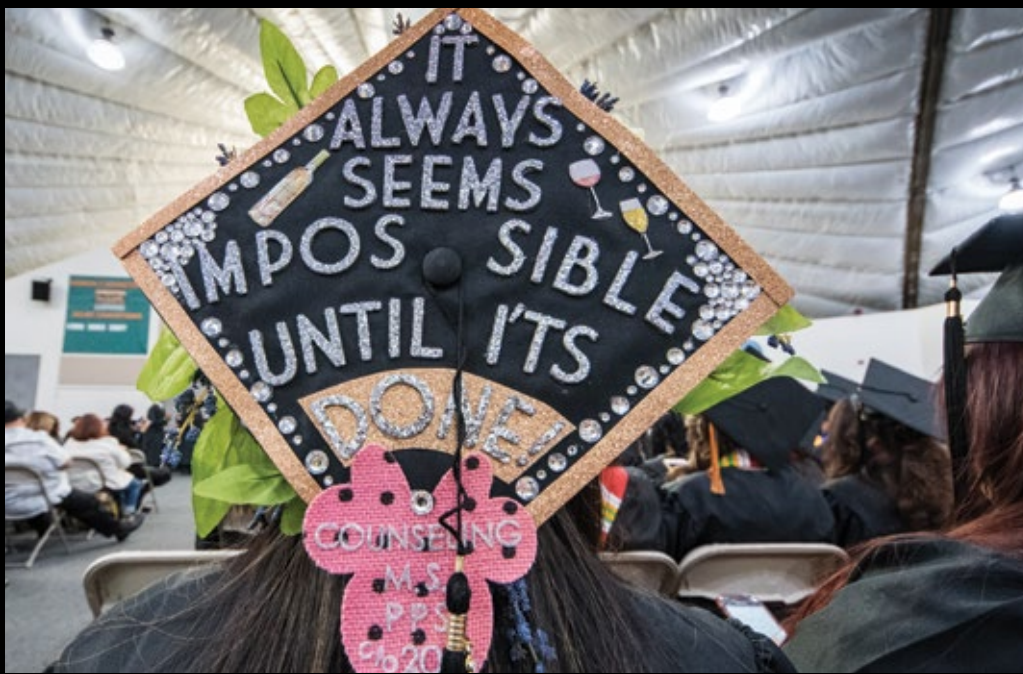


Voice



University of La Verne Magazine Fall 2018



**Alma mater La Verne
we are true to you.**

Commencement is an emotional high point in the educational journey, making it an opportune moment for self-expression. Members of the Class of 2018 shared their messages of inspiration and pride on mortarboard caps during the commencement exercises.





Features



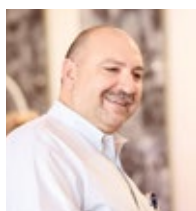
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Alumnus Michael Sacoto helps local high school students get on track for careers in health care.



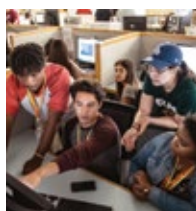
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With life expectancy on the rise, gerontology program director Kelly Niles-Yokum says it's time to make communities friendlier for older adults.



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As president of Adventist Health White Memorial medical center, alumnus John Raffoul helped the struggling hospital make a strong recovery.



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Disadvantaged high schoolers learn about business skills and college life during University of La Verne's REACH Summer Camp.



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College of Law students succeed in helping Ugandan woman win asylum.



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The largest comprehensive campaign in the university's history launches new initiatives.

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FROM THE EDITOR



A few weeks ago, the first class of students in the University of La Verne's Physician Assistant master's degree program stood on stage in Morgan Auditorium, pulled on ceremonial medical white coats, and recited an oath to seek knowledge and care for the sick.

For each of these 22 students, the ceremony marked a milestone in their personal and professional journeys. It represented the hard work that lies ahead, but also the opportunities for success and service that are now within their reach.

For the University of La Verne, the ceremony held equal significance. It offered a moment to celebrate the launch of this much-needed academic program and also reflected a larger commitment to improving the educational, physical, and social well-being of the broader communities we serve.

That commitment is the inspiration for this issue of *Voice* magazine.

Inside, you will meet Professor Kelly Niles-Yokum, who is leading the university's thriving gerontology program as it prepares graduates for in-demand careers serving the country's booming population of older adults.

You will read about two determined alumni who are making their communities healthier. The first, John Raffoul, helped revitalize Adventist Health White Memorial medical center in Los Angeles, which now serves more than 245,000 patients per year. The second, Michael Sacoto, has dedicated his young career to inspiring inland Southern California high school students to pursue jobs in health care. We will take you into the University of La Verne's emerging Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, which, through a growing network of community partnerships, is poised to transform the health of our students and the surrounding communities.

Finally, we will immerse you in the annual REACH summer camp, which has helped hundreds of high school students build confidence and skills to prepare for college.

We hope this issue of *Voice* magazine finds you healthy and well. Thank you for reading.

Rod Leveque

Rod Leveque
Executive Editor

Voice

University of La Verne Magazine

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The University of La Verne is committed to educating the whole student, which means we care as much about their health and well-being as we do about their academic achievements.

Alumni John Raffoul and Michael Sacoto, profiled in this issue, are two former students who took this message to heart: Raffoul is president of Adventist Health White Memorial medical center, while Sacoto served as program manager for Inland Health Professions Coalition.

Meanwhile, our gerontology program continues to prepare students to meet the needs of the country's rapidly growing population of older adults. I encourage you to read about these exciting programs and accomplished alumni in this *Voice* magazine.

I also offer a heartfelt thank you to Randall Lewis, a renowned visionary and remarkable changemaker in our region. Lewis's philanthropy will make possible the new Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research. The Lewis Center, to be constructed this academic year, will be a unique space in the center of the La Verne campus that brings together students' academic work, faculty field research, recreational exercise, mindfulness

activities, community engagement, and community partnerships. As a result, every student will graduate with the opportunity to be healthier than they were when they began, creating a ripple that will continue far into the region.

It is important to note that the new Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, along with other bold campus initiatives, is supported by our Create the Future campaign. This campaign is the largest fundraising undertaking in the institution's history. All funds raised will benefit scholarships, academic programs, co-curricular support, and new facilities to enhance students' experience. We look forward to celebrating with you when we meet our historic goal of \$125 million by 2021.

Sincerely,



Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.
President

WHAT'S NEW

Fast Facts

with Diana Towles, Coordinator for Veteran Students Success



Q Who is served by the Center for Veteran Students Success?

The center assists all military-connected students, including active duty service members, their spouses, and registered domestic partners and dependents. Our students come from every branch of the military and they are earning degrees on all of our campuses, at every level, and in nearly every major. Together, they are about 900 students, or 10 percent of the university community.

Q What benefits and services does the center provide?

We help students manage the Veterans Administration or Department of Defense education benefits, and assist with access to tutoring, peer-to-peer mentoring, housing, and financial aid. We help resolve administrative and classroom challenges, and advocate for changes to help ensure a positive educational experience.

Q Why is it important to serve the veteran population?

Veterans are natural leaders: they are motivated, focused, and mission oriented. They committed to serve the country through hard work and sacrifice – the ultimate sacrifice, if necessary. Over the next 10 years, approximately 1.4 million veterans are expected to earn degrees. There is no better place than the University of La Verne to discover and develop additional core values, while growing academically, socially, and civically.

Q What is the biggest challenge veterans encounter during their transition to college?

Nearly every veteran transitioning to civilian status experiences feelings of loss and ambivalence. For many, there is an immediate, sharply-felt loss of connection with his or her military family – fellow service members often referred to as brothers and sisters. Admitting to a need and locating the right assistance is challenging for many veterans. In addition, the Post-9/11 GI Bill provides many veterans the ability to choose college as part of the transition process. However, it provides a limited amount of benefits, and for some veterans, the financial assistance may end before degree completion.

Leo on the Street

Jackie Ku

President of the Associated Students of University of La Verne



Do you believe technology does more to help or harm your well-being?

I believe technology is an overall benefit to society and the human condition. Technological innovation facilitates human growth and betterment. While there are certainly disadvantages – for example, constant scientific reports of decreased attention span or common fears about “changing times” – I believe technological innovation encourages creative destruction. Though we might mourn the loss of established traditions, the technological advances we make, whether in medicine or in the natural sciences, serve to strengthen the control humanity has over the world and ultimately over ourselves. Technology, I believe, makes us better than who we were.

Save the Date

Scholarship Gala

Saturday, March 30, 2019

Please mark your calendar for the University of La Verne 2019 Scholarship Gala. With your support, we will help our students achieve more than they ever imagined.

For more event information and sponsorship opportunities, please contact Ashley Vanga at 909.448.4670 or avanga@laverne.edu.

To register please visit:
thespot.laverne.edu/gala2019

● ● create | The Campaign for the
● ● the future | University of La Verne

My Perspective

The Evolution of Alumni Engagement

By Kimberly Grant

WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE in December 2017, I immediately started to ask questions so I could learn about the people who make up my new community. To anyone willing to answer, I would ask: What does “Leo for Life” mean to you? How would you describe your experience at the University of La Verne? What are some of your favorite memories?

Whether I am chatting with members of the Class of 2018 or the Class of 1968, I find that the one word people use most frequently to describe their experience here is “family.” I’ve heard stories of how students, professors, staff, and peers were there for each other in times of need. I’ve heard tales of how, no matter where you go, you can always find a Leo.

The word “family” has become my guiding star when I think about alumni engagement programming. Good families take care of one another and support each other to reach personal goals. Hence, the alumni engagement team — Lucero Rojo, Natalie Goss, and myself — embrace the idea of family when creating new programs and networking tools. We welcomed many of you to Angels Night, Dodgers Night, and our Hollywood Bowl summer series. We also put the spotlight on some of our outstanding alumni at the Big Cat Award events. When it comes to family, there is nothing like sharing good food and good conversation to keep the bonds between us strong.



University of La Verne alumni live all over the world, and not everyone can make it to local events. That’s why social media exists. We have put a lot of effort into increasing our engagement on Facebook and Instagram. We love to share news and other content about alumni, and we’ve noticed that you appreciate seeing it, too. If you have not yet followed @ulvalumni on Instagram and Facebook, please do. The miles between us disappear when one sees new photos of old classmates or hears joyful news of weddings, babies, and job promotions.

While we enjoy planning parties and sharing news, our goal is to be so much more. We want to be seen as the alumni gateway to the University of La Verne — a key portal for all interactions, whether on campus, in your local community, online, or globally. Networking, feedback, advocacy, and volunteerism can all be facilitated through our office, which also serves as the voice of our graduates.

I am thrilled to be a part of the dramatic growth and evolution here at La Verne. Please don’t hesitate to drop by the Office of University Advancement or drop a line to kgrant@laverne.edu. I will have questions to ask you!

If you haven't already, be sure to register at leoalumninetwork.com, our new platform for Leos to stay connected, expand their networks, keep up with the latest happenings, find mentors, and more.

NEWS & NOTES



University Celebrates Opening of New Residence and Dining Halls

Students at the central campus in La Verne now have a new place to live, eat, and gather. The fall semester marked the grand opening of a residence hall, Citrus Hall, and a dining hall, The Spot. Named in honor of the region's agricultural heritage, Citrus Hall is five stories tall, nearly 115,000 square feet, and fits 396 beds. Attached to it is the 18,700-square-foot The Spot, which is more than four times the size of the former Davenport Dining Hall. The complex was designed to encourage student interaction, and constructed next to existing housing, the Sara and Michael Abraham Campus Center, and athletics facilities to form the hub of an emerging student village.

College of Law Ranks Among Best for Diversity

The University of La Verne College of Law ranked among the best in the United States for diversity in *U.S. News & World Report's* Law School Diversity Index. The publication compiled the ranking to identify American Bar Association-accredited law schools where law students are most likely to encounter classmates from different racial or ethnic groups.



University of La Verne Commits to Transfer Pathway for Community College Students

This summer, the University of La Verne became one of the first independent universities in California to develop a transfer pathway for students who graduate from a California Community College with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT). The university will guarantee transfer admission for ADT students who apply to certain academic programs, as well as accept a minimum of 60 units transferred, and assure these students start at La Verne with a junior standing. President Devorah Lieberman, who serves as chair of the executive board of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, helped negotiate the statewide agreement between the California Community College system and schools like University of La Verne in the independent, nonprofit sector.



Management Professor Issam Ghazzawi Wins National Leadership Award

Professor of Management Issam Ghazzawi has won the Jack Kahl Entrepreneurial Leadership Award in recognition of his contributions to the Enactus program, which shows students how to change the world through entrepreneurial action. Ghazzawi, who has taught at the University of La Verne since 2005, received the award during the Enactus National Exposition in Kansas City, Missouri, in May. Ghazzawi serves as adviser for the Enactus program at the University of La Verne. The award is given to a college professor who has done the most to advance the national Enactus organization.

La Verne Receives High Marks From *U.S. News & World Report* for Social Mobility, Value, and Serving Veterans

U.S. News & World Report ranked the University of La Verne 5th in the nation for social mobility, recognizing the university's success in helping students from low-income families achieve equity with graduates from families with stronger financial backgrounds. The publication lists University of La Verne in its National Universities category, which includes more than 300 institutions. Only one private university ranked higher than La Verne in the social mobility category. This year's *U.S. News & World Report* rankings also gave the university high marks for value and serving veterans.



LaFetra College of Education Secures Grant to Prepare Teachers for Work with Neurodiverse Learners

Faculty from the LaFetra College of Education received a grant from the California Council on Teacher Education that will support their efforts to prepare future teachers to work with neurodiverse learners. Associate Professor Amber Bechard, Assistant Professor Sylvia Mac, and Professor Marga Madhuri received one of eight such grants from the council. The grant will support their work to develop curriculum and academic programs that will prepare special education teachers and general education teachers of typical learners to work in teams so that children with neurological differences, such as dyslexia or autism, can learn in the same classrooms alongside all other students.

READERS CORNER

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Great to see the happy faces of parents, teachers, and counselors at today's REACH summer business camp graduation. 54 high school students lived the college experience for 3 weeks @ULaVerne and gained tools to successfully apply to and attend college in the future. #onward

@ASMRODRIGUEZ52



#miraulv2018
learning about
what @ULaVerne
#Makerspace is
using #3Dprinting

@EDTECHBUSD



Thanks to @ULaVerne College of Law summer clerks for their hard work this summer conducting intake calls, researching legal issues, and learning more about special education and disability law.

@DISABILITYRLC

Make Your *Voice* Heard

We want to hear from you! Submit comments on *Voice* at voice.laverne.edu. Please include your full name, class year, degree, and the city in which you live. We reserve the right to tailor submissions for style and length.

“Applause for the stories on current events where an LV alum was actually there – fires, hate paraders, hurricanes. Every page from the inside cover of the drama Cabaret to the back cover parade was outstanding, first class, didn't miss a thing. It is all relevant. Well done.”

Jerry R. Miller '75

Take La Verne With You

Traveling the world? We are calling on all students, alumni, faculty, and staff to share their trip with the rest of us by sending a photograph of themselves on location wearing La Verne garb (hat, shirt, sweater, etc.). Please send images that are at least 1MB to proffice@laverne.edu.



Yiting Johnson Lin '18

shows his Leopard pride in front of the Taipei 101 building in Taipei, Taiwan. Lin, an international student, returned home to Taiwan after graduating earlier this year. He is completing military service before moving to Shanghai for work.



Rollover Your IRA for Good

By taking a distribution from your IRA this year, you will likely pay more in taxes and may even reach a higher tax bracket. **Rolling over** part of your IRA's "required minimum distribution" or "RMD" to the University of La Verne can help reduce your tax bill while supporting our students.

If you are 70 ½ or older and don't need your RMD, you can make a gift of up to \$100,000 this year from your IRA to help support La Verne. Compare the impact of taking your RMD versus the benefits of making an **IRA charitable rollover gift** to us below:



Taking Your RMD:

- You pay income tax on your distribution
- You may not need or want the money
- Your tax dollars go to Washington
- You are limited by the RMD rules



Making an IRA Gift:

- You will pay no income tax on your gift
- You can help support the University of La Verne
- Your gift can help build your charitable legacy
- You can use your IRA in the way you want

Double the Benefits

An IRA charitable rollover gift can benefit both you and the University of La Verne! Visit our website to learn more about how you can create your legacy by making an IRA charitable rollover gift to us today.

Ready to talk now? Give us a call!





ripe for cha nge

Professor Kelly Niles-Yokum is on a mission to make life better for older adults. She's reimagined the graduate program in gerontology to ensure *aging is everybody's business.*

by
Kate Kealey

photography by
William Vista



Dr. Kelly Niles-Yokum wants to retire ageism.

As the director of the University of La Verne's master's program in gerontology, Niles-Yokum helps students understand what it is like to be an older adult and encourages them to design services and policies that improve the quality of life for older adults.

"American society is very youth-oriented. A lot of our policies, programs, and care are framed around the needs of people younger than 65," Niles-Yokum said. "My goal is to help people see that aging touches every part of life."

Despite the focus on old age, the academic discipline of gerontology is relatively young. The study of the social, cultural, psychological, cognitive, and biological aspects of aging has become more important as advancements in science and medical technology lead to longer life expectancy and a population boom of older adults.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects the number of American adults 65 and older will nearly double to 98 million by 2060. To prepare for this growing population, we will need more trained workers to meet the increased demand for elder care. University of La Verne's gerontology program was established in 2000 to help reduce the workforce gap.

Niles-Yokum is a trailblazer in the field. She was the first student in the Master of Public Administration program at Portland State University to concentrate in gerontology. In 2006, she was part of the first class to graduate from the University of Maryland Doctoral Program in Gerontology.

Her qualitative research focuses on social isolation, death and dying, and the impact of policies and programs on older adults and their families. She is the president of the California Council on Gerontology and Geriatrics.

After joining the University of La Verne in 2014, Niles-Yokum revitalized the program's curriculum to focus on real-world skills and assignments that get

students interacting with older people in the community. Optional concentrations train students to work in public health, public administration, or the nonprofit sector.

Courses such as Perspectives on Gerontology pair students with residents at nearby Hillcrest Retirement Community to help them better understand the needs of those living with dementia.

Niles-Yokum designed the program to help students reach the next step in their careers, and she urges them to identify creative solutions to problems faced by older adults.


Alumna Diane Parker, MS '17, said classes in death and dying, ethics, and case management applied directly to her job as a case manager for Riverside County Office on Aging. The research Parker did for her capstone project on food insecurity among older adults in Moreno Valley exposed a gap in services for seniors in her city.


"Some seniors have family or in-home support to provide meals and transportation, but some don't," Parker said. "I proposed that a mobile food bank could visit senior housing regularly to provide fresh fruits and vegetables, bread, and more, especially at the end of the month when seniors are most vulnerable."

After graduating from the master's program, Parker enrolled in the University of La Verne's Doctor of Public Administration program to develop the mobile food bank concept.

Another gerontology course, Health in Later Years, sends students into neighborhoods to evaluate age-friendliness based on categories such as transportation, social activities, and housing. Niles-Yokum will present the findings to local governments so they can improve civic planning.

"If there is a ramp in a sidewalk, if they make it usable for older adults, then it's good for strollers, walkers, and more," Niles-Yokum said. "A community that is friendly for older adults is friendly for everybody." 🍌

A woman with short, wavy purple hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a bright pink, textured button-down shirt and small pearl earrings. The background is a solid, vibrant yellow.

 **Video:** Take a deeper look into the Gerontology program and see an interview with Professor Kelly Niles-Yokum at voice.laverne.edu.

“

My goal is to help people
see that aging touches every

part of life.

”





Life, supported

R_x

PATIENT NAME Adventist Health
White Memorial

ADDRESS Boyle Heights, CA

*When **John Raffoul**, DPA '02,
took over **Adventist Health White
Memorial medical center**, it was
struggling. Under his guidance,
the hospital has emerged into a
community and industry leader.*

Signature

BY **MELISSA PINION**

WHEN CONSTRUCTION COSTS for a new Boyle Heights hospital climbed \$46 million over budget in 2006, administrators brought in John Raffoul, DPA '02, to save the project from a complete shutdown.

Raffoul, a longtime money man who worked his way up the ladder from accountant to vice president and chief financial officer at what is now Adventist Health White Memorial medical center, found himself outside the comfort zone of bottom lines and balance sheets. But he used skills from the Doctor of Public Administration degree he earned from the University of La Verne to reach an agreement that satisfied both sides.

"We had to go in there and negotiate a settlement," Raffoul said. "It had to be a win-win settlement for everybody. I took into consideration the concerns of the builder and found common ground between the hospital and the builder's point of view."

Raffoul now leads the 2,000-employee hospital as president and teaches accounting and finance at the University of Southern California. His Leopard roots remain strong. He serves on both the President's Advisory Council and the Health Advisory Council, and he was named one of the 125 Notable Leos for Life in 2017.

Raffoul came to the United States from Beirut in 1979, initially majoring in chemistry. In his senior year of undergraduate studies, he switched to business administration.

"I liked the interaction, the critical thinking, analytics, and solving problems more than anything else," he said.

After completing his bachelor's degree, he pursued a Master of Business Administration with a focus on finance. He cast a wide net with his résumé, covering a variety of industries including health care. The chief financial officer for Adventist Health — a system of 20 hospitals that includes White — gave Raffoul a call. He asked if he could share Raffoul's résumé with the organization's hospitals, a move that led Raffoul to his first job at White Memorial as an accountant.

That phone call never left his mind. It is a gesture Raffoul applies to his own work today, particularly as a college professor.

"I return the courtesy now. I will never refuse a call from a student," he said.

Recommendations from friends led Raffoul to the University of La Verne to pursue a doctorate, something he felt would advance all aspects of his career. He took classes through the university's corporate education program in Los Angeles.

"I thought it would be great to get a doctorate I could use to mature my thinking and my leadership, and at the same time, allow me to continue teaching," he said.

University of La Verne Professor of Public Administration Dr. Jack Meek, one of Raffoul's teachers, said Raffoul's unique perspective as both a practitioner and theorist in public administration makes him an outstanding leader.

Meek praised Raffoul's teaching style, saying it parallels his alma mater's academic philosophy.

"He brings theory to practice in the classroom — a hallmark of the University of La Verne — and engages students in meaningful applications and learning opportunities," Meek said.

Raffoul's proudest career moments relate to recent accolades for White Memorial.

White received a top 100 Hospital Award from Healthgrades, a national rating agency. The hospital earned a Eureka Gold award through the California Awards for Performance Excellence in January. He also considers the rebuilding of White Memorial to be a point of pride.

Part of the hospital's distinction comes from its Center for Limb Preservation and Advanced Wound Care, which opened in 2016 due to high need for diabetes care in the region. A *Los Angeles Times* article reported that East Los Angeles has a diabetes-related amputation rate that is eight times higher than in wealthier California neighborhoods.

With the changing landscape in the medical industry, Raffoul considers it a challenging time to be in his field. But he has a message for Leos with an interest in the medical or administrative side of the industry:

"There are so many issues being debated, and so many policies to influence and help shape, so this is probably one of the most dynamic periods in health care," he said. "This is our chance to shape the future of health care."

“I thought it would be great to get a doctorate I could use to mature my thinking and my leadership, and at the same time, allow me to continue teaching.”



Top left: John Raffoul fills medical prescriptions for residents in the Philippines.

Top right: Raffoul talks to associates who are exhibiting projects that benefitted from a fundraising campaign.

Bottom: Raffoul showcases a newly-installed well and water pump in a village in Zambia during a medical mission trip.

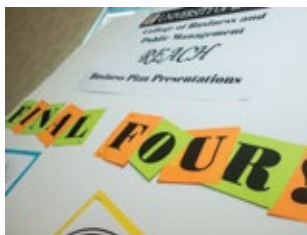


success within REACH

BY ELAINE REGUS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JEANINE HILL

The University of La Verne's REACH Summer Camp introduces disadvantaged high schoolers to business skills and inspires them to pursue a college education.



GABRIELA LANDIN WAS HOMELESS and had no plans for her future when a counselor at Fremont High School in South Central Los Angeles encouraged her to apply to the University of La Verne's REACH Summer Business Camp.

She took the advice, if for no other reason than to have a place to stay for three weeks. But the residential camp, which introduces disadvantaged high school juniors to college life, gave her much more than a temporary shelter.

"It helped me realize that I did want to go to college, and I wanted to go into the business field," Landin said. "And later, it helped me realize that I wanted to go to the University of La Verne."

That was two years ago. Today, Landin attends La Verne and is giving back as a REACH counselor, guiding other students through the program that changed her life.

REACH, which just completed its 13th year, has served more than 700 students like Landin since it began in 2006. Each summer, they live on the La Verne campus, take business and management courses, go on field trips, and build skills for the college application process.

The program serves about 60 students from Southern California per year. Ninety-eight percent go on to college. About 86 percent graduate.

"It's a remarkable transition," said Dr. Issam Ghazzawi, professor in the University of La Verne's College of Business and Public Management (CBPM) and REACH advisor. "When they first get here, many of them don't have a good idea of what universities are like because they are the first in their families to think about going to college."

REACH is supported by CBPM and community partners such as U.S. Bank, Walmart, Southern California Edison, the Metropolitan Water District, and the Pomona Unified School District (PUSD).

Dr. Roberta Perlman, president of PUSD's board of trustees, called the program "transformational" for her students.

"Students gain tremendous confidence and are ultimately able to eloquently communicate a business plan to fellow students and audience members," she said. "Our REACH students come back for their senior year of high school with a new perspective on education and with renewed goals for success."

Pomona High School student Brandon Rivas, who plans to major in international business management, participated in REACH this summer. It helped him understand the nuances of teamwork and polish his public speaking and presentation skills.

The REACH program serves about 60 students per year. Ninety-eight percent of the participants go on to attend college.

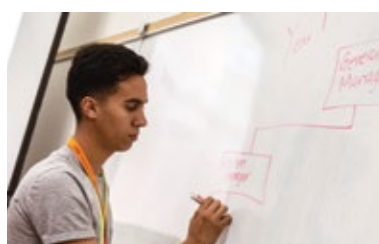


"The program overall changed my attitude toward life," he said. "It helped me grow not only as a student, but also as a person."

In addition to faculty members, executives with business-related backgrounds serve as instructors and guest speakers. They help students develop concepts for virtual businesses, which include the development of business plans.

Mark Lefkowitz, a land developer and creator of The Lemonade Game, which helps to teach financial literacy, is one such instructor.

When he first got involved, Lefkowitz thought he might have to oversimplify his lessons on gross and net profit margins, return on equity, and other sophisticated business concepts.



“But, I found that students were engaged, they were excited, and they wanted more,” Lefkowitz said. “Seeing their transformation was simply exhilarating. Watching the students collaborate to create fantastic projects just blew me away. The results have been awesome.”

Kyle Webb, chief financial officer of Webb Family Enterprises, which operates 17 McDonald’s restaurants throughout Southern California, is a member of the REACH Advisory Board. He and his family are longtime supporters of the program, and their company, which aims to increase opportunities for people from disadvantaged or underrepresented backgrounds, offers all REACH participants jobs at the end of the camp.

“The participants are awesomely engaged,” Webb said. “Their questions about our business are also more

informed. Once they are in the program, they are more likely to look at the business side of our enterprise, which is amazing for us.”

Kimberly Robledo, a former PUSD student and REACH alumna, is currently a junior at University of California, Berkeley, majoring in economics with a minor in education and public policy. She credited her REACH professors and volunteers for their commitment to student success.

“The program made me see myself in a place where I previously thought people like me did not belong,” Robledo said. “I now see myself reaching my dreams to end my family’s poverty, and I have the strength I need to impact others through my education.”

Raising

HOPE

A vibrant rainbow beam of light originates from the center of the letter 'O' in the word 'HOPE'. The beam is composed of distinct bands of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, creating a strong visual metaphor for hope and optimism. The beam extends diagonally across the lower half of the image, fading slightly as it moves towards the bottom right corner.

Gladys Namuyonga fled
persecution in Uganda
for the United States.
The University of La Verne
College of Law helped
her win asylum.

By **Melissa Pinion**



WHEN GLADYS NAMUYONGA CAME TO THE

University of La Verne College of Law's Justice and Immigration Clinic in 2014, she had been disowned by her family, denied employment, and even received death threats for her sexual orientation in her native Uganda.

But with the persistence of law students and faculty, the Los Angeles woman received asylum this year, and is now working to pass her exam to be a Licensed Vocational Nurse.

"I was excited," she said. "I finally felt like I had a home where I could stay. This is where I had started a new life. Denying asylum would be like losing a life for me. I couldn't see myself going back to Uganda at all."

The College of Law's Justice and Immigration Clinic opened in 2008 to provide pro bono assistance to immigrants seeking asylum in the United States. Law students who participate in the clinic gain experience through interviewing clients, preparing documents, and representing clients in immigration hearings.

Namuyonga, 40, fled Uganda for the U.S. because her community did not accept her for being gay. Homosexual activity in Uganda is illegal. She came to Southern California, despite having no friends or family here to support her.

A married couple from Uganda gave her a place to stay. But she needed a way to remain in the U.S.

"I needed any help I could get," she said.

Another Ugandan who had been granted asylum took her to the College of Law for assistance.

There, she met Professor of Law Diane Uchimiya, who founded the clinic. The professor agreed to help.

"It was like a breath of fresh air," Namuyonga said.

John Gallegos, JD '18, who graduated last spring, said he first met Namuyonga a few weeks before her interview, but previous students had filed paperwork to lay the groundwork for her case. Gallegos, Marita Valdez, JD '18, and Uchimiya accompanied Namuyonga to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services asylum office in Anaheim for interviews.

Before going, the team prepared Namuyonga for the interviews. Once there, Gallegos delivered a closing argument, insisting that Namuyonga deserved a better life, free from persecution.

*"I finally felt like I
had a home where
I could stay"*

Gladys Namuyonga

"I argued that if she was to return to Uganda, she would face no employment prospects, public and private shame, potential imprisonment, and possible death," he said.

While she waited for the government to decide her fate, Namuyonga had been going to school to be a nurse and worked as a Certified Nursing Assistant at Motion Picture and Television Fund Hospital in Woodland Hills.

The uncertain future weighed heavily on her, as did the new presidential administration's shifting policies on immigration.

But after four years, she finally got some relief.

The government granted her request for asylum, a victory for both Namuyonga and the College of Law.

"The asylum process entailed a lot of hard work for our client since she had to remember and recall horrible moments in her life," Gallegos said. "Because of this, I was so happy her hard work paid off."

Namuyonga says she can now obtain a green card and apply for citizenship in five years.

She plans to return to the College of Law when she takes the next step to become an American citizen.

"They're so helpful to people like us who come here with no hope, not knowing how things are going to turn out," she said.

Gallegos, who hopes to become a general practice attorney in Palm Springs, said he joined the clinic, in part, because of his interest in immigration law and the political climate regarding immigrants.

"This case showed me the United States is and should always be a leader in asylum and immigrant rights," he said. "Our client saw the U.S. as a beacon of hope for a better life, just like the millions of immigrants that came to the country before her."

MAN ON THE

DR

Former track and field athlete ***Michael Sacoto*** '12, MSLM '15, ***clears hurdles*** to educate high school students on the need for health care professionals ***in Southern California.***

BY **MATT HUTAFF**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **WILLIAM VASTA**







ALMOST HALF of the population of Southern California's Inland Empire is Latino or Hispanic, yet only six percent of physicians in the region identify as such. It's a fact Michael Sacoto '12, MSLM '15, eagerly shared with high school students he mentored, because he sees an

opportunity to change those statistics for the better.

"Every time I shared this in a classroom, eyebrows would raise," he said. "I'm sure it made an impact as students begin to see themselves as the solution to the physician shortage issue."

The United States health care system is woefully understaffed. Some reports estimate the country will need more than 2 million new health care workers by 2025 to accommodate our aging population. That's why Sacoto worked closely with schools throughout San Bernardino County — telling kids about the health care career opportunities waiting for them was part job, part mission.

For the past several years, Sacoto has served as program manager for Inland Health Professions Coalition (IHPC), a nonprofit that provides seminars, internships, and teacher externships while partnering with educators and health care professionals. He was introduced to the career by DeAntwann Johnson, a fellow Leo who ran track and field with Sacoto at the University of La Verne.

"Track was as valuable as any classroom," he said. "I learned about leadership, responsibility, and hard work — and to treat every day like a meet."

Sacoto's work with IHPC is a natural extension of the two degrees he earned while at La Verne: a bachelor's in kinesiology and a master's in

leadership and management. The former provides insight into the medical field, while the latter informs his ability to bring people together. He's also on track to complete a doctorate in urban education.

"Every year, I mentored 12 students under my Student Ambassador Program," he said. "They're exposed to a 40-hour internship, so they can see, feel, hear, and smell the careers they're pursuing. It's the best way to find out if the job is one you truly see yourself doing."

Sacoto is proud of the work he's done throughout the Inland Empire and is enthusiastic about beginning a new chapter as a career adviser for Claremont Graduate University. He's pledged to bring his professional relationships to a new generation of students by promoting employer relations through their School of Community and Global Health.

"I've changed so many lives in my position," he said. "It will be hard to pick up and leave — but I'm ready."

Ready to help his community — and show how his alma mater changed his life for the better.

"The University of La Verne gave me a home," Sacoto said. "A close-knit community was something I needed at the time, and the faculty, coaches, students, and teammates gave me just that."

With all the work he's doing, does he still make time to go for a run?

"I spent three years exploring Bonelli Park in San Dimas as a member of the track team," he said. "I don't see myself ever growing tired of it."

Center of Well-Being

The new Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research will serve students and the community as a resource for maintaining healthy lifestyles.

Written by
MONICA RODRIGUEZ

The University of La Verne will soon break ground on a new facility that will serve as a unique hub for teaching, researching, and promoting healthy lifestyle habits for students and members of the broader community.

The \$7 million Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research is supported by a generous gift from developer and philanthropist Randall Lewis, as well as donations from other university friends and institutional funds. Construction will begin during the 2018-19 academic year.

"This Lewis Center will help ensure that every student who graduates will have the opportunity to be healthier physically and mentally than when they arrived," University of La Verne President Deborah Lieberman said. "Additionally, it will help prepare students for careers in health care, and provide health and wellness programming that enhances the inland Southern California region."

Studies have shown that residents of inland Southern California, which encompasses San Bernardino, Riverside, and eastern Los Angeles counties, struggle with high rates of obesity, diabetes, and mental health issues, among other conditions. The region is also experiencing an acute shortage of primary care physicians.

Greater access to community-based prevention and intervention services is critical for the region.

The Lewis Center will build and expand these types of services through new curriculum for students, an increased focus on health and well-being research, and a network of partnerships with community

organizations. It is the only center in the region that brings together students' academic work, faculty field research, recreational exercise, mindfulness activities, community engagement, and community partnerships in a central location on a university campus.

Lewis is a longtime supporter of education and healthy-community initiatives. The collaborative nature of the center, and the impact it will have far beyond the University of La Verne campus, inspired his support.

"We must bring together the collective resources of families, schools, workplaces, and civic institutions to solve the region's most pressing health care issues," Lewis said. "This center does just that, and I am extremely proud of what we are building here."

More than a dozen community organizations have already agreed to partner with the university on programming for the center. They include: AltaMed, Bon Appetit, Casa Colina Hospital and Centers for Healthcare, Chaffey Joint Union High School District, City of Hope, Claremont Club, The Farm at Fairplex, Hillcrest Retirement Community, Methodist Hospital of Southern California, Mt. San Antonio College, Perfect Step, Pomona Unified School District, Western University of Health Sciences, and Adventist Health White Memorial medical center.

Once completed, the Lewis Center will approach its mission of improving students' health literacy through the lens of the Seven Dimensions of Health: physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, occupational, social,



▲ **FITNESS SPACE**



▲ **WELL-BEING PLAZA**



▲ **RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT LAB**



▲ **WELL-BEING STUDIO I**



▲ **WELL-BEING STUDIO II**

and environmental. It will be home to a testing and evaluation lab, an array of exercise and training equipment, multi-use areas for group work, and spaces for mental well-being activities.

For University of La Verne students, the center will offer paths for improving their personal health and wellness, and serve as a hub for teaching and research for health care-related academic majors and careers.

Undergraduate students enrolled in courses that meet the lifelong wellness general education requirement will be tested for muscular endurance, cardiovascular fitness, and flexibility. The results will help them gain an understanding of their health and assist them in designing effective lifelong wellness strategies.

Enhanced curriculum and a wide-ranging research agenda will expose students in health-related fields to timely issues in a safe and practical teaching environment.

Student and faculty research projects will include lifestyle intervention trials in areas such as diet, physical activity, and stress management, many of which will involve community partners.

“Some of the initial projects proposed by faculty include working with residents of a neighboring retirement community and research in fall prevention,” Provost Jonathan Reed said. “In addition, sociology and anthropology faculty intend to collaborate on research to assess the impact of stress on bone density in order to improve exercise or mindfulness programs.”

The Lewis Center will be located at the corner of Third and C streets, at the former location of Davenport Dining Hall, in the heart of the university's La Verne campus.



Making an Impact

New initiatives take
root as campaign to raise
\$125 million continues

Create the Future: The Campaign for the University of La Verne is well under way and making great progress. We have now raised over ***\$85 million*** toward our four major campaign priorities:



Ensuring Quality

by putting our students first and giving them a strong foundation for lifelong learning



Achieving Excellence

by attracting and retaining outstanding faculty



Assuring Relevance

by providing a holistic learning experience that extends well beyond the classroom



Promoting Innovation

through new initiatives, technology, and facilities that respond to a rapidly changing world

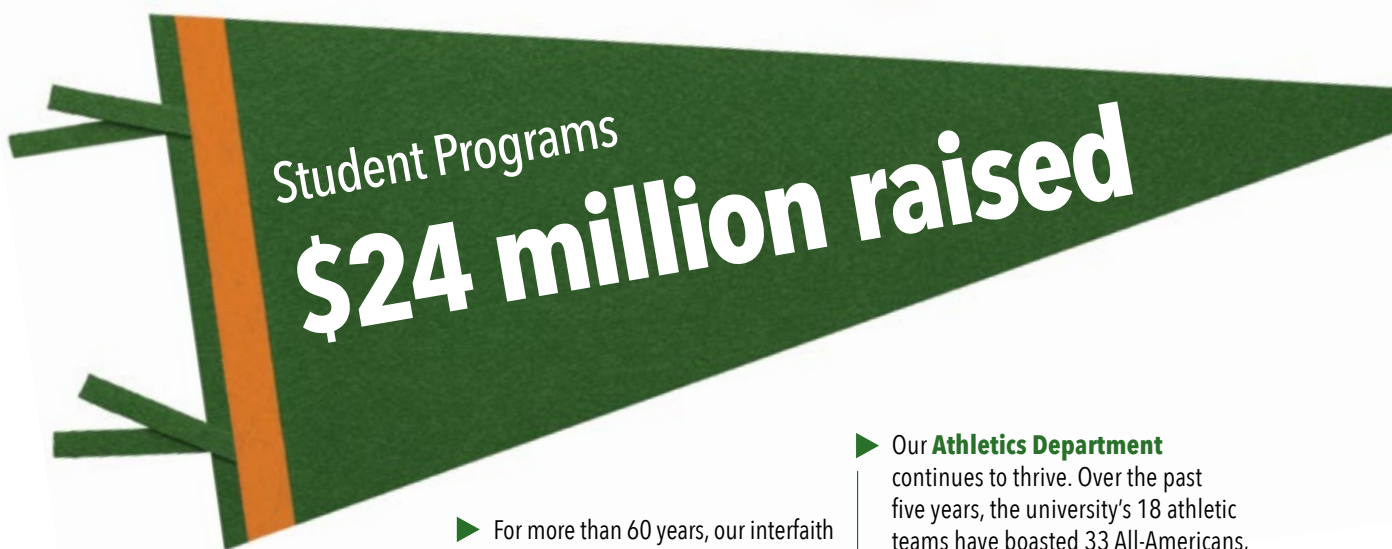
Student Scholarships

\$34 million raised, 32 new scholarships created

Founded by an Iranian-American educator stirred by memories of poverty in her home country, the **Heshmat Mirsepassi Endowed Scholarship for Muslim Students** helps young Muslim men and women secure an education that will enable them to make a positive difference and contribute toward peace and harmony for all people.

Small, Great Things strives to retain and graduate underserved, non-traditional undergraduate students facing severe financial need. This endowed scholarship fund specifically aims to serve two populations: first-year students of color who are at risk of dropping out; and seniors in the Campus Accelerated Program for Adults (CAPA) who are single parents with custody of children, U.S. military veterans, or students of color who are at risk of not graduating.

Give Something Back is a groundbreaking national program that provides both scholarships and mentoring to students who have faced adversity. Most are first-generation college students, and many have heightened social risks such as homelessness, foster care, or the incarceration of a parent. Every Give Back scholar receives a full scholarship that covers tuition, fees, room, and board. The University of La Verne is proud to partner in this program with dozens of other colleges and universities.



► For more than 60 years, our interfaith **Summer Service Program** has given students an opportunity to make a positive difference by serving and engaging with the wider community through a 10-week volunteer experience. Working with religious, secular, and social service organizations, Summer Service fosters leadership development, personal and spiritual growth, and awareness of social responsibility.

► Our **Athletics Department** continues to thrive. Over the past five years, the university's 18 athletic teams have boasted 33 All-Americans, four individual National Champions, four individual SCIAC Championships, nine SCIAC Athletes of the Year, and eight team NCAA Tournament appearances.

Join 9,600 committed donors who have collectively made 26,000 gifts toward our campaign. Make your gift today so we can reach our historic goal of \$125 million by 2021!

createthefuture.laverne.edu

**\$7
million
raised**

Faculty Chairs, Professorships, and Lectureships

- Searing Family Endowed Chair in Honor of Dr. Ahmed Ispahani
- Fletcher Jones Endowed Chair in Computational Biology
- Robert and Mary Neher Lectureship in Global Sustainability
- LaFetra Family Chair for Excellence in Teaching and Service

New and Ongoing Initiatives

\$20 million raised

The Center for Neurodiversity, Learning, and Wellness, a program of the LaFetra College of Education, provides support to those with high cognitive potential who also have diagnosed mood, learning, or behavioral conditions that require specific accommodations to succeed in learning and work environments. Through direct services to students and families, professional capacity building, and public policy/advocacy work, the center facilitates neurodivergent learning and promotes greater understanding of neurological diversity.

The Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research (see pp. 32–33), scheduled to begin construction this year, will promote and develop healthy habits and lifestyles throughout the campus community. Over three years, the center will evolve into a multi-agency wellness initiative that will facilitate faculty and student research and engage in collaborative partnerships with institutions and organizations throughout inland Southern California, ultimately generating a positive impact on the health and well-being of the entire region.

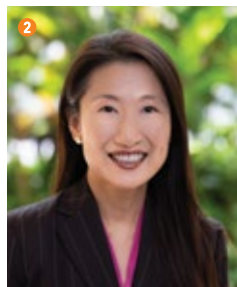
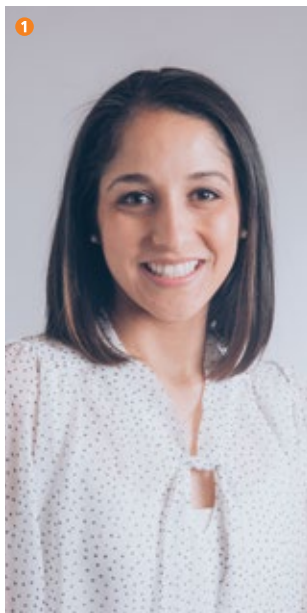


University of La Verne President Devorah Lieberman and Fairplex CEO Miguel Santana sign a partnership agreement related to the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research.



The University of La Verne's **Ludwick Center for Spirituality, Cultural Understanding, and Community Engagement** is envisioned as an interfaith gathering place located in the heart of the La Verne campus. This new facility, scheduled to open in fall 2019, will provide ample space and resources for our highly diverse student body to reflect, meditate, and engage in dialogue. Features will include a large sacred space, three classrooms, a group prayer and meditation room, a yoga and quiet room, offices, a courtyard, and spaces for collaboration, study, and work. One of the key initiatives supported by the Create the Future campaign, the Ludwick Center replaces La Verne's original chapel, an intimate space that was built to serve a much smaller student body.

WHAT'S NEW ALUMNI NOTES



1 **Leslie Flores-Cloud '07** was named head coach of the Eastern Washington University women's volleyball team. She began her position in June. Before taking the head coach post at Eastern Washington, Flores-Cloud was associate head coach at Drake University.

Samuel Lee, EdD '11, was named vice president of academic affairs at Norco College. Lee had been in this post on an interim basis since June 2017. He took over duties permanently on July 1.

William Catlett '06 has a lead role in "Love Is..." a series that debuted in June on OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network. The series, which airs Thursdays at 10 p.m. Eastern/Pacific, was renewed for a second season, the network announced in July. Earlier this year, Catlett was also in the series "Black Lightning" on The CW Network.

2 **Su Shin '93** was promoted to chief of staff to the president of Hawaiian Telecom. She will assist the company's president by providing strategic counsel to him and company leaders along with directing important projects and initiatives. Prior to her promotion, Shin was a senior strategic communications executive with the company.

3 **Jarrod McNaughton, MBA '01**, delivered the commencement address in June at Pacific Union College in Northern California. In May, McNaughton took over the responsibilities of chief operating officer for the Inland Empire Health Plan.

Eden De Ruse-Moore '85 married interior designer John Moore of San Diego in a ceremony held at the foot of the Avenue of the Giants in Northern California. A reception was held at the Benbow Historic Inn in Garberville.

4 **Mark Vidal '10, MS '16**, former *Voice* magazine editor, married his life partner, film producer Max Landwirth, in Claremont. The ceremony was held in June with University of La Verne Chaplain Zandra Wagoner officiating.

5 **David Plouffe '04** published his first book. The California State University, Fullerton lecturer's book is titled "Art Appreciation: An Introduction to the Formal Element and Mediums."

6 **Leona Olson, MEd '89**, was appointed assistant superintendent of human resources of the Newport-Mesa Unified School District in July. Olson has been with the school district since 2015 and held the post of director of certificated personnel. Prior to her appointment, she served as acting assistant superintendent of human resources for nine months.

7 **Alejandra Molina '05** was awarded two journalism fellowships for the 2018-19 year. She is the equitable cities fellow for the nonprofit Next City, where she is writing about how wealth and income inequality affect communities of color in cities across the United States. She is also a news journalism fellow for the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, where she will be embedded in the Media Center to build newsroom management skills.

Brady Wilkins, MS '01, was promoted to the rank of colonel in the United States Air Force.

8 **Mark Miller, EdD '01**, was appointed superintendent of the Sonora Union High School District in Northern California. He left his post as superintendent of the Juneau School District in Alaska to take the position. He began in August.

9 **Maura Murabito '09, MEd '12**, was appointed dean of career technical education at Cerro Coso Community College in the Kern County city of Ridgecrest. Previously, Murabito held the post of superintendent of the La Puente Valley Regional Occupational Program.

10 **Sheri Lunn '90, MS '10**, was named public information officer for the City of West Hollywood in February. Lunn has experience as an executive in the nonprofit the sector.

11 **Sandia H. Cano, MEd '05**, has been a teacher with the Chaffey Joint Union High School District for 18 years. She earned a master's degree and two teaching credentials from the University of La Verne, and now her 18-year-old son is a freshman majoring in kinesiology.

12 **Norm Enfield, EdD '07**, was appointed superintendent of the Chino Valley Unified School District. Prior to becoming the district's top administrator, Enfield served as deputy superintendent for four years.

Adelaida "Adi" Bautista '93 and Patricia "Pati" DeRobles '92 opened Café con Libros, a bookstore/lending library/meeting space in downtown Pomona.

Emilio Handall, MEd '03, EdD '16, became superintendent of the Guadalupe Union School District in Guadalupe, California.

Scott Howland, MBA '13, EdD '16, was appointed to the California 9-1-1 Advisory Board by Gov. Jerry Brown. Howland has been chief information officer and chief of the information management division at the California Highway Patrol since 2014.

Vanessa San Martin '09, MS '14, was named director of child development for Culver City Unified School District.

Karen M. Cullen '67 received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Citrus College. Cullen is the great-granddaughter of Glendora's first permanent settler, William B. Cullen, a Civil War veteran who arrived in the San Gabriel Valley in 1874.

13 **Rogelio Espinoza Huerta '18** secured a prestigious management internship with the city of Phoenix, Arizona, which he began only a few weeks after graduating in June. Huerta was also the subject of a nationally-televised profile on the Telemundo television network.

Sharon Weaver, MEd '00 retired from the Tehachapi Unified School District after 22 years.

14 **Adam Raymond '04** was hired as city manager in Glendora, California. He previously worked as chief financial officer in Riverside.

International Drive

With a tight-knit group of student-athletes from the United States and overseas, the University of La Verne men's golf team is excelling on the links and in the classroom.

The University of La Verne men's golf team enjoyed one of its best seasons last year, and it was a global effort.

The Leopards were one of 42 teams to qualify for the NCAA Division III Men's Golf National Championships, but one thing distinguished the 10-man team from the rest of the pack: the diversity on the squad.

The Leopards boasted four athletes from outside the United States. They are Justin Eller-Hughes of Germany, Pitiluk Phanomchai of Thailand, Charlie Green of England, and Henrik Skogseth of Norway. The diversity of nationalities led to a strong camaraderie on the team.

"These past two seasons have been the tightest-knit teams and best units I've ever had," Head Coach Eric Riehle said. "It is one group moving forward, and I really do think the mix helps that."

Riehle recruits heavily internationally, but that doesn't mean he passes up local talent. Along with golfers coming from overseas, the Leopards have several student-athletes from talent-rich Southern California, including 2018 Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) Athlete of the Year Hisham Hussein (San Dimas), All-American Conner Davis (Upland), and recent graduate Aaron DiGiamarino (La Verne). All helped their international teammates adapt to college life in California.

"It really helps that we have the local guys on the team to get us adjusted," Skogseth said. "Knowing we have a team that we can always rely on means a lot."

The benefits of having players from different backgrounds also extends to the classroom.

"They've been able to help each other in the educational sphere," Riehle said. "Some of the English language learners are much more advanced in the mathematics and business realms. So, I have some local California guys who are helping with the English, and on the other side get tutoring for math."

"My English has definitely improved because I get to listen to my teammates and coaches and talk to them," Pitiluk Phanomchai said. "I'm learning a little more every day."

At the conference level, Phanomchai won SCIAC Newcomer of the Year. He also picked up West Region Freshman of the Year honors. Hussein was named to the All-West team, and Davis placed seventh individually at the NCAA Tournament to pick up his first All-American award. Davis also earned Academic All-American recognition.

As a team, the Leopards qualified for the national tournament for the second time in four years and ranked as high as 14th nationally.

"I think that this is the most interesting group of guys that I've ever met and that I've ever had the privilege to be around. I don't think you'll find this team dynamic at any other school," Davis said.

The Leopards continue to expand their recruiting territory. Two of the six new golfers joining the squad this season are international students, one from Canada and the other from Thailand. With the Leopard squad losing just one golfer to graduation, the team is back on its way up the national rankings and to compete for a SCIAC title.

MEMBERS OF THE University of La Verne men's golf team (from left): Henrik Skogseth, Conner Davis, Pitiluk Phanomchai, and Hisham Hussein. Having teammates from the local area, like Davis and Hussein, helps Skogseth, of Norway, and Phanomchai, of Thailand, adjust to college life.



HEART OF LA VERNE UNIQUELY LA VERNE

THERE'S A DEAR FAVORED SPOT that shall ne'er be forgot, but we're creating new memories, as well. Alumni joined current students, faculty, staff, and the community for Homecoming and Family Weekend 2018.

Were you there? Share your stories, photos, and memories on Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag **#LeosForLife**.



Way-Back-When Trivia

The university's new dining hall is not the first eatery on campus to be called "The Spot." Can you name the locations of the two previous versions of "The Spot?"



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