

New Leaders Take Center Stage

First-year directors infuse four Boalt research centers with abundant energy

Jonathan Simon '87 and Kate Jastram '87 are former Boalt classmates and longtime faculty members. Dimple Abichandani and Rebecca Golbert only arrived on campus last summer. Their common thread: Each just capped a fruitful first year directing a Boalt research center.

Simon assumed leadership of the Center for the Study of Law & Society (CSLS), often described as the world's top center for socio-legal studies. An expert on criminal law, he had worked closely with CSLS while chairing Boalt's Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program.

Propelling the center's push to challenge conventional legal and policy wisdom, Simon created the weekly Visiting Scholar Summer Speaker Series, expanded CSLS's research network, and helped the center guide California policy as the state grapples with overcrowded prisons.

"Law has traditionally been an autonomous field, and the idea of having a space for interdisciplinary research and collaboration is still unfamiliar in parts of the world," says Simon. "But people are now realizing that approach to legal education serves modern legal practice well, which makes this an optimal time to maximize our impact."

As the Miller Institute for Global Challenges and the Law's new faculty director, Jastram wants Boalt to become ground zero for U.S. students pursuing international law by "creating more opportunities for them to enter it."

She helped develop the school's Certificate of Specialization in International Law in 2009, awarded to 28 students at graduation this year. Boalt's international law program recently ranked fifth nationwide.



LEADING THE WAY: Kate Jastram '87, Jonathan Simon '87, Dimple Abichandani, and Rebecca Golbert

Jastram also connects Boalt students and alums with the American Society of International Law, works to increase international law placements within the school's UCDC Law Program, and recruits alumni as student mentors.

"Much of our international law system is organized around sovereign nation states, but in many areas, borders are becoming less important," says Jastram, who has worked in high-level positions with several international organizations. "That throws a lot of international law into question, which makes it a fascinating time to prepare students for practicing in a globalized setting."

Before becoming the Henderson Center for Social Justice's executive director, Abichandani spent 15 years advancing its goals in positions where law was the primary tool for change.

At the center, Abichandani quickly forged partnerships with academics, legal practitioners, advocacy organizations, policymakers, and community groups. She engages not only Boalt students who plan to pursue social justice careers, but all who care about equity and justice.

The Henderson Center has recently hosted a dynamic conference on low-wage earners and barriers to workplace equality, as well as sym-

posia on forced arbitration in the workplace and affirmative action.

"I was drawn to the center's mission of inspiring and arming the next generation of lawyers and leaders in the social justice arena," Abichandani says. "Winning in today's environment takes integrated strategies and lawyers who know how to work collaboratively."

Golbert, executive director of the Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies, calls her new position a "dream job." She arrived from Pepperdine University, where she was associate director of its Glazer Institute for Jewish Studies.

In 2013-14, her new institute hosted the Robbins Collection Lecture on Jewish Law and Thought by renowned political theorist Michael Walzer, an international conference on Israeli and Palestinian waterways, and many other events.

Launched in 2011, the institute is expanding Jewish and Israel studies offerings at UC Berkeley. With faculty director Kenneth Bamberger, Golbert oversees its two programs—one on Jewish law, thought, and identity, the other on the study of Israel.

"Both programs engage in trailblazing endeavors," she says. "Our contribution to these fields is very rewarding." —Andrew Cohen

New directors were named last year to help guide four Boalt research centers.