This was a productive year at the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center. The 114 SCU law students who signed up for clinical courses logged 10,884 hours of work directly related to clients’ issues in the areas of Workers’ Compensation, Workers’ Rights, Immigration and Consumer and Debtors’ Rights. For the students, this represents an impressive number of hours dedicated to learning in a very practical setting. For the Law Center clients, assuming an estimated market value of $150 per student hour, this represents a $1,632,600 investment for the solution of their legal problems. The work performed this year breaks down as follows:

**Workers Compensation**
Sixty-one people attended the 16 clinics offered throughout the year. Most attendees required only brief services, but the Law Center represented nine clients directly. Three clients settled their cases, with the Law Center’s assistance, for a total value of $51,171. Read a perspective from one of these clients on p.4, "The Big Picture."

**Workers Rights**
There were 267 people who attended the 27 clinics held throughout the year. The vast majority of them required brief services, such as orientation, the drafting of demand letters, inquiries on their behalf, etc. The Law Center offered direct representation to 20 of those clinic-attendees. Six cases were settled during the year, though some may have extended from previous years. The total value of the settled cases was $14,177.

The Law Center recruited Margarita Alvarez as its new Workers’ Rights Attorney in January, 2005. Find out how she is doing on p.4, “The Big Picture.”

**Immigration**
This was an exceptionally productive and successful year for the Immigration component of the KGACL. The Law Center offered 21 clinics that were attended by 180 people. Though most of the attendees required only general information and brief services, 27 of them received direct representation from the Law Center. Twenty-seven cases were also successfully closed, with the clients receiving either political asylum, U-visas (reserved for victims of crimes), adjustment of status under VAWA (the Violence Against Women Act), or deferred action. Impressively, seven of those cases (six U-visas and one political asylum) were opened and successfully closed.

Continued on p.8
Professor Cynthia Mertens Steps Down as the KGACL Director

Professor Cynthia Mertens became the Director in 2001, while the Center was in East San José. At the time, the Center was divided into two separate buildings along Alum Rock Avenue. Clients, students and staff had to go from one building to the other simply to access a file or discuss a case with a client in one of several cubicles that left no room for privacy. After hearing the news that the building was about to be sold, Professor Mertens, in her own quiet but diligent manner, immediately started looking for more appropriate office space. Unfortunately, the search did not yield any affordable or sustainable rental space, but the circumstances revealed some traits in Professor Mertens that became characteristic of her during her tenure.

A true socialite in all mazes, she was able to gain the support of the University through SCU’s President, Father Lo- catelli, and the then-Law School Dean Mack Player as well as the Community Law Center staff, for a move that had its own controversy because it would take the Center closer to the University but away from East San José and the community it had served. A drop in client attendance was feared. To address these concerns, she designed a representative survey to poll the effects of the move on the clients, and in fact discovered that clients did not mind traveling a few extra miles on the same avenue to receive the Center’s services. Once everyone was on board, the Community Law Center opened its state-of-the-art facility on 1030 The Alameda, just two years into her tenure. A zero drop in client attendance later confirmed that she had been right all along.

It’s not easy to keep the Community Law Center’s constituencies satisfied, but Professor Mertens made the best out of every opportunity to do just that. For instance, in an effort to increase the Center’s community outreach, she instituted and expanded the number of Atomic Fraud, Workers’ Rights, Immigration and Tenants’ Rights workshops given in various locations throughout the community. In these workshops, SCU Law students, supervised by attorneys who are experts in their fields, present the information in PowerPoint format and, sometimes, with the help of interpreters. Students gain the knowledge, confidence and skills that can better prepare them in their careers; the community benefits, and the staff and volunteer attorneys have an opportunity to teach what they love. In 2005 alone, the Center’s students and volunteer attorneys have offered 33 workshops that have benefited more than 950 people.

Her efforts have truly raised the profile of the Community Law Center within the University, the state, the country, and even internationally. For instance, in 2002, a contingent of four Brazilian law students and the President of the São Paulo BAR-equivalent traveled to the Center to compare notes on the benefits of a community-based legal education and to see how they could strengthen a similar program in their own country. When their trip was about to be cancelled due to insufficient lodging funds, Professor Mertens readily offered her home for two weeks to all of them and issued them keys for convenience (she once revealed that she had lost count of the keys she had issued over the years to fam- ily, friends, and foreign visitors). In 2003, the Dean and a professor from Murdoch University School of Law, Western Aus- tralia, also traveled to share notes with the Community Law Center’s immigration attorney and Professor Mertens to address similar issues back home. In spite of her demanding schedule split into teaching, grading exams, managing the Center and being a mother and wife, she always seems to find time and graciousness to make people feel at home.

Professor Mertens took the reigns of the Community Law Center, an organization with a $1 million budget, during the technology bust of the Silicon Valley, which affected state, county and local bud- gets. The Center depended on these enti- ties for about half of its budget, so when these sources of money dried up, a sudden drop in the Center’s coffers was not really surprising. What was truly surprising was how well the Center’s budgetary proposal garnered $3.4 million in new state funding. The Center’s current budget is $3.6 million, and is able to bring a host of services to the community.

Continued on p. 7

A Word From the Director...

I t is both an honor and a pleasure to send you greetings this holiday season. I joined the Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center in May 2005 as its Director, and it’s been an exciting time for me and for the Center. The Dean, faculty, and staff of the law school have been wonderful suppportive of our work during this time of transition, as have the University’s key administrators and leaders.

We continue to serve our mission of training Santa Clara University law students for excellence in the practice of law, while also serving a vital role in the Santa Clara Valley by providing free legal services to low-income members of the community, many of whom are immigrants and refugees with limited English proficiency and little experience with the American legal system. We have an extraordinary staff, as well as a set of highly dedicated volunteers and Advisory Board members who continue to share their time generously with the Law Center.

Our attorneys are outstanding practi- tioners and exceptional teachers. Margarita Alvarez joined our staff earlier this year as the Supervising Attorney in our Workers’ Rights component, and she brings a wealth of experience in both private practice and public service to the job. She joins Susan Levin, Scott Maurer, and Lynnette Parker to complete our corps of nationally prominent supervising attorneys.

Professor Cynthia Mertens, who directed the Center for four years, has returned to full-time teaching at the law school, but she continues to play an active role in the Center -- helping me with transitions, leading our educational workshops in landlord-tenant law, and working to create our Leadership Council, a newly formed advisory body that will help expand the Center’s fundraising in the major donor, corporate, and law firm sec- tors during the coming years. Katha- rine and George Alexander, whose generous gifts in the past have help- ed establish the Center’s core fund, recently created and financed the Cyn- thia Mertens Award to honor Professor Mertens and to recognize an outstanding volunteer for the Center each year.

As always, your support for the Center remains essential. Like other legal ser- vices providers, we face reductions in many governmental and private funding sources, while the legal needs of the community continue to grow. With- out your help we simply could not ac- complish our goals of serving the low- income population and preparing future lawyers and leaders. We cannot thank you enough for being a supporter and a member of the Center’s extended family.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season.

Angelo Ancheta
Director

Professor Cynthia Mertens...
We cannot call ourselves a democratic society and then turn around and have a legal system which, by my observations to date, favors those who can afford legal representation. The law should not be defined and applied based on economic market forces. Understandably, the legal profession is a business profession, but it is also a profession that is responsible for upholding the foundations of American democracy. I am concerned that we are becoming more focused on wealth—and the security that comes with it—that we will begin to overlook justice.

Underlying every case and client interview that I worked on this summer was one individual, usually the “defendant” in legal parlance, taking advantage of another individual, usually someone who sits on the margins of our community, for economic gain. If it were not for the services offered by the Law Center, I am afraid that the “defendant” would be able to get away with minimal and unethical conduct without the judicial system ever checking up on them. Fortunately, the Law Center is a little shining diamond that works tirelessly and successfully to ensure that legal services and justice are provided to those individuals who sit on the margins of society. By engaging in this type of work the Law Center provides some checks and balances to a legal system that may, unfortunately, be more focused on the profitability of its clients than the fair delivery of justice.

I do not know where I will find myself after law school, but wherever I may be, I know that I have a responsibility and duty to work towards more legal access to the underserved and the equitable application of our laws. My experience this summer at the Law Center affirmed this duty.

Elizabeth G. Pianca, Class of 2005

I suffered a serious back injury at work some time ago. My employer, the owner of the restaurant where I worked, refused to pay for treatment and compensation during the time that I could not work. As it turns out, the employer was uninsured, and he eventually fired me. I went to see two attorneys in downtown San Jose, and they declined to take my case because “it was too complicated.” One of them referred me to the KGACL C, and they gladly agreed to represent me. My case was complicated, and it took about three years to be resolved. Finally, at the beginning of 2005, I received a check from my former employer. I was 100% satisfied with the results. What I always appreciated about the Law Center was their very kind treatment and patience. I would recommend the Law Center to anyone.

Former KGACL C (Workers’ Compensation) Client

The Big Picture

Since its inception, the Community Law Center has been a hub for student learning and community service. It is a convergence point for all of its participants who contribute their skills, talents, experience and their sense of justice and fairness. These perspectives provide but a glimpse into the learning, the growth, and the symbiotic relationships that develop during the course of a typical semester at the KGACL C.

Come see us, or visit us at http://www.scu.edu/law/kgaclec/ to see more of the Big Picture.

Do you wish to make a donation? Send it to us or call Dianne Blakely at (408) 288-7030. We appreciate your support.

I joined the Law Center this past January, after 23 years in private practice. I can say that my first year as the Workers’ Rights Attorney at the KGACL C has been both challenging and fun. The challenge has been to teach students the things that I do automatically after so many years of practice: things like reading a client’s body language, asking the right questions based on the rhythm and pace of an interview, taking a client’s cultural background into consideration to get to the essence of their case; listening both as a legal advocate and as a counselor to clients with a wide range of concerns, many of them incapable of being resolved in the legal arena. Also, after so many years as a law practitioner, I developed a tremendous sense of responsibility for all the details of my cases. Sharing the responsibility with students has been a challenge.

As for the fun part, the students have infused me with energy and renewed optimism and confidence that justice and equality are values that can be made real. Working with students that are open and eager to learn is exciting. I feel privileged to share my experience and knowledge with them.

Margarita Prado Alvarez
Workers’ Rights Attorney

I started working at the KGACL C in January of 2005. During the past year, I have been an interpreter, working with the law students in all of the Law Center’s legal areas: Immigration, Workers’ Rights, Workers’ Compensation, and Debtors’ and Consumer Rights. Lately, I also have been translating documents in Spanish, from the Mexican legal system, into English, for an immigration case. This has been a challenge, but I’ve enjoyed it. Working at the Law Center is fun because I am always learning new things. I can also say that my work there has changed my perception about a lot of things. For instance, now when I go eat at a restaurant, I am more aware of the workers who prepare my food, of their rights and their humanity.

The Law Center is a safe place where people don’t have to be afraid to come forward with their problems; they know they’ll be helped with respect and dignity.

Virginia Suarez, SCU undergraduate
The 8th Community, Commitment & Cause Awards went to…..

The 8th Community, Commitment & Courage Celebration took place on October 14, 2005, in the University’s Adobe Lodge. The event was hosted by KGACL’s Director, Angelo Ancheta – the first celebration in his tenure at the helm of the Center. Jim Hammer, a co-founder of the Center, was appropriately chosen as the MC. In his introduction, Mr. Hammer made the audience travel back in time as he played a VHS tape recording of the Center’s original founders. He praised the Center’s achievements and emphasized the importance of the SCF’s programs to provide legal services to communities in need.

Commitment Award: Immigration attorney Lynette Parker presented the award to Jennifer E. Pesek of the Consumer Law Project; and, Attorney Robert Greeley, for his commitment to Attorney Robert Greeley, for his generation of effective consumer protection attorneys; for providing invaluable legal advice and collaboration to the Consumer Law Project; and, for giving substantial, longstanding and crucial financial support. We thank you.” Mr. Ogilvie accepted the award on his and Ms. Brewer’s behalf.

The Cynthia Mertens Award: This new award (read Professor Mertens Steps Down, continued.)

Professor Mertens Steps Down, continued.

Cynthia Mertens Steps Down, continued.

The Law Center Volunteer Attorney Wins the State Bar Pro Bono Service Award

Law Center Volunteer Attorney Wins the State Bar Pro Bono Service Award

Professor Angela Ancheta, second from right, welcomes the Japanese delegation at the Law Center.

A delegation of law professors and clinical attorneys from the Omiya Law School visited the Alexander Community Law Center this past November to learn more about American clinical legal education and to help develop models for new legal clinics in Japan.

Led by Professor Senzou Miyazawa, Vice President of the Omiya Law School, the visiting professors and attorneys met with KGACL’s staff to discuss models of service delivery, clinical instruction, and legal practice in California and the United States. The Omiya Law School is one of many law schools in Japan that are beginning to develop clinical and skills-oriented classes as part of their law school offerings. Professor Miyazawa was joined by Terahisa Maruyama, Mitsuara Sakurai, Takeshi Higawara, and Lawrence Repeta.

Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The KGACL staff presents a plaque to Professor Cynthia Mertens in appreciation of her work.

Professor Mertens, you will be missed, but your accomplishments, boundless energy and example will inspire us to reach new heights in the achievement of the Center’s mission: to educate law students in accordance with the highest professional and ethical standards by serving individuals and communities in need with competence, conscience and compassion, through pro bono legal representation and education.

The Law Center on the International Map…again

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.

The Omiya Law School is located near Tokyo, and is one of the several new graduate-level law schools established in Japan that parallel the post-bachelor’s degree programs that are common in the United States. Until recently, the typical way to practice law in Japan was to obtain a bachelor’s degree in law and then take the bar examination. Professor Angela Ancheta, the KGACL’s director, will be visiting Omiya Law School in February 2006 and addressing the area’s local bar association to discuss opportunities and models for clinical legal education in Japan.
during this year, while the others comprise the years 2000-2004. These statistics do not truly reveal the amount of work invested in each case, which includes countless hours of client interviews, research, writing, and translating of copious amounts of legal documents from other countries. Read from a VAWA client and an interpreter/translator (a SCU undergraduate) on p.5, "The Big Picture."

**Consumer and Debtors’ Rights**

Eighty-eight people attended the 18 clinics (12 Consumer Rights clinics, 6 Debtors’ Rights clinics) held during the year. The KGACLC offered direct representation to 56 people. Nine consumer cases were settled, though some may have extended from previous years, for a total value of $18,654. Read the perspective of a student in this area on p. 4, “The Big Picture.”

In addition to this work, the Law Center was very active in the community through its very mobile outreach workshops, dedicated to educating the public about their rights as the best way to prevent abuse. In 2005, the Law Center gave 48 workshops benefiting 1,280 people in several locations throughout San Jose and the Bay Area. These locations include evening-ESL schools, day-worker centers and community centers. The legal areas covered were Workers’ Rights (22 workshops), Tenants’ Rights (17), and Prevention of Fraud When Buying a Car (9). In these workshops, first-year law students under the supervision of experienced attorneys present the information with the assistance of a PowerPoint presentation and, if necessary, an interpreter.

The Katharine & George Alexander Community Law Center would like to thank all the students, volunteer attorneys and the volunteer and paid undergraduate students for their excellent work at the Center. We also want to thank all the contributors and foundations, listed at www.scu.edu/law/kgacle/donors2.html, for helping us to fulfill our mission in 2005.