

Voice



University of La Verne Magazine Fall 2025

Establishing Roots

Why creating a legacy through ULV led to a lifetime of connections



A person's arm and hand are visible on the left side of the frame, holding a large stuffed tiger. The tiger is white with black stripes and is looking towards the right. The background is a dense, out-of-focus forest with green leaves and brown branches, creating a bokeh effect. The lighting is bright, suggesting sunlight filtering through the trees.

Hugs all Around

Calling all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and ULV community members. Submit your photos for a chance to be featured in the next Voice issue!

univ.lv/voicephotos

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05.02.26
Save the Date

SCHOLARSHIP GALA 2026
Sheraton Fairplex Conference Center, Pomona, CA

University of
La Verne



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Furthering a Legacy

Rayna Harrison is expanding her family's remarkable heritage

By Charles R. Bentley

—

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Illustration by
Grace Kim

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Voice

ULV Voice Magazine

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Where Lifelong Learning Flourishes

At the University of La Verne, we believe that learning doesn't end at graduation. In fact, it's just the beginning. Lifelong learning—one of ULV's core values—means continually growing, adapting, and staying curious throughout every stage of life.

In today's rapidly evolving world, our relationship with knowledge must also evolve. Whether that's exploring new interests, building skills, mentoring others, or simply engaging with fresh ideas, learning helps us lead fuller, more connected lives. At ULV, we're committed to fostering this mindset not just within our classrooms but throughout our broader community.

Through degree and non-degree programs, public lectures, faculty research, and immersive experiences, we offer opportunities to learn that go beyond career development. They're designed to spark personal growth and bring people together around shared curiosity and purpose.

In this issue, you'll read about Represen-

tative Grace F. Napolitano, who entrusted her congressional archives to ULV to inspire future generations; Maria Estrada '25, a decorated military veteran recognized for her leadership and resilience; and the university's recent national recognition for promoting student success and equitable outcomes through the 2025 Carnegie Classifications.

Each of these stories reflects the spirit of lifelong learning. They remind us that it's never too early—or too late—to ask questions, try something new, or make a meaningful impact. We hope their experiences inspire you to keep learning in your own way.

Thank you for being a valued part of the Leo community. Your continued support allows us to build a culture where education is not just a phase—but a lifelong pursuit.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Risa E. Dickson".

Dr. Risa E. Dickson, PhD
President

Connect

Supporting Excellence ○ ULV Names New
Provost ○ LFCE Joins National Consortium
○ Law Students Argue Appeal

News



Exploring Innovation and Excellence

The University of La Verne's 2025 Celebration of Scholarship showcased the innovative work of faculty, students, and staff across various disciplines, including business, finance, health and fitness outcomes, artificial intelligence, student success, history, and virtual/augmented reality. The event featured research pre-

sentations, creative works, and innovative teaching approaches that exemplify the university's commitment to scholarship with real-world impact. Highlights included the presentation of 23 research posters at a community lunch, where student and faculty researchers discussed their work. Awards were presented to individuals and teams demonstrating excellence in teaching innovation, discipline-based research, and student/faculty collaboration.

Awards were presented to individuals and teams demonstrating excellence in teaching innovation, discipline-based research, and student/faculty collaboration.



Above
Attendees of the
2025 Celebration of
Scholarship gather
for a presentation.

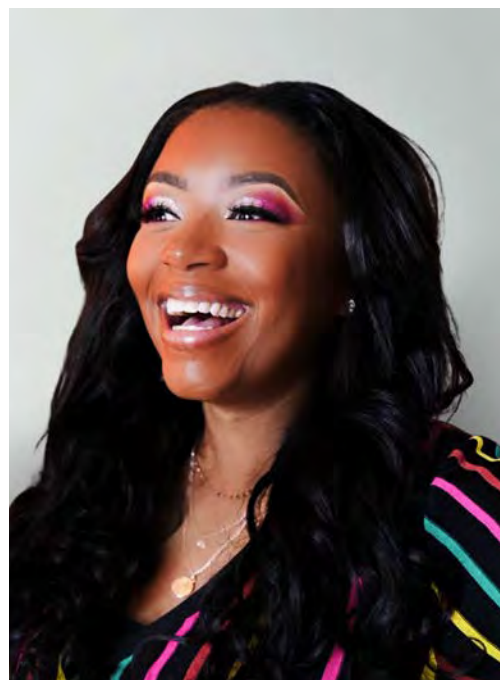
Photo by Brandon Le

Dr. Marquisha Frost Appointed as Assoc. Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Mission Integration

The University of La Verne has named Dr. Marquisha Frost as Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence and Mission Integration. An experienced leader in higher education, nonprofit strategy, and inclusivity initiatives, Dr. Frost previously served as Senior Vice President of Strategic Engagement and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at the Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. A former adjunct professor at ULV and local community leader, she returns to further embed the university's values—ethical reasoning, diversity and inclusivity, lifelong learning, and civic and community engagement—across campus. Reporting to the provost, she'll oversee Title IX, Center for Multicultural Services, Religious & Spiritual Life, Office of Civic and Community Engagement, and the Randall Lewis Center for Well-Being and Research. Dr. Frost earned a PhD in Higher Education Administration and master's degrees in counseling and education.

ULV Alumna Named Top 100 Education Influencer

Kelly MayVollmar, EdD '17, adjunct faculty at ULV, has been named one of *District Administration* magazine's Top 100 Education Influencers for 2025. As Superintendent of California's Desert Sands Unified School District, she champions innovation and equity—closing the digital divide, enhancing storytelling and social media, and mentoring future leaders through ULV's EdD program. This national honor follows her being named one of the 2024 DA Women of Distinction. Her recognition highlights ULV's mission of preparing transformative, equity focused educators who drive systemic change in K-12 schools.



Dr. Frost will work collaboratively to better integrate ULV's core values across all areas of campus life.

University of La Verne Announces New Provost

The University of La Verne has named Ken O'Donnell as its new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. O'Donnell brings nearly 25 years of experience in higher education leadership, with a strong focus on equity, student success, and innovation. He most recently served as Vice Provost and professor at CSU Dominguez Hills, where he led initiatives to improve graduation rates and workforce readiness. University President Risa Dickson praised his appointment: "Ken brings a deep understanding of the academic landscape and a bold vision for its future." O'Donnell expressed enthusiasm for his new role, stating, "I'm honored to join a university that puts students first and is unafraid to rethink how education can better serve society." His background includes roles at the CSU Chancellor's Office and Chapman University. O'Donnell holds a master's in film production from USC and a bachelor's in French literature from Northwestern University.



The LFCE Joins National Consortium to Advance EdD

The LaPetra College of Education has been accepted into the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED), a national consortium of over 150 institutions focused on reimagining the EdD as a rigorous, equity-driven, practice-based degree. The University of La Verne joins ranks with USC, ASU, and Baylor, affirming its commitment to preparing equity-minded educational leaders. Membership provides faculty with collaborative frameworks and resources, strengthens the EdD program's academic reputation, and attracts PK-12 professionals seeking practitioner-focused doctoral studies.

Ken brings a deep understanding of the academic landscape and a bold vision for its future.

25 years

Ken O'Donnell brings nearly 25 years of experience to Provost position

ULV has announced Ken O'Donnell as its new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. O'Donnell brings nearly 25 years of experience in higher education leadership, with a strong focus on equity, student success, and innovation.

Ranked #1 Bar Pass Rate for California Accredited Law Schools, Cal Bar 2023

ULV earns multiple distinctions in the 2025 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Online Programs rankings. "These rankings affirm our commitment to accessible, impactful graduate education, empowering diverse learners across California and online to lead and serve their communities," said Provost Ken O'Donnell.

#1

Top 100

ULV ranks No. 80 nationally in "Top 100 Best U.S. College 2025"

On March 14, 2025, ULV made history. Ehsan Danesh, a student in the program, successfully defended his research on financial storytelling. Danesh's defense was more than just an academic requirement, it was a major event and worthy of celebration.

ULV Law Students Argue Appeal

In March 2025, University of La Verne law students Brent Balancio and Erika Zuniga achieved a significant milestone by arguing before the California Court of Appeal—a rare opportunity even for seasoned attorneys. This accomplishment highlights the rigorous legal training and opportunities provided by the university's San Bernardino County Misdemeanor Appellate Clinic. Founded in 2019, the clinic offers hands-on appellate law experience, allowing students to represent indigent defendants

and argue real cases in court. Under the guidance of Professors Courtney Redman, Michele Assael-Shafia, and Arya Shamuilian, students analyze trial transcripts, identify legal issues, draft appellate briefs, and argue before local superior court appellate panels. College of Law and Public Service Dean Kevin Marshall emphasized the significance of this achievement, stating, "This was a monumental achievement for CLPS, our clinic, and our students." Zuniga reflected on the experience, noting, "Being involved in this clinic has opened my eyes to how vital appellate advocacy is to the legal system." Balancio and Zuniga's oral argument was the culmination of years of work by at least half a dozen students each semester, demonstrating the clinic's role in advancing justice and providing students with a unique, hands-on experience.

"This was a monumental achievement for College of Law and Public Service (CLPS) our clinic, and our students."



Brent Balancio, JD '25)
Law Student



Michele Assael-Shafia
Assistant Professor, Law



Erika Zuniga, JD '25
Law Student



Courtney Redman
Assistant Professor, Law



Arya Shamuilian, JD '18
Professor of Practice

ULV Partners with LA School District to Expand College Access

The University of La Verne and El Rancho Unified School District (ERUSD) have established a partnership to enhance college access and career advancement for ERUSD students and employees. The agreement, formalized at El Rancho High School, guarantees admission to ULV for qualifying students and provides a minimum scholarship of \$19,000 per academic year. Additional benefits include waived application fees, dedicated counseling, and college readiness programs. ERUSD employees, including full-time and permanent part-time staff, along with their spouses and registered domestic partners, are eligible for tuition discounts at ULV. This collaboration aims to remove barriers to higher education and create new opportunities for college success. University President Risa Dickson emphasized the importance of the partnership, stating, "We are removing barriers through student scholarships and a streamlined admissions process, creating new opportunities for college success." ERUSD Superintendent Marco Villegas added, "Collaborating with the University of La Verne broadens opportunities for our students to fulfill their educational and career goals."

"Collaborating with the University of La Verne broadens opportunities for our students to fulfill their educational and career goals."



Professor Mwebi Earns Carnegie Fellowship

Dr. Nixon Mwebi, a chemistry professor and department chair at the University of La Verne, has been awarded the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship. This fellowship will support his project at Kisii University in Kenya, where he will develop laboratory spaces and curriculum focused on environmental chemistry. His work aims to address global challenges such as

climate change, manufacturing, medicine, and agriculture. The initiative is part of a broader effort to foster collaborative research, graduate training, and mentorship between African Diaspora scholars and institutions in Africa. The Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program, funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and managed by the Institute of International Education in partnership with the Association of African Universities, has awarded nearly 750 fellowships since its inception in 2013.

This fellowship will support his project at Kisii University in Kenya, where he will develop laboratory spaces and curriculum focused on environmental chemistry.

Above
Dr. Nixon Mwebi
in the lab.

The ability to use their voice to advocate for issues is something that they will take forward into their futures.

Speaking Up and Speaking Out

By Mikayla Holzinger '20

My life took a meaningful turn when I decided to transfer to the University of La Verne during my sophomore year of college. I was initially drawn in by the university's debate team, which seemed like a natural fit given my passion for forensics. Once I arrived, I learned that the team focused exclusively on debate, while most of my background was in speech. I still remember advocating for the opportunity to compete in speech as a solo participant. Although that path didn't materialize at the time, it planted a seed that never left me.

Now, seven years later, I have the incredible privilege of serving as the Director of Forensics for the Lordsburg Speech Team

at the University of La Verne. In many ways, it feels like life has come full circle, and it's more rewarding than I ever imagined.

I have been involved in forensics for 16 years, and it changed my life as a young kid. I learned how to think critically about the world, formulate my thoughts more constructively, and use my voice for something much larger than just myself. Having the opportunity to teach this to the students of the Lordsburg Speech Team means everything to me, because they carry on the tradition of curiosity and life-long learning. They are exposed to what is happening to other people and communities by going to tournaments and listening to other speech-



Above

Trophies awarded at the National Speech Championship in Peoria, Illinois at Bradley University.



Mikayla Holzinger '20
Director of Forensics



es. This then teaches our students how to care about other people and issues, and once you're exposed to that, it never stops. The students on the team are learning to always seek information and listen to other people, something that everyone in the world should experience. Members of the team this past year have advocated about misogyny in the LGBTQ+ community, the conflated identities of being Arab American, fighting for women's rights through the battle of historical amnesia, the history of Black conservatism and its setbacks for liberation, and so much more. Their fervor for knowledge is something they will carry on with them for the rest of their lives.

Beyond just the students on the team, I can see how this activity is impacting the campus and surrounding community. When team members perform their speeches in showcases each semester, the student body is exposed to topics that they may not have previously researched or even known about. I have heard from students in my classes and showcase attendees that listening to these speeches inspired them to dig deeper and become more knowledgeable about those topics. This creates a new level of eagerness for life-long learning that is not found in a traditional classroom.

While I have been a part of the forensics community for such a long time,

becoming the director of a brand-new team has come with incredible learning opportunities. I have the unique privilege as a coach to learn about what my students are passionate about and continually learn about what is going on in the world. To have taken part in the opportunity to create a space that encourages critical thinking, advocacy, and community in a world that is challenging those very things is so important. Through this experience I believe that I am a better person, professor, and coach, and I owe it all to the University of La Verne for affording me this opportunity to continue the tradition of life-long learning.

Continuing The Mission

Maria Estrada's Journey From Combat To The Classroom

By Stephen Chavez '89

Maria Estrada '25 understood the mission: transitioning from 21 years of service in two combat deployments while serving in the United States Air Force to starting her path to a future in leadership at the University of La Verne.

Born on an airbase in Okinawa, Japan, Maria was shaped by her father's career in the Air Force. Today, as a single mother of three, with a grandson turning two this fall, Maria stands as a beacon of strength, celebrated not only for her military service, but also for her contributions to the ULV community.

Maria's two combat deployments included one in Qatar during Operation Enduring Freedom and another to Iraq as a convoy gunner for Operation Iraqi Freedom. In 2007, she transitioned to the Army National Guard, where she served for another 15 years. Her leadership roles included team leader and military police instructor, and her service earned her several commendations, including the Combat Order of the Spur and the NATO Medal for her contributions to international security efforts in Afghanistan.

"College isn't easy, and you have to give yourself a lot of grace. Stay focused, ask for help, and lean on the people around you."

As one of the few women in combat roles, Maria faced unique challenges, often being the only female in her unit. But her focus was never on gender—it was always on proving herself as a leader. "I didn't want to be seen differently just because I was a woman," she shares. "I worked hard to prove myself, and I took on every challenge with the same determination as my male counterparts."

Transitioning from military life to civilian life is a difficult process for many veterans, and Maria was no exception. Her journey took a pivotal turn when she decided to pursue a degree at ULV. For Maria, the University of La Verne's mission to create a space for quality education and personal growth mirrored her own desire for growth beyond her military career. Balancing academics with raising three children, Maria credits her military background for helping her succeed in college. The leadership skills she honed during her years of service became her foundation at ULV, especially as a mentor in the Sara and Michael Abraham Center for Veteran Student Success (ACVSS).

In March, the LA Kings honored her as the Hero of the Game for her years of service in the military. Maria advocates for veterans who are transitioning into student life, emphasizing the importance of self-compassion and utilizing available resources. "College isn't easy, and you have to give yourself a lot of grace," she says. "Stay focused, ask for help, and lean on the people around you."

Her commitment to both her education and community is reflected in her decision to now pursue a master's degree in leadership and management at ULV.

Beyond academics, Maria talks about the relationships she has formed at ULV, connections that have helped her grow both personally and professionally. "The memories and relationships I've made here are what I'll treasure most," she shares. "ULV gave me the chance to grow, both academically and personally."

Maria Estrada's journey is a powerful reminder of the courage and resilience that define veterans and women in the military. Her story continues to inspire those around her, demonstrating that leadership knows no gender and that with perseverance, any challenge can be overcome.

Photo by **Brandon Le**



Athletics



More Than A Win: Mya Ray Leads ULV Volleyball Into History

The fans held their breath. One final point, and then it was real. The University of La Verne Leopards clinched the SCIAC Tournament Championship. For the first time in the school's history, the team had claimed the conference title, engraving their names into the university's record books.

The team finished the season 26-6 overall with an NCAA Regional Championship, the program's first SCIAC Tournament Championship, two All-Americans, three All-Region selections, and four All-SCIAC awards. It is the 10th time in team history that the squad has won 25 or more games.

At the center of this major win stood Mya Ray, team captain, three-time All-American, and junior Business major, who helped guide the Leopards through one of the most successful seasons ULV has ever seen. Ray will be a senior this year with an expected graduation date in spring 2026.

"We definitely knew we were going to win that game," Ray recalled of the final against cross-town rival Claremont-Mudd-Scripps. "We just had such great energy. It was so positive. Everyone was in a really great mindset."

But Ray's influence at La Verne goes far beyond the volleyball court. Her leadership, rooted in service, humility, and a strong sense of community, has helped transform the Leopards into more than a team. Under her guidance, they've become a family.

"Our team specifically is really close," she said. "We almost do everything togeth-

Above
Mya Ray leads
the team to a
conference title

Photo by **Brandon Le**

“From lifelong friendships and memories to personal and professional growth, La Verne has shaped my life as I know it. To be a Leo is and will always be an honor.”



Randi Taylor-Toomay
BA '13, MEd '16,
EdD '24

Alum & Current
Women's Volleyball
Assistant Coach

Randi Taylor-Toomay says that thanks to her time as a student athlete, a coach, and now a professor at ULV, her values and beliefs have been deeply rooted in her experiences as a Leopard.

er. Whether it is the weight room, practice, eating—lunch, dinner, and breakfast even.”

That closeness has become a defining strength. In high-pressure moments, it's not just athletic skill that drives the team but the trust they've built with one another. Ray has played a central role in cultivating that trust.

“She never really wants to be in the spotlight. She always wants to lift other people up,” said Kaitlyn Patterson, graduate student and fellow teammate.

Freshman and Biology major Valerie Gallegos echoed the sentiment: “She is someone we all look up to. Mya Ray is a big name. She

is a beast on the court, but she's also uplifting and encouraging to her teammates.”

Head Coach Jeff Hendershot has seen that evolution firsthand. “The biggest thing that Mya's grown on is her presence, her voice, and her leadership,” he said.

At ULV, leadership is defined not only by achievement, but by ethical decision-making, mentorship, and contribution to a greater good. Ray embodies all of that. She balances the demands of a full course load with her captain duties, all while mentoring younger players and representing the university with integrity.

Her time at ULV, she says, has shaped her in ways she didn't expect. “It's been really eye-opening—and just fun overall,” Ray said. “Being part of such a close-knit team made it a great experience.”

For ULV and everyone around her, Mya Ray is more than a standout athlete. She's a mentor, a motivator, and a living example of what leadership at the University of La Verne looks like: grounded in service, built on heart, and destined to leave a legacy far beyond the final game.

Highlights

Home of the La Verne Leopards achievements and accomplishments.

100th

Career Win at La Verne

Jeff Hendershot reached a major career milestone on Friday night, collecting his 100th career victory as the University of La Verne women's volleyball head coach.

198

Student-Athletes on SCIAC All-Academic Team

The spots earned on the 2024-25 Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) All-Academic Team by our Leopards, highlights the continued commitment to excellence both on the field and in the classroom.

14.25 sec

110m Hurdles School Record

Zachary Reid set a new school record and led the University of La Verne Track and Field teams at the final regular season meet of the season.



Built Different: How Justin McFadden Is Redefining Resilience

When Justin McFadden steps onto the pitcher's mound, he brings more than just a ball and a glove; he brings heart, history, determination, and hope. The baseball team finished 25-11 overall and 18-6 in the SCIAC. They finished first in the conference, and they won both the SCIAC Regular Season Championship and the SCIAC Post-season Championship. They advanced to

"He played professionally for the Angels. Ever since I was a kid, he always told me this is something he wanted for me and I wanted it for myself, too."

Above
Justin McFadden throws a practice pitch before the game.

and hosted the NCAA Division III Baseball Regionals. It was the third year in a row they advanced to the regionals.

McFadden will be a senior majoring in Psychology with an expected graduation date of spring 2026.

Born with symbrachydactyly, a condition that left him without a fully formed left hand, Justin never let it stand in the way of his dreams. From a young age, baseball was more than just a passion; it was a sport he was determined to master.

That love for the game runs deep in his family. His grandfather, Thomas McFadden, once signed with the California Angels and later spent decades coaching high school baseball. Their bond shaped Justin's path early on.

"My grandpa, he kind of motivated me to play baseball," Justin shares. "He played professionally for the Angels. Ever since I was a kid, he always told me this is something he wanted for me, and I wanted it for myself, too."

As an outstanding pitcher for the University of La Verne, Justin represents an institution that fosters ethical reasoning, embraces diversity, and fosters lifelong learning.

More than just a place to compete, ULV empowers students to grow as principled leaders both on and off the field. Justin embodies that spirit. With a fastball reaching 91 miles per hour, he is living proof that heart and hard work can overcome any obstacle.

His family's support has always fueled his journey, and his strength hasn't gone unnoticed by those closest to him.

"My brother is the true testament of strength and resilience," says his older sister Mariah. "His determination for the game, his dedication, and his self-discipline are indescribable."

That blend of mental strength and physical talent has earned Justin the respect of his fellow teammates and coaches. Head Coach Scott Winterburn describes him as a smart, focused athlete with enormous potential. With the Leopards ranked No. 1 in their NCAA Division III region this season, Justin's role in their success is undeniable.

Even in tough moments on the field, he remains grounded. "Obviously, there's gonna be adverse moments when I'm pitching," Justin says. "I kinda tell myself that

I belong here and all my teammates have my back.”

It’s this sense of belonging, rooted in the university’s commitment to respecting all backgrounds, that fuels Justin’s confidence.

Furthermore, Justin’s impact stretches beyond the field. He plays not just to win but to inspire other children in similar situations. “One day, I hope to be in the Major Leagues,” he says. “And I want other kids born different to know they can do it, too.”

Justin’s story is not about overcoming a disability but rather about owning what makes you different and turning it into your personal strength. His story is about walking into spaces where people doubt you, and proving them wrong, not with words, but with actions.

“One day, I hope to be in the Major Leagues, and I want other kids born different to know they can do it, too.”

Below

Justin putting in the work behind the net.



Photo by Brandon Le

Historic 600th Career Win

Honoring three decades of dedication, teamwork, and a legacy that defines the spirit of La Verne baseball.

By Stephen Chavez '89

The University of La Verne's Head Baseball Coach, Scott Winterburn, has achieved a historic milestone: his 600th career win. This victory represents far more than a number; it's a reflection of three decades of mentorship, tradition, and unwavering commitment to student athletes.

Coach Winterburn began his 32-year collegiate coaching service as the head coach for the Cougars at Azusa Pacific University. After just one season with the Cougars, he joined the Leopards and has spent the last 24 seasons transforming the baseball program into a powerhouse built on courage, excellence, and community.

Coach Winterburn has greatly impact-

ed the University of La Verne's baseball program through the individual successes of his players and the achievements of the school's team as a whole.

Under his leadership, the Leopards have claimed six Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC) titles, competing against nine accomplished programs. His impact extends beyond team recognitions: Coach Winterburn has mentored five SCIAC Players of the Year—many of whom earned All-America and All-Region honors and went on to play professionally, including selections in Major League Baseball drafts.

Coach Winterburn strives to help his players accomplish their respective goals through the university's baseball program. He has set up a solid foundation for the team to create a supportive familial bond among one another, which can be an ultimate support system for the players.

"Our goal has been really consistent - promote an environment that is rich in talent and quality individuals, and to work really hard at the things that are in front of us," he says.

While he motivates his players to "keep their heads in the game," the coach also highly encourages them to dedicate themselves to their studies and become involved in their communities.

Whether it be from the stands or in the dugout, Winterburn's philosophy of hard work and collaboration does not go unnoticed.

Winterburn continues to shape the next generation of leaders both on and off the field. Coach Winterburn continues to focus on what truly matters: building character, fostering resilience, and shaping young lives through sport.

Winterburn's 600 wins mark an extraordinary milestone for the University of La Verne, but his greatest achievement lies in the leaders he's shaped, the lives he's empowered, and the legacy he continues to build. His influence isn't just woven into ULV's story; it defines the very standard of excellence the university aspires to uphold.

"Our goal has been really consistent - promote an environment that is rich in talent and quality individuals, and to work really hard at the things that are in front of us"

Right

University of La Verne's Head Baseball Coach Scott Winterburn in the dugout.



Global Lessons to the ULV Classroom

Bridging science and society through the anthropology of food, equity, and innovation.

By Stephen Chavez '89

Dr. Lauren Crossland-Marr, assistant professor of Anthropology at the University of La Verne, has built her career on a deceptively simple idea: food is more than sustenance; it is a window into culture, politics, and identity.

From studying halal certifications in Milan, Italy to examining how CRISPR, a gene-editing technology, is shaping modern agriculture, Dr. Crossland-Marr explores how what ends up on our plates reflects the systems and values that define our world.

Since joining the University of La Verne in 2024, Dr. Crossland-Marr has become known for her approachable yet thought-provoking teaching style. Her classes don't just teach theory; they invite students, many of whom are first-generation or bicultural, to see how their own experiences connect to broader global issues. Whether she's producing her podcast *A CRISPR Bite*, developing research on soybean farming in the Midwest, or finding creative ways to balance fieldwork with life as a mother, Dr. Crossland-Marr brings energy, curiosity, and care to everything she does.

In this conversation, she reflects on her path into anthropology, her passion for connecting science and culture, and how she

hopes to inspire students to see their place in shaping the future of food and society.

What originally drew you to anthropology, and how did food systems become your lens for exploring culture and identity?

I've always been curious about why certain things feel "right or natural" based on where and how we grew up. Anthropology gave me tools to connect those everyday experiences to larger systems like power and inequality. When I was doing my PhD research in Italy, studying food certification in the food system, it became clear how much food carries questions of authenticity and belonging. For the Muslim communities I worked with, food wasn't just about sustenance; it was about religious adherence, identity, and national belonging. That was my entry point into food anthropology.

You balance a demanding academic career, research, a podcast, and teaching—all while raising a family. How do you manage it all? Some days I do, and some days I don't! It took me a while to learn that rest is as much a part of productivity as output. I set aside time for writing, for my daughter, and for sleep. Having a strong

support network of mentors, colleagues, and friends helps enormously. And curiosity is my biggest motivator, when I'm excited about a project, I somehow find the energy to make it work. But I'll be honest, I'm no model of perfect balance.

What brought you to the University of La Verne, and what stood out when you joined the faculty? ULV's commitment to first-generation and nontraditional students really resonated with me. If education is going to be meaningful, it has to include everyone, not just those with a straight path to higher education. I was also drawn to the university's emphasis on equity and social justice. From day one, I felt welcomed by my colleagues, and I've been inspired by our students. Many of them are bicultural and bring such rich, layered perspectives to our discussions about culture, politics, and identity.

Your podcast, *A CRISPR Bite*, blends storytelling with science. Why did you choose audio as your platform, and how did you push yourself to do it? Honestly, I was nervous at first. I wanted to make complex questions about gene editing feel inti-



If education is going to be meaningful, it has to include everyone, not just those with a straight path to higher education.

mate and relevant. Audio felt like the perfect medium. You get to hear from farmers, scientists, and activists in their own voices. The podcast began as a pandemic project when my postdoctoral work at Dalhousie University transitioned from on-campus to remote. What started as a creative outlet soon evolved into a platform that connected with audiences far beyond academia.

How do you translate something as technical as CRISPR into something engaging for general audiences? I start with people. Anthropology is about stories, so I frame the science around human experiences and what CRISPR means to the farmers or scientists who work with it. I avoid jargon, use metaphors, and test my scripts on friends and students to make sure it's clear. If I can't explain it as a story, I know I don't understand it well enough yet.

You've voiced concerns about equity in food technology. How can CRISPR and other innovations better serve fairness? The first step is asking who's at the table when these technologies are being developed. Whose problems are they solving?

Too often, the answer is corporations and startups, not small-scale farmers or marginalized communities. CRISPR can be part of the solution, but it can't be the only solution. We also need policies that address land access, seed sovereignty, fair labor, and transparency about trade-offs. Innovation is never neutral—it reflects the systems and values behind it.

Where do you see the biggest gap in public understanding of food systems? Most people think food choices are purely personal, without realizing how much policy and infrastructure shape access to healthy food. Anthropologists now prefer the term “food apartheid” over “food desert,” because these inequities were created through historical and systemic forces, not by chance. Another gap is the belief that technology alone can solve hunger or climate change. History shows us—like during the Irish potato famine—that these are political and economic problems first.

Your research has taken you from Milan to Halifax to Southern California. How

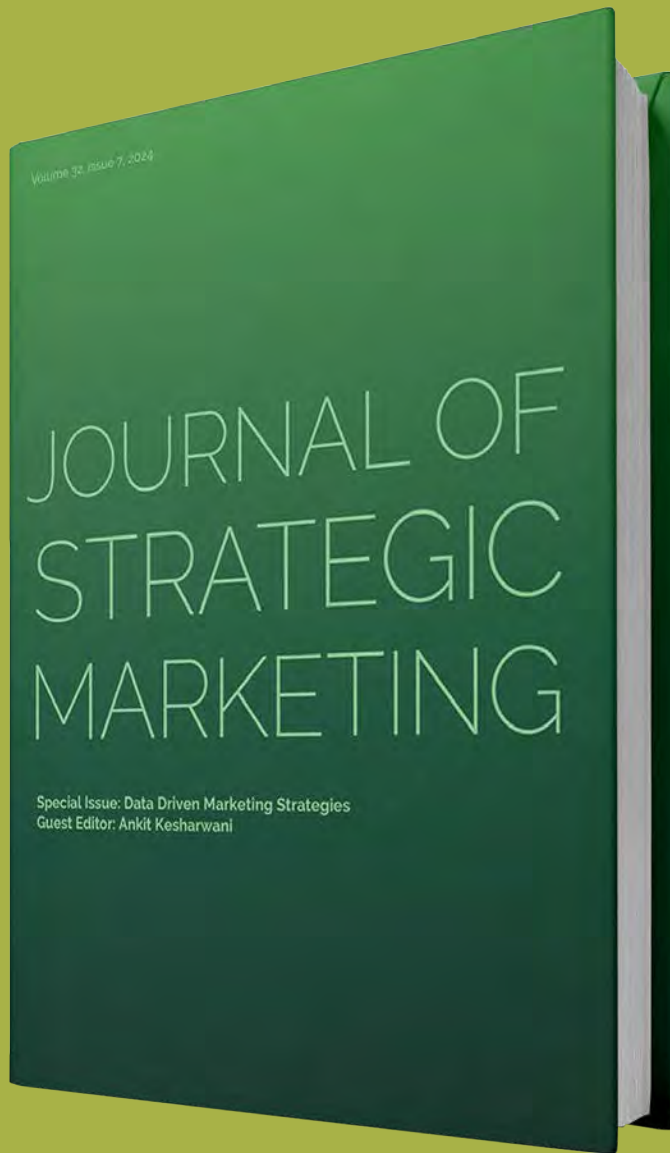
has that shaped your perspective on global food politics? It's made me deeply skeptical of one-size-fits-all solutions. Every context is different, and local realities matter. At the same time, these places all raised similar questions, about authenticity, belonging, and what's considered “natural.” Those connections help me bring a global, comparative lens into the classroom.

What do you find most rewarding about working with ULV students? Seeing them realize what's possible for their futures. After hosting Yale scholar Dr. Chelsey Carter for a guest talk, many students wrote to me about how powerful it was to see someone who looked like them succeeding in academia. Those moments remind me to amplify diverse voices and to help students see that their ambitions are achievable.

ULV emphasizes lifelong learning. What does that mean to you? For me, it's about staying curious and humble. I learn as much from my students as they do from me. They connect ideas in ways I wouldn't think of, and they keep me engaged with the world outside academia, whether that's exploring how to thoughtfully integrate AI into our classrooms or finding new cultural touchpoints for lessons. Lifelong learning is what keeps me energized and makes me love what I do.

What's next for you? Another podcast, new fieldwork, or a book? All three! I recently signed a book contract for *Parma Ham and Halal Salami*, an ethnography about food certification and belonging in Italy designed for introductory courses. I'm also starting fieldwork on soybeans in the Midwest, exploring how innovation and infrastructure shape farming, and developing a soybean-focused podcast. On campus, I'm building a teaching project using ULV's Native Californian basketry collection to explore food systems. And, of course, I'm savoring every moment with my two-year-old, she keeps me grounded and inspired.

Bookshelf



Journal of Strategic Marketing

**By Thomas Martin Key, Astrid L. Keel,
Andrew J. Czapslewski and Eric M. Olson**

“Brand Activism Change Agents: Strategic Storytelling For Impact And Authenticity” proposes a narrative-based model to help brands engage in activism, strengthen customer ties, and minimize alienation, to enhance their impact as sociopolitical change agents while maintaining stakeholder support.

Our faculty-written and edited recommendations.

An Artful Reframing:
The University of La Verne’s
Heritage, Identity, and Current
Context

Edited By Alfred P. Clark

An Artful Reframing: The University of La Verne’s Heritage, Identity, and Current Context reframes University of La Verne’s history with an inclusive lens, highlighting our transformation from a predominantly white college to a minority-serving institution.

Danilo and the
Chocolate Hills –
Book 3: The Final Adventure

By Issam Ghazzawi

In this exciting children’s fiction novel, Dr. Issam Ghazzawi highlights the power of life-long learning. Through magical adventures and meaningful challenges, young readers will explore themes of friendship, courage, and personal growth while building their imagination and other values essential to child development.

FURTHERING



RAYNA HARRISON IS EXPANDING HER
FAMILY'S REMARKABLE HERITAGE

BY CHARLES R. BENTLEY

ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE KIM



A LEGACY

*“I TELL
OTHERS
THERE IS
STILL
NOWHERE
ELSE
LIKE
LA VERNE.”*

**FAME, IT'S SAID,
IS FLEETING.**

The flickering of a candle's flame against the winds of time. Yet celebrity's shadow can extend well beyond the life of the wick, and those shaded regard it as a blessing or a burden. Or both.

Rayna Harrison '19 is well aware of her family tree and its links to the University of La Verne. She spent countless hours of her youth on the campus and attending school-related events with her parents, Corlan '79 and Rob '81, MAT '83. Still, even to some familiar with the institution, the connection isn't readily apparent.

At a university with 134 years of educational excellence and rich in traditions, certain names are respected, even revered. Trace back one generation along Rayna's family lineage and everything becomes clear. Her maternal grandparents remain esteemed and treasured campus figures eight decades after their arrival in 1948.

Roland "Ort" Ortmyer spent his career at La Verne coaching, teaching, and serving as director of athletics. The Leopards head football coach for 43 years, his approach to coaching set him apart. Where victories, titles, and trophies typically measure success, he believed the player mattered more. He allowed individuals to set their own goals, seeking progress and growth rather than yards or points. He encouraged each to exceed personal expectations while striving to become the best person he or she could be.

That philosophy resonated with students on his teams and in his classes. It also appealed to fellow faculty and administrators, complimenting La Verne's value of lifelong learning. The pursuit of knowledge and skills for self-improvement isn't contained within a single lesson or class. It's an enduring search for fulfillment.

Cornelia "Corni" Ortmyer, who worked 35 years as a teacher in the Bonita Unified School District, was involved in a vast array of campus activities. That included running the concession stand at football games, still known as "Corni's Corner."

While the "dorm parents" in Woody Hall, Ort and Corni raised three children—Susan, Corlan, and David (who tragically passed away in 1953). Decades later, Rayna would also spend time on and around campus. Understandable since her best friend while growing up was her grandfather.

Her earliest memory of La Verne came when she attended her first football game.

"I wrote about it in my admission essay," said Rayna. "We'd watched games on TV, but to be there on the sidelines with him, standing at the 20-yard line on the north end of the field, it was special."

*“LA VERNE COULD
BE RIGHT FOR ME,
AND NOT JUST BECAUSE
OF MY GRANDPARENTS’
LEGACY. IT WAS ALL
ABOUT ME AND
WHAT I WANTED TO DO.”*

RAYNA HARRISON
ULV ALUMNA '19

Her cousin, Beau Ortmyer '06, was on that team. She recalls how big all the players looked in their uniforms. Her grandfather, long retired, told her everything that was happening, “explaining it in a way a five-year-old could understand,” she said.

“To see the respect he was given by everyone, it was amazing. I have no idea who won or lost. But then that wasn’t the point.”

Athletics have long been a part of Rayna’s life. While in kindergarten, she brought home a flyer about a karate program. Her father Robb, who had previously participated in martial arts, wasn’t sure it was the best option for someone so young. He

personally investigated, checking out what was being taught and how, before Rayna was allowed to join. Karate quickly became her passion and over time she advanced in status and stature, winning competitions and becoming a popular instructor.

At one point a knee injury required her to seek help from an athletic trainer. Matt Wilson, father of one of her students and now co-head trainer for Pomona-Pitzer athletics, worked with her. His assistance not only helped Rayna’s rehabilitation, it opened the door to a new world.

“He started the ball rolling in my life,” she said. “There was a Sports Athletic Training Club at Upland High School, and

But Julie said, 'A tour as a prospective student? That's different.'

Wheeler '86, MEd '96—at that time a ULV employee and the daughter of distinguished alumna Myrna Wheeler '60—conducted the tour personally.

"While in the Student Center we ran into Marilyn (Oliver). I still don't know if that was a planned meeting or not," said Rayna.

The university's longtime head athletic trainer and its director of athletic training education, Oliver showed her the department's facilities. She explained how the program was academically sound and highly respected, then addressed the other issues.

"(Marilyn) helped me realize La Verne could be right for me, and not just because of my grandparents' legacy. It was all about me and doing what I wanted to do," said Rayna.

Early in her college life, it sometimes felt as if she was living under a microscope. Being held to a different standard by certain faculty members.

"Believe me, the degrees of Ort are so real," said Rayna, who now insists attending ULV was the right choice. "I tell others there is still nowhere else like La Verne."

After earning a Bachelor of Science in Athletic Training, Rayna accepted a job in South Carolina. However, things didn't work out, and she returned home to search for a position. A friend told her about an opportunity at Concordia University Irvine.

"There was a hiring freeze on, but they could still hire grad assistants," said Rayna, who along with her CUI colleagues received the 2021 Athletic Training Staff of the Year award from the PacWest Conference.

Earning a Master of Science in Coaching & Exercise Science from Concordia in 2022 proved a proud personal achievement. "Our family has a tremendous coaching tradition," she said, "yet here I am the first to get a master's in coaching."

Now an assistant athletic trainer, she is preparing for her sixth year with Concordia athletics and credits Head Athletic Trainer Jeff Brown for encouraging the right atmosphere.

"It makes all the difference that the student athletes know we care about them, not just as athletes but as people. That ties into how I want to work," said Rayna.

That work ethic includes the same ap-

proach her grandfather brought to La Verne: a belief in helping each student achieve their goals, in competition and in life.

Four years ago, Rayna worked with the men's water polo team. She became close to the players, especially several freshmen. Last spring she attended Concordia's commencement ceremony as those former freshmen earned degrees. One stood out, one who "wasn't on top of things academically, so I made him do his homework while at my desk," she said.

"Athletic training is a job of people. You have to be good at diagnosing issues and helping them to compete at their best. But it's also a unique place to get to know people."

During commencement, that student's father, who she describes as a "big burly man," sought her out.

"He took off his sunglasses and gave me this big hug. He told me he knew the role I played in helping his son earn his degree," she said. "So he's crying, I'm crying and his son is crying. I loved it, and it helped me see that I made a difference."

According to her parents, such demonstrations of appreciation happen frequently. While attending Concordia events where Rayna is working, they are approached by parents who thank them for how she supports their sons and daughters.

"That was something my dad always talked about, how sports isn't about winning or losing but about how it helps people become a more complete person," said Corlan. "Rayna has that ability to help these athletes."

It's that core belief in lifelong learning, the Ortmyer legacy, renewed and revitalized.

"That's what my grandfather believed. To put people first; athletics is secondary," said Rayna. "I feel like I am keeping that philosophy alive."

Because her grandmother died not long before she was born, she has no personal memories. One Sunday at the La Verne Church of the Brethren, Corlan asked the congregation to share stories about her mom with Rayna. Many did.

"When people tell me I remind them of Ort, it's an incredible honor," said Rayna. "But it's the ones who tell me I remind them of Corni. That's a blessing. And the unbelievable legacy of the Ortmyer name is something I will always cherish."

I immediately fell in love with it all. I knew it was what I wanted to do."

Yet when the time came to look at colleges, Rayna didn't set her sights on ULV. There the Ortmyer name carried weight she wasn't sure she was ready to bear.

She was never pressured by her parents, who allowed her to make the final decision. She considered a program in Maine, far from her Upland home. However, an unexpected invitation would change everything.

"Julie Wheeler heard from someone I wasn't planning to come to La Verne. She asked if I'd taken a tour yet," said Rayna. "I said I'm the last person who needs a tour."



FORWARD

PRESIDENT RISA DICKSON IS HELPING POSITION ULV TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

BY STEPHANIE L. GRAHAM '88
PHOTO BY BRANDON LE

IT'S EARLY
AFTER
NOON

"What I'm here to do is create stability and provide a

and University of La Verne President Risa Dickson, dressed in business casual and sensibly chic flats, has returned to her Founder's Hall office from an Academic Affairs meeting. Her goal in these meetings and others like it is to share information frequently and transparently.

"I tend to be very collaborative. I delegate appropriately. I will explain what I'm doing and why," says Dickson, settled now in her office. "I'd like to think that I've generated a level of trust with everyone because when they approach me, they're going to get consistency."

This trust is essential as Dickson, in unison with all ULV constituents, navigates a challenging time for colleges and universities.

"Right now, higher education is in a very hard pivot," she says. "What I'm here to do is create stability and provide a way forward into the future so that the university is relevant to students and to the communities that they'll live and work in."

LEADING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Dickson is well-suited for this moment. A communication theorist who specializes in interpersonal and organizational communication, she arrived at ULV as

Interim Provost, a position she held for nearly eight months. She was appointed president in August 2024, following Acting President Mark Hicks and the university's 19th President, Pardis Mahdavi, who resigned in June 2024.

Prior to ULV, Dickson held interim positions at the University of Toledo (Provost) and at Palo Alto University (Interim Vice President). Her career in higher education also includes serving as Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy at the University of Hawaii (seven and a half years) and as Associate Dean and Communication Studies Department Chair at Cal State San Bernardino (24 years).

She says her experiences have made one thing clear: most institutions' problems are not unique.

"Having worked in so many different organizations, from small private institutions to big public ones, I've learned that they all run quite similarly," Dickson says. "I've learned what hasn't worked and what has."

Nearly all schools have been impacted by the "enrollment cliff": fewer college-age students. Colleges and universities collectively experienced a 15% decline in enrollment between 2010 and 2021, according to the National Center

way forward into the future so that the university is relevant to students and to the communities that they'll live and work in."

for Education Statistics. ULV had an 8% drop in total headcount in fall 2024 compared to the prior year, showing decreases in both undergraduate and graduate programs by 9% and 8%, respectively. The university's enrollment stood at 8,000 undergraduate students for much of the 2010s before declining near the end of the decade.

Add to this the influence of technology. "The way our students' brains work and how they think and learn has changed," she says. "Students are entering a world where jobs are being created and becoming obsolete unlike any other time in recorded history. Today's students really will have to create the future.

"Artificial intelligence is going to be pervasive. It's not just about how students use it in the classroom. Our students need to be able to understand how to really create, harness and use AI, and we are just learning what skills are needed for that," says Dickson. "Companies like Amazon—which starts meetings with a six-page memo—are looking for excellent writers."

EDUCATING STUDENTS FOR THE FUTURE

The belief that higher education builds—and must continue building—America guided discussions among more than 100 U.S. college and university presidents and policy makers at the February 2025 ACE on the Hill conference in Washington, D.C. Organized by the American Council on Education—Dickson is a former ACE Fellow and ACE Council of Fellows Professional Development Committee member—the meeting included panel discussions with congressional staff and remarks from members of Congress, which, Dickson says, "helped me understand what I should be focused on." Prominent on her mind is the House reconciliation bill that includes reimbursements to the federal government for unpaid interest and principal on certain federal student loans ("risk sharing") and student financial need assessments based on the program of study.

"Part of this is just watching how things play out—not getting upset or scared about it," she says. "There are long-term issues looming in Washington around educational policy that we really need to focus on in

terms of collaborating and advocating with other institutions so that we can elevate these issues to the national level. I try to strategize and focus on the opportunities."

As far as ULV is concerned, she says, opportunities abound.

OPPORTUNITIES ABOVE OBSTACLES

"I think ULV is well-positioned because it's very deeply rooted in the region," Dickson says. "There are over 80,000 alumni worldwide. It's financially stable, and it's unlike other institutions in the area."

Newly revised 2025 Carnegie Classifications designate ULV as an Opportunity University that excels in both providing access to education and supporting students in achieving competitive earnings post-graduation. *U.S. News and World Report* ranked ULV as the second-highest California university for the online bachelor's in business. A 2025 Military Friendly® School, ULV offers award-winning programs, including the EdD in educational leadership (ACHE Distinguished Program Award) and the master's in child development degree program (designated No. 1 by intelligent.com).

Along with these points of pride, Dickson notes the university's talented faculty—"the heart of the institution"—and students who do remarkably well, with many alumni forging lucrative careers that have allowed them to give back, some donating millions of dollars to the university.

"ULV really provides social mobility," Dickson says. "Wherever you start, you are going to end up in a better place, which is what education should do for you."

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

In February, ULV and El Rancho Unified School District announced a new partnership to expand college access and career advancement opportunities for district students and employees. Students meeting ULV admission criteria will receive guaranteed acceptance and financial assistance. The agreement also includes waived application fees, dedicated counseling, and college readiness programs to help students meet admission requirements. At the event celebration, Dickson noted that this initiative removes barriers and "creates new opportunities for college success."

This initiative removes barriers and creates
new opportunities for college success.





The university's relationship with the city of La Verne is another important community connection. Dickson and City Manager Ken Domer meet regularly.

"We're interested in building the city and the university together, because we rely on each other," Dickson says. "We're talking about some really cool opportunities because the Foothill A Line recently opened."

ULV's Enrollment Management building, which sits adjacent to the 12.3-mile extension of the Metro A Line running from Glendora and eventually to Montclair, has potential for some city-university spaces.

Dickson believes such collaborations, along with ULV's distinctive education, will continue to make the college a sound choice for prospective students in Southern California and beyond.

"I believe that student success is community success. Educated communities are healthier communities," she says. "The livelihood of our communities relies on an educated citizenry."

A CLEAR STRATEGY

This sentiment is reflected in ULV's 2025 Strategic Vision, which directs university leaders to deliver "flexible, personalized, career-focused education within an inclusive learning environment."

"Our strategic direction helps us all understand what we're doing and why," she says.

Dickson oversees all aspects of university operations in her deliberate, collaborative style, guiding the institution through a time of transition.

"If you have strong processes and policies, it doesn't matter who steps into the position of president, because the organization is running itself," she says. "I'm here to ensure that things are done the way that they need to be done. So, my focus is on policies, processes, strong structure and making sure that the right people are in the right jobs."

"I believe we're creating the future of higher ed," says Dickson of the institution's stakeholders. "The University of La Verne is in such a uniquely special place to do this based on who we are, our history, and where we are in terms of the work that needs to be done. It will be a lot of work over the next couple of years, but we're making huge strides and building forward. It's exciting."

CHAMPIONING
EDUCATION, ARCHIVES,
AND
MENTAL HEALTH

THE IMPACT OF

GRACE F. NAPOLITANO'S
ARCHIVE

BY..... STEPHEN CHAVEZ '89

PHOTOS BY..... BRANDON LE







GRACE F. NAPOLITANO'S CONNECTION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

RUNS

DEEP.

shaped by decades of public service in California's San Gabriel Valley. Born in Brownsville, Texas, and educated at Cerritos College, Napolitano launched her political career locally—first as Norwalk's mayor, then as a California Assembly member—before representing the region in Congress from January 1999 through early 2025.

ULV recognized her early on and most notably in 2019, when she was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters for her advocacy in immigration reform, veterans' services, small business development, and especially mental-health initiatives. She also delivered the commencement address that same year, urging graduates to embrace leadership and service.

From that moment, her engagement with ULV intensified. Her leadership and vision dovetailed with the university's goals of bolstering public service, equity, and wellness—making ULV a natural home for her forthcoming archival and mental-health initiatives.

Napolitano shared that she chose ULV for

her archive because of its student-centered mission. President Risa Dickson commented:

"This is an incredible moment for the institution in so many ways... These archives will serve to educate and inspire University of La Verne's students, researchers, and future public servants."

IMPACT ON STUDENTS AND CAMPUS LIFE

Her decision underscores her commitment to local higher education and the community beyond legislative service. Napolitano's archive decision wasn't merely symbolic—it was deeply intentional. By keeping her archives within the district, Napolitano ensures local scholars and students can explore grassroots governance—especially impactful in a region historically underrepresented in major archives. ULV students gain firsthand exposure to the inner workings of legislative advocacy, campaign strategy, and constituent relations—an experiential supplement to traditional coursework. As someone who often speaks about hope and opportunity, Napolitano

chose ULV to encourage students to explore civic involvement and leadership—showing them a living blueprint rather than a distant historical figure.

The archive donation has already generated positive ripple effects across ULV's academic life. Political science and history courses can now leverage primary materials—urban development proposals, draft legislation, and campaign strategies—for hands-on research projects.

This curation positions ULV as a hub for regional civic studies. Beyond research, the archives are inspiring. The wrestling belt—from her mental health advocacy—provides a visceral emblem of resilience and public passion, particularly resonating with students in psychology, public health, and social sciences.

The exhibitions enable broader campus engagement, encouraging visitors to connect with community-focused governance across her 26-year congressional tenure. Perhaps Napolitano's most direct connection to ULV is her critical role in securing Department of Education funding to establish the Institute of Mental Health and Psychological WellBeing. In June 2023, ULV was awarded a \$2.2 million U.S. Department of Education grant—partially in response to Napolitano's advocacy through Community Project Funding—laying the groundwork for the Institute within the new College of Health and Community Well-Being (CHCWB). This college incorporates mental-health awareness throughout curricula. The archives—and the wrestling belt's symbolism—offer unique educational storylines for students, illustrating how advocacy transforms into formal policy and campus programs. As founder and co-chair of the Congressional Mental Health Caucus, Napolitano prioritized mental-health equity. In 2001, she launched culturally competent school-based programs after alarming data showed one in three Latina adolescents had considered suicide.

She co-sponsored the Mental Health Services for Students Act (H.R. 3713), aimed at expanding on-site school mental-health professionals. Her leadership also helped secure mental-health parity in the Affordable Care Act and established veterans' and adolescent services.





“THESE ARCHIVES WILL
SERVE TO EDUCATE AND INSPIRE

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE’S
STUDENTS, RESEARCHERS,
AND FUTURE PUBLIC SERVANTS.”

WHY THIS MATTERS:
FROM DOLLARS TO LIVES

ULV’s move to weave mental-health pedagogy into all disciplines reflects a larger cultural shift—students and faculty are now united in promoting wellness. The Institute supports subsidized on-campus services via Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), helping combat anxiety and depression—especially post pandemic.

The Institute extends far beyond ULV: training covers four school districts in the region, aiming to dismantle disparities in mental health access for ethnically diverse and underserved youth.

A focus on simulation labs, experiential learning, and evidence-based curriculum ensures students gain hands-on readiness. Future mental-health practitioners trained here are positioned to serve as practitioners, educators, or policymakers addressing critical local and national needs.

The archival gift and the Institute are deeply linked: both reflect Napolitano’s belief that access to knowledge—whether historical or mental health—triggers empowerment.

The archive tells a story: one woman’s journey from local mayor to mental-health champion in Congress. The wrestling belt symbolizes a fight—public and personal—for awareness. The Institute, empowered by state and federal dollars she procured, operationalizes this legacy—creating infrastructure that empowers students to carry forward her mission.

The Institute continues to expand:

- Curriculum Integration: Faculty training in neurodiversity and cultural compe-

tence will spur campus-wide pedagogy.

- Research & Grants: Future federal and philanthropic funding may follow initial success.

- Community Partnerships: Expansion through school district seminars and local clinics embeds the Institute within the region.

- Student-Led Innovation: Students now have direct access to real-world legislative history, inspiring civic engagement and mental-health leadership.

Grace Napolitano’s partnership with ULV transcends honorary degrees—it has been a dynamic collaboration. By entrusting her archives to Wilson Library, she embedded a living history of public service in her very own community. By securing funding for the Institute of Mental Health and Psychological Well Being, she helped create a structured mechanism to tackle stigma, train professionals, and enhance campus and community wellness.

For ULV students, this legacy provides tangible lessons: a career built on advocacy; a symbolic “wrestling belt” that invites conversation; a campus invigorated to embed mental health consciousness into every discipline. Napolitano’s holistic impact aligns with ULV’s core values of ethical reasoning, diversity and inclusivity, lifelong learning, and civic and community engagement.

Through archives and institutions alike, she has built pathways—from history, to healing, to hope—for current and future generations of Leopards to follow.

A Good Beginning *Never Ends*



Questions?

For Planned Giving

To learn more about including the University of La Verne in your estate planning, contact Anthony Todarello at 909-448-4674 or atodarello@laverne.edu.

For Annual Giving

Contact Christine Camacho '14, Director of Annual Giving, at 909-448-4685 or ccamacho@laverne.edu.

Make Your Gift Today

Send us your gift, story and news by returning the enclosed envelope or scan the QR code to make your gift online.

Planning for Tomorrow

Planned Giving ensures La Verne's story continues for generations to come. By including La Verne in your will or trust, you guarantee that future students will discover their gifts and shape the world around them. These meaningful legacy commitments provide vital scholarships, enhance our academic environment, and expand programs that nurture the next generation of leaders.

Supporting Today

Your annual gifts to scholarships open doors for students the moment they step onto campus. Your gift will directly impact students now, regardless of their economic background, by removing financial barriers that might otherwise prevent them from pursuing their dreams.

Make a Difference Forever

Every gift—whether given today or planned for tomorrow—supports La Verne's mission of helping students achieve more than they ever thought possible. Your generosity creates immediate results while building the foundation for the institution's future success.



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University of
La Verne

Outcomes

Alumni Advice ○ Helping Others Succeed
as an Administrator ○ Returning to School
○ Finding Community Post-Graduation

Alumni



Her Space

When Michaelyn Thomas EdD '17 was four years old, she looked toward the stars, saying to herself, “I want to work in outer space when I grow up.”

Everyone has a story, and Dr. Thomas’s is quite unique. Through resilience, professional experience, grit, and doctoral research at the University of La Verne, she has had the opportunity to reach the highest levels of the space industry. Fortune 100 companies, government organizations, including international, and wealthy investors have relied heavily on her mathematical modeling abilities for cost, price,

and competitive analyses as well as her systems engineering skillsets for technical assessments on complex space programs.

Within the first 10 years of her nearly two-decade career, Dr. Thomas went from an entry-level employee to reporting directly to the CEO at a Sir Richard Branson space company, Virgin Orbit. Today, she is a program manager and a system-of-systems engineer for a highly complex space portfolio at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, and she also teaches engineering graduate students at the Whiting School of Engineering at The Johns Hopkins University.

“It’s critically important to learn, embrace, and implement your life’s purpose.

“It’s critically important to learn, embrace, and implement your life’s purpose.”

Above
Students embrace at graduation, a feat of their efforts and excellence.

It's okay to evolve your purpose as you navigate life and learning, and it's imperative to allow your passion to guide it."

Scholastically, Dr. Thomas is a published author and belongs to Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society. She holds a doctorate degree in organizational leadership from University of La Verne; a master of science degree in space systems engineering from The Johns Hopkins University; a master of business administration degree from University of Redlands; and a bachelor of arts degree in political science, public law with a minor degree in Russian language from California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Thomas admits that her degree path is very unconventional, yet it was intentional.

Despite these accolades, Dr. Thomas still struggled with imposter syndrome. She explains that imposter syndrome disproportionately plagues many high-achieving, underrepresented groups more than most will ever understand or realize, because underrepresented groups are often disproportionately represented in the spaces they are working or leading. This experience can be categorized as an adverse psychological response to one's talent, intellect, skillsets, and accomplishments. It causes the individual to doubt, minimize, and dismiss their greatness. There can be an overwhelming fear that the individual does not belong and that they will be exposed as a fraud or as an imposter. It took Dr. Thomas a while to realize that feelings of imposter syndrome come from others who choose to project their insecurities onto high performers.

Through the University of La Verne's Organizational Leadership doctoral program, Dr. Thomas found her voice and her life's purpose—space exploration, space systems innovation, and space education through inclusive leadership. Her favorite part about being an executive leader in the space business is that she gets to represent, advocate, and make room at the table for people who look like her, too.

Dr. Thomas is so proud of that four-year-old little Black girl looking up at the stars shaping her story because it set the foundation of her life's purpose. She explains that space exploration transcends the divisions we often face on Earth, and when we pull together our diverse skillsets, we can innovate and create out-of-this-world technology.

Dr. Thomas found her voice and her life's purpose—space exploration, space systems innovation, and space education through inclusive leadership.



“Believe in yourself. Show up for yourself. And always move forward despite life’s challenges.”

Body Building Upon his Foundation at ULV

“Believe in yourself. Show up for yourself. And always move forward despite life’s challenges.” These words from Guillermo Escalante ’97, MBA ’99, are the personal mantra that transformed a nine-year-old immigrant from Costa Rica who spoke little English into a recognized leader in sports science and higher education.

Today, Escalante serves as Associate Dean of the College of Natural Sciences at California State University, San Bernardino, where he began as an adjunct professor

in 2012, became a tenured associate professor in 2018, and achieved full professor status in 2022. His remarkable journey exemplifies the transformative power of perseverance and mentorship.

Escalante’s connection to the University of La Verne began early—his father was an adjunct professor of marketing. Understanding that education was the key to opportunity, Escalante came to ULV to study while running sprints and playing football. He was fascinated with sports training and nutrition.

After tearing his ACL, he pivoted from the football field to courtside, helping the men’s basketball team as a student athletic trainer. Here he discovered his true

passion. Despite becoming a father at age 19, he graduated early at 20 with his BS in athletic training and a minor in biology. He earned his MBA at ULV by age 22 in 1999, then obtained his doctor of science in 2012.

Escalante has been published more than 50 times in peer-reviewed publications and another 50 in leading fitness publications including Bodybuilding.com and Muscle & Fitness. He presents research findings at international conferences.

“I remember when applying to be a professor early on, I had a gap in my CV with no peer-reviewed publications yet,” Escalante recalls. “I decided to bridge that gap by committing myself to scientific inquiry and engaging students in research opportunities.”

At a recent Oxford conference, surrounded by experts from Harvard and other prestigious institutions, Escalante experienced what he calls a “pinch me” moment. “Imposter syndrome is real,” he reflects. “You can accomplish so much in your life. But inside you still remember being that insecure kid who had trouble speaking and writing English as a second language. But I am proof that it’s about what you do with each day to drive your life forward.”

Escalante’s influence extends far beyond the classroom. He serves as Vice President of the International Society of Sports Nutrition and will become its president in 2026. He’s chaired several committees for the National Strength and Conditioning Association and serves on scientific advisory boards of multiple sports nutrition companies.

After running a successful fitness business for almost 20 years, Escalante established a certification program for physique and bodybuilding coaches. In 2018, he partnered with the National Academy of Sports Medicine as the lead subject matter expert, developing a comprehensive program now considered the gold standard certification for bodybuilding coaches.

“At CSUSB, there are many minority and disadvantaged students. I see the younger me in many of them. Not feeling smart enough or good enough. But they are! I want them to thrive and find a career they love as much as I do.” This passion led Escalante to co-author a proposal for a \$5 million U.S. Department of Education grant in 2021 designed to attract underrepresented minorities to STEM majors. The grant has helped more than 1,000 minority students succeed through paid research opportunities and comprehensive mentorship.

In 2022, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities named Escalante as a fellow for its Leadership Academy, making him the first CSUSB faculty member selected for this prestigious program designed to increase diverse leadership in higher education.

Escalante credits much of his success to mentors from ULV, particularly Paul Alvarez and Marilyn Oliver. “Paul and Marilyn had confidence in me that I would complete my BS degree despite the challenges of being a young father,” he says. “They helped me during my formative years and showed me how to gen-

uinely care for people. Connections last a lifetime.”

He also fondly remembers Carol Fetty ’78, his freshman English professor, who told him he was a strong writer before he could see it in himself—recognition that proved prophetic given his extensive publishing career.

Looking ahead, Escalante sees unlimited possibilities: “Dean, provost, university president—it’s all a possibility.” But regardless of his next role, his commitment to lifelong learning and lifting others remains unwavering, embodying the transformative power of education and mentorship that began at the University of La Verne.

After tearing his ACL, he pivoted from the football field to courtside, helping the men’s basketball team as a student athletic trainer.





Going Far Together

A Journey of Leadership,
Family, and Purpose

By Torian Mylott



For Kathy Bakhit EdD '11, the University of La Verne wasn't just a degree; it was a turning point.

"I want to keep opening doors for others, just like doors were opened for me."

When Kathy Bakhit EdD '11, first arrived in the United States nearly four decades ago, she never imagined her path would lead to the Vice Presidency of Academic Affairs. What she did know was that relationships mattered—deeply. "The way I grew up," she reflects, "relationships are like glass. If you break them, even if you try to put them back together, they're never quite the same." That awareness shaped her leadership philosophy early on: listen carefully, lead thoughtfully, and never take trust for granted.

Dr. Bakhit's professional journey began at Citrus College, where she balanced multiple roles and responsibilities. Though she was passionate about service, she often questioned her own effectiveness. "I want-

ed to participate more, to be a better representative for my faculty," she says, "but I was apprehensive. I didn't want to step into something without being fully prepared." That desire to lead with both heart and understanding led her to pursue her doctorate in education at the University of La Verne.

But it wasn't an easy road. While raising three children with her husband and working full-time, she had to make difficult choices about where to place her energy. "In my culture, the house must be immaculate," she says with a laugh. "But I had to let that go. If I was going to be a good mother, that meant my kids came first. Studies and work followed. And cleaning? That came in at number seven." What fueled her during those long days and sleepless nights was a

It's about setting ego aside and asking, "How can I help others succeed?"

purpose she had carried since childhood—to be a role model for her daughters and for the women around her.

That sense of purpose only deepened through the doctoral program. "It was life-changing," she says. "The classes gave us language for experiences we had lived through but hadn't been able to name. It transformed the way I thought about leadership, about service, and about the kind of impact I wanted to have." It also gave her a framework, a way to step outside a challenge, see it from multiple perspectives, and move forward with clarity and courage.

Today, as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Antelope Valley College, Dr. Bakhit still draws on the tools and insights she gained at ULV. "We spent the first year of the program asking ourselves, 'Why do you want to lead?' It helped me realize that leadership isn't about titles or recognition, it's about service. It's about setting ego aside and asking, 'How can I help others succeed?'"

Her leadership philosophy, shaped by experience and humility, is grounded in community and inclusivity. "An organization is like a living being," she explains. "It has its own rhythms and phases. If you want to lead well, you can't run too far ahead of your people. I tried to go too fast, and I fell and so the famous saying of *'If you want to go fast go alone, but if you want to go far, go together.'*" Now I know, if you want to go far, go together."

Looking forward, she's not done learning or giving back. "Even as an administrator, I never left the classroom. I continued teaching as an adjunct and mentoring through my church and social circles. In this next chapter, I want to keep opening doors for others, just like doors were opened for me."

For her, the University of La Verne wasn't just a degree; it was a turning point. "La Verne believed in diversity and inclusion not just in theory, but in practice. That made everything possible. Two of my kids are now physicians and one is a pharmacist. None of it would've happened without structures of inclusion, without people who believed in me before I believed in myself."

In a world that often feels fragmented, Dr. Bakhit's message is simple but powerful: "What we need now is healing through inclusion and community building. That's what La Verne gave me. That's what I hope to pass on."

To my fellow alumni: don't wait for the perfect moment to reengage. Just start.

Coming Home

How I Found Purpose
and Community Through
Alumni Volunteering

By Myla Sarmiento, JD '19, MBA '21

It had been two years since I graduated from the University of La Verne, and I had just finished catching up with a fellow alum. I was in my office in Murrieta, sipping coffee between meetings, when a quiet tug at my heart stopped me mid-thought. It was subtle but insistent. I found myself asking: What is this feeling? Why now? Is this something we all go through? And yes—what am I having for lunch?

That fleeting moment turned into a powerful realization: I missed being part of something that helped shape me. I missed the energy of campus life, the late nights prepping for presentations, the faculty who challenged me to think bigger, and the friends who helped me become who I am today. I realized I wanted to reconnect—not out of nostalgia, but out of a desire to give back. So, I came home to ULV—as a volunteer.

Coming back as an alum was a turning point. I discovered a vibrant, welcoming community, and through service, I found a new kind of purpose. I had already gained experience in my legal career that I was proud of, representing small to medium size business in civil litigation matters as an associate

at Tyler Law LLP. But volunteering offered something different: personal fulfillment that complemented my professional journey.

I began mentoring students, joining advisory boards, and speaking on career panels. Each interaction reminded me why this university matters. Our students are driven, resilient, and hungry for guidance. Showing up for them became more than an act of service—it became a source of inspiration.

Alumni volunteering has also helped me grow. It challenged me to think beyond the courtroom and step into roles that stretch my leadership, communication, and empathy. I've had to listen more, mentor intentionally, and consider how my story can help others shape theirs.

I believe we often underestimate the ripple effect of giving time. While financial gifts are vital, sharing our experiences, networks, and insights can be just as transformative. One conversation can spark a student's confidence. One story can ignite a dream. I've seen it happen—and I've felt it myself.

What surprised me most about coming back wasn't how much the university had changed—it was how much I had changed because of it. I no longer view ULV as just a place I once attended. It's an active part of my life now. I'm part of something living and evolving, something that needs our voices, our support, and our belief in its future.

For me, alumni involvement isn't about reliving the past—it's about investing in what's ahead. When we reconnect, we strengthen the bridge between where we came from and where we're going. We become mentors, advocates, and stewards of a shared legacy.

The University of La Verne gave me the foundation to build the life I lead today. And in coming home, I've found new meaning in giving back. Volunteering reminds me that we're not just graduates—we're lifelong members of this community.

So, to my fellow alumni: don't wait for the perfect moment to reengage. Just start. Say yes to one event, one panel, one student coffee chat. You never know how much impact you'll have—or how much you'll grow in return.

Coming home isn't going backward. It's bringing our full selves—our experience, wisdom, and heart—back to where it all began and using it to light the way forward.





After years devoted to family and career, her return to college began with an acceptance letter from the University of La Verne.

A Journey Home

By Stephanie Hancock '16

From the time I was a little girl, I couldn't wait to go to school. I was eager to learn, and I still remember the exact moment I read my first sentence at five years old. That passion for learning has stayed with me ever since.

My mother attended Spelman College in Atlanta, and growing up with her stories and yearbooks, I dreamed of experiencing college life for myself. Instead, I chose to travel, marry, and start a family. But the dream never faded.

When I began working in higher education, my desire to return to school was reignited. A colleague often spoke highly of her daughter's experience at the University of La Verne, which led me to explore the Campus Accelerated Program for Adults (CAPA). At the time, I had three young children—one with special needs—and a marriage that was struggling. Despite all of that, I decided to apply.

When my acceptance letter arrived, I was in disbelief. I kept it on my nightstand for a couple of months, unsure how I'd manage it all. But eventually, I reached out to Admissions, enrolled, and attended my first class. That moment confirmed what I needed to know—I was in the right place. I was home.

Although I transferred 18 credits, I was essentially starting fresh as a non-traditional student in my 40s. My first year exceeded every expectation. It was the year the university welcomed its first female president, Dr. Devorah Lieberman. We were even inducted into the Alpha Lambda Delta honor society at the same time. I found a close-knit group of classmates who became not just study partners, but lifelong friends.

Life didn't slow down. I became a single mother working full-time. I'd help my kids with their homework in the evening and complete my assignments once they

were asleep. As they got a little older, they'd sometimes read along with me, just long enough to satisfy their curiosity before heading to bed.

One of the most transformative experiences of my academic journey was studying abroad in Costa Rica, which expanded my worldview and advanced my career. Another standout aspect of my time at ULV was the support I received through academic advising. I especially looked forward to class registration each semester—collaborating with my counselor, Peter Centeno '91, MEd '00, to build a schedule that supported both my family responsibilities and educational goals. That level of thoughtful guidance was instrumental to my success.

Graduating with honors was a moment I'll never forget. I celebrated in a big way, knowing it wouldn't be my last connection to ULV. This university shaped me into a more resilient, thoughtful, and strategic version of myself. It became family—something you never outgrow.

Later, I joined the Alumni Advisory Board, eventually serving as secretary and then as president. My term ended this summer, but this experience has been invaluable. I've had the privilege of mentoring students, guest lecturing, speaking at multicultural ceremonies, supporting fellow alumni through career transitions, awarding my daughter her degree, and—one of the most unforgettable moments—throwing out the first pitch at an Angels game. These experiences have enriched my life in ways I never imagined.

Though my time as board president has come to an end, my journey with ULV is far from over. This university isn't just where I earned a degree—it's where I found a community. It will always be home. And now, as a proud parent of an alumna, my daughter graduated in the spring of 2024, and with my son, who began ULV this Fall, this special place has taken on even deeper meaning. Sharing the ULV experience with my children has made my connection to this community even more meaningful and profound.

My love for learning began as a child, but ULV gave it new life as an adult. It reminded me that education isn't bound by age or stage—it's a lifelong journey. And for me, that journey will always lead back to the University of La Verne.





1987

On the Graduation Lawn



The class of 2025 joins a proud tradition of graduates who embody the spirit of lifelong learning. This year's ceremony, full of fresh energy and new possibilities, is a testament to how each graduating class pushes our university forward. While the historic image reminds us of where we've been, today's grads are already shaping where we're headed, continuing a cycle of growth, innovation, and success for generations to come.

Class Notes



Dr. Zandra Wagoner BA Psych'89

We wish our beloved Chaplain and alumna, Dr. Zandra Wagoner, BA Psychology '89, a fond farewell. After 25 years of dedicated service to the University of La Verne, Dr. Wagoner is leaving to begin a new chapter at another college. At a farewell reception on August 28 in the Campus Center Ballroom, she was honored with a commemorative candle presented by Provost Ken O'Donnell and Malissa Hernandez, executive assistant to the Provost.

Dr. Wagoner's compassionate presence, guidance, and unwavering commitment to

Dr. Wagoner's speech at commencement focused on strength and unity as the university moves forward.

Above
Dr. Zandra Wagoner speaks at the 2025 Commencement ceremonies.

our community have left a lasting legacy that will continue to shine brightly at La Verne. She departs with our deepest gratitude and love.

Gary Stewart BA PhysEd'84, MEd Spec'95

**Head Men's Basketball Coach, Executive
Director of Recreation & Athletics**

UC Merced

Coach Stewart is a well-recognized American College Basketball coach. Coaching over 9 Universities through his career, including ULV from 1987 to 1995. He himself played during his time at ULV, 1980-1984. He has been honored with the NCAC CO-Coach of the Year and the Bay Area Men's College Coach of the Year. He is also known for his strong skills in athletic administration. His career includes coaching the USA Basketball National Team. He has had multiple positions, including President of the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

Susie White MBA'12, BS HlthSrvsMngmt'01

Congratulations to our alumna, Susie White, MBA '12, BS Health Services Management '01, Chief Operating Officer of IEHP, on receiving the 2025 President's Award from the San Bernardino County Medical Society. This distinguished honor recognizes her outstanding leadership and commitment to serving the Inland Empire community.

Christopher M. Layne, BA, Business Admin'02

**Senior Vice President &
Regional Market Executive**

Richmond at First National Corporation

Alumni, Chris Layne, was recently appointed Senior Vice President & Regional Market Executive for Richmond

**Susie
White
receives
the 2025
President's
Award from
the San
Bernardino
County
Medical
Society.**

Dr. Wagoner's compassionate presence, guidance, and unwavering commitment to our community have left a lasting legacy at ULV.

at First National Corporation. In this leadership role, Chris will oversee business banking and development efforts across the Richmond market. With over 20 years in commercial banking, a strong record in strategic growth, and deep community involvement (including veteran service in the U.S. Air Force), he's well poised to drive impact for First National and the region.

Abby M. Knight BA AthTrng'06

Was invited to the U.S. athletic training staff at the recent FISU World University Games in Berlin, Germany as a USA delegation of Athletic trainer. Joining her for all the excitement was another beloved ULV member, Emeritus Faculty, Dr. Paul Alvarez.

Jennifer Ibrahim

Deputy Chief Financial Officer
NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

We're proud to highlight Jennifer Ibrahim for her recent appointment as Deputy Director of Finance at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

With over 25 years of experience guiding business operations in high-complexity settings, Jennifer has made her mark in engineering, scientific, and research environments. Jennifer previous-

ly served as Assistant Director for Business in JPL's Operations & Integration Directorate, where she oversaw financial planning, budgeting, and strategic resource allocation across major projects

Her career also spans roles in Caltech's Physics, Mathematics & Astronomy division and various business management positions at JPL. As finance deputy, Jennifer plays a central role in ensuring that JPL's missions are supported by sound fiscal strategy, risk management, and stewardship of resources.

Congratulations, Jennifer — your impact continues to reach the stars!

Nicholas S. Gonzalez BS, Psych'11, MBA'14

**Director of the Palm Springs
Parks and Recreation**
City of Palm Springs

Nicholas Gonzalez, at that time serving as the Recreation & Community Services Director for the City of Ontario, was selected to be the new Parks & Recreation Director for Palm Springs. His new role began in December 2024. Under Nicholas' leadership, the department has unveiled a five-year master plan roadmap (in mid-2025), with priorities including climate resilience, equitable access, connecting trails and parks, improving maintenance, expanding programming, and implementing performance metrics.

Robin L. Reed Riggle MEd '13

Has been honored in the Marquis Who's Who for her excellence in education. As in all Marquis Who's Who biographical volumes, factors such as position, noteworthy accomplishments, visibility, and prominence in a field are all taken into account during the selection process.

Debbie Dunn BA, Business Admin'20

Director of Communications and Community Engagement

William S. Hart Union School District

Alumna Debbie Dunn takes on the new role of Director of Communications & Community Engagement at William S. Hart Union School District. A longtime Hart District team member, she has shaped messaging strategies, media relations, and stakeholder outreach in her prior role as Executive Assistant to the Superintendent.

Nike B. Adelekan BS Psych'21

Lead Afternoon Teacher

Flagstaff Montessori

For the 2025-26 school year, Flagstaff Montessori School's Westside Campus introduced a new full-time late-day lead teacher: Nike Adelekan, a passionate leader ready to take on the child-focused teaching.

Adelekan moved to Flagstaff three years ago after getting her degree in psychology from the University of La Verne.

Miranda Tejeda BA Theater'21

Alumna Miranda Tejeda, BA Theater '21, is making waves in New York City theatre! She is serving as both Production Stage Manager and Production Manager for the upcoming Off-Broadway debut of *Slaughter City* by Naomi Wallace. The play, which opens this October at the Gu-

Miranda Tejeda is serving as Production Stage Manager and Production Manager for the upcoming Off-Broadway debut of *Slaughter City*.

ral Theatre, explores themes of labor, solidarity, and resilience through the lives of workers in a meat-packing plant.

Christian Carter MS, Lead & Mngmt'24

Assistant Coach

Portland State Vikings Track & Field

Former University of La Verne assistant coach, Christian Carter has been named Assistant Coach for Portland State University's Track & Field program. At La Verne, Carter guided athletes to seven SCIAC titles, six NCAA Division III qualifications, and five school records. Now overseeing sprints, hurdles, and horizontal jumps at Portland State, Carter is recognized for his energy, expertise, and commitment to student-athlete success.



Across
Abby M. Knight and Dr. Paul Alvarez with the USA athletic training delegation at the World University Games.

Abby M. Knight BA'06 says her experience expanded her clinical insight, teamwork, and appreciation for the diverse world of sport.

Thank you for your continued support!

Your support makes publications like *Voice Magazine* possible. Your annual gift allows for more outreach opportunities for ULV to make a difference.



To make your annual gift by mail, please send a check payable to University of La Verne Advancement to the following address:

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La Verne, CA 91750

Christine Camacho '14
Director of Annual Giving
ccamacho@laverne.edu, (909) 448-4685



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Golden Hour

The campus comes into focus from above, its paths shaped by years of study and growth. As the sun sets, the scene reflects a tradition of learning that extends beyond classrooms and continues long after graduation, a journey that evolves with every new perspective.

Photo by **William Vasta**

