Oumelbanine Zhiri has been a faculty member in the UCSD Literature Department since 1992. She teaches French, Arabic, and Comparative literature, and world history in the MMW program. She has published books and articles on the geographer Leo Africanus, including *L’Afrique au miroir de l’Europe, Fortunes de Jean Léon l’Africain à la Renaissance* (Geneva, Droz, 1991), and *Les Sillages de Jean Léon l’Africain du XVIème au XXème siècle* (Casablanca, Wallada, 1995) and a book on François Rabelais, *L’Extase et ses paradoxes* (Paris, Champion, 1999). She has published many articles and book chapters on early modern European and Arab cultural histories. Her current research is devoted to the literature of travel between Europe and the Middle East and North Africa in the early modern period. More broadly, she is interested in mapping the development of early modern Oriental studies in a transcultural context, as a circulation of objects, manuscripts, knowledge, technologies, and people, and wants to attend to the role played by many Arab and Ottoman natives in the evolution of the field of Orientalism. She is currently completing a book manuscript on these issues.

She often participates in large international conferences, such as the annual meetings of the Modern Languages Association, the Renaissance Society of America, and the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference. She is an active member of the Mediterranean Seminar, an international research network, and of the UC multi-campus Maghreb Studies Workshop.

She has over the years performed extensive service for UCSD, including Head of the Middle East Studies Program, Chair of the Literature Department, and Head of the Senate Committee on Library during the protracted negotiations with Elsevier and other publishing businesses.