Beware

Every English teacher has a brother with a gun,
somebody who goes out Thanksgiving for a duck.

The teachers sit home with red pens, or so you would suppose.
They're planning the future, looking for odd Oxford commas.

ii. National Accountability

Listen up: all the English teachers have taken notice.
For instance, the burn marks never indicated arson, so
we're killing the wrong man again.

If the indicators of fire suggest accelerant,
everything so quick, who wouldn't believe
he killed his wife and kids? Junk science!
Don't worry, he's black or, anyway, poor.

All the death row murderers lie down in orange jumpsuits
and sleep until their last meal, the fried legs
of chicken, processed meat in a shell,
beans and gravy, fatback, boiled tongue, ribs.

iii. Nonviolent Means, the Chemical Plans: Exigency

All the lies about the country are coming true.
All the truths about the country are becoming lies.
They'll pull Granny up by her bootstraps before they knock her down.

You can see every lie from your seat in the house.
Like the good Dr. King, link your arms with your neighbors.
Every English teacher has *that* violence inside.

See these violent sit on the ground. They point their eyes
like accusations. Have even you never wanted
to drop the stiffening toddler into bed as he resists?

When the officers come, they'll aim red cans.
Last summer you covered your mouth and sprayed at the fleas in the carpet.

They'll tilt back your head and spray
your bloody throat. Haven't you, Poet, been heard to sing?

The yellow spray is trained on your classroom
of literature bullies. You were taught to leave
when the poet smelled burning almonds.

Oh, little Miss Lee, why don't you ever have a gun?
Your baby doll is marked and torn. The red stitches
have broken where he sewed on the arm.

Traitors to the state train for empathy.
Sonny's glass trembles over the piano. The old
woman blows out the light. The fawn, still
warm in the belly, cracks at each jut
of the rock. The cat in the basket is going to leap.
Another three barns are burning. You've wanted the park
and the pantomime, the stage dog, and the wink
in the eye of the rogue.

Landmines and unmanned drones, baton carriers,
riot gear masks, zip cuffs, the boot in the neck or the face:
let the distractions be football or poems, the witty turn
of phrase. They're coming with furloughs and exigencies,
be thankful for canard jerky dried and served on small plates.

This poem originally published in [*Radius*](#).

The Power of Oneness

Francisco X. Alarcón

more than 5,000 students, faculty, staff
and community members gather at the Main Quad of UC Davis
in solidarity with the pepper spray students November 21, 2011

we are one
in thousands
in this crowd

suddenly
we feel
this power

we are
the grass blades
the clouds

standing
like green
grass blades

bouncing
above over
our heads

the leaves
wavering
in trees

surrounded
by people
and trees

sprouting
up from
our feet

the power
of the 99%
OCCUPIES us

breathing
the same
cool air

no longer
is each of us
just one

one heart
one mind
one soul

warmed
by the body heat
of thousands

no longer
do we feel
all alone

we felt it
in the air
in the ground

the same
deep concern
for each other

we are now
all part of
the Whole

the amazing
power of
oneness

Contributors

Francisco X. Alarcón, award-winning Chicano poet and educator, is the author of twelve volumes of poetry, including, *From the Other Side of Night: Selected and New Poems* (University of Arizona Press 2002). His latest book is *Ce•Uno•One: Poemas para el Nuevo Sol/Poems for the New Sun* (Swan Scythe Press 2010). His most recent book of bilingual poetry for children is *Animal Poems of the Iguazú* (Children's Book Press 2008). He teaches at the University of California, Davis. He is the creator of the Facebook page, [POETS RESPONDING TO SB 1070](#)

Phillip Barron edits the online journal *OccuPoetry*, and his poems appear or are forthcoming in *Main Street Rag*, *Counterexample Poetics*, and *The Scrambler* among other journals. He has taught philosophy at the Chapel Hill and Greensboro campuses of the University of North Carolina and currently lives in Davis, California where he works in the digital humanities at the University of California. Barron is a member of the Squaw Valley Community of Writers.

Theron Brown is an undergraduate design major at UC Davis.

Glenda Drew creates visual media projects that include layers of oral history, image and text. She is currently an associate professor in the Department of Design at University of California, Davis.

Jesse Drew's work is centered on the theory and practice of alternative and community media and their impact on democratic societies. His media work has been exhibited internationally and his writings have appeared in numerous publications and journals as well as several anthologies, including *Resisting the Virtual Life* (City Lights Press), *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture* (City Lights Press), *At a Distance* (MIT Press) and *Collectivism After Modernism* (University of Minnesota). He is currently associate professor of Cinema and Technocultural Studies at UC Davis.

John Emerson is an activist, graphic designer, writer, and programmer based in Brooklyn. He has designed web sites, printed materials and motion graphics for leading media companies as well as local and international non-profit organizations. Since 2002, he has published Social Design Notes, a weblog of writings and clippings on the intersection of design and activism at <http://backspace.com/notes/>

Danny Friedman is an undergraduate agriculture student at UC Davis passionate about food equality.

Julia Halprin Jackson is a writer and 2012 graduate of UC Davis' M.A. in Creative Writing program. Her fiction, nonfiction, and poetry has appeared in anthologies by SMITH Mag, Flatmancrooked, Beyond Words Publishing, Scribes Valley Publishing, the American Diabetes Association, and literary journals such as *California Northern*, *Fourteen Hills*, *Fictionade*, *Sacramento News & Review*, *sPARKLE & bLINK*, *Catalyst* and *Spectrum*. Read more at <http://juliaintheraw.blogspot.com>.

David S. Pointer has been publishing poems for 21 years in the small press scene. He currently resides in Murfreesboro, TN.

Sylvie Truong is an undergraduate international relations major at UC Davis.

Laura Lee Washburn is the Director of Creative Writing at Pittsburg State University in Kansas, and the author of *This Good Warm Place: 10th Anniversary Expanded Edition* (March Street) and *Watching the Contortionists* (Palanquin Chapbook Prize). Her poetry has appeared in such journals as *Carolina Quarterly*, *The Sun*, *The Journal*, and *Valparaiso Review*. Born in Virginia Beach, Virginia, she has also lived and worked in Arizona and in Missouri. She is married to the writer Roland Sodowsky.

FORCE: The UC Policy contributors

Ashleigh Crocker is a 2012 graduating senior in Art History and is continuing her education in Museum Studies this fall. She has participated in the UC Davis Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) and has been published by the URC journal, *Explorations*. Ashleigh hopes to work in the museum or gallery management field after completing her masters.

Maizy Enck is a third year Art History major, History minor at UC Davis. After graduation, Maizy plans to continue her study of art history at the graduate level in the hopes of obtaining a career in the museum industry.

Megan Friel received a BA in Art History at the University of California, Davis (2012) where she researched aesthetic theory in relation to the Light and Space Movement. During her time at Davis, Megan focused on public programs working in public programs at the Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts and the De Young Museum.

Bryan Pereyra is an undergraduate student at UC Davis pursuing a double degree in Sociocultural Anthropology and Art History.

Mika Sakaue is an illustrator and graphic designer living in Davis and Santa Cruz. She received her BA in Visual Communications at University of California Davis (2012), where she discovered the graphic arts and the power of design as a tool for social change.

For further reading on issues and reports discussed in **FORCE: The UC Policy**, see the following:

- [University of California, Santa Cruz report](#)
- [University of California, Berkeley report](#)
- [University of California, Davis report](#)
- [Essays on Privatization and Militarization](#)