Luis Aroche is part of the first group of Moscone Scholars to attend CIIS. The Institute began the Moscone Scholars program to provide scholarships to public employees of the City of San Francisco who wish to finish their BA degrees. The scholarships are named in honor of George R. Moscone (1929–1978), who served as mayor of San Francisco and as majority leader of the California State Senate. Moscone was assassinated at the same time as Harvey Milk.

“The Moscone Scholarships are a wonderful way to honor and remember a mayor and legislator who made an enormous impact in his too-short life,” says CIIS President Joseph L. Subbiondo.

Luis Aroche seems like a very appropriate candidate for this program. He is the first alternative sentencing planner to be hired by a district attorney in California, part of a new statewide plan to keep low-risk offenders from being incarcerated with high-risk state prisoners.

“It’s my job to screen cases that go before the San Francisco district attorney’s office,” Aroche explains, “to see if there are ways that alternative sentencing can work in certain cases.” The program is only used for inmates whose offenses fit the “the three nons”—non-sex-offenders, nonviolent, and non-serious crimes.

“San Francisco has the highest rate of recidivism among inmates of any county in California,” Aroche}

The spiritual emphasis at CIIS also appeals to Aroche. “I’m a santero, a priest in the African-based Santería religion,” he says. “I also like the fundamental values of the founders of CIIS.”

“My job sometimes makes the world feel as if it’s all concrete and bars,” Aroche observes. “I hope that studying at CIIS will give me a different perspective, one I can take back to my work place.”

This fall, CIIS added two colorful banners to the outside of the Main Building. The signs, designed by CIIS Creative Services Manager Lisa Zamarin, feature the Institute’s name, logo, and Sri Yantra symbol.