In San Francisco, a city known for seismic change, a shift which had been slowly gaining momentum in the queer community exploded to the foreground in 2004 when Mayor Gavin Newsom attempted to legalize gay and lesbian marriage, and for the first time, married Del Martin¹ and Phyllis Lyon.

"Now queer clients are coming into my psychotherapy practice and the practices of our students, struggling with questions about marriage, parenting, and the PTA," says Keiko Lane, MA (SOM) '02, psychotherapist and CIIS Somatics Psychology faculty member. "And queer clients are still coming in struggling with issues of taboo sexualities, desires, attractions, and conflicts with their own communities and families of origin. Some of these are the same clients."

Enter CIIS' Queer Bodies in Psychotherapy conferences, chaired by Lane, constructed so that straight psychotherapists, queer psychotherapists, body-oriented therapists, queer theorists, and somatic practitioners could come together and talk directly about some of the problems in working with queer/body psychology in practice.

"Both traditional psychotherapies and somatic psychotherapies have largely promulgated a normative sexuality that has ignored or given short shrift to diverse forms of sexual experiences, desire, love, and identity," says Ian Grand, Somatics Program Chair and Director of the Center for the Study of the Body in Psychotherapy. "Students who had been researching sexual identities and gender issues found that there was little current research literature looking at queer development or LGBTQI psychological issues in depth."

The Center had received a J.C. Kellogg Foundation grant, which helped fund the first Queer Bodies in Psychotherapy Conference in 2007, a one-day invitational event that brought together alumni, faculty, program chairs, students, and members of the queer and psychotherapy communities to engage in conversations about unmet needs and understandings in the field. What came out of that conference was Lane's Queer Bodies in Psychotherapy class and the eponymous October 2008 conference held in San Francisco.

The conference featured more than 20 workshops and lectures, including transgender educator and attorney Dylan Vade; SJ Kahn on potential biases to impacting effective treatment of couples living in nontraditional partnerships and families; CIIS Dean of Alumni Richard Buggs, PhD (CLN) '96, and clinical psychologist Connie Hills, PhD (CLN) '98, on dynamic and clinical approaches to counseling same-sex couples; Vernon Rosario, MD, PhD, on queer Latino teens negotiating sexuality, culture, and poverty; Zach Finley, MA (SOM) '08, on gay male bodies, shame, and addiction; CIIS faculty Alzak Amlani on familial and cultural constraints for Middle Eastern and South Asian Americans; as well as presentations on queer activisms, nonviolent parenting, psychodynamic theory of S/M, a performance by Tim Miller, and a keynote address by poet and activist Jewelle Gomez.

Becky McGovern, MA (SOM) '99, MFT, CIIS Director of Career Development and Field Placement, commends the Institute for gathering such a formidable assemblage of bodies under one roof. "These conversations aren't taking place anywhere inside or outside academia in a way that brings together all these interesting people working in diverse ways and fields toward similar goals," she says.

“We want to make sure that we address the needs of the LGBTQI community as we prepare our graduates to be therapists,” says CIIS Academic Vice President Judie Wexler. “The self-reflexivity inherent in a CIIS education is particularly powerful in this preparation as it supports students going deeply into their own understandings and beliefs in support of new learning. We are excited by the way the dialogue in this conference expands understanding."

While CIIS may be out ahead on these issues, the history of psychology and the pedagogical approaches from which most psychological and psychotherapeutic training stems, valorizes traditional binary forms of gender and sexual expression. “Instead of ‘Marriage and Family Therapist License, it ought to be called the ‘Traditional Marriage and Family Therapy License,’” muses one CIIS faculty member who declined to be named.

(Continued on page 12)
Steven Tierney Leads New Community Mental Health Program
Initiated August 2008

CIIS appointed Steven Tierney, EdD, a child and adolescent therapist and a longtime HIV/AIDS prevention expert, as director of its new Community Mental Health graduate program. Tierney brings more than 30 years of experience in the field of public and community mental health. In December 2007, he was appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom to serve on the San Francisco Public Health Commission.

What is unique about the Community Mental Health Program at CIIS?
At CIIS we are training therapists to build and implement a new model of therapy that better meets the needs of clients who seek help in the community mental health system. We are redesigning the way professional psychologists interact with clients by developing client-centered therapy models in which clients can help determine positive health outcomes and participate in new treatment modalities that respect the realities of their lives.

As providers, we have to rethink the traditional structure of therapy, which is often a 50-minute session. This model doesn’t work for everyone, especially those who seek help in the community mental health system. These are folks who typically face multiple challenges—they may be homeless, struggle with addictions, be runaway youth, or present with dual or even triple diagnoses.

What are some of the other challenges therapists in the community mental health system face, and that are addressed in this master’s program?
CIIS graduates who have gone into the public health system report that they find it challenging to deal with the realities of that system, such as having to compete for funding at the same time they are working with and prioritizing multiple clients; the demands of a completely booked schedule; and reporting requirements for grants and other administrative duties. All of these factors compete with their ability to do their interventions effectively. At CIIS, students are learning how to juggle these realities, while keeping the improved mental health of the client as the top priority. This can only happen if we, as a profession, introduce a new paradigm of treatment.

How do you believe your appointment to the San Francisco Health Commission will benefit mental health services in the Bay Area?
The San Francisco Health Commission is the governing and policy-making body of the Department of Public Health. Serving as a commissioner presents me with a real opportunity to make sure that public health care includes mental health services, which typically get left out of the mix, and that all San Franciscans have adequate access to these services. Being able to influence how $1.5 billion gets spent is a tremendous opportunity for changing the system.

What goals have been established for the Community Mental Health Program?
There are many people in the Bay Area community who don’t have access to mental health services. Limited resources compounded by competing demands in life can make it hard for many to access quality mental health care. Chances are, most people will take care of their medical and housing needs first, which are always challenging in San Francisco. Mental health needs often get pushed to the back of the list of people’s priorities.

Among our goals is the desire to create a mental health delivery system that is more easily and readily accessible to those who desperately need these services; that the services be delivered in the communities in which clients live; and that clients be intimately involved in determining their own health outcomes.

At the time of this interview, enrollment was taking place for the program. In what way has CIIS been successful in recruiting a diverse population of students?
Right now we have 18 students enrolled and they bring broad diversity. We have students who are Asian and African American and students who identify as gay, lesbian or transgendered. Four are from countries other than the United States, with three from Latin America and one from Africa. This is in line with our goal of training mental health practitioners who come from a wider range of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and who are culturally competent and bilingual. It is very gratifying to see the program get off to a start that is in alignment with what we had hoped.
Following the Call of the Universe
Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness Alumna Linda Gibler, PhD, on integrating Catholicism and cosmology in her life and work

In 1995, Dominican Sister Linda Gibler watched in awe as the Hubble Space Telescope beamed detailed images of the vast Universe back to Earth. That moment, coinciding with her just having viewed—for the third time—Brian Swimme’s video, Canticle to the Cosmos, radically transformed the way she looked at the Universe, her faith, and her path in life.

“As my image of the Universe expanded, my narrow concept of God shattered,” Gibler says. “I realized that the Universe was more complex and God was more magnificent than I could imagine, and I was compelled to learn more.”

These two influences sparked Gibler’s lifelong interest in cosmology—and led her to CIIS. After eight years of study at the Institute, she earned a master’s and a doctoral degree in Philosophy and Religion, with a concentration in Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness (MA, ’01, PhD, ’07).

Gibler chose CIIS after an extensive search for a university that would help her to delve deeply into creation and the cosmos from a Catholic perspective. She had the blessing and financial support of her Dominican congregation to pursue higher education in cosmology, with the caveat that she study at an accredited university, and preferably a Catholic one.

“I looked all over,” Gibler says, but found no schools, Catholic or otherwise, who were teaching cosmology as a rigorous academic field. Out of options, she looked up Brian Swimme on the Internet. In this way she learned about the Institute and its groundbreaking Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness (PCC) program for the first time. A few months later, the Houston resident had moved to San Francisco and was attending CIIS.

Gibler says she never intended to pursue a doctoral degree. “I doubted my academic abilities, wondering ‘Am I smart enough? Organized enough? Can I write a book?’” However, Swimme and other PCC professors, as well as her Dominican Sisters, encouraged her to do so. “I was the last to know,” she says, laughing. “They sensed from the beginning that I was going to pursue my doctorate.”

Gibler’s area of research and her dissertation focused on the “cosmocentric” aspects of the Roman Catholic sacraments, especially the use of water, olive oil, and fire. Her work traced both the cosmic history of these elements from their creation 13.7 billion years ago and their sacred history from the earliest Hebrew scriptures to the contemporary catechism. This research, Gibler believes, can help Catholics and others to become more intimately aware of God in all aspects of creation, especially in the common things that surround us in the natural world.

Upon graduation, Gibler faced the daunting task of finding a job that would “put my education to work.” She felt compelled to contribute to her congregation but, more critically, to fulfill her mission as a Dominican to “share the fruits of my contemplation with others.” She also had the added pressure of limiting her job search to the Houston area, so she could be close to her congregation and her family. It took about a year, but just this past summer she secured a position as the associate academic dean and director of the doctor of ministry program at the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas. Last summer she taught a course titled “Faith and Evolution” at Loyola University in New Orleans, where she currently is an adjunct faculty member and curricula consultant for the Loyola Institute of Ministry.

Despite the effort, Gibler’s faith that she would find a way to integrate theology and cosmology into meaningful work—since it had become the very fabric of her everyday life—never flagged. She believed, paraphrasing what Swimme often told his students, “that by following your passion, you are following the call of the Universe, and it will lead you to a place of creativity.”

—Valerie Chow Bush
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As CIIS continues to celebrate its fortieth year, the Institute is pleased to recognize all those members of its extended community who made gifts during the 2007-08 academic year. Numbering more than 300, these generous donors represent every segment of the CIIS community including alumni, students, trustees, faculty, staff, and friends, as well as foundations, corporations, and businesses.

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- BAC—Bachelor of Arts Completion
- CER—Certificate
- MA—Master of Arts
- PhD—Doctor of Philosophy
- PsyD—Doctor of Psychology

Guide to Program Abbreviations
- BIS—Interdisciplinary Studies
- CLN—Clinical Psychology
- COU—Counseling
- EWP—East-West Psychology
- EXA—Expressive Arts Therapy
- GES—Gender, Ecology, and Society
- HOT—Human and Organizational Transformation
- ICP—Integral Counseling Psychology
- IHS—Integrative Health Studies
- IND—Individualized Studies
- ISD—Integral Studies
- MAB—Business
- ODT—Organizational Development
- PAR—Philosophy and Religion
- PCC—Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness
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- TLR—Transformative Learning
- WSE—Women’s Spirituality
“I don’t want to say anything too negative about mainline universities, for they have given me a happy career. Still, in the course of decades American higher education has created tradition-bound ruts and it works in those ruts. Consequently, it is vitally important that mainline universities be complemented by alternative programs that work alongside of them and are not stuck in those ruts. CIIS is the best of these alternative programs that I know of.”

—Huston Smith, PhD

“With its core competencies in psychology, spirituality, and transformative leadership, CIIS prepares its students to know themselves and to transform the world.”

—Prasad Vepa
Chair, Board of Trustees

“CIIS matters because there are so many people who want to bring their hearts into their work and cannot figure out how to do it. CIIS helps create people who can figure out how to do it.”

—Constance G. Hills, PhD, ’98

“Enrolling in the TLC program at CIIS was a critical turning point in my life. CIIS allowed me to move beyond the limitations of my own voice toward an understanding of a more collective voice—one that encompasses personal experiences, human connectedness, and spiritual awakening.”

—Lisa Herzig, PhD,’06, RD, CDE

“CIIS is a constant reminder of my father, Louis P. Gainsborough, who founded the American Academy of Asian Studies, which was the predecessor to CIIS. My father’s quote in 1950 still rings true, in my mind, for CIIS today, ‘The aim of the Academy is to eliminate the idea that there is any material difference between East and West. All peoples believe in spiritual reality.’ CIIS continues to prove that this philosophy is indeed one whose time has come and is a most worthy and steadfast mission.”

—Philip N. Gainsborough
President, Gainsborough Financial Consultants, Inc.
“Rarely does one find an accredited graduate school that is pioneering and successful in its multicultural, multidisciplinary, and integral approach to education.”
—Angeles Arrien, PhD Cultural Anthropologist

“CIIS provided the opportunity for me to connect body, mind, and spirit with its variety of unusual degrees. I was elated when I discovered that the Somatic Psychology Program existed and am grateful to this day for a place like CIIS.”
—Ondina Nandine Hatvany, MFT, ’94

“For many alumni, an education at CIIS was much more than vocational training—it was also a healing journey, an introduction into a community of like-minded souls, and a unique initiation into integral awareness.”
—Carl Marsak, MA, ’03

“CIIS is an institution where engagement with the world finds serious examination both inward and outward. And this, in our opinion, is where we need to journey as we find our way forward.”
—John Grim, PhD
—Mary Evelyn Tucker, PhD Senior Lecturers and Research Scholars, Yale University

“The entire CIIS community has a huge yearning for transformation and authenticity. It’s an alchemical cooker, the likes of which are unknown in most of higher education where the nonordinary is rarely discussed. At CIIS we are free to address the extraordinary.”
—Meg Jordan, PhD, RN Department Chair Integrative Health Studies, CIIS

“While world events herald dark times ahead, CIIS shines the light of ancient wisdom on our capacity to evolve personally, and to commit to the task of transformation.”
—Anne Teich, PhD, ’90
Cultural anthropologists are the historians of the present. Sarah Deragon took this statement to heart when she heard it spoken during a class taught by Professor Angana Chatterji at CIIS. Deragon likes to make a difference or, as she stated with a wry smile, “to cause trouble”—that is, to dedicate herself to changing the status quo when it needs changing.

One primary way that Deragon has set about to make change is through her volunteer work, including a one-year stint with The San Francisco LGBT Community Center as cochair of Center Women Present (CWP), a queer women’s volunteer initiative that she helped to organize.

“When I found out about the center’s program for men called SNAP! (San Francisco Newcomers Assistance Program), I wondered why comparable programs didn’t exist for women. The answer was plain and simple—funding. This really motivated me to start thinking about ways in which I could produce something similar for queer women of diverse backgrounds,” Deragon said. CWP holds several donation-based monthly social activities for the queer women’s community.

It was her leadership that prompted The San Francisco LGBT Community Center to nominate Deragon for the Community Spirit Award given annually by The Volunteer Center Serving San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. Persons who receive the award have demonstrated a deep involvement with the organization for which they volunteer and a passion for the community as a whole, offering their time and talents whenever called upon for service.

Deragon believes it is her studies at CIIS that gave her the courage to speak up about a need she saw in the queer women’s community. “The classroom at CIIS has been the most dynamic and intellectually rigorous space in my life. The professors work hard and do work that is connected to community. There can be a huge chasm between being a scholar and being an activist, but the professors at CIIS live as scholars-activists and are amazing examples of what you can be in the world,” she said.

Deragon has proven herself to be an activist. In the past year alone, she presented at Femme2008, a national conference on queer femme issues held August 17–18 in Chicago. Deragon’s workshop was entitled, “Femmeizm: Request for an Ideological Utopia,” which facilitated a conversation about the various commitments to social justice within the queer community. She writes a column for bettyslist.com (http://bettyslist.com), a leading source of information for the Bay Area’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. In the fall, she began a teaching assistant job in the Gender and Women’s Studies Program at UC Berkeley with Professor Rita Alfonso’s class, “Uncovering Our Queer Pasts.”

“In the San Francisco area, many of us who are queer-identified are in a very privileged space. Most of us are ‘out’ at school, ‘out’ at work, and we can walk down the street without the threat of physical violence. Sometimes it is easy to forget that we live in a larger homophobic society that is not so comfortable with people who are differently raced, classed, and gendered. I think that working in the Bay Area is exciting because we can bring new levels of awareness about various issues to other parts of the country. What I’m learning here at CIIS has helped me to understand what community is and how to work in solidarity with other queer movements,” Deragon said.

Working in solidarity is not without its challenges, however. Deragon characterizes making changes in society as “a constant series of successes and heartbreaks. Being a part of the anthropology program has made me rethink everything I have been taught in the classroom. The world as I knew it is not what it seemed. I have realized how much work there is still to be done to make change,” she said.

—Paula M. Zimlicki
Dear Alumni and Friends,

The fortieth year of CIIS has begun with a record enrollment of more than 1,200 students and with an increase of nearly 15 percent in new students for our fall 2008 semester. Our success has been due in large part to being faithful to our founding mission. Unquestionably, the educational aspirations of our cofounders, Haridas and Bina Chaudhuri, continue to guide CIIS. I thought that this was most evident by the appreciation so many of you expressed for the film on the founding of CIIS, Integral Yoga, which was shown at the fortieth anniversary celebration in April.

First and foremost in this founding vision is our long-standing commitment to be a pioneering institution of higher education. CIIS continues to draw inspiration from our uncommon ability to be at the leading frontiers of learning and practice. For example, the Community Mental Health Program was successfully launched this semester as the first of its kind in higher education. As you will read in this issue, the Queer Bodies in Psychotherapy Conference held in October not only stretched the traditional boundaries of scholarship and practice, but also addressed the crucial needs of communities that have traditionally been ignored. By maintaining this distinctive academic perspective, CIIS defines its purpose.

In addition to our academic programs, we have expanded our reach and increased our global impact through the offerings of our Public Programs, travel tours and studies, and five award-winning counseling centers. I certainly hope that you will cherish your connection to CIIS by participating in our many nondegree programs and activities. In addition, I encourage each of you to forward your e-mail addresses to Richard Buggs (rbuggs@ciis.edu) so that you will be aware of our many events.

Last, and by no means least, we need your financial investment to ensure that our scholarship program is vibrant and competitive. I am convinced that you will see a significant return on your investment. If you have questions about making a donation, please contact Dorotea Reyna, Director of Development, at dreyna@ciis.edu.

As we conclude our fortieth year, we look forward to planning and envisioning all we can accomplish by our fiftieth year. We have much for which to be grateful, and we have much yet to attain.

With gratitude to you for your dedication and support,

Joseph L. Subbiondo
President
For the queer community, visibility means new problems or a spin on the same ones. “Queer communities that had their identities and experiences organized around marginalization have started showing up in the Weddings section of The New York Times,” says Lane. “Clients and clinicians are now needing to explore how these seemingly contradictory identities of outsider and normative are going to coexist,” she says. “Part of our commitment to the notion of ‘queer’ is that it holds enough space for all of these experiences.”

Queer, as the conference planners conceive of it, “means making space for these supposed contradictions to live side by side in the therapy room, as they live simultaneously in the lives, bodies, and experiences of our clients,” says Lane. Grand concurs. “We thought it important to open the usual categories and identifications people had around sexualities. We were interested in using work in Queer Theory as a starting point of entry into understanding aspects of the questions we were raising,” he says.

CIIS has been part of the Bay Area vanguard on social issues for the past 40 years. “As a pioneering institution,” offers President Joseph L. Subbiondo, “CIIS manifests its mission through conferences that stretch the limits of knowledge and serve all communities. Queer Bodies meets this goal in every way.” That’s a sentiment echoed by CIIS trustee Jim Herman, who along with his partner Dave Mason, generously funded a feasibility study that explored broader interest among San Francisco community leaders and philanthropists in supporting an LGBTQI Research Center at CIIS.

“The conference demonstrates CIIS’ leadership and initiative in advancing LGBTQI research and practice in psychotherapy,” says Herman. “We are privileged to work with the faculty, students, and staff at CIIS to better train and contextualize future therapists who will work in LGBTQI communities.”

Compared with what she’s seen at other academic institutions, Library Director Lise Dyckman believes that “CIIS students are going far beyond the limits of challenging the mainstream understanding of queer. I see it not just in the doctoral dissertations, but at the master’s level as well. I’m in awe of students’ rigor and courage.”

According to Dustin Smith, MA (SCA) ’09, steering committee member of Queer@CIIS, which maintains a listserv of roughly 400 students, faculty, and alumni, CIIS is shaking it up. “There’s a new feeling here that queer people can take up more space—that students’ concerns will be heard and reaffirmed. We have so many allies at CIIS in both queer and nonqueer faculty and staff. People will show up for you.”

Along with interdepartmental collaboration under the leadership of Subbiondo, the conference included three program chairs among seven faculty presenters, eight committee members, seven alumni, and dozens of students and volunteers.

Testament to a true collaborative community spirit was the roster of nine community cosponsors: New Leaf: Services For Our Community; Community United Against Violence (CUAV); The Pacific Center; The Psychotherapy Institute; Women’s Therapy Center; Maia Midwifery and Preconception Services; Jewish Mosaic: The National Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality; Visual Aid; and Good Vibrations.

Grand and Lane, finding that work with queer populations has been undertheorized and underdeveloped in both talk therapy and body-oriented psychotherapies, organized this conference as a part of their department’s ongoing commitment to exploring issues of embodied difference, marginalization, and the sociocultural understandings of somatic formation. “Our next conference will be around the themes of multicultural bodies in psychotherapy,” says Grand.

In the Somatics Psychology Program, Lane finds “a way of approaching clinical practice and theory grounded in understanding the social, political, and historical contexts in which clients and clinicians live, and helping both to become more empowered as agents of change in our own lives, and in the cultures in which we live.”

And so has Lucy Braham, fourth-year somatics student, conference committee member, and Center for Somatic Psychotherapy trainee. “These conferences have been so inspiring,” she says. “I’m thrilled personally and clinically that these conversations are continuing and that I’m a part of them.”

—Lisa Denenmark

1 Lesbian activist Dorothy L. (Del) Martin died on Aug. 27, 2008. She was 87 years old. On June 16, 2008, Martin and Phyllis Lyon, her partner of 55 years, were again married by Newsom.

2 The San Francisco Bay Guardian, in its annual “Best of the Bay 2008” awards, lauded CIIS’ five counseling centers for their expertise, range of therapeutic orientations, and sliding-scale fees.