

Voice

University of La Verne Magazine

Spring 2022



THE WAY TO WELL-BEING

Helping individuals and communities thrive.

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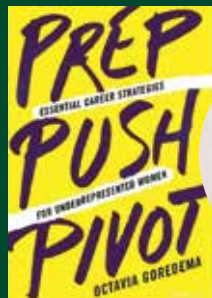
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Illustration by
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



THIS SUMMER, THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE WILL LAUNCH ITS NEW COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND COMMUNITY WELL-BEING, the cornerstone of our 2025 Strategic Vision. The college will transform the Inland Southern California region through high-quality education, research, and innovation in health and the social determinants of health and create a pipeline of graduates to support our community's growing need for healthcare professionals.

“Our evolution continues with this new college’s distinctive focus on not only physical health, but the broader concept of well-being, or helping individuals and communities achieve a higher quality of living.”

The University of La Verne has offered healthcare-related degree programs for nearly a half century, dating back to the 1970s when the first bachelor’s and master’s degrees in healthcare administration and management began. In every decade since, we have offered new degree programs to meet the evolving needs of our times.

Our evolution continues with this new college’s distinctive focus on not only physical health, but the broader concept of well-being, or helping individuals and communities achieve a higher quality of living. It is a focus we began developing years ago through the creation of our Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, and it is flourishing on our campuses.

This issue of *Voice* magazine explores the broader meaning of “well-being,” and spotlights how the concept is being embraced and brought to life by the entire university community. As you explore these pages, you will discover diverse perspectives on what it means to achieve physical, emotional, financial, and environmental wellness.

You will go behind the scenes with students and faculty in the digital media program who are using their filmmaking skills to provide video resources for nonprofit organizations. You will meet alumnus Alberto J. Roman, president of California’s largest community college, who has learned to be both a public servant and an effective leader.

You will be briefed on two legal clinics in our College of Law that help asylum seekers navigate the complex bureaucracy of immigration law, and advocate for second chances for people who are turning their lives around following criminal convictions. And, you will put the petal to the mettle with alumnus Bob Miller, immediate past president of the Tournament of Roses Association, who tapped into his blooming creativity to connect and delight millions of people when the COVID-19 pandemic kept us physically distant.

Health care and community well-being are needed now more than ever. We are proud that the University of La Verne, once again, focuses on and serves the needs of our greater community and region. Opportunities for promoting well-being are around us. All we must do is open our eyes, use our imagination, have courage, and act.

I hope this issue finds you well.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Devorah Lieberman". The script is fluid and cursive.

Devorah Lieberman, PhD
President

DBA Program to Enroll New Cohort

The College of Business and Public Management plans to accept students into a new Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program to start in fall 2022. It is designed for working professionals who wish to make a lasting contribution to the field of business through high-level positions in upper management, consulting, research, or teaching. Students in the DBA program graduate with valuable skills and knowledge they can immediately apply to real-world problems.



President Receives Regional Awards

The Orange County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce presented President Devorah Lieberman of the University of La Verne with its Dr. Juan Francisco Lara Education Award on November 20 during the organization's Estrella Awards. She also was named President/CEO of the Year by the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership on October 9.



First MS in Athletic Training Graduates Excel

Graduates in the inaugural Master of Science in Athletic Training cohort exceeded the first-time pass rate national average on their board of certification exams, achieving an 89 percent pass rate. This brings the cohort far above the 61.6 percent national average. Of those graduates who passed, each has secured employment.



Title III Grant Will Enhance STEM Support

The University of La Verne has been selected to receive a Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM Program grant by the US Department of Education. It is expected to be renewed annually and totals \$5 million over five years. This is the second Title III grant the University of La Verne has received. The purpose is to develop and carry out activities to improve and expand capacity to serve Hispanic and low-income students. Increasing degree completion in STEM majors—science, technology, engineering, and math—is a top priority for the University of La Verne.

Students Complete Inaugural Infoblox Diverse Certification Program

Fourteen students from the University of La Verne's Computer Science and Computer Engineering Department are the first to have completed a new certificate program designed to prepare a diverse student population for successful technology careers. The Infoblox Diverse Student Certification program was launched this year as a partnership between the university, the technology company Infoblox, and the TELACU Education Foundation. The inaugural student cohort took one course for four weeks during January Interterm, developing hands-on product training, mentorship, and career knowledge.



Newly-Renovated Science Labs Ready for Use

Students now have access to newly-renovated, state-of-the-art science labs at the University of La Verne central campus. The labs were set to open in March 2020, but their use was delayed until the start of the 2021-22 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Features include HVAC hoods for each student station, a clean room, and a layout that allows faculty and lab assistants to easily see each student at work.

MPA Program Earns Seven-Year Reaccreditation

The Master of Public Administration program at the University of La Verne has earned reaccreditation for a seven-year term. The designation was awarded by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration. The site visit team praised the program's mission-based approach. They also noted the well-developed assessment program tied to core competencies, which helps to continually improve the program. Additionally, the site visit team was impressed by the respect and loyalty that students, alumni, program advisory board, and part-time faculty have for the program. The accreditors also commended the program director, Marcia Godwin, and other faculty for their leadership, including guidance on careers and mentoring opportunities.

U.S. News & World Report Ranks University High for Social Mobility and Value

The University of La Verne is again ranked among the top private universities in California and seventh among all national universities for social mobility of students, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* 2022 Best Colleges rankings. In the Best Value Schools category, the university has risen six places since 2020, placing it among the best in California and 66th nationally.



Professor Earns Statewide Award

Nancy Jarman-Dunn, assistant professor of educational counseling in the LaFetra College of Education, has been named the 2022 Counselor Educator of the Year by the California Association of School Counselors. Her teaching at the University of La Verne draws on 37 years in the Fontana Unified School District, first as a classroom teacher and then as a middle school counselor.

Gifts Support New Endowed Professorships in Artificial Intelligence and Business Leadership

The University of La Verne has established two new endowed professorships that will strengthen academic offerings in several high-demand fields.

The Fletcher Jones Endowed Professor for Artificial Intelligence, funded by the Fletcher Jones Foundation, will allow the university to expand programs in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity within the College of Arts and Sciences. These programs will help to develop a diverse pipeline of graduates in critical technology fields that have historically excluded women and people of color.

The Richard G. and Beth T. Landis Endowed Professor in Business Leadership and Ethics, supported by the generosity of the late Richard '42 and Beth '44 Landis, will help the university attract a recognized national or international scholar in the field, and

bring recognition to the University of La Verne's programs in the College of Business and Public Management.

The Landises were alumni, foundational leaders, and champions of the University of La Verne for 70 years.

Both of these new professorships represent significant investments in the university's faculty and are aligned with the 2025 Strategic Vision theme of providing high-value education to students.

"We are so grateful to the Fletcher Jones Foundation and the Landis family for their generosity, commitment to our students, and support of our mission," President Deborah Lieberman said.

Searches to fill both positions are underway.

Looking for your next good book?

See what our faculty have written on The Bookshelf by visiting: voice.laverne.edu/bookshelf



Allyson P. Brantley

Assistant Professor of History
Brewing a Boycott: How a Grassroots Coalition Fought Coors and Remade American Consumer Activism

Brantley examines the boycott campaign against Coors Brewing Company, one of the longest boycott campaigns in US history, and studies the complexities behind anti-corporate organizing in the late twentieth century.



Benjamin Jenkins

Assistant Professor of History and University Archivist
California's Citrus Heritage

Jenkins explores the impact of the citrus agricultural industry in California by drawing from archived images and in-depth research on historical citrus production in the state.

New Dean Named for College of Business and Public Management

The University of La Verne has appointed Emmeline de Pillis, PhD, as dean of the College of Business and Public Management. She joined the university in July, replacing Abe Helou, who had served as dean since 2008.

"The University of La Verne is remarkable for its combination of academic excellence, inclusivity, and social mobility," de Pillis said. "I'm inspired to see how a La Verne education can transform lives."

De Pillis comes from the College of Business and Economics at the University of Hawai'i

at Hilo, where she founded its Executive Education Program and established a new advising structure that reduced the number of students dropping without earning a degree by more than half. She also led the college's strategic planning and accreditation processes.

De Pillis earned her PhD in business administration from the University of Southern California Marshall School of Business and her bachelor's degree in mathematics and computer science from the University of California, San Diego.



An active scholar, she is interested in how complex organizations, especially in healthcare and education, can be more effective. She is the author of four books or book chapters and many peer-reviewed journal articles and has presented at conferences across the US and in Europe.

In Conversation with Brian Clocksin

Brian Clocksin, PhD, is the vice provost for strategic initiatives for the University of La Verne. He leads the academic planning for the new College of Health and Community Well-Being—the transformational initiative of the university's 2025 Strategic Plan—which launches this summer.



Q What does the term “well-being” mean? How is it different than health?

If we look at the technical definition of health as the absence of disease, we start to realize that there's more to being healthy than that. The term well-being started to get traction as research looked beyond a single definition of health. More and more, we're seeing interplay between those two words as meaning a holistic approach between multiple dimensions. Health has been somewhat narrowly defined as the absence of disease, where well-being looks at how these different dimensions are interacting, shaping, and influencing the overall health of an individual.

Q Why is a College of Health and Community Well-Being needed in this region?

We have to understand that there are different factors that impact the ability of people to be healthy and thrive in our region. We can do a lot of planning to, say, target individuals with diabetes, but if we do not change the foods served in our school systems, educate on nutrition, or change unhealthy environments people live in, then it is really hard for people to have changes in behaviors. It is the interaction between these cross-sectional aspects of well-being that need to be addressed in Southern California, and the College of Health and Community Well-Being at the University of La Verne looks to determine what the interaction between these different terms of wellness mean as they play a role in ultimate outcomes.

Q There are other educational institutions in the region offering degrees in health fields. How is the University of La Verne distinctive?

Understanding the social determinants of health and health equity is what makes this college different. As a Hispanic-Serving Institution, we also aim to diversify the health workforce, as well as train students from our region to address critical needs that exist in Southern California.

Q When the new college opens this summer, what will it look like?

Offering health-related programs is not new to the University of La Verne. We have had health programs for the past 50 years. We will leverage our existing strengths in health by migrating nine current undergraduate and graduate programs into the new college. Additional new programs will be added beginning in the fall.

Q Will programs be offered at locations other than the La Verne Campus?

Yes. We will continue to utilize our regional campuses and online options. The first new program we will launch is an RN to BSN, which will be available fully online. This program will allow registered nurses to earn their Bachelor of Science in Nursing, which is increasingly important to have in the nursing field. Because the program is online, it will serve any student in California, and across the nation.

Q What partnerships will contribute to the success of the new college?

Partnerships are happening at multiple levels. For example, for the RN to BSN program, students earning their associate's degree in nursing from our partner community colleges will be able to transfer in to receive their Bachelor of Science in Nursing here. We are also building partnerships with regional hospitals, medical offices, and other healthcare systems for student placements, and to help train and upskill their existing workforces.

Q Five years from now, what will the new college look like?

We will see our future and existing programs thriving and producing graduates able to impact our region in significant ways. We will have helped produce a diversified workforce and practitioners who have a deep understanding of cultural influences of health, social determinants of health, and how they can impact equity across the healthcare system.

Searing Family Scholarship Supports Next Generation of Student Leaders



University Advancement is thrilled to announce the Searing Family Scholarship for Pomona High School graduates who wish to attend the University of La Verne. Established by Trustee Sue Searing '71, her husband Lee '70, and their children Christina, Richard '06, and Katherine, the scholarship will provide qualified students with full financial support for expenses such as tuition, fees, housing, and meals for on-campus residents, in order to ensure that students' academic success is unburdened by financial need.

The Searings created this scholarship to support the next generation of student leaders from their community. Both Lee and Sue grew up in Pomona and graduated from Pomona High School. She worked weekends as a clerk in the Pomona Valley Hospital pharmacy and volunteered at Casa Colina before going on to a career as an educator, earning both her bachelor's degree and teaching

credential from the University of La Verne. She worked for 25 years in elementary school education within the Ontario-Montclair and Arcadia Unified School Districts, where she saw firsthand the inequities faced by economically disadvantaged students. She also owned and operated a preschool from 1978 to 1990 in Arcadia.

In addition to Sue's work on the University of La Verne Board of Trustees and as co-chair of Create the Future: The Campaign for the University of La Verne, her family also created the Searing Family Endowed Chair in honor of professor Ahmed Ispahani to support excellence in teaching economics, and they are loyal supporters of the university's annual Scholarship Gala. It's safe to say the university would not be where it is today without the stalwart support of this Leopard family!

Ways to Give

Generous scholarships are truly the lifeblood of our university. They reflect our mission to make a quality education accessible to all regardless of financial situation, and they are one of the reasons *U.S. News & World Report* consistently ranks us among the top 10 colleges in the nation for social mobility.

The Searing Family Scholarship is available to students who have been accepted into the University of La Verne as traditional undergraduates; attained a 2.75 minimum GPA in high school; demonstrated skills in leadership and teamwork; and agreed to engage in on-campus extracurricular activities. The four-year scholarship is available for a set number of students and is renewable for recipients who maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA each year of undergraduate enrollment. First-generation students are especially encouraged to apply.



Trustee Sue Searing, center, and recipients of the Searing Family Scholarship. From left: Juliana Magallon-Ramos, Amari Waddell, Sue Searing, Caitlin Layseca, and Sarai Martinez Acosta.



Want to make a *big difference* in the lives of our students?

Visit giveto.laverne.edu to make your own contribution toward scholarships.



In Pursuit of Well-Being



By Barbara Goen

Illustrations by Hannah Agosta

From philosophers to cartoonists, humankind has long attempted to define well-being. Within the university community, the concept is brought to life through varied and vibrant lenses.

According to Aristotle, well-being or “being well” is having a sound mind in a sound body. Merriam-Webster tells us it is “the state of being happy, healthy or prosperous.” And, of course, there is beloved *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz, who said simply, “Happiness is a Warm Puppy.”

Now if only it were that simple.

From ancient philosophers to modern-day cartoonists, humankind has attempted to achieve and define well-being. Is it synonymous with happiness? Is it just something we know when we feel it?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines well-being in what is characterized as a “Wellness Wheel,” capturing eight essential components of wellness: social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, physical, environmental, financial, and occupational. These components are interconnected and, viewed holistically, provide a definition of well-being that would be hard to argue against.

At the University of La Verne, the pursuit of well-being is baked into our teaching and learning, our research, our outreach, and our relationships with one another. Recently, that commitment has taken on increased visibility through the creation of the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, and soon with the launch of the university’s College of Health and Community Well-Being.

The following pages explore the ideas expressed in the Wellness Wheel, as they are experienced across multiple areas of the Leopard community.

Fitness and Health for Life



Since 2020, our physical health has consumed our collective attention, controlling how we behave in public and in private, and changing how we engage with the world around us. Across the globe, we have learned more about our health and the science that governs it than perhaps at any other time.



Paul Alvarez, PhD

Professor of Kinesiology Paul Alvarez, clinical coordinator for the university’s athletic training program, has also thought about what it takes to rebound from a catastrophic health crisis and reboot to wellness.

One year ago, Alvarez found himself hospitalized for a scary episode of ventricular fibrillation, followed by bypass surgery. It was a wake-up call about not only the fragility of health, but about the inequities of America’s healthcare system. His hospital roommate had been admitted for critical and untreated high blood pressure, the result of poor health care and inadequate insurance.

These health disparities that exist in the world have always influenced how he interacts with students and student athletes.

“Many of my students’ parents don’t seek health care because they don’t have insurance, or their cultural background precludes their seeking medical attention when they might need it,” he said. “So in our Fitness for Life classes, we try to emphasize the importance of wellness and getting care when it’s needed. In athletic training, I try hard to focus on the whole person, not the injury. It’s not just a broken ankle, it is the person and how they handle it. It always includes the mental as well as the physical.”

Alvarez has spent his career talking to students and student athletes about physical health and its role in overall well-being.

“I know lots of these concepts won’t sink in right away,” he said. So Alvarez has a method that gets their attention every time; “I show them a picture of myself in college...‘this is me when I was you. And this is me now. Life happens.’”

The message is clear: Take care of your health now. Don’t take it for granted. And take advantage of the many resources the university offers to maintain your physical well-being.

“I teach fitness and health for the long term,” Alvarez said. “My goal is to give them the tools to make the right choices, to maintain a healthy balance throughout their lives.” ●

Finding Our Emotional Bliss



“Emotional well-being is more than the absence of a mental illness. It’s that resource within each of us which allows us to reach ever closer to our full potential, and which also enables us to be resilient in the face of adversity.”

—Vivek H. Murthy, MD, United States Surgeon General

At the University of La Verne’s Center for Neurodiversity, Learning, and Wellness, emotional well-being is explored through a variety of lenses. Center Director Niki Elliott likes to define it as the optimal balance of five key “bliss points”: physical and psychological health; gratifying intimacy, the right balance of friendships, relationships, physical touch, and intimacy; a nourishing environment, whether that be

access to the natural world or an aesthetically supportive living or work space; a flourishing vocation, whatever calls us to use our gifts and talents; and transformative spirituality, a connection to community and something greater than oneself.



Jerry Kernes, PhD

In his research, Psychology Professor Jerry Kernes echoes the surgeon general’s emphasis on positive psychology.

“A traditional focus has been on diagnosis and treatment of abnormal psychology,” Kernes said. “While that is important, we also need to focus on what’s right with people—what inspires us, draws us to a higher purpose,

to higher potential. One can have a life that might include adversity, might not always have all subjective aspects of happiness, but still have a purpose, a sense of serving others.”

Kernes also emphasizes that a proper measure of well-being is about connection with others and a sense of community.

In Elliott’s work with neurodiverse individuals—those who have learning differences, anxiety, emotional disturbance, trauma, or post-traumatic stress disorder—she affirms a sense of well-being is certainly achievable.

“What is good for them is good for everyone,” she said, but often with an increased need. “We find that grounding, safe relationships are even more critical for these individuals than others. They are already working to compensate for challenges with sensory processing, attention, or memory consolidation, so supportive relationships are more important than ever. Also, the quality of their environment is critical to helping their nervous systems settle, including sound, lighting, color, and feeling.”



Niki Elliott, PhD

Not surprisingly, toxic social stress, including exposure to racism, identity threat, or gender bias can significantly push against the well-being of all of us. Inequity of any kind is a source of emotional trauma.

Is happiness the same as emotional well-being? Not according to Elliott and Kernes.

“Happiness is situational; it’s external,” said Elliott.

“Research tells us that happiness may be an aspect of well-being,” agreed Kernes, “but there is so much more.” ●



Monday, Monday

“Heigh-Ho, Heigh-Ho, It’s Off to Work We Go...”

Many of us probably don’t share the enthusiastic harmony from Walt Disney’s *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* about the job we do every day. But according to Robert St. Juliana, director of career development and career success coach for the regional and online campuses, and Amanda Miller, director of the career center, well-being will be elusive if we don’t find some work we can truly be passionate about.

“Career is a part of life,” said Miller. “It’s not just going to work; it’s a place you should feel comfortable in, where you feel whole.”



Robert St. Juliana, MBA

St. Juliana enjoys working with students to uncover what specific aspects of work would give them this feeling. Most answers include a prioritized list of things like salary, work-life balance, company culture, location, training, company reputation, and benefits.

“It’s normal for this mix of priorities to change over time,”

St. Juliana said. “And it’s important for people throughout their careers to check in with themselves to ensure their career remains rewarding and challenging in the right way.”

According to Miller, fulfilling work should be a place that feels like ‘home.’

For many, that fulfilling work could very well be in the home. The word “generativity” is used to define work that is not necessarily wage-earning, but provides the person with a sense of being useful and promoting positivity for another generation. This work could include full-time parenting, fulfilling volunteer activities, mentoring, or engaging in community activism.

Miller, who is also a fitness instructor and holds a black belt in jiu-jitsu, emphasizes the importance of work-life balance to her students. “I share from my own experience

that their overall well-being and the work life they are choosing is so important,” she said.

St. Juliana and Miller both coach their students to be open to course-corrections in their career goals. “It’s ok to change your mind,” said St. Juliana. “If you start to have doubts, listen to your own feelings.”

And while you might not sing on the way to work every day, according to these professionals, a chosen career should unquestionably bring you joy. ●



Amanda Miller, EdD



All You Need is Love...and an Income

Physical and emotional health are two among the many important factors in our lives that contribute to a sense of peace and satisfaction.

But what if our most basic needs aren’t being met? According to Soomi Lee, associate professor of public administration, whose research includes local public finance and economic resilience, we often manage to avoid the simple subject of money.

“If I ask my students to come up with measurements for a child’s well-being and happiness, they come up with measures of emotional well-being first,” Lee said. “But the basic needs, such as how often they eat, the kinds of foods available to them, whether they have a place to sleep, whether it is warm and has clean running water, are often taken for granted and forgotten.” The priorities of a dependent child are crystal clear.

But are they for adults, for college students? Worrying about money—where your next meal will come from or if you’ll have a roof over your head—can be so all-consuming it can make a sense of well-being almost impossible to achieve.

“Well-being is both subjective and objective,” she said. “Study after study has shown that basic financial liquidity, having a cash cushion, significantly increases one’s well-being.”



Lee sees many university students who don't yet have that cushion. "These are undergraduates who often work 20 or more hours per week plus take a full academic schedule," she said. "Some of them become honors students and their achievement is admirable. But they often forgo a good night's sleep, exercise hours, and healthy eating, all of which are important for one's well-being. The lack of financial opportunity is a constant drain."

Much of Lee's work is in the area of financial literacy. But what her students already know about finances can

be eye-opening.

"A common misperception is that people are poor because they don't have financial literacy," she said. "But poor people and poor students—and I was a poor graduate student myself—count every single penny when they spend money. Often the rich don't know the cost of things. But poor students do know, and when



Soomi Lee, PhD

they pick items from a grocery store, they make sure to stay in budget. It's a myth that poor people are ignorant of finances."

If financial literacy alone isn't the key, what is?

"Financial capability—having a bank account, managing a budget, is critical," Lee said.

For those who struggle with this basic component of life, Lee's answer is straightforward. "Essentially it is about resource allocation," she said. "Public policies to provide equal opportunities can move the needle for those struggling with the basics of daily living."

After all, "the ultimate purpose of economics," according to former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, "is to understand and promote the enhancement of well-being." ●



A Community to Call Home

What makes for a healthy community? There is no better person to ask than Randall Lewis.

Lewis is an owner of The Lewis Group of Companies, a family-owned business that has built homes and nurtured healthy communities and environments for more than 60 years. Lewis is also the passionate University of La Verne advocate and donor behind the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, opened in 2019, which offers physical, emotional, and mental well-being resources for the campus and its surrounding communities. The new Randall Lewis Center for Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Social Impact focuses on positive economic impacts for students and partners.

"With my professional background as a home builder, I know that when you buy a house, you think about 1,800 square feet, three bedrooms, and two bathrooms," he said. "You think about the room sizes, the architecture, the landscaping. But in the late 1990s, as builders, we began to think about more than that. We began to focus more on community building, not simply home building."

Lewis wanted to build communities that encouraged and contributed to the health and well-being of the residents.

"This was ingrained in our company," he said. "My parents always said that as a business person you have an obligation to give back to the community where you were successful. Their focus was on health and education, two important components of achieving well-being."

In Lewis' communities, residents, of course, have the basics—infrastructure, streets, flood control mechanisms—but they also have safe walking trails, health fairs, partnerships with hospitals, opportunities for volunteerism, and classes on stress reduction, cooking, and nutrition.



Randall Lewis

“As a buyer or renter, you want the basics but you worry more about other elements,” he said. It is those extra elements that build a healthy community.

As an inveterate walker and a frequent campus presence, Lewis gains some of his passion for the university by simply enjoying what he views as its own healthy community. And he credits the university with helping him find new ideas for his own company.

“The physical elements of the campus itself—the old buildings and trees—make me feel better,” he said. “So much thought has gone into it – colors, fabrics, lighting that won’t flicker or trigger brain disturbances. The different heights of chairs, some with and some without wheels, to accommodate any physical need. This has all been done with the goal of promoting the best outcomes—for promoting well-being—for people on campus.” ●

A Never-Ending Satisfaction



One of the University of La Verne’s core values is a commitment to lifelong learning. Across many campuses, and inside dozens of classrooms, an opportunity for lifelong learning is contributing to a sense of well-being for Leopards of all ages.

According to AARP research, well-being scores increase with age. Those age 54 and older have higher than average well-being, and after midlife, well-being markedly improves.

Concurrently, research tells us that continuing to learn as

we age contributes to a healthier brain. Whether it is learning a second language, taking up a new hobby, or beginning yoga or stretching classes, anything that stimulates our brain and engages our mind and spirit will contribute to life satisfaction. At the university, compatible work is being conducted by



Yvette Latunde, PhD

Yvette Latunde, co-director for the Center for Educational Equity and Intercultural Research and professor of organizational leadership.

“Well-being can be a set of tools,” said Latunde, tools you can add to as you get older. “Informal learning, not just intellectual learning, can contribute to that set of tools.”

Pursuing a purpose in life, researchers also found, is one of the two activities most closely associated with well-being. Socializing with friends and family, and learning new things are consistently linked to mental well-being. The more brain-healthy activities an adult engages in, the higher their mental well-being.

Professor of Learning Marga Madhuri agrees that well-being can be enhanced as you age. “Well-being comes with getting to know yourself and honoring yourself,” she said. Because people are designed to be learners, they feel the greatest well-being when learning continues for life.



Marga Madhuri, PhD

“As an educator you have to be a lifelong learner,” she said. “Well-being and mindfulness are an outgrowth of neuroscience. All learning is emotional.”

Madhuri also believes in self-care. “Breathe, follow your heart, avoid an excess of bad news,” she said. She encourages making time for sleep, movement, nutrition, nature, and stress management for learners of any age.

Observes Latunde, “I think of well-being as being able to set your own goals with the tools and capacity to obtain those goals. Health, wellness, fiscal health, being able to think optimistically. One should strive for joy and inner peace. Whether it’s in your home, with your partner, or in lifelong learning.” ●



*well-
being*



By Alexandra Clayton * Photography by Jeanine Hill

Andre Bossieux '83, MHA '88 and **Margarita Gomez-Nadin '06, MBAX '16** utilize their personal strengths and experiences to uniquely benefit the well-being of others.

A Legacy of Love and Basketball

Andre Bossieux '83, MHA '88, might not have known it at the time, but his natural strengths as a mentor would lead him to a career that drastically improved the lives of others. And it all started with a little love and basketball.

Bossieux attended the University of La Verne in 1979 eager to begin a career as a media professional in Los Angeles. Before he could get to the big city, however, he knew he'd have to work, so he applied for a part-time job at Leroy Boys Home, the La Verne child-care facility and group home now known as the Haynes Family of Programs. At Leroy, he worked in the recreation department and played basketball with program participants.

At 18, he was coaching teenagers at the boys home who were just shy of his age. Even though many of his students were in need of mental health services and other support, including housing and living necessities, Bossieux said he didn't see the youth any differently from himself.

After a remarkable basketball career at the university, which landed him a spot in the University of La Verne Athletic Hall of Fame in 2011, and having built a thriving side business as

a DJ to keep his love of entertainment media in his life, he knew his passion for serving youth outweighed his desires to move to the city. Bossieux stayed working at the care facility, feeling his work there was more than just a job that would pay the bills, but a calling. He found it natural to incorporate his personal passions for sports, music, and even car mechanics, to connect with the youth.

"There were no color lines when they came in the gym," Bossieux reflected after recalling the abundant gang violence that preyed on his mentees. "I taught more life lessons about self-control, teamwork, and acceptance of others on the basketball court than I ever thought."

Bossieux worked at Leroy for 25 years and became a big brother to every mentee who found their way there. He quickly became a reliable resource for the youth and was promoted to a house parent while he lived in the center himself, pursuing his Master of Health Administration at the University of La Verne. Then in 2007, Bossieux seized an opportunity he couldn't resist.



CHAMPIONS





He was entrusted to help plan San Bernardino County's Transition Age Youth Program, commonly known as TAY, under the county's Department of Behavioral Health. This nationally-recognized program provides people ages 16 to 25 who have mental health issues with access to public health services if they find themselves repeating unwanted habits after leaving their original care facility.

What makes him a Well-Being Champion? As he likes to say, "Once a TAY, always a TAY." He makes it his mission to maintain contact with each of the youths who have crossed his path, some of them now in their 50s. He also stays active with the university by helping his program participants apply to the Give Something Back Scholars program, which helps students who have faced adversity obtain a college education from the University of La Verne.

"It brings me so much joy to see my former mentees leading successful lives based on some of my teachings," Bossieux said.

As all basketball players know, you're only as good as your team. Bossieux has built a strong team of friends, colleagues, and mentees over the years, and it all began with just a little love and basketball. 🏀



The jojoba plant is native to the Sonoran Desert of North America

Planting the Seed For Sustainable Beauty

Most people pick their career path in their mid-20s, but the decision to work for an ethical business came early to Margarita Gomez-Nadin '06, MBAX '16, when she vowed to pursue a career strongly connected to her family's farming history and ecological values.

The daughter of a migrant farm worker, she was introduced to farming and sustainability alongside her nine brothers and sisters in the suburbs of Lynwood, California, where they grew an abundance of fruits and vegetables in their backyard. Knowing the human side of agriculture work from her parents' experience, Gomez-Nadin sought to find a career that would allow her to both advocate for the environment and support the people who worked the land.

At the University of La Verne, she found the opportunity to forge that path. She took her first classes at the university's Burbank Campus. As a business administration undergraduate, she loved being exposed to the roots of ethical decision-making and lifelong learning.

After earning her bachelor's degree, she went on to earn her Master of Business Administration on the La Verne Campus, with a dual concentration in operational management and leadership and supply chain management. After graduation, Gomez-Nadin connected with a work colleague and found an opportunity to join Vantage®, a global chemistry company that farms natural ingredients to be used in multiple industries. The company's initiative, From Farms to Formulations™, provides transparency and control of its agricultural supply chain through an end-to-end process—from growing its product on its farms in Arizona and Argentina, to creating products for customers.

Gomez-Nadin is now a regional account manager for Vantage® Personal Care in California and assists brands to discover and obtain the most beneficial, natural, and sustainable personal care ingredients for popular independent beauty market brands, known as “indie brands,” within the beauty industry.

“The farms are vertically integrated and are completely transparent from seed to seed. They grow the seed, grow the tree, press the seed, and grow it again,” she said.

The seed that lands Vantage® a seat at the table in the beauty sphere? Their global production of jojoba oil.

Jojoba oil is a liquid wax ester that is cultivated and pressed from a medium-sized, pit-like seed. It protects the skin against harsh radicals and promotes hair, skin, and nail health. This product grew popular in the 1970s as a vegan, cruelty-free replacement for oil harvested from whales, used at the time in most beauty products. This beauty industry change was in response to the era's popular “Save the Whales” environmental movement, a cause Gomez-Nadin was actively involved with in grade school. Gomez-Nadin was elated to learn how chemists developed a vegan formulation without using animal-derived ingredients.

How is Gomez-Nadin a well-being champion? She attributes her capacity to love others and the environment as an extension of her mother's love, whom she lost to Alzheimer's disease in 2020. She deliberately takes time to foster that trait in her work and personal life.

“Be a conscious consumer as you seek your journey into self-care,” she said. “Notice what products you spend money on.”

She also commits to speaking up for social justice issues, such as multiethnic and gender-fluid representation in beauty spaces, and even makes time to volunteer across different boards, as a past president of Beauty Industry West, as current chair and chief elected officer of the California Chapter of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists (SCC), and as the inaugural chair of the SCC Diversity of Inclusion Insights Committee at the national level.

Gomez-Nadin reflects daily on her parents' advice. Her father said, “don't feel spent, pay yourself first.” Her mother said, “make time to give to others unconditionally.” She carries on their memory by living out their words, which earns her spot as a well-being champion. 🌱



What makes a well-being champion? It begins with purpose and continues on with a determination to help others.



INF

Associate Professor Morgan Sandler raises the level of community discourse by partnering the digital media program with nonprofits in need of professional—and emotional—videography work.

There's hesitation in the knock on the apartment door of Johnpaul Ortiz '24. He opens it to find Brian Duenas Sanchez '24, a mixture of defeat and exhaustion on his face. No familiar handshake or warm pleasantries are exchanged; Brian simply pushes past his friend and slumps onto a nearby couch.

Johnpaul sits across from him. "What's going on?" he asks. "Did you and Sarah get in another fight?"

A beat. "Yeah, it's getting bad," Brian confesses. "I don't know how much more I can take."

While the situation isn't real to them—both students are performing for the camera—the scenario is all too familiar for the clients of the Los Angeles Domestic Violence Council. And that's the point; the short film on spousal mediation was produced by the University of La Verne's digital media program to help people navigate the legal system in times of crisis. Last fall, more than a dozen students created a series of videos to provide resources to the nonprofit while giving students the opportunity to commit socially-conscious projects to film.

"The council is always trying to find ways to simplify things for their clients, who are victims of domestic violence," said Morgan Sandler, associate professor and chair of the digital media program. "So we were asked to put together instructional videos to help navigate the different processes they're going to see."

Sandler was introduced to the council's efforts through Sherri Mylott, vice president for University Advancement. From there, he worked with students in the University of La Verne's Fundamentals of Video Production class to craft the first wave of videos.

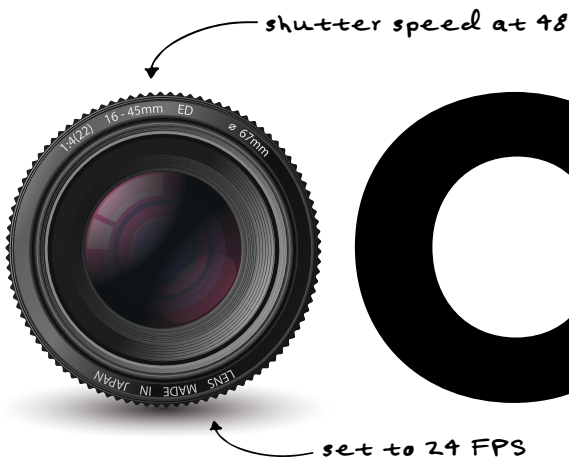
begin
scene

end
scene

students
in action

new
equipment!





CUS

WRITTEN BY
Matt Huttaff

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
Jeanine Hill

student created films!

"Students acted in them, wrote the scripts, and directed them," Sandler said. "They were the cinematographers, the producers. They took on all aspects of the project."

To get an authentic feel for the subject matter, students coordinated with council attorneys to ensure scenarios were handled respectfully. The end results are stories, shared with people experiencing the same universal emotions played out on screen. Instead of brochures or dry statistics, council clients learn about mediation, legal rulings, and more through the characters.

"It was such a privilege to work with the council," said Kaitlyn Moran '24, one of the student editors. "They were excited to see what we could put together and we loved working with them."

"I believe our videos will have an impact," added cinematographer Brett Hoyle '25. "We show people how easy it can be to get help if you are not sure what to do in hard situations."

"We've never done anything for an actual client like this before," added Sandler. "It's been fantastic."

It's also an idea he's been cultivating for some time. The digital media program historically produces *Making a Difference*, a series of short-form documentaries about people in the local community. By working with the council, University of La Verne students continue this tradition while showcasing their skills across the broader region. This could be the beginning of something transformative for the department while still aligning with the university's mission of service.

"There's an organization called The Lucky Few, run by Heather and Josh Avis, who are incredible advocates for the Down syndrome community," said Sandler. "They do wonderful work and are working on a project titled This is Down Syndrome."

"Ultimately, as filmmakers, we have the opportunity to reach lots of people. Expressing those voices and those opinions to me is extremely important."

Currently it's photographs and stories, profiling families and their struggles – and wins! However, we are soon transitioning into short films, profiling these incredible families."

The videos form the backbone of this year's Intermediate Video Production course. Sandler has worked for several years to build these ties and create a diverse space in the program, with offering more to the community part of the larger strategic goal.

"I want to make sure there's a space where we can tell stories," he said. "But I also think it's really important we give back. Ultimately, as filmmakers, we have the opportunity to reach lots of people. Expressing those voices and those opinions to me is extremely important."

With one academic year's worth of material in the can, Sandler hopes to continue this with other nonprofits in the area. As a working cinematographer for more than two decades, he sees this as an opportunity to help students understand that why films are made is as important as how they're made.

Thanks to a friendship with alumnus Nathan Chow, MS '01, DPA '11, who recently donated \$2 million to support the university's digital media program, Sandler is now able to teach both with state-of-the-art equipment like ARRI Alexa cameras and DaVinci Resolve color grading software.

Sandler is extremely excited about the evolution of the program; over the past six years it has transformed from a traditional television broadcasting program to a top-notch film program, with state-of-the-art technology, equipment, and curriculum. Film crews looking to shoot at University of La Verne now also hire students as production interns to help build ties with the professional community. "Our students don't look like students at a lot of other university film programs, which is what makes our program so wonderful. There are also lots of worthwhile organizations that don't have funding to make films," he said. "It's important to me that all of their voices are heard."

LIGHTS. CAMERAS. ACTION. 🎥

Petal to the Mettle

As president of the Tournament of Roses Association, alumnus Bob Miller kept some of Southern California's most beloved traditions afloat through two tumultuous years.

BOB MILLER '79, DPA '14, HAD WAITED 38 YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT.

On the morning of January 1, 2022, as president of the Tournament of Roses Association, he and his wife, Barbara, their four grandchildren, two adult children plus spouses, and Miller's 92-year-old mother, Bernice, climbed aboard a vintage fire engine for that iconic ride down Colorado Boulevard.

More than four hundred thousand pandemic-weary fans roared their approval, and 32 million viewers watched the parade on television. Later in the day, the Rose Bowl Game was seen by 92,000 fans within the Bowl and another 17 million on television.

Miller, 66, credits his eclectic career and education—including two degrees from University of La Verne—with preparing him to lead the tournament's 935 volunteers and 31 operating committees through two uncertain years.

"I believe there's a plan for all of us," he said, "and this was the plan for me. I'm pretty good with challenges."

A flair for high-impact TV flows in Miller's veins. His father was a pioneering television audio engineer who'd worked the sound boards on the *Ed Sullivan Show* and the first NFL Super Bowl. When Bob and his twin, Rick, were 13, their dad moved the family from New York City for a new job with ABC's Hollywood studios. They settled into a house in Pasadena.

Miller planted lifelong roots in the community. It was over a pilgrim-themed Rose Parade float that, at 17, his eyes first locked with those of his future wife. They were gluing flower petals onto the Mayflower as part of a church youth activity.

After finishing his associate degree at Pasadena City College (PCC), Miller was recruited by La Verne College to help launch its telecommunications program in 1975. He taught the college's first courses in radio and television production and operations while working on his own bachelor's degree in business administration. His career in distance learning took Miller back to PCC, and later, Intelcom, the instructional TV arm of a consortium of 31 Southern



California community colleges. In 2019, he retired as vice chancellor of finance and resource development with the Los Angeles Community College District to take up the travel-intensive duties of leading the Tournament of Roses Association.

His 2020-21 term started out like any other. As president, Miller had four basic responsibilities: choose a theme, name a grand marshal, visit participating marching bands and other parade and Rose Bowl Game participants, and be the tournament's ambassador-in-chief. But tradition unraveled overnight in March 2020 and by April, Miller was contemplating the unthinkable.

In late July 2020, the organization made the painful decision to pull the plug on the parade due to the COVID-19 pandemic and started looking for ways to fill the gap. Leaning on his television

production expertise, Miller and colleagues reimagined the 132nd Rose Parade as a television special: part historical retrospective, part live entertainment, part telethon.

To comply with California health and safety guidelines, on December 12, 2020, Miller and his Executive Committee colleagues made the difficult decision to move the iconic Rose Bowl Game. The Tournament Football Office team hustled to produce the January 2021 Rose Bowl Semi-Final College Football Playoff long-distance from Arlington, Texas.

It helped immensely that late in his career Miller had returned to University of La Verne for a doctorate in public administration (DPA).

He'd enrolled in the weekend-intensive program in 2009, looking to build new leadership skills as a community college executive.

"It turned out to be the right program at the right time," he said.

"When I looked at the cohorts, they were all people working in high-profile public service jobs: city managers, police chiefs, and senior level education executives like me."

"I believe there's a plan for all of us, and this was the plan for me. I'm pretty good with challenges."

The DPA program opened new doors for Miller at work and in public service. Active in the Rose Parade organization since 1984, he was invited to join the executive committee in 2014—the same year he finished his doctorate. A lockstep promotion path put him in line for the 2020-21 presidency.

But by July of his term, Miller knew there would be no ride down Colorado Boulevard for him or anyone else. He didn't waste his time on self-pity.

"People would say: 'It's so terrible this happened during your watch,' and I would tell them: 'We've got to keep this in perspective. It's just a parade and a game and nothing like the debilitating illness or death let alone the financial harm or ruin wrought by the pandemic.'"



Left: Bob Miller makes his entrance at a Tournament of Roses event.

Above: Bob and Barbara Miller wave to fans at the Rose Parade.

In October, Miller learned he would get a second shot when the tournament's Executive Committee decided to freeze its leadership rotation. He immediately began planning 2022's Tournament of Roses events and became the second two-year president of the association in its 132-year history.

When the COVID-19 vaccines arrived in early 2021, they injected new optimism. But it wasn't until September 2021 that Miller was certain the 133rd Rose Parade and 108th Rose Bowl Game would happen. He and his wife resumed travel as the tournament's top ambassadors. They took 25 trips in three and half months, including 15 site-visits to marching band home fields, where they headlined make-or-break fundraisers.

Miller remained upbeat through it all.

"I never, ever regret the time I spent on this," he said. "It was just an incredible experience. There were a thousand pinch-me moments."

Miller remains active in the Tournament of Roses leadership. Professionally, he also stays busy as a higher education consultant specializing in accreditation, program review, and vice chancellor and chancellor-level searches.

But his greatest legacy will surely be as the Pasadena civic leader who refused to let the parade pass him by.



Bearing Fruit

Alumnus Victor M. Hernandez creates greater equity and opportunity for farmers from underserved communities throughout the state of California.

VICTOR M. HERNANDEZ '09, MS '13, GREW UP IN A CLOSE-KNIT FAMILY OF FARM LABORERS. THANKS TO THEIR SUPPORT, HERNANDEZ AND HIS OLDEST BROTHER BECAME THE FIRST IN THEIR FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE.

Now, Hernandez is paying it back in a big way by helping farmers throughout the state of California as outreach coordinator and sociologist for the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

A former Marine who did a tour of duty in Iraq and also started a family before beginning his undergraduate studies, Hernandez's path through higher education was not a typical one. He began his studies at Allan Hancock College in his hometown of Santa Maria and then transferred to the University of California, Santa Barbara. While there, he couldn't quite relate to the other undergraduates, who went to college straight out of high school and did not yet have life experience. He also needed a job to support his wife and children.

After some research, Hernandez learned about the University of La Verne's Vandenberg Space Force Base Campus, which was close to Santa Maria and offered a business curriculum that both fit his interests and better accommodated his busy schedule. Once enrolled, he was also delighted to find his fellow students were just like him—adult learners, with varied life experiences, and many of them active duty service members.

"There were always lively dialogues in the classroom," Hernandez said. "Everyone had a different perspective."

While thriving at his new school, Hernandez landed a job at the USDA as a farm loan officer. He saw all the threads of his life coming together in a remarkable way as he worked toward a career for which he seemed to be born.

The Hernandez family's roots in farm labor run deep. Hernandez's paternal grandfather picked lettuce in Salinas Valley as part of the US government's 1942 Bracero Program that sponsored farm labor from Mexico, while his maternal grandfather worked the cotton and tobacco fields of Georgia and North Carolina.

"Both of my parents and my middle brothers worked long hours while I was growing up," Hernandez said. "They sacrificed so my oldest brother Hector could go to college. I was then inspired by Hector to pursue a similar path." Hector, who became a chemical engineer with the State of California's Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, also showed his brother it was possible to work in agriculture as a professional.

Now, Hernandez provides technical and financial assistance programs to farmers from underserved communities—particularly Hispanic, Black, veteran, and urban farmers. Thanks to his efforts, the USDA has developed the "Growing Together" Latino Farmer Conference and the Black Farmer Conference with Urban Farmers to help build better communities.

Although he's already accomplished a lot, Hernandez is just getting started. His many current projects include serving as president of the National Organization of Professional Hispanic NRCS Employees and working with the University of La Verne's Bakersfield Campus on outreach to farmers statewide. He also partnered with the university's Small Business Development Center in 2016 to organize an annual outreach event for veteran farmers at Cal Poly Pomona; the event continues today as Future Forward. Constantly inspired by people, Hernandez is a proud Leopard who says his life's purpose is to be a leader in "developing talent-based diversity."

Victor Hernandez attended University of La Verne after serving in the Marines.



An Eye Toward the Future

Driven by a discovery about her son, alumna Hana Saad Alarifi develops cutting-edge tools to help diagnose autism in children.

IF ONE IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF WELL-BEING IS A PASSION FOR ONE'S WORK, HANA SAAD ALARIFI '13 IS THE EMBODIMENT OF THAT PASSION.

She came to her profession through the desire to meet a compelling personal challenge head on.

Alarifi, a citizen of Saudi Arabia, arrived at the University of La Verne as an international student in 2009, graduating with a bachelor's degree in computer science and computer engineering.

"When I graduated from La Verne and went back to Saudi Arabia, my son Ayad was nearly two years old. I had started to see some unfamiliar symptoms and behaviors in him, and I wondered about his diagnosis," Alarifi said.

When she returned to the United States to begin her graduate degree in computer science, she took her son to a pediatric neurologist.

"He mentioned the word 'autism.' I was in shock and denial for a few weeks," she said.

The diagnosis drove Alarifi to pursue an additional graduate degree in psychology that she hoped could help her find answers.

"I said 'How can I use my education to help him, and to help other children with autism like him?'"

Following her graduation from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 2018, Alarifi went home to Riyadh and followed her quest to King Faisal Specialist Hospital and Research Centre, one of the country's most renowned medical facilities with a dedicated Center for Autism Research. There, she became a software and program developer and began working with Dr. Hesham Aldhalaan, the center's director and a doctor of pediatric neurology.

As part of her work, she attended a special training course in Copenhagen where she was "emotion certified," a designation from a Danish company that develops biometric data collection software, including eye tracking data and facial expression analysis.

After her certification, Alarifi returned to Riyadh where the hospital established its own human behavior laboratory at the Center for Autism Research.



Hana Saad Alarifi showcases her biometric data collection software.

"We were able to purchase high-end equipment, and I began to collaborate with consultants on simple and objective measurements for autism screening using visual stimuli," Alarifi said. "Individuals on the autism spectrum have different visual behaviors. It is interesting to capture and compare those differences and find patterns to build our own objective screening tool based on eye tracking data."

The first project of Alarifi's lab was developing an artificial intelligence model that would screen and predict autism based on eye tracking data. Collaborating with professionals in Great Britain, the United States, Denmark, and Sweden, the groundbreaking findings will be published this year.

Alarifi said that while at University of La Verne, she was inspired and supported by professors, like Seta Whitby and Ahmed Ispahani, who championed her work and challenged her to see the world with a different perspective.

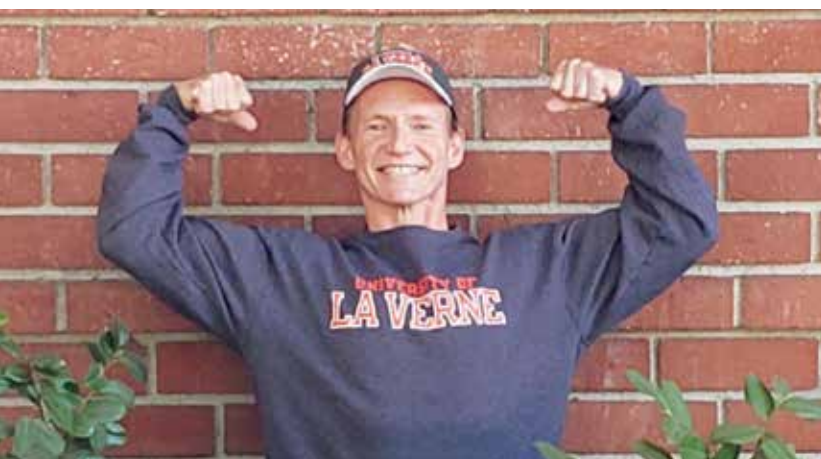
"I was coached by remarkable individuals who teach with passion, grace, and wonderful values," Alarifi said. "I wouldn't have had the same opportunity to learn from professors like them anywhere else."

Finding His Strengths

Professor Loren Dyck pursues well-being through his passions as an award-winning bodybuilder, researcher, and all-around academician.

MANAGEMENT PROFESSOR. RESPECTED WELLNESS SCHOLAR. MASTER BODYBUILDER. LOREN DYCK SEEMS TO BE LIVING MULTIPLE, PARALLEL LIVES.

Dyck has pondered “what drives sustained desired change?” for decades: at the personal level, as a lifelong bodybuilder in pursuit of the perfect physique. And at the professional level, as a social scientist investigating how long-term change occurs in individuals and couples, within teams, inside large organizations, and across societies.



Loren Dyck strikes a pose in front of the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research.

For the past two years, Dyck has been a faculty research fellow with the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research, gathering data on how wellness participation produces changes in long-term behaviors.

But Dyck never expected to be an academic. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, he comes from working-class Dutch Canadian roots.

“With me, growing up, it was all about sports,” Dyck said. Especially hockey and volleyball. He took up weight-training and bodybuilding to gain strength and speed on the ice.

With his father’s encouragement, Dyck enrolled at the University of Manitoba, majoring in finance and human resources.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce degree, he embarked on a 15-year career with the Canadian government.

By 1996, Dyck had done “pretty much all there is to do in human resources,” so he pursued dual master’s degrees in business administration and human resource management at Hawai’i Pacific University. While there, he opened a consulting business in leadership development and executive coaching. Dyck had a blast, but he longed to conduct original research.

Dyck moved to Cleveland in 1999 to study organizational behavior at Case Western Reserve University. He was 50 when he finished his PhD and accepted a tenure-track job at University of La Verne teaching human resource management and organizational behavior.

For years, his career in government, consulting, and academia seemed to run parallel to his passion for fitness and bodybuilding. As a professor, he integrates the strands whenever possible—like mixing tai chi sessions into his graduate seminars.

With the Lewis Center research fellowship, everything came together.

In collaboration with colleague William Luse, their ongoing research has already yielded valuable insights. Their findings indicate University of La Verne students who participated in wellness exercises such as aerobics, strength building, and stretching also expressed a readiness to change or improve their health—for example, practicing good eating habits and handling stress well. Concern about COVID-19, the researchers found, strengthened the positive relationship between wellness participation and health behavior change.

Dyck’s advice to students and colleagues: “Do something. Get busy, get active. I live by and firmly believe that exercise is medicine.”

An inspirational message hangs over Dyck’s squat rack in the converted garage-gym of his Rialto home. It reads: “You can throw in the towel, or you can use it to wipe the sweat off your face.”

Dyck takes that philosophy beyond the gym, into his teaching and research. And the university community is better for it.

The Great Equalizer

Alumnus Alberto J. Roman navigates the challenges of leading the largest community college in the state with lessons from his graduate degrees in public administration.

ALBERTO J. ROMAN, MPA '03, DPA '08, KNEW FROM A YOUNG AGE THAT HIS CAREER WAS GOING TO BE IN PUBLIC SERVICE.

Growing up in the Inland Empire in the 1980s and '90s, his family faced many of the same hurdles acclimating to the United States as other immigrant families from Mexico—a new language, a new city, a new way of life.

"As my family settled in, I began to face the challenges that come with being a person of color in this country," Roman said.

Experiencing incidents such as the Rodney King uprising in real time as a teenager also had a profound effect on him.

"I remember coming back from my baseball game and watching this debacle happen on TV, this social unrest," Roman said. "It got me thinking about what was underneath those actions, all the frustration from communities of color, and reflecting upon where we were in America at that time with regards to social justice and racial equity. That got me thinking about what we could do to improve our communities."



Alberto Roman congratulates an East Los Angeles College graduate from her car during a drive-through celebration.

In his college years and early 20s, Roman aspired to be an immigration attorney and ran for elected office before finding his path in higher education. To prepare, he earned both a Master of Public Administration and a Doctor of Public Administration from the University of La Verne while working his way up from local school district to community college management.

Roman's career trajectory and education perfectly aligned when he was appointed interim president of East Los Angeles College in July 2020 and then was offered a multi-year contract. The community college in Monterey Park is a Hispanic-Serving Institution with more than 35,000 students, many from immigrant families.

"Public education is the great equalizer, and I want to focus on bringing equity to students and communities of color," he said. "This is where I found my passion...where I felt I could have the highest impact."

Leading the largest community college in the state during a hot job market and a pandemic, though, has been a rocky road.

"We think we're making progress and then something else comes up and we have to pivot and change our planning," Roman said. "Sometimes we have a plan we think will work for the next two years and it changes by the next month."

To help navigate these challenges, Roman leans on his graduate education in public administration.

He draws from the lessons as he analyzes data to make informed decisions about enrollment, budget, and running the college. The program's focus on community involvement, too, helped him recognize how important it is to partner with nonprofits, businesses, or government agencies to access resources and shape opportunities for students.

The leadership classes especially, Roman said, prepared him for how to become an effective leader in tumultuous and uncertain times.

"I learned so much about how to become a public servant and an effective leader," he said. "It really honed me into ultimately what I want the rest of my career to be, and that's public education."

Justice for All

Two hands-on legal clinics in University of La Verne's College of Law provide students with real-world experience helping disenfranchised clients and critical lessons in self-care.

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE'S COLLEGE OF LAW, TWO CLINICS ARE PREPARING STUDENTS TO ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF LEGALLY DISENFRANCHISED CLIENTS.

The Misdemeanor Appellate Advocacy Clinic works with the San Bernardino County Judicial System. Students assist clients who are appealing misdemeanors, or attempting to clear their records following a criminal conviction, allowing them to find housing, pursue jobs, or join the military.

The Justice and Immigration Clinic provides pro bono representation to those in need of legal assistance in immigration matters.

Both programs build a sense of accomplishment and confidence for these young attorneys-to-be, and instill in students an understanding of the critical role lawyers play in creating an equitable society.

"It is a profession in which you become more aware of self and self-development," said assistant professor Michele Assael-Shafia. "As a lawyer, you take an oath to treat people with respect and professionalism, and to have an obligation to ethics."

Assael-Shafia and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Placido Gomez co-direct the Misdemeanor Appellate Advocacy Clinic. They supervise as students prepare briefs, set up oral arguments, and sometimes present before a panel of judges.

In a recent case presented by the students, one of the judges was decidedly impressed, asking in court, "Are you sure you all are law students?"

"What the clinic does for students is almost immeasurable," Gomez said. "When they have a real case with a real client, it is no longer theoretical. They have someone's life in their hands."

The same is true in the Justice and Immigration Clinic, said Krystal Rodriguez-Campos, a certified specialist in immigration and nationality law, and a visiting professor at the clinic.

Students in their final year work with U visa and asylum applicants. Asylum applicants have suffered torture or persecution in their home country, while U visa applicants have been victims of a crime in the United States.



Visiting Professor Krystal Rodriguez-Campos and law students in the Justice and Immigration Clinic.

Rodriguez-Campos trains students to prepare a case by conducting client interviews, writing legal briefs, and developing case strategy.

"We teach our students to be sensitive in talking to clients," she said. "Traumatized people often won't look you in the eyes. They sit close to the door. Often they will break down, or have memory issues. If you don't know how trauma works, you can't do the job."

The well-being of both the client and the student is critical.

"When you are dealing with these horrible stories, it can affect you," she said. "Our students watch training exercises and read materials from social workers, psychologists, and other mental health workers. We want them to be conscious of their own limits emotionally and psychologically to avoid burnout."

Many College of Law students are immigrants themselves, noted Rodriguez-Campos. Because of that, "they are able to respond in a more compassionate manner."

Gomez echoed the importance of compassion, justice, and safety in the education of new attorneys.

"Our students will be lawyers who understand their responsibility to serve their community," he said.

Marriages

Sajaad Shah, MBA '13, married Elizeth Leon in Claremont, California on June 4, 2016.

Elizabeth Ross '15 married Nicholas Zuppardi on June 5, 2020.

1 Brooke Grasso '18 married **Timothy Lavin '18** on November 6, 2021, in Palm Springs, California.

2 Kendra Craighead '18 married Edgar Pintor on June 5, 2021, at Holy Name of Mary Church in San Dimas, California.

3 Kevin Anthony Brouard '12 and his wife Megann were married in June 2021.

Megan Keller '16 married Kevin Nuss on November 6, 2021.

Andrea Naccache '13, MBA '16, JD '16, married Rony Khoury on January 16, 2022.

4 Lauren Crumbaker '16 married Bryce Keen on March 18, 2022, at Rancho Las Lomas in Silverado, California.



Births

5 Sarah Barthel '15, MEd '19, welcomed her first child, Clayton Xavier Ruiz, on May 30, 2021.

6 Tamlyn Tarango '13 and George Bageris '14 welcomed their first child, Sebastian Demitrios Bageris, on March 15, 2022.

7 Karina Cummings '15 welcomed baby Sebastian into the world on June 12, 2021.

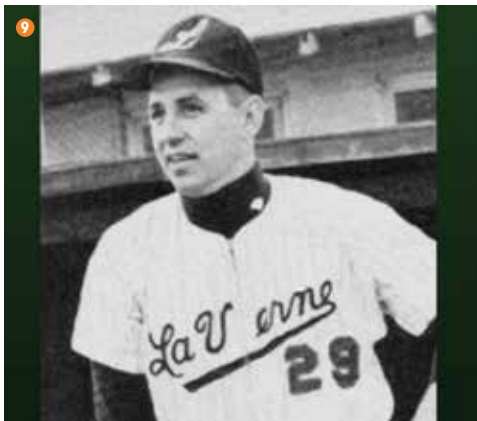
Sajaad Shah, MBA '13, and Elizeth Shah welcomed their first child, Lincoln Rose Shah, on May 15, 2021.

Kathryn Yeager '15 welcomed her first child, Theodore Barrington Hilliker, on April 10, 2022.

8 Michelle Roman '06 welcomed twin girls Anne and Jane into the world on November 11, 2021.



LEOPARD TRACKS ALUMNI NOTES



1950s

9 Ben Hines '58 passed away at age 85 on January 13, 2021. He served as a legendary baseball coach at the University of La Verne for 20 years and was a member of Tommy Lasorda's Los Angeles Dodgers coaching staff for several seasons.

10 Fred Burwick '59 passed away one day before his 86th birthday in Pomona, California, on March 16, 2022. He was an internationally recognized authority on Romantic-Era British Literature, and the author and editor of more than 30 books, including *A History of Romantic Literature*.



1960s

Sarah Eleanor Meek '65 passed away at 98 on January 30, 2022. She earned her bachelor's degree and teaching certificate, then taught elementary school in the Chino Unified School District for more than 20 years.

Charles "Chuck" W. Freitas '65 passed away from cancer on Saturday, April 16, 2022. He played football for La Verne College, was a longtime educator and leader within the Claremont Unified School District, creator of the Claremont Adult School, principal of Sycamore and Condit elementary schools, and was widely involved in his community.

1970s

Bob Miller '79, DPA '14 served as the president of the board at Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association from 2020 to 2022.

1980s

Frank Lizarraga '80 was named Ann and Steve Morgan Leopard of the Year at University of La Verne.

Alvaro E. Diaz '85 is the vice president of operations and research and development for ReShape Lifesciences Inc.

1990s

11 Fabian Valdez '95, MBA '03, was appointed chief of police for the San Fernando Police Department.

Naomi S. Hammonds, MEd '94, was appointed to the Board of Education of Inglewood Unified School District.

Thomas W. Monahan, Jr., MEd '92 served as an elementary teacher with the Bellflower Unified School District for 38 years. On June 7, 2019 he retired and lives in Mission Viejo, California, with his wife of 32 years.

Rick Weaver '99 has a new role with Check Point Software Technologies as security engineering manager for state and local education.

Alison Caito-Galligan, MS '93, started as head coach for girls' lacrosse at Bishop Stang High School.

Vincent D. Jensen '99, MBA '03, started as chief clinical operating officer at City of Hope.

Nancy A. Treder '92 started as a reporter for Sound Publishing.

2000s

12 Giovanna Brasfield, DPA '06, EdD '07, was featured in the *LA Business Journal* as Woman of Influence in construction, architecture, and engineering.

Adam Cushing, MEd '04, was named new run game coordinator for the Duke Blue Devils football program. He was an assistant football coach at the University of La Verne for two years.



Nick Paz '04 celebrated his retirement after 38 years of service as La Verne police chief.

Jonathan Serret '06, MS '16, was selected by the City of Thousand Oaks, California, as cultural affairs director following an executive search process led by Arts Consulting Group.

Clarence Cernal '06 was appointed as commissioner at Tri-City Mental Health Authority's Mental Health Commission serving the communities of Pomona, La Verne, and Claremont.

Stacy Gomes, EdD '05, has been appointed to the board of the Academy of Integrative Health & Medicine at Pacific College of Health and Science in San Diego.

Ward Andrus, EdD '09, was unanimously selected to be the new Murrieta Valley Unified School District superintendent.

Rita Gallardo Good '03, MPA '07, is the director of civic affairs for California State University, Sacramento in the Office of Public Affairs and Advocacy and won a *Hispanic Lifestyle* 2021 Latina of Influence honoree title.

Eric R. Nunez '08 won the "Heroes for 2021" award during the Los Alamitos Chamber of Commerce annual luncheon.

Jose L. Reynoso '06 started a new position as city manager for the City of Sierra Madre, California.

Adrian J. Ferrera '06 started a new position as director of counseling and sports psychology at West Virginia University.



2010s

Tammi Gray, MS '10, was awarded by the 2021 Women of Color STEM Conference for her significant contributions and outstanding achievements related to women in technology.

Ben Jenkins '11 published a book titled *California's Citrus Heritage* in 2021.

Brenda Lewis, EdD '16, was appointed to the California Board of Education by Governor Gavin Newsom.

Alyssa Navarro '16 joined the *Forbes* 30 Under 30 2022 list in Hollywood and Entertainment for her work as an executive producer at The Walt Disney Studios.

Fonda Whitehead, MSLM '13, MPA '16, was honored with the G.O.L.D. Star Alumni Award (Graduate of the Last Decade) for the University of La Verne.

Candice Salazar '15 started a small business called Candy's Compost in August 2020 selling succulent arrangements in Pomona.

Ruzanna Hernandez, MEd '13, MEd '17, EdD '17, released a book titled *Efficiency and Organization*.

Cameron R. Davis, MS '16, started a new position as assistant defensive line coach for the Detroit Lions.

Adrian Paul Stevens, DPA '10, started as associate vice president for philanthropic giving at California State University, San Bernardino.



Walter Marquez, EdD '15, started a new role as CEO of the Fairplex in Pomona.

Erica Beal, MBA '15, was featured in *Forbes Magazine* in the article "Latina CEO Breaks Down Gender Barrier In Engineering and Provides Employment Solution For Military Spouses."

Tanis Christine Burleson, MEd '15, started a new position as vice principal at Sierra Vista Middle School.

James T. Hayes, MS '18, started a new position as president and CEO of State Employees Credit Union.

David Gustafson, EdD '19, has been recognized by the Association of California School Administrators as the 2022 Region 19 Continuation/Educational Options Administrator of the Year.

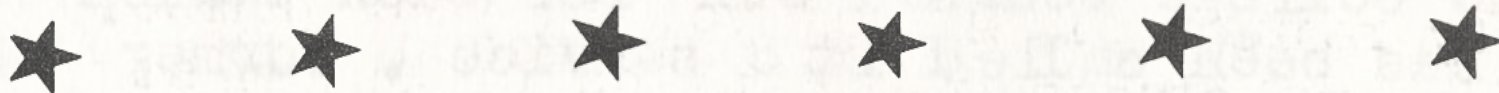
Tiffany Ann Mendez '09, MEd '14, EdD '18, passed away on May 1, 2022 from breast cancer. She was 34. She was a dedicated University of La Verne scholar and former staff member who helped numerous students access academic services and financial aid counseling.

2020s

Liliana Andriani '20, president of local Angel's Jewelers, was presented with a proclamation in recognition of her community service by Mayor Dennis Michael, on behalf of the Rancho Cucamonga City Council.

Andrew J. Alonzo '20 started at the *Claremont Courier* newspaper as a reporter.

La Verne College Goes to War



BY DECEMBER 1941, WHEN THE UNITED STATES JOINED WORLD WAR II, FEW STUDENTS, PROFESSORS, OR STAFF MEMBERS AT WHAT WAS THEN CALLED LA VERNE COLLEGE WERE SURPRISED THAT THE CONFLICT WOULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES AND INSTITUTION.

The war posed an ethical conundrum for students. Members of the Church of the Brethren, a nonviolent Christian denomination, played a pivotal role in the founding and early years of the college. At the heart of the Brethren faith is a commitment to pacifism, nonviolence, and non-participation in military conflict.

A generation earlier, during World War I, Jesse Brandt, a Brethren student who had taken classes at La Verne, was drafted but refused to serve in the military. After temporary incarceration in Alcatraz, he worked in an army hospital in Washington. By the time the US entered World War II, Brandt had become a faculty member and administrator at the college. He offered counsel to pacifist students who wanted to avoid military service but still support the war effort.

During World War II, no students from La Verne College were jailed as Brandt had been. Taking the advice of the Brethren and other pacifist denominations, the US government established the Civilian

Public Service program. As part of this organization, students from La Verne College performed forestry and conservation work in California and the Pacific Northwest. Although these students had to temporarily pause their educational pursuits, working with Civilian Public Service allowed them to live out their faith's pacifist creed.

“Balancing tradition with the need for innovation allowed La Verne to weather the storm of the 1940s.”

Other students did join the armed forces, serving in a variety of capacities in the Army, Navy, and Army Air Force. From radarmen in the Pacific theater to infantrymen in Europe, students from La Verne College supported the war effort in many ways. Five students died in the conflict, and shortly after the war were honored by the dedication of a memorial drinking fountain that now stands outside Founders Hall.

World War II transformed life on the home front. The most visible impact on the college was the disappearance of male students. This caused a collective sigh among the female population.



Above and Above Right: Historical images from the La Verne College 1946 yearbook show students studying and posing for a group photo outside.

The most consequential outcome of the war was La Verne College's commitment to educating veterans.

As a dirge from the early 1940s lamented, "Of all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest of these – there are no men."

Despite their colorful lament, female students thrived at La Verne College during the war. They studied under blackout conditions, turning their lights out at dusk to avoid attracting enemy aircraft. Lena Ott Coffman, a student in the early 1940s, once had to write a paper for a class late at night. She sequestered herself with a typewriter in a closet, closed the door, turned on the lightbulb, and completed her assignment. Female students took control of the associated student body during the war, even assuming its presidency.

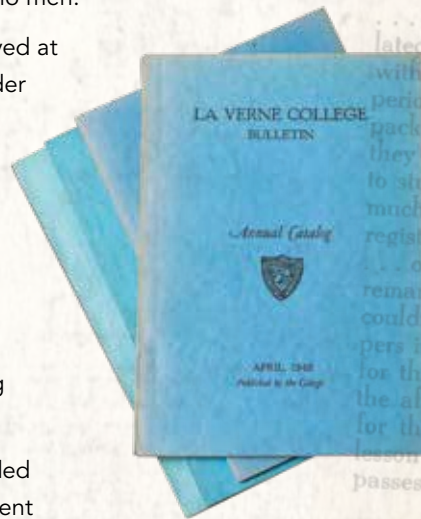
After the war, students from across the world attended the college. By the 1960s, the *Campus Times* student newspaper regularly featured columns by international students. Following in the footsteps of conscientious objectors, numerous graduates entered Brethren Volunteer Service and, later, International Voluntary Services, working on educational and community development projects worldwide.

The most consequential outcome of the war was La Verne College's commitment to educating veterans. In 1944, the US Congress passed the GI Bill, which funded education for veterans. La Verne College worked closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs to enroll male and female veterans as early as the mid-1940s. Quonset huts for veteran students and their families appeared north of Third Street, within sight of Founders Hall. Educating and housing veteran students paved the way for the university's Sara and Michael Abraham Center for Veteran Student Success, which now provides services for hundreds of active military personnel, veterans, and their family members.

Balancing tradition with the need for innovation allowed La Verne to weather the storm of the 1940s. That same Leopard spirit exhibited during the COVID-19 pandemic has helped the University of La Verne survive these turbulent times and move forward stronger than ever.



VETERANS



May 1944

University of La Verne

University of La Verne
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OF LA VERNE

Big Hearts, Big Impact

THE DYERS HAVE ATTENDED EVERY HOMECOMING AND FAMILY WEEKEND SINCE THEY GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE.



Bob served as the university's football announcer for 32 years while also announcing the men's basketball team for 29 years. When people heard him shout, "Welcome to Ortmayer Stadium, home of exciting Leo football!" from the announcer booth into the stands, the Leopard community would get up and cheer for the home team. Yet, it isn't the Dyers' cheery faces or Bob's golden voice for which they will be most remembered. Instead, their biggest legacy will be their hearts.

“It felt like the right thing to do, supporting the school, so that others can have great experiences like we’ve had.”

After learning of the various ways they could make a planned gift, they decided to take out a life insurance policy that would benefit the university upon their passing. For a fraction of the price, the Dyers will be making a substantial six-figure gift that they would not otherwise have been able to make. "The University of La Verne, particularly its athletics program, had such a big impact on my life," Bob reflected. "I met Sue here, and we have lots of friends that we've kept in contact with for years. It felt like the right thing to do, supporting the school, so that others can have great experiences like we've had."



Learn more on giving societies: **laverne.edu/advancement/giving-societies**

Explore how you can make an impact by using one of our interactive online tools.

And more at **plannedgiving.laverne.edu**



**GIFT
CALCULATOR**



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SAVE THE DATE
OCTOBER 15-16, 2022



**Homecoming and
Family Weekend**