FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

In Progress

Aya Abelon is working on arranging a second Court Reporting faculty/student interview for the September taping of the TW cable “Community Challenge.”

Aya Abelon is also working on arranging media coverage for the October 1 GLANCD check presentation.

Coverage


Los Cerritos Community News / Norwalk Community News — August 1, 2008 — Article on Rose Vasquez graduating Norwood University (from press release).

Downey Patriot — August 1, 2008 — Informational brief on ESL classes (from press release).

Downey Patriot — August 1, 2008 — Article on Foundation scholarships awarded (from press release).

Long Beach Press Telegram — August 3, 2008 — Informational brief on jazz band playing in the park.

Whittier Daily News — August 4, 2008 — Informational brief on ESL classes (from press release).

Furniture Today — August 4, 2008 — Article on possible credits for internships in furniture department.

Long Beach Press Telegram — August 6, 2008 — Article on insurance career classes (from press release).

Wave — August 7, 2008 — Article on Steve Arias (from press release).

Downey Patriot — August 8, 2008 — Informational brief on ESL classes (from press release).

Los Cerritos Community News / Norwalk Community News — August 15, 2008 — Article on Tuan Dao (from press release).


Long Beach Press Telegram — August 20, 2008 — Obit about former employee Marian Spika.


Los Cerritos Community News / Norwalk Community News — August 22, 2008 — Informational brief on Cerritos College Community Band.


Whittier Daily News — August 25, 2008 — Article on funding received by the woodworking department (from press release).

Long Beach Press Telegram — August 29, 2008 — Article on football team changing divisions.

Long Beach Press Telegram — August 31, 2008 — Article on local colleges.
Related News

*Long Beach Press Telegram*—August 1, 2008—CSULB sets fundraising record.

*Los Angeles Times*—August 11, 2008—Accounting class enrollment is up at San Diego State.

*Long Beach Press Telegram*—August 13, 2008—CSULB gets donation to fund a permanent chair for the Jewish Studies program.

*Los Angeles Times*—August 13, 2008—Court rules it is okay for UC to reject classes as transferable.


*Los Angeles Times*—August 20, 2008—Drinking age debate.

*Los Angeles Times*—August 21, 2008—Students starting universities in spring instead of fall.


*Long Beach Press Telegram*—August 26, 2008—Colleges dumping cafeteria trays in effort to conserve.

*Long Beach Press Telegram*—August 27, 2008—Pulitzer Prize winner to speak at CSULB.

*Long Beach Press Telegram*—August 27, 2008—CSULB gets new science building and tennis courts.

*Los Angeles Times*—August 27, 2008—Corinthian College loan program.

*Los Angeles Times*—August 29, 2008—More students using summer to enhance college applications.

*Long Beach Press Telegram*—August 30, 2008—CSULB reaches records regarding grad rates, applications and fund raising.
Successful Accounting Alumnus Gives Kudos to Parents and Professor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 29, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext. 2287

NORWALK, Calif. - July 29, 2008 - Born in East Los Angeles, Steve Arias grew up in the City of Commerce. As his mother and father were both working when he was young, his grandparents raised him, his younger brother and his two cousins throughout their childhood years.

His father and mother both came to California from Mexico in their late teens to look for opportunities for them and their families. His mother worked 18 years as a bankruptcy clerk and 10 years for an insurance company in downtown Los Angeles where she commuted by bus every day. Since his parents couldn’t afford two cars and there was a direct bus route to work, his mother took the bus to work every day for 28 years without ever complaining. Although his father’s English was not strong, he managed to attain a job at La Opinion, the largest Spanish-language newspaper in the U.S. He loved his job as a machinist. Both of Arias’ parents struggled in their lives, but he never heard them complain about their hardships.

Given their attitude toward life, he thinks he owes all of his success to his parents. “My parents are extremely proud of my accomplishments,” says Arias. “They tell me that all of their sacrifices paid off and they will continue to support me in any future venture.”

When Arias completed high school, he was out of school for one year without caring about his future plans. However, working what he describes as a “dead end” job, or harassing people at the mall asking them to fill out surveys all day long, forced him to start thinking about his future. He soon figured a community college was a good start and enrolled at Cerritos College.

Since he was in high school, he always had an interest in economy and business operations. However, he wasn’t sure what major in business would fit his interest. He took various introduction classes, spoke with many professors and came to a conclusion that accounting was the best fit. The accounting courses provided him with a good understanding of how businesses operate and how they generate cash flow.

The relationships that he established with his professors and peers at Cerritos College were what guided him to where he is today. Arias believes that the ability to establish genuine long term relationships with people is what separates successful people from ordinary individuals.
Contributing to his belief was Professor Peter Moloney who Arias thinks has played a significant role in his success. One day Arias spoke with Moloney about an upcoming job interview and his worries about not having a suit to wear. Growing up in a blue-collar family, Arias had little idea of how to buy an appropriate suit for job interviews. Moloney offered to take him to a tailor and guided him to buying his first suit.

In the fall of 2003, Arias transferred from Cerritos College to the University of Southern California where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

He has been working for Ernst & Young, one of the world’s leading accounting services firms, for almost two years which translates to being a “Senior One”. Senior Ones are responsible for the day-to-day activities of the audit. Some of the day-to-day activities consist of reviewing the staff’s work and testing various balance sheet accounts to ensure GAAP compliance. He aims to become a manager at Ernst & Young.

Aside from his full-time job, he is interested in helping minority business major students reach their potential. He plans to mentor those students by continuing to attend recruiting events and being involved at Cerritos College.

In his free time, Arias stays active with hiking and snowboarding. He is also an avid basketball player.

###
Detour Worth Making

College Employee Finishes Northwood University at Cerritos College BA Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 24, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext. 2287

NORWALK, Calif. - July 24, 2008 - For Rose Vasquez, the detour she took in education was definitely worth sticking out. Born in Mexico, she came to California with her parents and her five siblings when she was 12 years old. She is the second oldest of the six and the first one to get a college degree.

After she graduated from Artesia High School, she wanted to become a nurse. She was pre-admitted to the University of California, Irvine; however the program counselor told her to take English classes at a community college since her English was not strong. Her first reaction was, “Where are the local community colleges?” She asked for help at her high school career center, and a recruiter from Cerritos College EOPS personally drove her to the college and took her around the campus.

It was when she was almost done with the English prerequisite that her mother was hospitalized. Caring for her mother in a hospital, she realized that hospital is not the place she wanted to be at every day. After taking some career assessments she found out that the business major was more suitable for her personality and abilities since she always liked working with numbers and data.

When she started taking English classes at Cerritos College, she also started working part-time as a career center assistant at the college. She worked as an hourly without benefits for 11 years and eventually got a position as Program Assistant II. Since then she’s been acting as the office operations person for the Career Services Department. July 2008 is the 20-year anniversary of her Cerritos College employment.

She started her bachelor’s program in business at California State University, Fullerton in 1991. At CSUF she chose accounting as a concentration. Working full-time at Cerritos College and part-time off campus to support her family and pay for school, she was very close to finishing the school. One day, a few months shy from completing the degree, she had a car accident and had to stop going to school. Then soon after the accident, she got married and had her first son. Clearly, education had to be put on hold for a while.
During the years Vasquez worked at Cerritos College, her co-workers including Dean of Counseling Renee Chomiak, Director of Career and Assessment Services Terrie Lopez and Counseling Professor David Young kept encouraging her to finish her degree.

When Northwood University began offering a program which allows students to earn bachelor’s degree in business administration while at Cerritos College, she thought this was it. She researched the program accreditation and contents, and thought it was worth the money. Plus it couldn’t get any more convenient – she could work and study at the same place. Time was more valuable than anything else for Vasquez. She even compared the costs of attending other state universities and Northwood, and decided to enroll at Northwood in September 2006 as one of the inaugural class of this new program. She was able to transfer some, but not all of the 15-year-old units from CSUF since the requirements and curriculum have changed over last decade. Looking at the positive side, she got to experience business programs 15 years ago and now. “Technology has advanced significantly since 1990’s and I see more interactivity and multimedia use in the classroom now,” she observes.

The accelerated 6-week sessions at Northwood were hard, but she enjoyed the real-life work experiences that the Northwood professors brought to the classes. “Their practical and up-to-date insights are something you can’t learn in books,” she said. Having instructors who’ve been out in the field for quite a long time and who can point out what’s more important in the real world was invaluable to Vasquez. The class size was reasonably small with the largest she had being 12 students in one class. “We had more interactions with the instructors and the instructors could pay more attention to each student,” she said.

When she was almost done with the Northwood program, another misfortune struck her. Her grandmother got sick in the end of last year and passed away in January this year. And that was not all. Following his wife, her grandfather passed away in February. Not only had she had to go back and forth between California and Mexico, she was emotionally torn and saddened by the losses of loved ones.

However, she had no intention of repeating the mishap at CSUF. Dropping out of school when she was this close to finishing was not an option anymore. She closely communicated with her instructors and managed to pass the classes even in the midst of the tragedy. Juggling work, family and the adversity, Vasquez completed the program in amazing one and a half years.

Vasquez moved to Riverside last December. Now degree in hand, she is ready to take on new challenges. Coming from the EOPS Summer Bridge program, she wants to give back to other disadvantaged students. She is interested in helping students at EOPS or Financial Aid. “I remember sitting in the quad crying when I found out that I didn’t qualify for financial aid,” says Vasquez. “I don’t want the students to go through what I did.”

For more information of the Northwood University BBA program at Cerritos College, call (562) 653-7852 or visit www.cerritos.edu/northwood.

###
Cerritos College Offers Day and Evening ESL Courses

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 24, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext.2287

WHAT: Cerritos College’s Liberal Arts Division offers classes in English as a Second Language (ESL) with the start of the fall semester on Monday, August 18, 2008. Classes are offered at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels, and are available for $20 per unit (most classes are three units). Several classes are offered during both the day and evening. Most classes meet twice a week and are available during both the 18-week session and the first and second 9-week sessions. ESL classes at Cerritos College offer:

- Pronunciation
- Oral communication
- Speaking and listening
- Grammar
- Reading
- Vocabulary
- Writing and structure
- American expressions and culture
- Spelling
- Editing

WHEN: 18-Week Session: August 18 – December 19, 2008
First 9-Week Session: August 18 – October 17, 2008
Second 9-Week Session: October 20 – December 19, 2008

WHERE: Cerritos College
11110 Alondra Blvd
Norwalk, CA 90650

CONTACT: For more information, please contact Lucia Coulter at (562) 860-2451, ext. 2847 or by e-mail at lcoulter@cerritos.edu.

COST: $20 per unit for state residents; parking is $1 per day.

###
Cerritos College Foundation Awards Summer Scholarships

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 23, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451, ext. 2287

NORWALK, Calif. – July 23, 2008 - The Cerritos College Foundation awarded seven student scholarships during its board meeting on Thursday, July 10.

Katelyn Hamasaki, of Hawaiian Gardens, received a $500 Robert C. Hughlett Scholarship for Students with Disabilities. Hamasaki maintains a GPA of 3.6 and is on the Dean’s List. The scholarship was established in 2005 by college staff members in honor of Dr. Bob Hughlett, a member of the Cerritos College Board of Trustees and the retired director of Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS).

Cosmetology students Alecea Duran, of Rossmoor, and Amber Bustamante, of Long Beach were selected by the cosmetology faculty to receive the $300 John Pelloni Scholarship, in honor of the late Cosmetology Professor John Pelloni.

A new scholarship presented was “I Know What It’s Like to Be a Photo Student” Scholarship. Established this year by Anna Javier, a former Cerritos College photography student, the scholarship provides financial assistance to photography students. Andrea Garcia, of Norwalk received $150, Marisa Klug-Morataya, of La Mirada received $65, Steve Rosa, of Downey, received $55 and Melissa De Mata, of Buena Park received $30.

The Cerritos College Foundation, a non-profit organization, serves as a charitable vehicle for the community, individuals and alumni, to assist with financial support of Cerritos College. Visit the Foundation online at www.cerritos.edu/ccf.

###
Cerritos College to Offer New Insurance Career Program

Program Designed to Prepare for Rewarding Insurance Careers

For Immediate Release: June 23, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon; Public Affairs, (562) 860-2751 ext. 7878

NORWALK, Calif. – June 23, 2008 – Looking for a high-paying, flexible career? The Business Department at Cerritos College is pleased to announce that it is the first community college to offer a new California Insurance Career Program in Southern California.

“It is very exciting to be one of the few schools in California and the first in the area to offer this exciting new program which opens up so many well-paying, interesting jobs in such an a stable industry,” says Cerritos College Insurance Career Program Professor Peter Moloney.

California Insurance Career Program includes an industry developed curriculum that will prepare students for entry-level positions in the insurance industry.

The goal of the California Insurance Careers Program is to give students the tools and education they need to succeed and quickly advance within the insurance industry,” said Mike Wilson, Program Administrator, California Insurance Careers Program. “We are thrilled to have Cerritos College join the other 17 colleges running our program in California seeking to meet the growing demand for skilled workers in the insurance industry.”

The certificate program here at Cerritos College will provide insurance, business and communication skills to prepare students for entry-level positions in commercial insurance. It also provides web-based tools designed to create links between students and employers including company profiles and resume posting.

The program will start from the fall semester which begins on August 18. For more information on this and other business department programs, visit http://cms.cerritos.edu/accounting/insurance-program or contact the Accounting Department Co-Chairs Debra Schmidt (562) 860-2451 ext. 2712 or Michael Farina (562) 860-2451 ext. 2730. To register for classes, call 562-860-2451 or visit www.cerritos.edu.

###
Cerritos College Alumnus Rises to State Capitol

Born Leader is Lt. Governor’s Right Arm in Higher Education

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 22, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext.2287

NORWALK, Calif. - July 22, 2008 - Josh Franco was born in Uruapan, Michoacan, Mexico. Shortly after his birth, he came to the United States with his mother and his older brother to live with his father in California.

His interest in the leadership and public service budded early in his life. Franco served as student body president at almost all of the schools he attended, from Bellflower High School, Cerritos College and the University of California, Merced. At UC Merced, Franco established the student government and was elected first-ever student body president at the institution.

Franco recalls that each person he has met, spoke with and learned from has shaped his desire to pursue a career in public service. “Observing the passion of others, trying to understand the depth and breadth of their life experiences and absorbing as much knowledge as I can, I find that each person is greatly committed to creating a better life for themselves and those around them,” he says.

The awards and scholarships he received include the Cerritos College Facilities & Purchasing Leadership Scholarship, the Donald A. Strauss Foundation Public Service Scholarship, the Great Valley Center Institute for the Development of Emerging Area Leaders Class of 2006 and the Associated Students of Cerritos College Man of the Year, 2005.

“Cerritos College afforded me the opportunity to learn about myself, develop life skills and establish lasting friendships,” he says.

Josh received two associate’s degrees in economics and political science from Cerritos College and transferred to UC Merced in fall 2005. He achieved a bachelor’s degree in public policy from UC Merced in the spring of 2007.

His charismatic leadership and passion in public service landed him a job in the State Capitol in the Of-
Office of Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi. As an assistant to the Lt. Governor, he helped redesign and launch the Lt. Governor’s new website, coordinated the Students for California’s Future, a coalition of the three statewide student associations of the California Community Colleges, California State University and the University of California, and is now responsible for the Lt. Governor’s higher education policy.

Between his extremely busy schedule, Franco dedicates himself in community services as an Advisor to California “Students for Barack Obama” and as the participant for California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley. By attending meetings and regularly providing input on matters of general concern and of particular concerns to younger people, Franco hopes to elevate the matters of concern of the emerging generation.

Yet Franco manages to dig up some time to give back to his alma mater by mentoring current and incoming students. “The community challenged me to have a greater appreciation for the diversity of the campus and surrounding areas,” said Franco. “Cerritos College molded me into the person I am today.” He has mentored more than a dozen Cerritos College students and he also regularly meets with peers and student organizations at UC Merced to provide them with academic and career guidance and serve as a bridge to aid them in their journey after their time at the university.

Franco hopes to someday become a professor and teach at a public university. He has, and will continue to inspire many students whatever path he takes.

###
International Student Finds Niche in Healthcare

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 12, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext.2287

NORWALK, Calif. - August 12, 2008 - Tuan A. Dao never thought he would "dare to care," but now he knows he has it in him. Dao was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam. He came to California as a high school exchange student a few months before he started at Cerritos College in 2000. His family still lives in Vietnam except for his mother who immigrated in the U.S. a few years ago.

When he first attended Cerritos College, he was taking ESL classes and still wondering what he wanted to do with his life. He tried biochemistry, computer science, and business. He received an associate degree and transferred to California State University, Long Beach as a Computer Information System (CIS) major at the end of year 2003, but he was still not sure if he wanted to spend a portion of his life in front of a computer screen or inside a cubicle.

The turning point came when Dao met an old classmate from a chemistry lab who just graduated from the Cerritos College Nursing Program. “She inspired me into nursing,” he said. It was a breakthrough from his family tradition where his parents were both engineers.

In 2004 he came back to Cerritos College to take some nursing prerequisite classes. Then, he was admitted to the Cerritos College Nursing Program in fall 2005 and graduated in fall 2007.

“Cerritos College, specifically the Nursing Program, gave me tremendous help and guidance,” said Dao. “It provided me with the most updated information and detailed guidelines for my educational success as well as career choices.”

“I still remember a few weeks before I graduated from the nursing school, we had a representative from AfterCollege, a career network for college students, show us how to write a resume and how to apply for jobs online. Thanks to that, I got job offers from the places I sent my resume to.”

He also recalls that the Cerritos College counselors and faculty were very enthusiastic, very resourceful and very passionate. “They give students chances to better themselves,” said Dao.
Currently, he works as a registered nurse at the Downey Regional Medical Center Medical/Surgical unit. His responsibilities include providing and managing care to five patients, setting up care plans, teaching patients and their families about patient care and self care, and working with other healthcare providers to optimize patient health benefit. His goal there is to become a critical care nurse in operation room.

He is planning to go back to school by next spring to complete his bachelor’s degree and then earn a master’s degree to seek new experiences and challenges.

###
Cerritos College Women’s Water Polo Coach Leads the U.S. Women’s Water Polo Team in Olympics

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 13, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext.2287

NORWALK, Calif. - August 13, 2008 - The Cerritos College athletics is starting the new season with a great world-wide presence. Brenda Villa, women’s water polo assistant coach since 2004, is the captain for the U.S. national team in the Olympic Games now going on in Beijing, China.

Her career as a player is just stunning. Starting from being a four-time 1st Team All-American when she played on the Bell Gardens High boys’ team, she led the Stanford University water polo team to the BCAA title in 2002 and became the 2003 and 2007 World Water Polo Champion. Of course she is not new to the Olympic odyssey. The third time U.S. Olympian was a member of the 2000 and 2004 Olympic team, winning a silver medal and a bronze medal in each game.

“We are so fortunate to have Brenda as a coach on our women’s water polo staff,” commends Dan Smith, Ph.D., instructional dean of Health, P.E., and Athletics Division. “When she talks, our young ladies listen. Due to her efforts, along with those of Coach Sergio Macias, our Women’s water polo team has consistently been one of the top programs in the state.”

The team is currently competing in preliminaries. The semifinals and the medal matches are slated for August 19 and 21.

###
Cerritos College Composites Students Land Jobs at Global Defense Company

Northrop Grumman, Cerritos College Partner to Train Future Workforce

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 7, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext.2287

NORWALK, Calif. - August 7, 2008 - Cerritos College is proud to announce that 16 of its Composites students have recently been offered full time jobs by Northrop Grumman Corporation (NYSE: NOC), a global defense and technology company. This partnership was developed as an industry collaboration between Cerritos College Manufacturing Technology Program and Northrop Grumman.

In fall 2007, Cerritos College and Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems sector created a training initiative to prepare men and women for careers as composites mechanics at the company’s El Segundo Manufacturing Center. Orville Dothage, a training manager for Northrop Grumman, selected the Cerritos College composites classes as an alternative way to meet the company’s training requirements for new hires in composites. Under this cooperative venture, Northrop Grumman provided guidance and reviewed course materials for Cerritos College to assure the minimum requirements for a composites mechanic are met. Collaboration between Northrop Grumman and Cerritos College Composites Center has been reoccurring since 1985.
The Cerritos College Composites Certificate program is recognized by Northrop Grumman and accepted as certification in composite fabrication. It provides prospective candidates with the necessary experience to seek employment with Northrop Grumman or other aerospace companies. When hired, candidates can start working immediately without the customary four to five weeks of training in the Advanced Production Training Center.

“This program allows those with little to no background to become trained in the technology of composites fabrication,” said Terry Price, the program chairman for the composites training classes at Cerritos College. “It will allow them to become employed and ‘hit the shop floor running.’”

Northrop Grumman’s El Segundo Manufacturing Center is in need for well-trained composites workers to fill positions created by rising demand for its advanced technology products and growing levels of workforce.

Prior to graduation, the students were able to tour the El Segundo facility and receive interviews from Northrop Grumman supervisors. These steps allowed for a speedy opportunity to have job applications processed.

On July 10th, students of the composites fabrication class finished the “hands-on” course and received their certificates of completion. Upon their successful completion, Northrop Grumman interviewed and extended job offers to 16 students.

Current Northrop Grumman employees are encouraged to refer friends and family members to enroll in the classes. Stephanie Frasier, of Huntington Beach, is one of the students who received a job offer from Northrop this summer. “My mother, who is a planner at Northrop Grumman, recommended this program at Cerritos College,” said Frasier. “Before I joined the program, I wasn’t familiar with this field, but I enjoyed the class very much and look forward to start working soon.”

“This certification program is a win-win for Northrop Grumman and the community by providing people essential skills necessary to enter a career in aerospace,” said Dothage.

The Composites Training Center (CTC) at Cerritos College was launched in 1985 as a result of the growing need for trained workers for aerospace defense contractors and other high profile products. Composites are a conglomerate of lightweight materials that replace traditional wood and metal materials, engineered to provide directional strength and stealth capabilities. Composites courses are offered year round. The upcoming Composite Fabrication Course begins August 19, 2008. For further information about composites training, contact the Plastics/Composites program at (562) 860-2451 ext. 2927.

###
Cerritos College Woodworking Receives Over $100K from Perkins CTE Program

Funds Enables Purchase of Advanced Computerized Manufacturing Tool

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 15, 2008

Media Contact: Aya Abelon, Public Affairs; (562) 860-2451 ext. 2287

NORWALK, Calif. - July 15, 2008 - Cerritos College is proud to announce that its Woodworking Manufacturing Technology Department has received funding over $100,000 from the Perkins Career and Technical Education Program, a federal source of funds for occupational program improvement. The funding, which will be used to purchase a nested base CNC router, was awarded thanks to the commitment and efforts of woodworking instructor Mike Jones. “Nested base CNC is one of two major computerized technologies for cabinetmaking; the other is manufacturing cell,” said Jones. “Obtaining the nested base CNC router ensures that our cabinetmaking students will be exposed to the complete set of cabinetmaking technologies”.

Cerritos College is already equipped with manufacturing cell machinery: a point-to-point machining center, a beam saw and an edge bander. This technology is appropriate in high-volume manufacturing settings. The nested base CNC router performs both cutting and machining operations, as well as more flexible 3D machining. Nested base technology is favored by small custom cabinet shops because it is less expensive and requires less floor space.

With over 2,700 custom cabinet shops in Southern California, the demand for skilled employees with CNC training is growing. With the new router, Cerritos College will be equipped to prepare students for a wider range of jobs in the industry. The next step is course work. As Jones explains, “After the equipment is installed, we will revise our curriculum to include the new technology. We will touch on nested base CNC in many of our existing cabinet classes. We will also develop at least one new class that involves application of new CAD/CAM software to produce custom machining of parts and products”.

Cerritos College offers a certificate and degree program in cabinetmaking. The program teaches wood finishing, cabinet design, construction and installation. For more information about the program, contact (562) 860-2451 x2986.

###
Successful Accounting Alumnus Gives Kudos to Parents and Professor

Born in East Los Angeles, Steve Arias grew up in the City of Commerce. As his mother and father were both working when he was young, his grandparents raised him, his younger brother and his two cousins throughout their childhood years.

His father and mother both came to California from Mexico in their late teens to look for opportunities for them and their families. His mother worked 18 years as a bankruptcy clerk and 10 years for an insurance company in downtown Los Angeles where she commuted by bus every day. Since his parents couldn’t afford two cars and there was a direct bus route to work, his mother took the bus to work every day for 28 years without ever complaining. Although his father’s English was not strong, he managed to attain a job at La Opinion, the largest Spanish-language newspaper in the U.S. He loved his job as a machinist. Both of Arias’ parents struggled in their lives, but he never heard them complain about their hardships.

Given their attitude toward life, he thinks he owes all of his success to his parents. “My parents are extremely proud of my accomplishments,” says Arias. “They tell me that all of their sacrifices paid off and they will continue to support me in any future ven-

Alumus, Continued from page 8

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Since he was in high school, he always had an interest in economy and business operations. However, he wasn’t sure what major in business would fit his interest. He took various introduction classes, spoke with many professors and came to a conclusion that accounting was the best fit. The accounting courses provided him with a good understanding of how businesses operate and how they generate cash flow.

The relationships that he established with his professors and peers at Cerritos College were what guided him to where he is today. Arias believes that the ability to establish genuine long term relationships with people is what separates successful people from ordinary individuals.

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Detour Worth Making
College Employee Finishes Northwood University at Cerritos College BA Program

NORWALK — For Rose Vasquez, the detour she took in education was definitely worth sticking out. Born in Mexico, she came to California with her parents and her five siblings when she was 12 years old. She is the second oldest of the six and the first one to get a college degree. After she graduated from Artesia High School, she wanted to become a nurse. She was pre-admitted to the University of California, Irvine; however the program counselor told her to take English classes at a community college since her English was not strong. Her first reaction was, “Where are the local community colleges?” She asked for help at her high school career center, and a recruiter from Cerritos College EOPS personally drove her to the college and took her around the campus.

It was when she was almost done with the English prerequisite that her mother was hospitalized. Caring for her mother in a hospital, she realized that hospital is not the place she wanted to be at every day. After taking some career assessments she found out that the business major was more suitable for her personality and abilities since she always liked working with numbers and data.

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She started her bachelor’s program in business at California State University, Fullerton in 1991. At CSUF she chose accounting as a concentration. Working full-time at Cerritos College and part-time off campus to support her family and pay for school, she was very close to finishing the school. One day, a few months shy from completing the degree, she had a car accident and had to stop going to school. Then soon after the accident, she got married and had her first son. Clearly, education had to be put on hold for a while.

During the years Vasquez worked at Cerritos College, her co-workers including Dean of Counseling Renee Chemia, Director of Career and Assessment Services Terrie Lopez and Counseling Professor David Young kept encouraging her to finish her degree.

When Northwood University began offering a program which allows students to earn bachelor’s degree in business administration while at Cerritos College, she thought this was it. She researched the program accreditation and contents, and thought it was worth the money. Plus it couldn’t get any more convenient – she could work and study at the same place. Time was more valuable than anything else for Vasquez. She even compared the costs of attending other state universities and Northwood, and decided to enroll at Northwood in September 2006 as one of the inaugural class of this new program. She was able to transfer some, but not all of the 15-year-old units from CSUF since the requirements and curriculum have changed over last decade. Looking at the positive side, she got to experience business programs 15 years ago and now. "Technology has advanced significantly since 1990's and I see more interactivity and multimedia use in the classroom now," she observes.

The accelerated 6-week sessions at Northwood were hard, but she enjoyed the real-life work experiences that the Northwood professors brought to the classes.

Vasquez moved to Riverside last December. Now degree in hand, she is ready to take on new challenges. Coming from the EOPS Summer Bridge program, she wants to give back to other disadvantaged students. She is interested in helping students at EOPS or Financial Aid. "I remember sitting in the quad crying when I found out that I didn’t qualify for financial aid," says Vasquez. "I don’t want the students to go through what I did.”

For more information of the Northwood University BBA program at Cerritos College, call (562) 653-7852 or visit www.cerritos.edu/northwood.
**Detour Worth Making**

**College Employee Finishes Northwood University at Cerritos College BA Program.**

For Rose Vasquez, the detour she took in education was definitely worth sticking out. Born in Mexico, she came to California with her parents and her five siblings when she was 12 years old. She is the second oldest of the six and the first one to get a college degree.

After she graduated from Artesia High School, she wanted to become a nurse. She was pre-admitted to the University of California, Irvine; however, the program counselor told her to take English classes at a community college since her English was not strong. Her first reaction was, “Where are the local community colleges?” She asked for help in her high school career center, and a recruiter from Cerritos College EOPS personally drove her to the college and took her around the campus.

It was when she was almost done with the English prerequisite that her mother was hospitalized. Caring for her mother in a hospital, she realized that hospital is not the place she wanted to be at every day. After taking some career assessments she found out that the business major was more suitable for her personality and abilities since she always liked working with numbers and data.

When she started taking English classes at Cerritos College, she also started working part-time as a career center assistant at the college. She worked as an hourly without benefits for 11 years and eventually got a position as Program Assistant II. Since then she’s been acting as the office operations person for the Career Services Department. July 2008 is the 20-year anniversary of her Cerritos College employment.

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During the years Vasquez worked at Cerritos College, her co-workers including Dean of Counseling Renee Chomiak, Director of Career and Assessment Services Terrie Lopez and Counseling Professor David Young kept encouraging her to finish her degree.

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The accelerated 6-week sessions at Northwood were hard, but she enjoyed the real-life work experiences that the Northwood professors brought to the classes. “Their practical and up-to-date insights are something you can’t learn in books,” she said. Having instructors who’ve been out in the field for quite a long time and who can point out what’s more important in the real world was invaluable to Vasquez.

The class size was reasonably small with the largest she had being 12 students in one class. “We had more interactions with the instructors and the instructors could pay more attention to each student,” she said. When she was almost done with the Northwood program, another misfortune struck her. Her grandmother got sick in the end of last year and passed away in January this year. And that was not all. Following his wife, her grandfather passed away in February. Not only had she had to go back and forth between California and Mexico, she was emotionally torn and saddened by the losses of loved ones.

However, she had no intention of repeating the mishap at CSUF. Dropping out of school when she was this close to finishing was not an option anymore. She closely communicated with her instructors and managed to pass the classes even in the midst of the tragedy. Juggling work, family and the adversity, Vasquez completed the program in amazing one and a half years.

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College students land scholarships

NORWALK – The Cerritos College Foundation awarded seven student scholarships, including a photography scholarship to a Downey resident, during its board meeting on July 10.

Katelyn Hamasaki, of Hawaiian Gardens, received a $500 Robert C. Hughlett Scholarship for Students with Disabilities. Hamasaki maintains a 3.6 GPA and is on the Dean’s List.

Cosmetology students Alecea Duran, of Rossmoor, and Amber Bustamante, of Long Beach, were selected by the cosmetology faculty to receive the $300 John Pelloni Scholarship, in honor of the late cosmetology professor John Pelloni.

A new scholarship presented was the “I Know What It’s Like to be a Photo Student” Scholarship. Established this year by Anna Javier, a former Cerritos College photography student, the scholarship provides financial assistance to photography students.

Andrea Garcia, of Norwalk, received $150; Marisa Klug-Morataya, of La Mirada, received $65; Steve Rosa, of Downey, received $55; and Melissa De Mata, of Buena Park, received $30.

College offering day/night ESL classes

NORWALK – Cerritos College will offer day and night English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at its Norwalk campus beginning Aug. 18.

Classes are offered at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels, and are available for $20 per unit (most classes are three units).

Most classes meet twice a week and are available during both the 18-week session and the first and second nine-week sessions.

For more information, call Lucia Coulter at (562) 860-2451, ext. 2847.
Artesia Concerts in the Park,
Cerritos College Community Jazz Band, 6:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, Artesia Park, 18750 Clarkdale Ave.
(562) 860-3361.
AWFS chapter offers internships

-- Furniture Today, 8/4/2008 7:01:00 AM

Students can work in Southern California

CITY OF COMMERCE, Calif. — College students taking courses in woodworking, furniture design or manufacturing can apply for full- and part-time internships with industry companies located in Southern California, improving their career opportunities on graduation, according to the Assn. of Woodworking and Furnishings Suppliers.

The program has been initiated by the Young Furniture Associates, a chapter of the AWFS, a trade association representing companies that supply the home and commercial furnishings industry.

El Camino College in Torrance, Calif., offers students three credits for the internship. Cerritos College, Long Beach City College and Los Angeles Trade Tech College are considering similar support.

Companies interested in providing an internship must become a member of AWFS or the Young Furniture Associates. Any company in the woodworking, upholstery, bedding or related industries is eligible. For more information regarding membership, contact AWFS at (800) 946-2937.

For more information on the internship program or to obtain an application, companies and students can go to the association’s Web site at www.awfs.org.
Cerritos College to offer insurance career classes

The first class for the program will begin Aug. 18. Cerritos College will offer two courses this fall, with the aim of expanding the program in the future to five insurance courses, Farina said.

Once the college receives approval from the California Community College Chancellor's Office, it will be able to offer certificates to students completing the program, he said.

"After completing this, (students) should be very well trained to go into the insurance business," Farina said.

Cerritos College will be one of the few community colleges in Southern California to offer such an insurance program, he said.

The high demand for insurance workers is "due to the growth of the insurance industry," Farina said. "And qualified workers have not kept up with that growth."

kevin.butler@presstelegram.com, 962-499-1308

SCHOOL: Students will fill a worker shortage, official says.

By Kevin Butler
Staff Writer

LONG BEACH — Cerritos College is launching an academic program designed to prepare students for jobs in the insurance industry.

The college, located in Norwalk, saw that the insurance industry was in need of qualified administrative workers, said Michael Farina, co-chair of the Accounting and Finance Department at Cerritos College.

This program is in response to a great demand in the insurance industry for qualified employees," he said. "From what I'm hearing, they have to steal each other's employees.'

Participants in the program will be able to earn certificates after taking classes to prepare them for employment in the commercial insurance marketplace, in administrative positions and possibly sales, Farina said.

Graduates would work in positions supporting insurance brokers, adjusters and other insurance industry workers, he said.
Son of immigrants cites his parents, college for success

NORMALK — The son of Mexican immigrants whose jobs required him to be raised by grandparents, Steve Arias says his success began with counseling at Cerritos College, according to Aya Abelon, coordinator of media relations for the college.

Born in East Los Angeles and raised in Commerce, Arias has been employed by Ernst & Young, one of the world’s leading accounting firms, for almost two years.

He is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the audit firm. He hopes to become a manager there.

Finding himself in a dead-end job about a year after graduating from high school, Arias decided Cerritos College was a good place to learn a career, Abelon said.

Since he was in high school, he always had an interest in economy and business operations. He took various introduction classes, spoke with many professors and came to a conclusion that accounting was the best fit, Abelon said.

Arias says the relationships that he established with his professors and peers at Cerritos College were what guided him to where he is today.

He especially cited professor Peter Moloney for his support and guidance.

Arias recalls speaking with Moloney about an upcoming job interview and his worries about not having a suit to wear.

Growing up in a blue-collar family, Arias had little idea of how to buy an appropriate suit for job interviews.

Moloney offered to take him to a tailor and guided him to buying his first suit, Arias said.

In fall 2002, Arias transferred from Cerritos College to USC where he obtained a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

Arias also is thankful to his parents, who both came to California from Mexico in their late teens. His mother worked 18 years as a bankruptcy clerk and 10 years for an insurance company in downtown Los Angeles where she commuted by bus every day because the family could afford only one car.

His father got a job at La Opinion as a machinist.

Both of Arias’ parents struggled in their lives, but he never heard them complain about their hardships.

Given their attitude toward life, he thinks he owes all of his success to his parents.

“My parents are extremely proud of my accomplishments,” Arias said. “They tell me that all of their sacrifices paid off and they will continue to support me in any future venture.”

Steve Arias

Aside from his full-time job, he is interested in helping minority business major students reach their potential. He plans to mentor those students by continuing to attend recruiting events and being involved at Cerritos College.

In his free time, Arias stays active with hiking and snowboarding. He is also an avid basketball player.
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Area resident is aide to state official

NORWALK — Josh Franco, a Cerritos College graduate who attended Bellflower High School, has been named an assistant to Lt. Gov. John Garamendi.

Franco has helped redesign and launch the lieutenant governor’s new Web site, coordinated the Students for California’s Future, a coalition of three statewide student associations of the California Community Colleges, California State University and the University of California; and is responsible for Garamendi’s higher education policy.

Franco was born in Mexico. Shortly after his birth, he came to the United States with his mother and his older brother to live with his father in California.

He served as student body president at almost all of the schools he attended, including Bellflower High School, Cerritos College and the University of California, Merced.

At UC Merced, Franco established the student government and was elected the first-ever student body president at the institution.

He received a number of awards and scholarships at Cerritos College.

“Cerritos College afforded me the opportunity to learn about myself, develop life skills and establish lasting friendships,” he said.

Franco received two associate’s degrees in economics and political science from Cerritos College and transferred to UC Merced in fall 2005. He earned a bachelor’s degree in public policy from UC Merced in spring 2007.

Franco hopes to become a professor and teach at a public university.
International Student Finds Niche in Healthcare

Tuan A. Dao never thought he would "dare to care," but now he knows he has it in him. Dao was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam. He came to California as a high school exchange student a few months before he started at Cerritos College in 2000.

His family still lives in Vietnam except for his mother who immigrated in the U.S. a few years ago.

When he first attended Cerritos College, he was taking ESL classes and still wondering what he wanted to do with his life. He tried biochemistry, computer science, and business. He received an associate degree and transferred to California State University, Long Beach as a Computer Information System (CIS) major at the end of year 2003, but he was still not sure if he wanted to spend a portion of his life in front of a computer screen or inside a cubicle.

The turning point came when Dao met an old classmate from a chemistry class who just graduated from the Cerritos College Nursing Program. "She inspired me into nursing," he said. It was a breakthrough from his family tradition where his parents were both engineers.

In 2004 he came back to Cerritos College to take some nursing prerequisite classes. Then, he was admitted to the Cerritos College Nursing Program in fall 2005 and graduated in fall 2007.

"Cerritos College, specifically the Nursing Program, gave me tremendous help and guidance," said Dao. "It provided me with the most updated information and detailed guidelines for my educational success as well as career choices."

"I still remember a few weeks before I graduated from the nursing school, we had a representative from AfterCollege, a career network for college students, show us how to write a resume and how to apply for jobs online. Thanks to that, I got job offers from the places I sent my resume to."

He also recalls that the Cerritos College counselors and faculty were very enthusiastic, very resourceful and very passionate. "They give students chances to better themselves," said Dao.

Currently, he works as a registered nurse at the Downey Regional Medical Center Medical-Surgical unit. His responsibilities include providing and managing care to five patients, setting up care plans, teaching patients and their families about patient care and self care, and working with other healthcare providers to optimize patient health benefit. His goal there is to become a critical care nurse in operation room.

He is planning to go back to school by next spring to complete his bachelor's degree and then earn a master's degree to seek new experiences and challenges.
Cerritos College
Women’s Water Polo Coach Leads the U.S. Water Polo Team in Olympics

The Cerritos College athletics is starting the new season with a great world-wide presence. Brenda Villa, women’s water polo assistant coach since 2004, is the captain for the U.S. national team in the Olympic Games now going on in Beijing, China.

Her career as a player is just stunning. Starting from being a four-time 1st Team All-American when she played on the Bell Gardens High boys’ team, she led the Stanford University water polo team to the BCAA title in 2002 and became the 2003 and 2007 World Water Polo Champion. Of course she is not new to the Olympic odyssey. The third time U.S. Olympian was a member of the 2000 and 2004 Olympic team, winning a silver medal and a bronze medal in each game.

“We are so fortunate to have Brenda as a coach on our women’s water polo staff,” commends Dan Smith, Ph.D., instructional dean of Health, P.E., and Athletics Division. “When she talks, our young ladies listen. Due to her efforts, along with those of Coach Sergio Macias, our Women’s water polo team has consistently been one of the top programs in the state.”

The team is currently competing in preliminaries. The semifinals and the medal matches are slated for August 19 and 21.

Cerritos College serves as a comprehensive community college for southeastern Los Angeles County. Communities within the college’s district include Artesia, Bellflower, Cerritos, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada, Norwalk, and portions of Bell Gardens, Lakewood, Long Beach, Santa Fe Springs and South Gate. Cerritos College offers degrees and certificates in more than 200 areas of study in nine divisions. Annually, more than 1,200 students successfully complete their coursework, and enrollment currently nears 20,000 students. Visit Cerritos College online at www.cerritos.edu.
Whittier Daily News
August 18, 2008

Cerritos College’s Villa in Olympics

NORWALK — Cerritos College’s water polo assistant coach, Brenda Villa, will start off the 2008-09 school year fresh from a stint in Beijing, where she is serving as captain of the U.S. national team in the Olympic Games.

Villa was a four-time First Team All-American when she played at Bell Gardens High, then led the Stanford University water polo team to the BCAA title in 2002 and became the 2003 and 2007 World Water Polo Champion.

It’s not her first time at the Olympics — she was a member of the 2000 and 2004 U.S. Olympic teams, winning silver and bronze medals.

The team is ranked No. 1 in the world, and has earned a spot in the semifinals competition that takes place Tuesday.

Long Beach Press Telegram
August 20, 2008

Marian K. Spika

Resident of Long Beach for over 50 years, Marian K. Spika, R.N., died peacefully at home on August 10, 2008. She graduated in 1938 from St. Francis School of Nursing, La Crosse, Wisconsin. After raising a family, ‘Nan’ went on to earn first a Bachelor’s and then a Masters Degree in Public Administration. She practiced and taught nursing for many years, retiring from Rancho Los Amigos Hospital. After retirement, she spent 14 years working part time at Cerritos College of Norwalk, California, tutoring students in anatomy, physiology, and other related subjects. In addition to her career, she provided complete personal home nursing care for her beloved husband, Rudy, as his health declined over the course of 17 years, until his peaceful death at home. She is survived by daughters, Stephanie Spika-Fox of Long Beach, Tansieem (Tam) Watts of Anaheim, California; granddaughters, Heather and Devon Nelson, and Sameen and Malika Ghazali; daughter-in-law, Karen Spika; son-in-laws, Dennis Watts, Michael J. Fox, and David J. Nelson. Predeceased by husband Rudolph, (Rudy), and sons Gregory L. Spika and Michael Spika. Notify Sister Kassmeyer, St. Francis Foundation, and St. Francis Alumnae Association, 19th and Market Streets, La Crosse, WI. Arrangements by Neptune Society.
Villa becomes leader U.S. needs

WATER POLO:
Veteran leads young squad into final, but Wenger breaks hand.

By Mark Long
The Associated Press

BEIJING -- Brenda Villa was one of the youngsters when she made her Olympic debut in Sydney in 2000, not knowing where to go, what to do or how to act.

She just followed the crowd. Eight years, three Summer Games and countless international matches later, Villa is leading the way for the U.S. women's water polo team.

Villa scored three goals, including the game-winner with a minute remaining, and the Americans advanced to the gold medal match with a 9-6 victory against Australia on Tuesday.

"There's a lot of great memories that I have about her," U.S. coach Guy Baker said. "We've still got one more to make. We still have one more game to go together. We'll see how that goes down."

The United States will face the Netherlands in the gold-medal match Thursday (3:20 a.m. PDT). The Dutch upset Hungary, 8-7, in the other semifinal, getting three goals apiece from Marike van der Ham and lekke van Bellezn.

The Americans will go for the gold without former Long Beach Wilson and USC standout Lauren Wenger, who broke her right hand against the Australians. It will be a big loss for the world's No. 1 team, but one Baker believes his team can overcome.

"She does a lot of things for us, especially offensively," he said. "We've got time to sit down and figure it out. We've got a couple days to kind of make some adjustments and do what we're going to need to do."

It likely will mean one of the team's youngsters stepping up -- much like Villa did in 2000, when she scored with 12.1 seconds left to tie the Australians, 3-3, in the gold-medal game. The Aussies came right back and won, 4-3, on a disputed goal, and Villa has been waiting for a chance to get back to the final game.

Now she has it. And she played a big part in making it happen.

The United States went more than eight minutes without scoring and watched a three-goal lead evaporate into an 8-8 tie.

But Villa, a stocky, 26-year-old who somewhat reluctantly accepted a leadership role, put her team ahead for good when she caught a pass from Heather Petri and slipped it by goalkeeper Alicia McCormack.

"Brenda's a fantastic player," Australian coach Greg McFadden said. "In crucial games, she steps up, she'll take the shots, she reads the play well. She doesn't look like much of a water polo player, but she's got the brains and she's got the skills and she's got to be rated as one of the best players in the world. She's not afraid to have a go. That's what's good about her."

Villa also gave the Americans a 9-2 lead in the second quarter with a goal and put them up, 7-4, in the third.

Her last one, though, is the one she'll remember.

"I knew we needed to turn it around," she said. "I saw the opening and I took it. I was relieved, I must admit."

The Americans let their defense do the rest, forcing a turnover with 41 seconds to play and then blocking a shot with 12 seconds left to seal it.

Lenny Krayzel's "American Woman" echoed through Yingdong Natatorium as Villa and her teammates celebrated the victory. Fans followed with chants of "U-S-A! U-S-A! U-S-A!" as the team exited the pool deck.

Villa soaked it all in.

After winning silver in 2000 and bronze in 2004, Villa wants nothing more than to complete her collection in Beijing. It would be the perfect ending for Villa, who begrudgingly took on a leadership role despite struggling to be the positive force her young teammates needed.

"I'm definitely someone that's not by nature nurturing," Villa said. "I got in the water and handle my business and try to lead the team with guidance."

"I was a really young girl in Sydney. It's kind of a way to pay back. So now, I don't mind the road. But it definitely was a struggle at the beginning."
College composite program leads 16 to high-tech jobs

NORWALK — Sixteen Cerritos College composites students have been offered fulltime jobs with the Northrop Grumman Corp., a global defense and technology company.

The partnership was developed as an industry collaboration between the Cerritos College Manufacturing Technology Program and Northrop Grumman, said Aya Abelon, coordinator of media relations for the college.

Composites are a conglomerate of lightweight materials that replace traditional wood and metal materials, engineered to provide directional strength and stealth capabilities. Composites courses are offered year round, Abelon said.

In fall 2007, Cerritos College and Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems sector created a training initiative to prepare men and women for careers as composites mechanics at the company’s El Segundo Manufacturing Center.

Orville Dothage, a training manager for Northrop Grumman, selected the Cerritos College composites classes as an alternative way to meet the company’s training requirements for new hires in composites, Abelon said.

The collaboration between Northrop Grumman and Cerritos College Composites Center began in 1985.

The Cerritos College Composites Certificate program is recognized by Northrop Grumman and accepted as certification in composite fabrication. It provides prospective candidates with the necessary experience to seek employment with Northrop Grumman or other aerospace companies, Abelon said.

When hired, candidates can start working immediately without the customary four to five weeks of training in the Advanced Production Training Center.

“This program allows those with little to no background to become trained in the technology of composites fabrication,” said Terry Price, the program chairman for the composites training classes at Cerritos College.

Northrop Grumman’s El Segundo Manufacturing Center is in need of well-trained composites workers to fill positions created by rising demand for its advanced technology products and growing levels of retirement among its experienced workforce, Abelon said.

Prior to graduation, the students were able to tour the El Segundo facility and receive interviews with Northrop Grumman supervisors. Those steps allowed the opportunity to have job applications processed.

On July 10 students of the composites fabrication class finished the “hands-on” course and received their certificates of completion. Upon their successful completion, Northrop Grumman interviewed and extended job offers to 16 students.
Son of immigrants credits parents, college for his success

NORWALK — The son of Mexican immigrants whose jobs required him to be raised by grandparents, Steve Arias says his success began with counseling at Cerritos College, according to Aya Abelon, coordinator of media relations for the college.

Born in East Los Angeles and raised in Commerce, Arias has been employed by Ernst & Young, one of the world's leading accounting firms, for almost two years.

He is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the audit firm. He hopes to become a manager there.

Finding himself in a dead-end job about a year after graduating from high school, Arias decided Cerritos College was a good place to learn a career, Abelon said.

Since he was in high school, he always had an interest in economic and business operations. He took various introduction classes, spoke with many professors and came to a conclusion that accounting was the best fit, Abelon said.

Arias says the relationships that he established with his professors and peers at Cerritos College were what guided him to where he is today.

He especially cited professor Peter Moloney for his support and guidance.

Arias recalls speaking with Moloney about an upcoming job interview and his worries about not having a suit to wear. Growing up in a blue-collar family, Arias had little idea of how to buy an appropriate suit for job interviews.

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In fall 2003, Arias transferred from Cerritos College to USC, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in accounting.

Arias also is thankful to his parents, who both came to California from Mexico in their late teens. His mother worked 18 years as a bankruptcy clerk and 10 years for an insurance company in downtown Los Angeles where she commuted by bus every day because the family could afford only one car. His father got a job as a machinist.

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Given their attitude toward life, he thinks he owes all of his success to his parents.

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Aside from his full-time job, he is interested in helping minority business major students reach their potential. He plans to mentor those students by continuing to attend recruiting events and being involved at Cerritos College.

In his free time, Arias stays active by hiking and snowboarding. He is also an avid basketball player.
Cerritos to Host Patriot Day Concert

The city of Cerritos will host a free patriotic concert featuring the Cerritos College Community Band Sept. 11 at Heritage Park starting at 6:45 p.m. Patriotic and Americana music will be featured and a moment of silence will be observed in honor of the victims and heroes of Sept. 11, 2001. For additional information contact the Recreation Services Division at (562) 916-1254.
Los Angeles Times
August 22, 2008

Water polo Olympians inspire city

Two silver medalists swam at Commerce’s Aquatorium.

By Emeraldale Bermudez
Times Staff Writer

Sergio Jimenez splashed around the edge of Commerce’s Aquatorium pool proclaiming the news to anyone willing to listen. “Brenda and Patty won 9 to 8,” the 7-year-old said after the U.S. women’s water polo team defeated Australia at the Olympic Games on Tuesday. “I thought the U.S.A. was going to win, and I was right!”

Michael Phelps may still dominate headlines, but inside this Aquatorium, Sergio and his water polo teammates have been more captivated by the triumph of two other Olympians: Brenda Villa and Patty Cardenas. They are part of the women’s water polo team that won a silver medal after being defeated by the Netherlands on Thursday morning.

Not too long ago, Villa, a three-time Olympian, and Cardenas were bouncing around in the Aquatorium as members of the Commerce water polo club. Now, more than 6,000 miles away in Beijing, they were given.

[See Water polo, Page B9]

Olympians inspire a city

Water polo, from Page B1]

Their hometown a fresh image and the children at their childhood aquatic center the highest of hopes for their sport.

Many of the 150 or so young swimmers who make up the Aquatorium’s nationally ranked program have been glued to television and computer screens watching Villa and Cardenas in awe, closely noting their plays, their goals, their facial expressions. Some 250 people in Commerce, including the mayor and Cardenas’ parents, gathered at the center at 3:30 Thursday morning in front of a giant television to cheer on the women.

“I see them, and I think, anything can happen to us,” said Alfredo Delamor, 18, who recently returned from Hawaii, where he competed for Commerce. “Someone from Commerce went that far. We could do it too, if we set our minds to it.”

Like Alfredo, many of the children on the Aquatorium water polo teams are neither well-off nor well connected. Many are the children of landscapers, truck drivers and factory workers. They live in Commerce, a blue-collar city of about 13,000, known not for beach views or recreational offerings, but for its expansive casino and industrial corridors. More than 90% of the population is Latino, and the annual median household income is less than $40,000.
less than $40,000.

But early on, the city caught on to the children’s knack for water sports and nurtured it. In 1961, the city built a top-of-the-line aquatic center. Former coach and water polo pioneer Sandy Nitta used to encourage youngsters to get involved in the sport, using trash cans for goals, said Aquatorium supervisor Barb Bylsma-Houghton. The new center was built in 2001.

Today, use of the $30-million facility, competition registration fees and player travel expenses are paid by the city. Parents cook and sell tamales and tostadas to cover additional expenses.

Years ago, Bylsma-Houghton started a campaign to have women’s water polo recognized as an Olympic sport, hoping that some of the Commerce players might be picked for a U.S. team. The first women’s Olympic competition took place eight years ago in Sydney, Australia. Villa competed there, the youngest on the team, helping the women win silver, and again four years later in Athens, where the U.S. took the bronze medal.

This time around, phones have been ringing more than ever because of media wanting to learn about the Aquatorium’s success. NBC filmed Thursday’s gathering to air later in the day.

Villa and Cardenas are celebrities at the Aquatorium, but they hardly show it, staff members say. Villa, 28, began playing polo here at age 8. Cardenas, 24, started taking swimming lessons when she was 3. Local businesses partnered with the city to pay for their families and friends to travel to Beijing.

The women keep close ties to Commerce, occasionally dropping by the center to swim or hold scrimmages with younger players. Villa’s collection of trophies lines a shelf on the second floor of the two-story facility, and inside the staff office, lifeguards point with pride to a recently posted photo of Villa and Cardenas with President Bush.

The two women often stood out because they were shorter than the rest of their Commerce teammates — a fact not lost on water polo player and swimmer Laura Jimenez, 11. The petite girl with reddish-brown hair said she considered her small size a detriment until she witnessed Villa and Cardenas’ success.

“They showed everyone that size doesn’t matter,” said Laura, who’s been going to the Aquatorium every week since she was 6 months old.

Coach Christian Flores, 21, said the enthusiasm of his players has been sky-high since the Olympics began. Many have elevated their game, dreaming that they, too, could be among the best in the world.

“They work so hard, you know you’re going to keep seeing girls from Commerce play in the Olympics,” he said.
No Dutch treat for the U.S.

**WATER POLO:** De Bruijn scores seven goals to lead 9-8 upset of top-ranked Americans.

By Mark Long
The Associated Press

BEIJING — They walked out together, then stood side by side holding hands and grinning like never before. When the Dutch women's water polo team jumped onto the medal stand to collect the gold medals, the players took several collective bows.

In truth, it was Danielle de Bruijn's show. And her curtain call.

De Bruijn, who is retiring from international competition after more than a decade on the national team, scored seven goals in her final Olympic game, including the game-winner with 26 seconds remaining, and the Netherlands shocked the United States, 9-8, in the gold-medal match Thursday.

"I don't think I've ever quite seen that," U.S. coach Guy Baker said. "What a great performance. ... It is up there with some of the great performances, especially because she did it at the Olympics."

De Bruijn scored three of the first four goals of the match, helping stake the Dutch to a 4-0 lead before the Americans could blink. She scored two more right after halftime, giving her team a 7-5 advantage. And she saved her best for last, scoring twice on power plays that turned out to be the difference.

The left-hander who was so disappointed her country didn't qualify for the 2004 Games in Athens helped them make amends four years later. The Dutch knocked out defending Olympic gold medalist Italy in the quarterfinals, sent Hungary to the bronze-medal game in the semifinals and delivered their biggest upset in the final.

Not bad for a country that came to Beijing ranked ninth in the world. De Bruijn is calling it quits after more than a decade on the national team and in need of knee surgery.

"It has been tough years," De Bruijn said, "and now I think I will do other things in my life besides water polo."

The Americans left Yingdong Natatorium with long faces, begrudgingly accepting silver again. They won bronze in Athens and silver in Sydney.

"It's just a little bittersweet," former UCLA standout Natalie Golda said, wiping away tears.

Lauren Wenger, a former Long Beach Wilson and USC standout, hugs Elsie Steffens after the Americans' loss to the Netherlands.
POLO
FROM PAGE C1

“We had the game.”
Like, we had it in our grasp
and we let it slip away. You
can’t be angry with a medal, a
silver medal. It’s a great thing,
but it’s bittersweet right now.
And knowing it’s the end of a
lot of people’s careers, and
you’d like to go out with a win,
it’s just the way sport is.”

Baker was disappointed for
Brenda Villa, the women’s
water polo assistant coach at
Cerritos College, and Heather
Petri, both three-time Olympi-
ans who plan to retire. Both
had hoped to round out their
medal collections with gold.
“This is going to be a bitter
disappointment instead of joy,”
Baker said.

The Americans were ranked
No. 1 in the world and looked
like they might get the gold
medal that has eluded them.
They may have had they
been able to stop de Bruinj.
Despite her scoring prowess,
the Americans had several
chances to tie in the waning
seconds, but Elsie Windes
missed an outside shot and
Villa couldn’t put home the
rebound.

“I like the way we came
back,” Baker said. “I don’t
think we ever panicked down,
4-0. We just could never get

Danielle de Bruijn scores one of her seven goals in the Netherlands’ 9-8 win over the U.S. in Beijing.

over the hump.”

Ranked No. 1 in the world,
the United States overcame
the 4-0 deficit to tie it at 5 at
halftime and again evened the
scored, 8-all with 5:05 remain-
ing, on Moriah van Norman’s
goal from the 2-meter area.
But Villa was called for an
exclusion penalty with 45 sec-
onds left, putting the Dutch in a
6-on-5 situation — and giving
de Bruijn extra space to oper-
ate.
She capitalized, pump fak-
ing from the top of the zone
and then unleashing an over-
head shot that whipped by

goalkeeper Betsy Armstrong
for the go-ahead score with 26
seconds left.

“This moment is very spe-
cial for her,” Netherlands
coach Robin van Galen said.

Added de Bruijn: “This is
great to play this way in the
last game.”
College students land jobs with Northrop

NORWALK – Cerritos College has announced that 16 of its Composites Manufacturing students have been offered full-time jobs by Northrop Grumman, a global defense and technology company.

The hirings were part of a partnership developed last year between the Cerritos College Manufacturing Technology Program and Northrop Grumman to prepare men and women for careers as composites mechanics at the company’s El Segundo manufacturing center.

Under the partnership, Northrop Grumman reviewed course materials for Cerritos College to ensure the minimum requirements for a composites mechanic are met. When hired, candidates can start working immediately without the customary four to five weeks of training.

“This program allows those with little to no background to become trained in the technology of composites fabrication,” said Terry Price, the program chairman for the composites training classes at Cerritos College. “It will allow them to become employed and hit the shop floor running.”

Northrop Grumman’s El Segundo manufacturing center is in need for well-trained composites workers to fill positions created by rising demand for its advanced technology products and growing levels of retirement among its experienced workforce.

Prior to graduation, the students were able to tour the facility and receive interviews from Northrop Grumman supervisors. This allowed for a speedy opportunity to have job applications processed.

On July 10, students of the composites fabrication class finished the “hands-on” course and received their certificates of completion. Upon their successful completion, Northrop Grumman extended job offers to 16 students.

Stephanie Frasier was one of the students who received a job offer.

“My mother, who is a planner at Northrop Grumman, recommended this program at Cerritos College,” said Frasier. “Before I joined the program I wasn’t familiar with this field, but I enjoyed the class very much and look forward to start working soon.”

For more information on composites training, call the Plastics Composites program at (562) 860-2451, ext. 2927.
Cerritos program receives funds

NORWALK — Cerritos College's woodworking manufacturing technology department has received more than $100,000 from the Perkins Career and Technical Education Program, a federal source of funds for occupational program improvement.

The funding will be used to purchase a nested base CNC router, one of two major computerized technologies for cabinetmaking.

The nested base CNC router performs both cutting and machining operations, as well as more flexible 3-D machining.

Cerritos College offers a certificate and degree program in cabinetmaking that teaches wood finishing, cabinet design, construction and installation.

For more information about the program, call (562) 860-2451, Ext. 2986.

Saddleback is top pick in new lineup

JC FOOTBALL: Long Beach predicted to struggle in '08.

From staff reports

COSTA MESA — Saddleback College was tabbed to win the newly formed Southern California Football Association National Division Southern Conference crown by voters Thursday at a media luncheon held at Orange Coast College while Long Beach City was picked to finish last among the seven teams.

Saddleback, which went 7-3 overall and 3-1 in the defunct Mission Conference National Division last season, received four of nine first-place votes and totaled 56 points. The Gauchos are ranked No. 17 nationally in the J.C. Grid-Wire/JCFootball.com poll and No. 9 in California in the preseason coaches poll.

LBCC, which struggled to a 2-7 record a year ago (1-3 MCND), received just 15 points with no first-place votes. Palomar finished second with 46 points and two first-place votes while Fullerton (48 points, one first-place vote) was picked third. Santa Ana (38/1), Grossmont (33/1) and Orange Coast (21) rounded out the voting.

LBCC scrimmages Santa Monica at Veterans Stadium today at 6 p.m. and opens its regular season Sept. 6 at 6 p.m. at L.A. Harbor.

Cerritos College has moved from the Mission Conference American Division to the SCFA National Division Central Conference and opens its season Sept. 6 at 6 p.m. at East L.A.

Compton has moved from the Western State Conference Southern Division to the SCFA American Division Mountain Conference.

The Tartars will host Fullerton in their opener on Sept. 6 at 1 p.m.
Area adds up to lots of school options

By Kevin Butler
Staff Writer

The Long Beach area offers multiple higher education options for residents, including two Cal State campuses and two community colleges.

Cal State Long Beach — one of the most popular CSU campuses — enrolled about 30,800 students in the fall of 2007. Founded in 1949, the four-year university — known as "the Beach" — has more than 2,000 faculty members. The campus offers 84 baccalaureate degrees, 67 master's degrees and two doctoral programs. High school graduates who are seeking to enroll as freshmen are advised to find relevant information by visiting the Web site, www.csulb.edu.

Cal State Dominguez Hills in Carson offers 45 undergraduate degrees, 24 master's degrees, as well as certificate and credential programs.

The university had an enrollment of about 12,000 in the fall of 2007, according to CSU data.

CSUDH is known for its ethnic diversity, with a student population that is about 40 percent Hispanic, 31 percent African-American, 18 percent white and 6 percent Asian.

The campus is the site of the Home Depot Center, a sports complex that hosts Major League Soccer teams Chivas USA and the Los Angeles Galaxy.

Long Beach City College's enrollment stood at about 29,000 students in the fall of 2007. The college has two campuses: the larger Liberal Arts Campus at 4901 E. Carson St., and the Pacific Coast Campus at 1305 E. Pacific Coast Highway.

Voters earlier this year approved a $440 million bond measure for LBCC to fund new construction and renovations. The college's Web site is www.lbcc.edu.

Cerritos College, a community college at 11110 Alondra Blvd., in the city of Norwalk, currently enrolls nearly 20,000 students. The college, which serves southeastern Los Angeles County, offers degrees and certificates in more than 100 areas of study in nine divisions. The college's Web site is www.cerritos.edu.

Other area college campuses include Biola University in La Mirada, El Camino College/Compton Center in Compton and Los Angeles Harbor College in Wilmington.
CSULB sets record for fundraising

By Kevin Butler
Staff writer

LONG BEACH — Cal State Long Beach raised nearly $34 million in the 2007-2008 academic year, setting a record, university officials announced Thursday.

The year-end total as of June 30 was $33.9 million — a $6.6 million increase over the previous year’s take. This year’s sum exceeded the university’s goal by about $4 million.

Overall, the university has seen a 65 percent increase in annual giving over the last two years.

CSULB President F. King Alexander credited the recent success to recent efforts to forge stronger ties with alumni and other members of the university community.

“I think it’s great news for the entire campus family,” he said. “And it shows that many alumni and friends of our university are increasingly getting involved in the direction and mission.

“They are very confident in the national as well as the state reputation that we’re gaining and acquiring,” he added.

The university has plowed more money into alumni relations in recent years, including hiring more staff, he said.

CSULB has increased alumni contacts, raising the distribution of its alumni magazine from 65,000 copies to 250,000 copies over the past several years, Alexander added.

“That does require some investment on the front end, but it certainly shows that it’s paying off in multiple ways,” he said.

The university hopes to kick off a fundraising campaign sometime next year, he said.

CSULB received a total of 25,761 gifts this year, more than 80 percent of them from individuals. The campus also received donations from foundations and organizations in the form of grants for academic programs.

CSULB also made history this year by receiving its largest single donation, a $16.4 million gift from the Bob Cole Trust to fund scholarships for music students. In recognition, the university renamed its Music Department the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music.
The numbers add up for accounting majors

A survey finds that enrollment is up 8% since 2004. Some schools aren’t able to keep up with demand.

By Trace Finster
TNS

SAN DIEGO — The weather is balmy, the local beaches are inviting, and, of course, San Diego State students are thinking about accounting.

Yes, accounting. It’s become one of the hot courses on campus.

Enrollment is up, one of the accounting instructors has twice been named professor of the year, and several students expect their summer semesters in a class meeting over a multiple-choice exam titled “Final Exam...”

The class is Accounting 111, Intermediate Accounting I, and it’s chock full of discussions of inventory, depreciation, real estate and the parts and joys of partnerships. Informally, it’s known as accounting boot camp. There were no open seats.

Part of the reason for accounting’s new popularity may be the inherent romance of business. Then there’s this: Enrolled in a database economy, accounting students are finding jobs — jobs that don’t require the first step toward realizing their own companies, or getting that career offer in an established business.

“People think I’m boring,” but “it’s hot,” said Chris Turner, 26, of Poway. “It helps you understand the business mathematics behind things.”

Among other factors leading to the rise, the institution, is the Barmanes-Oliver legislation, which requires businesses to make more strict financial disclosures. Last year, 84,221 students graduated with bachelor’s or master’s degrees in accounting, the most since the Institute of Management Accountants was founded.

You have to be a global thinker, an economist, somebody with judgment and ethics.

—WILL SNYDER
San Diego State University

The second reason for the growth is the perceived growth in the economy.

“A lot of folks are working, and the economy is shifting from businesses,” said Snyder. “It’s a firmer economy.”

San Diego State students are expected to pass the Bar exam and the CPA exam within one year. The college’s pass rate is 72%.

There is also the fact that San Diego State offers a joint degree program with the University of California, San Diego, which allows students to take classes at both schools.

The program is also attractive because the university is located in the heart of the city, which is ideal for students who want to work while they study.

The program has been so successful that the university is now offering it at full-time.

Finding balance: “Students in Snyder’s accounting boot camp read their textbooks during class.”

The school’s alumni are spotted in a variety of high-paying fields.

Among them is David Davis, managing director of the San Diego office of KPMG, one of the nation’s largest accounting firms. He’s a 1986 accounting graduate of San Diego State. He credits the enthusiasm of his graduation and the potential.

“They’re very passionate about the accounting profession, the academic side and the potential side,” he said.

Although the number of accounting majors is growing — from 25 in 1979 to 250 in 2007 — it’s still a small portion of the 6,800 students in the business school at the No. 1 campus.

“Is it a lot of eating, but once you get the reputation...”
Alperts fund CSULB position

SCHOOL: L.B. couple gives $1 million for Jewish Studies faculty.

By Kevin Butler
Staff Writer

LONG BEACH — Cal State Long Beach has received a $1 million gift to its Jewish Studies program to support a permanent faculty position in the field, university officials said.

Long Beach residents Ray and Barbara Alpert made the donation to fund a permanent endowed chair.

The contribution will help ensure the financial stability and prestige of the program, while allowing the university to attract talented faculty, said the program’s co-director, Jeffrey Blutinger.

“In addition, it will give us the opportunity to really raise the profile for Jewish studies on campus,” said Blutinger, an assistant professor in the university’s history department.

There are “very few” endowed Jewish Studies faculty positions at American universities, he added. The program, which was founded in 1998, now offers students major and minor courses of study.

Ray Alpert said that he and his wife became interested in the program when they learned that its Holocaust classes were popular with Jewish and non-Jewish students.

“We felt it was a very good educational vehicle,” he said. “And we wanted to keep that in the minds of people.

“We also think it will help some of the Jewish people maybe improve their roots and continue their connection to Judaism,” he added.

The couple has long been involved in the Jewish community. The Long Beach-based Alpert Jewish Community Center was named in recognition of the couple’s donation to help fund the organization.

The endowed position at CSULB will be called the Barbara and Ray Alpert Endowed Chair in Jewish Studies.

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Christian school loses UC case

A judge rules that the university was not discriminatory in its refusal to count certain classes toward admission.

By LARRY GORDON

The University of California did not violate students' freedom of expression and religion when it rejected some classes at a Riverside-area Christian school from counting toward UC admission, a Los Angeles federal judge has ruled.

In a case that has attracted significant attention in religious and academic circles nationwide since it was filed in 2006, the judge upheld the university's decision to disqualify several classes offered by Calvary Chapel Christian School of Murrieta for being too narrow or not academically rigorous enough to fulfill UC's entrance requirements.

In a final ruling issued Friday, U.S. District Judge S. James Otero said UC demonstrated a rational basis for rejecting Calvary Christian's English, history, government and religion courses and did not display any "animus" toward the school or its Christian doctrines.

The university's policy was constitutional despite allegations by the students and school of an anti-Christian bias, the judge said.

The decision will be appealed, said attorney Robert Tyler, who represents Calvary Christian, its student plaintiffs and a group of 4,000 Christian schools nationwide. Tyler said Tuesday that he was disappointed by Otero's ruling but was confident a higher court would find that UC violated the law by rejecting the classes for their religious content. The attorney also said the district court had applied overly restrictive standards to the bias allegations.

All five students named in the case have since graduated from the school and two are enrolled at UC Riverside, where they were admitted based on their grades in other, UC-approved courses at Calvary Christian, Tyler said. But he said the case was important to pursue for current and future students nationwide.

The Asm. of Christian Schools International joined the case in arguing that UC's attempts to force Christian schools to water down their religious teachings.

"This case is about the future of private religious education and the right to be able to have your kids learn from a religious perspective," said Tyler, who is general counsel for a religious liberty law firm in Murrieta named Advocates for Faith and Freedom.

His four children attend Calvary Christian, which enrolls about 1,300 students in kindergarten through high school. UC officials said they felt vindicated by the court decision, which followed a related ruling in March that upheld the university's practice of approving high school classes.

The decision shows that UC has been "totally within its legal rights to apply admission standards across the board to all students and has been doing that in an appropriate way," university counsel Christopher Patti said Tuesday.

If UC had lost the case, the 10-campus system's ability to set and control academic standards would have been "seriously undermined" and the door opened to all sorts of admission exemptions, Patti said.

In documents presented in the case, UC representatives pointed out that the university has certified more than 50 other courses at Calvary Christian as meeting UC's admission standards. UC said that it accepts courses from hundreds of schools affiliated with various faiths and that courses from Christian schools are approved at the same rate as those submitted by others.

The university said it had rejected, for example, an English class at Calvary Christian called "Christianity and Morality in American Literature" in part because students read excerpts from a literature anthology without having to read at least some complete books, as UC requires.

Historians testifying for the university said that a history class titled "Christianity's Influence on America" failed to teach critical thinking and relied on a book that attributed historical events to divine providence. The book also contained inadequate material about non-Christian groups, the historians said.

The case could influence admission practices at public colleges nationwide, Tyler said.

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Masca, a senior research fellow at the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in Washington, D.C. "No one is questioning the right of Calvary Chapel to teach what they want to teach. But what the case says is that when you do that, there may be consequences," Masca said Tuesday.

At one point in the long-running case, Judge Otero upheld UC's rejection of another school's biology class that used a text that dismissed evolution in favor of biblical accounts of creation. That part of the decision "continued a long line of cases where challenges to the teaching of evolution have been essentially pushed back," Masca said.

Among the most important such decisions came in 2006 when a federal judge ruled that the school board in Dover, Pa., could not force biology teachers to present so-called intelligent design — a theory that a creator is responsible for the universe — as an alternative to Charles Darwin's findings on evolution.
LBCC to acquire PCH land

EDUCATION: City’s redevelopment agency aids deal for adjacent motel and church.

By Karen Robes Meeks
Staff Writer

LONG BEACH – Two key land acquisitions will allow Long Beach City College to expand its Pacific Coast campus.

Long Beach Redevelopment Agency board members voted Monday to approve the $2.56 million purchase of 1521-1527 and 1585 E. Pacific Coast Highway on the college’s behalf.

The college will reimburse the agency the $2.56 million plus relocation costs for the property owners of the 17-room College Inn Motel ($1.85 million) and a storefront church and gift shop ($710,000).

The college does not yet know what it will develop on the properties, said Ann-Marie Gabel, vice president of Administrative Services for Long Beach City College. Likely, however, it will be used for parking and helping to improve the “storefront look” of the campus and “make it look more inviting.”

Campus expansion

Long Beach Redevelopment Agency board members voted Monday to acquire 1521-1527 and 1585 E. Pacific Coast Highway on behalf of Long Beach City College. The college, which will use the two commercial properties to expand its Pacific Coast campus, will reimburse the agency $2.56 million plus relocation costs for a motel and a storefront church on the properties.
Colleges: Is the drinking age too high?

DEBATE: School presidents’ call for review of issue brings criticism from MADD.

By Justin Pope

The Associated Press

College presidents from about 100 of the nation’s best-known universities, including Duke, Dartmouth and Ohio State, are calling on lawmakers to consider lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18, saying current laws actually encourage dangerous binge drinking on campus.

The movement called the Amethyst Initiative began quietly recruiting presidents more than a year ago to provoke national debate about the drinking age.

“This is a law that is routinely evaded,” said John McCardell, former president of Middlebury College. “It is a law that the people at whom it is directed believe is unjust and unfair and discriminatory.”

Mothers Against Drunk Driving says lowering the drinking age would lead to more fatal car crashes. It accuses the presidents of misrepresenting science and looking for an easy way out of an inconvenient problem. MADD officials are urging parents to consider the safety of colleges whose presidents have signed on.

“It’s very clear the 21-year-old drinking age will not be enforced at those campuses,” said Laura Dennis-Mooney, of MADD. Research has found more than 40 percent of college students reported at least one symptom of alcohol abuse or dependence. One study has estimated more than 500,000 full-time students at four-year colleges suffer injuries each year related in some way to drinking, and about 1,700 die in such accidents.

A recent AP analysis of federal records found that 157 college-age people, 18 to 23, drank themselves to death from 1999 through 2005.
He's no gangsta; he's a scholar

Rapper Ahmad found success in the '90s with his rhyming. Now, he'll focus on reasoning — as a Stanford student.

By Larry Gordon
Times Staff Writer

Ahmad Ali Lewis made a deal with his mother back when he was a student at Fullsades High School. He would go to college unless he got a recording contract for his upbeat rap music:

- It was a big if. But Lewis, 17, an honors student and top football player, skipped the college entrance exams and signed with Giant Records. “I said, ‘B.A.T. — whatever I learn to R.A.P.’” he recalls.
- His 1994 album, modestly titled “Ahmad,” included a hit single, “Back in the Day,” a nostalgic riff on his South Los Angeles childhood. In it, he rapped:

I miss those days, and so I put / Like a green jerk / Within all that had do now, was / Finish homework. / It’s true you don’t realize / Really what you got / Till it’s gone / And I’m not gonna sing / Another song, but / Sometimes I do sit and / Reminisce then / Think about the years I was / Raised, back in the days.

Looking back, Lewis said he does not regret his teenage decision, even though his early success was followed by struggles in a music industry he criticized as promoting violence in the African American community. Now 23 and the father of a 4-year-old son, he is still recording songs, but he also is finishing homework.

Ahmad the first-name-only rapper has become Ahmad Ali Lewis the Stanford-bound scholar.

Lewis enrolled two years ago at Long Beach City College and graduated in May as valedictorian, with a 4.0 grade point average. He was accepted as a transfer student by several universities for this fall and chose Stanford.

“When I stepped on campus, something in my gut said, ‘Dude, this is where you belong,’” said Lewis, who plans to pursue bachelor's degrees in sociology and African American studies. He said he is “going to be Dr. Ahmad Ali Lewis, the first rapper with a PhD.”

[See Ahmad, Page A15]
He aims to be first rapper with

H E S P E A K S o f h i s 
Christian faith and academic ambitions with enthusiasm, humor and what he jokingly concedes is the “egotism” of a well-loved child. His mother, Puanete Holt, inspired him by starting college when she was a divorced mother of three and also “brainwashed me,” he said.

“I always thought I was better than average, that I was handsome, smart and talented. It was a trick,” he said. “Being black in America, from the ghetto, you need that extra little bit of confidence. So that’s kind of my mission, to give other kids that kind of confidence.”

The odds were against him at Stanford, which accepted just 20 of this year’s 1,200 transfer applicants. But Lewis was admitted and offered a financial aid package that will cover his tuition and room and board, which total more than $47,000 this school year. He’ll also receive funds for books and living costs each year through a highly competitive grant program that the Virginia-based Jack Kent Cooke Foundation offers to community college students transferring to four-year schools.

Los Angeles Times (continued)
August 19, 2008
Lewis and Jones divorced, sharing custody of their son, Yeshua. The personal crisis led Lewis to community college.

Byron Cliff, Breland’s dean of student affairs, interviewed Lewis during valedictorian selection and learned how he had joined a trip to help orphans in Zimbabwe, but had no idea about his music career. Later, Breland’s wife realized that Lewis was the author of “Back in the Day,” a song she liked so much that she had it included on their wedding video.

“I was shocked and excited,” Breland said of learning Lewis’ identity. “To see Ahmad break down a lot of stereotypes of folks who go into the music industry in general, let alone hip-hop or rap, and then return to higher education and go to Stanford is a remarkable story.”

Next month, Lewis will start spending weekdays at Stanford and weekends in Los Angeles with his son. Music, however, is not out of Lewis’ life.

He is writing lyrics for a new album he hopes to sell to a music label. He lives with his mother and stepfather in Compton, where he draws inspiration from its diverse patrons.

In a small office overlooking the noisy gym, Lewis reviews the lines he has written in an old-fashioned notebook. Swaying in his chair, he sings into a laptop over prerecorded musical tracks from collaborators. The autobiographical album, titled “The Death of Me,” is meant to be celebratory, he said. In one number, “Smile,” he raps.

“Back to college on the low like a panther
Finished as selected then went to Stanford
And I ain’t paying for it but I’m gonna pay it forward
Who gets the glory? You know I gotta say
the Lord.”

larry.gordon@latimes.com
At 18, is it time for a drink?

Some college officials want to study changing the legal age to help promote safer habits.

By LARRY GORDON
and GALE HOLLAND

As college students gear up for annual back-to-school parties, a group of university and college presidents in California and across the country this week pushed for a national debate over whether the drinking age should be lowered from 21 to 18.

The current limit ignores the reality of drinking during college years and drives it underground, making binge drinking more dangerous and students less likely to seek help in an emergency, according to a petition signed by more than 180 campus presidents. Though they don’t call for an outright age rollback, the campus chiefs said they support “an informed and dispassionate public debate over the effects of the 21-year-old drinking age.”

“Their statement provoked some controversy, as critics contend that a lower drinking age will cause an increase in drunk driving deaths. In California, the heads of Occidental, Pomona and Whitman colleges signed the petition, along with leaders of Dartmouth, Duke, Johns Hopkins, Mount Holyoke, Tufts and many small liberal arts colleges elsewhere in the country. Pomona President David W. Oxtoby said colleges now were “in the difficult position of having to enforce the underage ban but also to encourage moderation and give advice to students who might want to help a drunk friend. Schools, he added, can’t sponsor events at which students might emulate responsible and controlled drinking, such as campus bars.”

[See Drinking, Page B9]

College leaders reopen debate on drinking age

[Drinking, from Page B1]

At Purdue, University of Kentucky and Occidental’s Robert Skolheim said they signed the petition to encourage discussion, but said they had not decided whether the drinking age should be 18.

“It’s time we look at the issue again and see whether there are better solutions than we currently have in place because, after all, we haven’t solved the problem,” Herzberg said.

Many colleges, including Whitman, Occidental and USC, require all incoming students to take an online course on the dangers of drinking.

The petition is part of a Vermont-based movement called the Amethyst Initiative, named after the gemstone that ancient Greeks believed ward off drunkenness. It is sponsored by the Responsible Organization founded by John McCurdell, former president of Middlebury College, and is funded with private donations, none of which come from the alcoholic beverage industry, its officials said.

McCurdell’s organization stresses the paradox that 18-year-olds can vote, serve on juries and join the military but cannot legally drink beer. It proposes a drinking license, similar to driver’s licenses, for 18- to 20-year-olds who complete an alcohol education program.

The effort, however, was denounced by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which is urging parents to protest to the college presidents. Chuck Hurley, chief executive of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said that he was “deeply disappointed” in the initiative and contended that the signs were ignoring research showing “what we have done is be very honest about this as an institution. And trained staff to deal with it.”

However, she said she doesn’t know if a lower drinking age would reduce drinking.

Pomona College sophomore Ted Zwang, 18, said he was pleased with the petition. He said most college students, including himself, drink before 21, but rarely become seriously drunk. He said he learned to drink responsibly since his parents allowed him an occasional glass of wine at home and during travels to countries where drinking is legal.

If the age limit is lowered, more parents might show their 18-year-olds how to drink safely before they go to college, said Zwang, who is from New Jersey. “Now students start to experiment when they are no longer under their parents’ supervision,” he said. “And that encourages them to drink in ways that are less safe for them.”

At USC, pharmacy student Estella Wu, 20, said she had seen teenage girls passed out on streets in San Diego and San Francisco, but she was not sure about the effects of a lower drinking age. “It might make drinking more visible, but I don’t know if it would make it easier to monitor and control,” she said.

At Occidental, residence hall officials do not search rooms for alcohol, but students discovered drunk or hosting a drinking party are required to attend a meeting with administrators and may have a reprimand placed in their file, according to Barbara Avery, campus vice president for student affairs. Counseling may be recommended, and parents may be alerted about repeated violations, but students typically do not face suspension or expulsion unless their drinking led to physical injury or property damage, she said.

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were ignoring research showing a significant drop in drunk driving deaths for teens since the age limit was raised to 21. McCurdell said some of that reduction may be attributed to safer cars, better enforcement and wider use of “designated drivers.”

Although states are free to set their own drinking ages, 21 became the national standard since a 1984 federal law reduced highway funds for states with a lower age.

UCLA and USC officials were approached to sign the petition, but they held off. A spokeswoman said UCLA Chancellor Gene Block wanted more time to confer with other university leaders and examine research about the age limit. USC President Steven B. Sample received the petition last week but hadn’t yet taken action, a spokesman said.

Surveys show that almost half of first-year USC students drink before college, but by Thanksgiving, the percentage rose to 80%, Swinfold said. “There are many, many first-time drinkers in the first few months of college,” Swinfold
Freshmen who major
in patience

As colleges cope with
a space crunch, more
students are being
told to arrive in
January or February.

By LARRY GORDON
Times Staff Writer

Lindsey Mathias was con-
fused and disappointed at first
when she opened the thick,
much-awaited envelope from
USC this spring. The letter in-
side told her she had been ac-
cepted to the Los Angeles Uni-
versity but also said she could
not enroll until January.

Mathias, who lives in Winter
Park, Fla., said she quickly got
over fears that a midyear start
to college would be socially and
academically awkward. “In the
long run, I don’t think it mat-
ters when you start,” the 18-
year-old said. “I waited four
years to go to USC, I think I can
wait four more months.”

She is part of an increas-
ingly common trend in U.S.
higher education: freshmen
who are told to arrive on cam-
pus in January or February,
even though most of their
friends started college as early
as this week. Colleges and un-
iversities face a demographic
bulge of high school graduates
who are qualified applicants.
Yet schools still need tuition-
paying students to fill class-
room and dormitory slots left

First day of college
comes a little late

[Lindsey, from Page A11]

include Pepperdine University,
the University of Maryland,
American University, Middle-
bury College, Colby College
and Brandeis University.

In most cases, students are
offered midyear enrollment
without having known it was a
possibility.

The offers are usually kept
apart from fall waiting lists, al-
though some schools allow stu-
dents to start in fall if vacancies
occur.

Beyond initial surprise and
for some, sadness, the big is-
Sues for midyear students are
what to do with the extra time
and whether the delay has any
percussions.

They and their parents want
assurance that the admittance
is not a backdoor entry that leads to second-class citi-
zenship on campus, carrying a
stigma that the students are in
a group with weaker creden-
cials.

Colleges contend there is lit-
tle difference between the
groups and that some students
are put in the spring pool be-
cause of their majors or for geo-
graphic diversity, not grades.
They insist that graduation
rates are similar and that many
midyear students manage to
finish with the fall group by
taking extra classes or summer
courses.

Some campuses, such as
UC Berkeley and American, in
Washington, sponsor special
fall extension or training pro-
grams on or near campus so
midyear students can earn a
full term’s worth of credits.
Some, including Colby, in
Maine, keep room in fall study-
abroad programs for students
starting on campus later. Oth-

[See Freshmen, Page A20]
It has become a great way to get kids willing and able to think outside the box, who are willing to be flexible.

— KATHY LINDSEY, associate director of admissions at Middlebury College, on midyear starters

selectivity started rising. “There’s always a group of students every year we couldn’t admit for space reasons in the fall but just couldn’t turn away. They are too much of a good fit to turn away,” said Timothy Brumold, USC’s undergraduate admissions director. USC made about 700 midyear offers — with financial aid for those who qualified — for this school year and expects more than a third to enroll and live on campus. The university does not compile a waiting list.

Some students offered midyear entrance express disappointment that they didn’t move onto campus Wednesday with most other freshmen, Brumold said. But he said USC counselors emphasize that 70% of all applicants are rejected outright and that midyear students “graduate at comparable rates and really become a part of the student body with little challenge.”

Mathias, who plans to major in journalism, expects to spend the fall taking transferable general education classes, such as English and psychology, at a community college in Florida. Then she plans to jump wholeheartedly into USC campus life.

“It’s kind of bittersweet,” she said. “I really want to go to USC. I don’t want to wait. But if this is what it takes, that’s what I’ll do.”
Top marks for CSULB

RANKING: School is again among top five in its category in magazine’s survey.

By Kevin Butler
Staff writer


CSULB ranked No. 4 in the Western Region on the annual list of best public master’s universities, which offer a full range of undergraduate and master’s programs but have few, if any, doctoral programs.

Last year, CSULB was ranked fifth on the same list.

The Western region includes 13 states. Cal Poly San Luis Obispo finished first, followed by the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro, N.M., and Western Washington University in Bellingham, Wash.

CSULB President F. King Alexander said it is difficult under the U.S. News methodology for large public universities to rank well.

“Still, we are pleased with where Cal State Long Beach placed in this year’s U.S. News rankings, especially among our peer institutions,” he said in a statement.

The CSULB engineering program also was ranked among the best in the nation. It placed at the No. 38 position nationally on the list of best engineering programs whose highest degree is a bachelor’s or master’s.

The university continued to rank well on student debt. CSULB students graduate with an average debt of $10,183, the third-lowest among its category of universities in the western region.

Cal State Dominguez Hills once again proved to be one of the most racially diverse schools in its category, according to U.S. News.

CSUDH tied with two other institutions as the third-most diverse school among its category of universities in the Western region, according to the magazine’s “diversity index.”

The magazine uses 15 indicators of academic excellence, including peer assessment, retention, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources and alumni giving rates.

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CONSERVATION: Move saves water and energy.

By John Raby
The Associated Press

GLENVILLE, W.Va. — Crammed on middle linebacker Derek Walker’s plate are beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, spinach and a roll.

In the other hand, he balances a salad and a bottle of hot sauce.

All without a tray.

“You’ve just got to do with what you have,” Walker said.

Glenville State has joined other colleges and universities that have shed their cafeteria trays.

In drought-stricken Georgia and North Carolina, the goal is to conserve water by lightening the load on dishwashers. Other schools are trying to cut down on wasted food and conserve energy. Proponents, including some food vendors, say it also cuts the use of water-polluting soaps. And advocates of the trayless cafeterias say if students can’t pile on the food, they might consume fewer calories and keep off those unhealthy pounds often gained in college.

Convincing the central West Virginia school’s nearly 1,400 students, however, could take time.

“I think that’s kind of ridiculous,” said freshman Rebecca Riffe, who used a legal-size notebook to help carry her plate to a table.

But students all over the country might have to get used to it.

Fifty to 60 percent of Philadelphia-based Aramark’s 500 campus partners and 290 of the 600 colleges and universities served by Gaithersburg, Md-based Sodexo are expected to dump their trays, company officials said.

At least 23 of the 625 schools belonging to the Michigan-based National Association of College & University Food Services have adopted the idea so far.

It’s too soon to measure cost savings nationwide. But five times more energy and water are consumed in dining halls than any other square foot on college campuses, said Sodexo spokeswoman Monica Zimmer.

“So if a college is looking to go ‘green,’ they need to start looking in the dining facility,” Zimmer said.
Pulitzer winner to speak in L.B.

By John Canalis
Staff Writer

LONG BEACH — Pulitzer Prize winner Seymour Hersh, one of the nation’s most respected print journalists, plans to speak Oct. 15 at Cal State Long Beach as part of the Distinguished Speaker Series, event organizers said Tuesday.

Hersh, a regular contributor to the New Yorker, has broken some of the most significant stories regarding the mistreatment of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison outside of Baghdad and President Bush’s decision process when evaluating whether to attack Iraq.

He won the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting in 1970 for reports related to the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War, worked at the New York Times and authored “Chain of Command: The Road From 9/11 to Abu Ghraib” in 2004 and other books.

“Seymour Hersh is just incredible — one of the most decorated investigative journalists of our generation,” said business professor Art Levine, director of the CSULB Distinguished Speakers Series and host of the “Straight Talk” public affairs program on Charter Communications.

Hersh will give the keynote address at the speakers’ program from 2 to 4 p.m. Oct. 15 in the Carpenter Performing Arts Center.

Tickets are $40 in advance and $46 the day of the event for the public, $30 for faculty and staff and $20 for students.

Proceeds will go to student scholarships, said Levine, who founded the forum last year.

The Press-Telegram is a sponsor of the speakers series.

For tickets, call 562-985-5673.

CSULB gets new science building, tennis courts

By Kevin Budner
Staff Writer

The university in September expects to finish its demolition of a science building to clear space for a new, modern one. Scheduled to open in Spring 2011, the new building will be used for lecture rooms and faculty offices. Science classes until then will be released to other parts of the campus.

Two new deals will be experiencing increased activity, food service and hotel management. A bachelor of science in hospitality degree will also offer a new post-baccalaureate credential for school nurses. Two new deals will be experiencing increased activity, food service and hotel management.

The building, which will cover 190,000 square feet, will be open Tuesday. The project cost is $2.1 million. The university in September expects to finish its demolition of a science building to clear space for a new, modern one. Scheduled to open in Spring 2011, the new building will be used for lecture rooms and faculty offices. Science classes until then will be released to other parts of the campus.

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School operator gets F from investors for lending to students

Shares fall 19% after Corinthian Colleges reveals loan program.

From Bloomberg News

Shares of Corinthian Colleges Inc. dropped after the operator of colleges and trade schools said it began making loans to students, raising concern that costs would erode earnings.

Corinthian shares fell $3.12, or 19%, to $13.09, the biggest percentage decline since Jan. 22, when SLM Corp. quit making higher-risk loans to students. The Santa Ana company has established a lending program for students with poor credit who can't borrow from SLM, known as Sallie Mae, Corinthian said.

Investors fear Corinthian will have to write off some of the loans and won't meet its fiscal 2009 earnings forecast of 58 to 63 cents a share, said Jeffrey Silber, an analyst with BMO Capital Markets Corp. in New York.

"It adds risk to the forecast," Silber said. "People were expecting sizable margin expansion and this is going to put a damper on that. People are not giving them the benefit of the doubt."

In fiscal 2006, Corinthian will spend on student loans all of its available cash that isn't earmarked for capital expenditures, Chief Financial Officer Kenneth Ord said Tuesday.

The company's net loss narrowed to $620,000, or 1 cent a share, for the fiscal fourth quarter ended June 30, from $8.76 million, or 10 cents, a year earlier. Income from continuing operations was $4.76 million, or 6 cents a share, compared with a loss of $2.09 million, or 2 cents, as enrollment increased.

Corinthian Colleges Chief Executive Jack Massimino said fiscal 2008 was marked by "the most challenging student financing environment in the company's history."

"We established a new company-sponsored student lending program, Access, and thus far have arranged financing for the vast majority of students," Massimino said.

Revenue for the fourth quarter rose 18% to $274 million.

Earnings for the fiscal first quarter ending in September will be 6 to 8 cents a share, the company said. Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg had predicted an average of 8 cents a share.

Corinthian runs post-secondary programs at more than 100 schools in the U.S. and Canada.

Corinthian also said Tuesday that Leon Panetta, 70, former chief of staff to President Clinton, would join its board. The move expands the board to 11 members.
For many teens, days of summer far from lazy

More students are taking classes to enhance college applications and boost their SAT scores.

By SHNRA MERTA
Times Staff Writer

For fun this summer, Mario Zubia spent six hours a day, five days a week in a Caltech classroom studying neuroscience and physics. He topped it off with five hours of homework a night. And the 17-year-old Santa Maria resident did it by choice.

"Some of my friends are like, 'What's wrong with you?'" said Mario, chuckling. "A high school counselor told me about it. I always liked science and math, and it seemed like a great opportunity."

Teens such as Mario—who eschew such summer rituals as hitting the beach in favor of hitting the books—appear to be growing in number, according to high school and college administrators.

Students' specific goals vary: improving SAT scores, guiding college applications or just freeing up class schedules so they can fit in yet another Advanced Placement course or internship.

But their motivations are much the same: boosting their chances of getting into top colleges at a time that may be the toughest ever, thanks to a population peak of high school seniors, greater rates of college attendance and a stagnant number of college slots.

"It's more competitive today to get into your college of choice than ever before," said Carl Hampton, principal of Chino Hills High School.

Hampton said he was seeing more and more students taking summer classes and tutoring to sharpen their college applications, including his nephew, who just enrolled at the Air Force Academy.

"Unfortunately, it's just something that's become necessary if you want to get ahead," he said. "To get accepted into some schools, the competition is so steep, and they have to decide if that's worth the price."

His nephew has no regrets, but Hampton said he worried that some students may miss out on the time to be carefree teenagers.

"I worry about that," he said. "I think some of the creativity gets kind of drilled out of them."

As a new school year begins, students such as Julia Chang, 18, who attends Oaks Christian School in Westlake Village, say the results will make their summer sacrifices worthwhile. The Calabasas resident spent eight weeks of her summer immersed in an SAT boot camp run by Elite Educational Institute, which was founded more than two decades ago in a Koreatown storefront and now runs 18 centers in California, six in Canada, five in South Korea and one in Thailand.

At the institute's Northridge campus this month, hundreds of teens hustled between classrooms, devoting five hours a day, five days a week to math, reading comprehension and writing, taking one full-length practice test each week.
Their goal is to boost their scores on the 2,400-point, three-part college entrance exam, helping their prospects of getting into the nation’s most competitive colleges.

“It’s a lot of hours; it’s intense; we have homework,” said Julia, who hopes to study theater or pre-med at Georgetown University. “My parents are kind of making me, but I know it will be totally worthwhile when I take the SAT.”

Marto, who attended Caltech’s Young Engineering and Science Scholars summer program, said he hoped it would increase his chances of attending the school once he graduates from Santa Maria’s Ernest Righetti High School.

The Caltech program, which attracted 87 applications in 2002, received 490 last year. Fewer than three dozen are accepted each year. The students then spend three weeks living on campus, taking classes, doing lab experiments and completing research projects. They also meet with university admissions officials, faculty and current Caltech students.

Students are also using their summers to take classes at local community colleges, so they can complete high school requisites, which will free up their schedules so they can take more electives or high-level classes.

At Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, 940 high school students took classes this summer, an enrollment that has quadrupled since 1999.

“The jump is because high school students are starting earlier to work on their college degree,” said Jenny McCue, spokeswoman for the college.

McCue, 36, said that when she was in high school, she spent her summers working and hanging out at the beach with friends.

Today’s teens are different, she said.

“They’re very ambitious; they seem to have a much clearer vision of what they are going to do with their lives than my peers did when I was in high school. They know where they want to go, they know where they want to be and they know what they’re going to do to reach those goals. It’s really impressive.”

Tania Khodayar, 15, who will start her sophomore year at Mission Viejo High School next week, is among those students. Over the summer, she took an introduction to fine arts class to fulfill her arts elective requirement, which means the Laguna Hills teen will be able to take additional Spanish classes in high school or possibly intern at a doctor’s office during her senior year. She also took an SAT prep class at Saddleback.

Tania, who hopes to attend USC or a University of California campus and become a surgeon one day, says she plans to take more courses next summer.

“I’ll get another subject at school over with,” she said.

Tania said she had been concerned that her busy schedule would cause her to miss out on time with her friends, playing tennis, visiting museums and having sleepovers.

“I was worried I wouldn’t have time to enjoy summer—I worked so hard over the school year,” she said. “It wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be. My best friend was in the SAT prep class with me.”

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Scholarship winners in CSULB’s President’s Scholarship Program are recognized Friday at the annual Convocation held at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center to begin the new academic year. President F. King Alexander said the university received more than 74,000 applications for admission this fall.

CONVOCATION: University boosts grad rates, sees record applications, improves fundraising.

By Kevin Butler

LONG BEACH — Cal State Long Beach begins a new academic year Tuesday having achieved several milestones, including higher graduation rates, record applications and improved fundraising, the university president told students, parents and staff members in a speech Friday.

Speaking at the university’s annual Convocation event kicking off the new academic year, CSULB President F. King Alexander said that the university received more than 74,000 applications for admission in the fall of 2008, a school record.

“In fact, there were only two universities in the nation that we are aware of at this point that received more applications than Cal State Long Beach for fall admission, and those were UCLA and UC Berkeley,” he said.

Nearly 38,000 students will attend CSULB this academic year, which begins Tuesday, he added. That number includes many students who would otherwise have dropped out had the university
not boosted its retention rate in recent years, he said.

Due to stronger academic programs, the university retained 1,100 more students in the fall of this year than it did at the same time period last year, he said.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, around 25 percent of CSULB students graduated within six years. This year, about 54 percent are expected to do so, representing a 7 percentage point increase from the prior year, Alexander said.

CSULB also reached a fund-raising milestone. It raised about $34 million in the 2007-2008 academic year, he said.

But Alexander said that the university faces an uncertain fiscal future. In addition to contending with a worsening economy, the university is still awaiting a state budget. The CSU system may be facing further state budget reductions, he said.

"This year is basically a year that we must fight for everything that we get," he said.

Alexander also noted some significant ongoing construction projects on campus, including a new $100 million science building slated to replace one that is being demolished.

"This is the largest project we have ever had in the history of our university," he said.

The campus also is constructing living space and classroom facilities at the former site of Brooks College, which closed and sold its property to CSULB.

The university continues to produce successful graduates, he added. A national study found that CSULB graduates ranked 40th among all public universities in midcareer earnings, Alexander said.