

CSUSB

MAGAZINE

**JEREMY SAAVEDRA
TO LEAVE 26-YEAR
TRUCKING CAREER TO
FOLLOW HIS DREAM
IN HELPING OTHERS**



CAL STATE SAN BERNARDINO

WE DEFINE THE *Future*

| spring 2023

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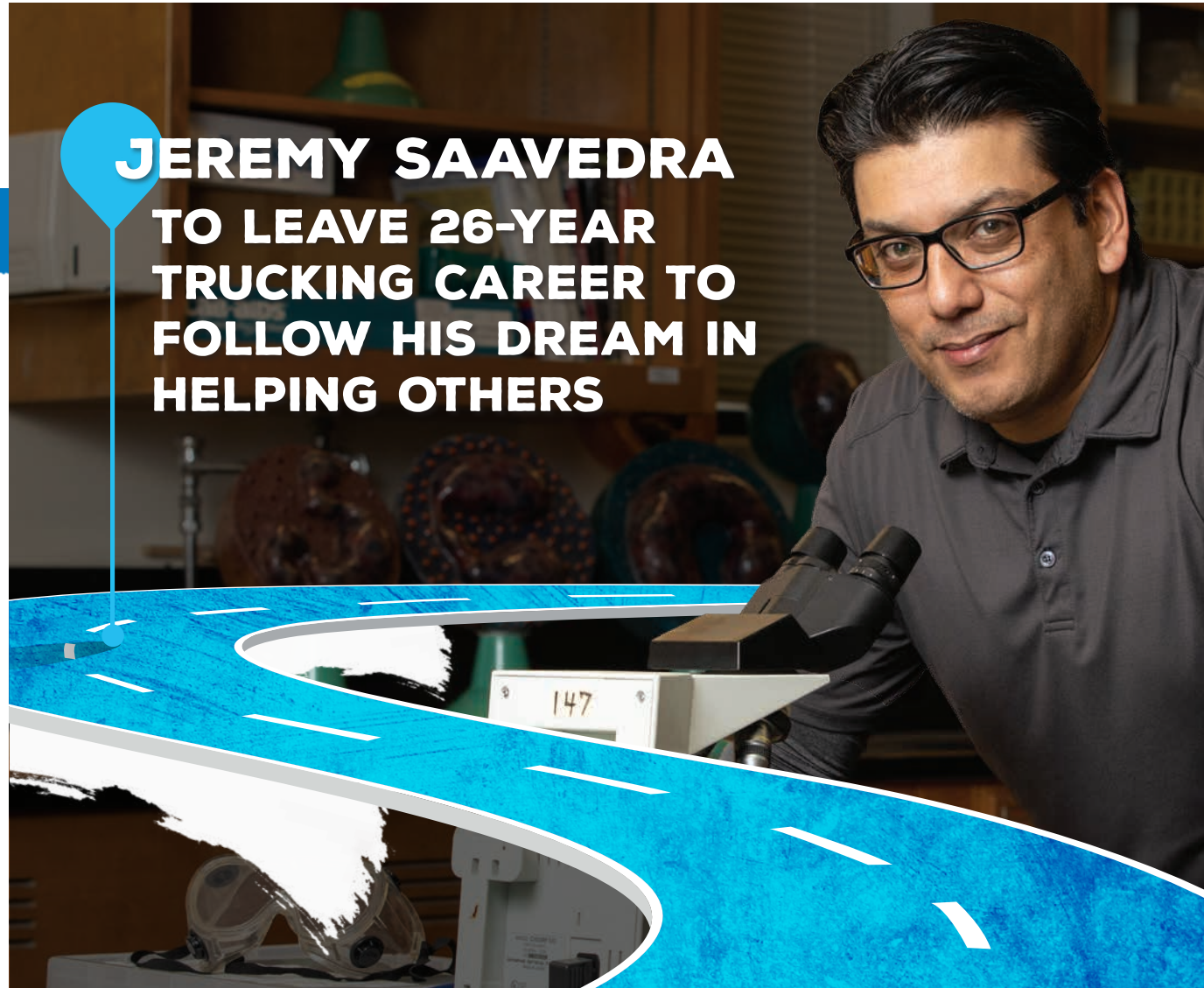
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**JEREMY SAAVEDRA
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Read all of these fascinating stories and more online at magazine.csusb.edu.

PRESIDENT'S AGENDA

Welcome to the spring 2023 CSUSB Magazine! I am delighted to share that we have had another innovative, exciting and trailblazing year here on our San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses as we continue to define the moment we are in as a university community.

As we like to do, in this magazine we will introduce you to and share the achievements of our students, alumni, faculty and staff. CSUSB is a higher education community of extraordinary and outstanding individuals who I am proud to say have a potential as large as our two-county region of the Inland Empire. As our men's basketball team showed the country this spring: yes, here at CSUSB, we grow and support amazing student-athletes who can make it to the Final Four in Division II basketball. As our alumni show: they can create groundbreaking roles in our public K-12 system (Cherina Betters). As our faculty show: the work in the classroom and in clinical settings in the field of social work can shine a spotlight on the marginalized and advocate for them (Rigaud Joseph). As our staff show: guiding our students and providing them with the leadership that they need to launch themselves successfully post-college is a key CSUSB responsibility (Roryana Bowman). And as our administrators show: we can serve as leaders in the 23-campus California State University system (Jennifer Sorenson).

I also encourage you to read this issue's cover story on student Jeremy Saavedra, who transferred to CSUSB from Chaffey College to pursue a biology degree. His ultimate goal is to become a physician assistant so that he can help people. A full-time trucker, he began his college journey at age 41. He is also the first person in his family to pursue a college degree. The message he is sharing: It is never too late to pursue your dream.

As we wrap up the academic year, celebrate with us our extraordinary faculty who have been honored by a committee of their peers with a highly select set of awards. We continue the tradition of having myself, members of the Cabinet and members of the awardee's department turn up unannounced in a classroom, lab or lecture hall to surprise the individual faculty member with the news. The result is meaningful for all who take part, not least the students who may have been involved in the nomination process itself of their professor.

And, learn about the two amazing individuals who were awarded at our May Commencement ceremonies with the highest recognition bestowed by the California State University system, an honorary degree: Dr. Mary M. Heckmann and Ms. Dorene C. Dominguez.

There is so much going on at our two campuses and this issue is filled with many of them. I invite you to settle back and take a virtual trip to CSUSB so you can experience a piece of all that is going on at our vibrant campuses. As always, we would love to welcome you back so that you can see how we are growing and changing to meet the needs of our students and prepare them for a future in which they will thrive.



Tomás D. Morales
President

President Tomás D. Morales regularly engages with the local community, university partners, legislative representatives and educational leaders worldwide to champion CSUSB and its mission.



CSUSB awards inaugural President's Medal to Richard 'Cheech' Marin

The highlight of the President's Holiday Dinner, held at the Mission Inn in Riverside on Nov. 30, was the first-ever awarding of the President's Medal, which was presented by President Morales to Richard "Cheech" Marin.

"Mr. Marin was selected because of his accomplishments as an actor, author of children's books and a preeminent collector of Chicano art," said Morales. "His recent partnership with the Riverside Art Museum to establish The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art and Culture is having a huge positive impact right here in the Inland Empire. 'The Cheech,' as this museum is affectionately named, has already become a cultural icon and destination."

The CSUSB President's Medal was created and presented in recognition of an individual's extraordinary achievements to a field, profession or our nation, and/or to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the wellbeing of others. The recipients have not attended and/or are not graduates of CSUSB. ●

Importance of a college education is the key for African American community

Now is the time for members of the Black and African American community to invest in a college degree, specifically a degree from Cal State San Bernardino and the California State University system for its value, affordability and providing a pathway to the stable, meaningful, high-paying and in-demand careers of the future.

That was the message that President Morales brought to members of the St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church in San Bernardino on Feb. 26, as part of the CSU's Super Sunday initiative on the importance of preparing for college.

"I want to thank the St. Paul AME Church family for allowing me to be here – its deacons, its elders, its pastoral team and leadership. Cal State San Bernardino, simply put, is your university," Morales said. "And I'm here to remind you that and to encourage you to partner with Cal State San Bernardino. We want to go beyond simply coming in as part of Black History Month and having an opportunity to speak with you on the



fourth Sunday of the month. But more importantly, to have an opportunity to interact with the parents and grandparents and youth of the St. Paul AME family."

With the theme "Equity, Access, Affordability and Social Mobility," Morales joined fellow campus presidents, CSU system leaders and administrators who visited nearly 100 predominately African American churches throughout California in spreading the message to Black and African American families that a college degree is affordable, within reach, transformational and theirs for the taking. ●

CSUSB president speaks at Universia International Rectors' Summit

President Morales was one of the panelists for a program, "University and Society," at the 5th Universia International Rectors' Summit held in Valencia, Spain, May 8-10. The summit was attended by more than 700 university leaders from across the globe, and featured discussions around three key topics: lifelong learning, promoting entrepreneurship and innovation, and developing university networks and interconnection. ●



Improving enrollment and retention of African American students focus of joint meeting

Officials from CSUSB and the Cooperative Economic Empowerment Movement (CEEM) met at the university on Jan. 27 to talk about increasing enrollment and retaining African American students.

The session was a follow-up to a joint meeting held in December where members of the university and cooperative discussed ways to build a stronger partnership to “further transform lives – particularly African American lives – here in the Inland Empire,” said President Morales in his welcoming remarks.

“Today we are going to dig deeper into specific data and CSUSB programs. We want to hear from the members of CEEM regarding ideas to enhance the African American experience at CSUSB, while improving enrollment and retention,” Morales said. “We strongly believe that this

partnership between CEEM and CSUSB can help support and advance the IE’s African American community.”

CEEM is an economic cooperative committed to closing the racial wealth gap through education, investments and support for African American professionals and the African American entrepreneurial ecosystem. ●



CSUSB to formally partner with Lviv Polytechnic National University in Ukraine

CSUSB and Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine, one of the largest technical universities in Eastern Europe, announced that the institutions are developing an agreement to establish a partnership and initiate international collaborative activities to promote joint educational, scientific and cultural development.

President Morales said, “This is tremendous news and a wonderful opportunity that will ultimately benefit students and the faculty and staff at both of our institutions. The memorandum of understanding reinforces my belief that students receive an incredible benefit from international studies. I look forward to our two institutions working together.”

The partnership will be designed to enhance international understanding and deepen friendship between CSUSB and Lviv Polytechnic National University, starting with cooperation in the area of entrepreneurship. ●



CSUSB and Rialto School District team up to Teach Rialto



In mid-March, the Rialto Unified School District (RUSD) and CSUSB launched Teach Rialto, an initiative that will provide ninth grade students, beginning with the 2023-24 school year, a rigorous program of study and support services through their senior year in high school. That will put them in a position to meet the requirements for admission to CSUSB, where they will earn their bachelor’s degree and teaching credentials so that they could return to teach in Rialto’s schools.

The agreement, in the form of a memorandum of understanding, is the first of its kind. The RUSD Board of Education formally approved the program at its meeting in November 2022.

“As an anchor institution – and a leader in training the region’s teachers – we are committed to bolstering the education of our youth so that they can define their future and that of the Inland Empire,” said President Morales. “Our partnership with RUSD through Teach Rialto will play a major role in that, by training homegrown teachers who will take pride in giving back to their community as well as continuing the work to pay it forward. And we hope it will be a model for other school districts to emulate.” ●

CSUSB president affiliates with Excelencia in Education’s Presidents for Latino Student Success network

Excelencia in Education, the nation’s premier authority in efforts accelerating Latino student success in higher education, announced that CSUSB President Morales has joined the Presidents for Latino Student Success network.

This important national network is comprised of college and university presidents and chancellors who commit to making their institutions learning environments where Latino students thrive. The institutions in Excelencia’s network are transforming higher education. Through the network, Morales will collaborate with Excelencia to leverage collective expertise and resources, foster partnerships, and amplify current efforts at the national level.

“I am deeply honored and proud to be part of this amazing group of leaders who are dedicated to providing an exceptional higher education experience not only to Latino students, but to all students,” Morales said. “Though our campuses are located throughout the country, our goal is the same – create an educational environment where students not only succeed, but excel and are ready to lead our communities as the future leaders of our society.” ●



CSUSB'S 2022-23 OUTSTANDING FACULTY

Watch at
magazine.csusb.edu

Surprising faculty with awards is a longtime and much celebrated CSUSB tradition in recognizing outstanding faculty. Each spring, President Tomás D. Morales, fellow faculty, staff and administrators walk into the winning faculty member's classroom, lab or meeting to surprise them with their award. This academic year recognized five faculty from the Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration, College of Natural Sciences, College of Arts and Letters, and College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.



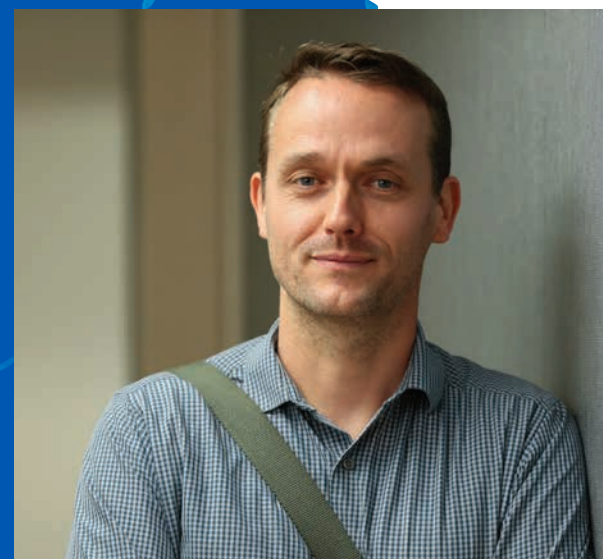
OUTSTANDING FACULTY ADVISOR: **SHARON VELARDE PIERCE, '13, '14, '17, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

In a nominating letter, the committee said Pierce's "demonstration of compassion, authentic care and dedication are common themes that emerge from student comments and letters of recommendation. The student remarks highlight the compassion, grace and support Dr. Pierce consistently provides. She receives near-perfect SOTE scores semester after semester and is a positive impact on her students' professional trajectories." ●



GOLDEN APPLE AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING: **STUART SUMIDA, PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY**

The nominating committee wrote that in addition to his exemplary teaching, Sumida has been actively involved in a variety of activities related to curriculum development and support of students. He has created four new courses and redesigned several others. In addition to teaching Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II, he has developed all the laboratory manuals, which are now in the third edition of publication. ●



OUTSTANDING SERVICE: **JEREMY MURRAY, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY**

The committee cited Murray's commitment to enhancing the student experience, bridging across disciplines, and integrating the broader local community. "Dr. Murray also ensures that his service actively engages the larger community, connecting students with agencies and community members, and bringing community members to campus," the nominating committee said. ●



OUTSTANDING PROFESSOR: **MONTGOMERY 'MONTY' VAN WART, PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

"Since joining CSUSB in 2005, Dr. Van Wart has served the university with distinction, particularly in his dedication to excelling in all areas of teaching, research and service," said the nominating committee. "When evaluating his accomplishments in these three areas, we conclude that Dr. Van Wart has consistently achieved exceptionally high levels of performance during his time at CSUSB." In being named the CSUSB Outstanding Professor, Van Wart becomes the John M. Pfau Endowed Professor, named for the university's first president. ●



OUTSTANDING LECTURER: **LACEY KENDALL, '12, LECTURER OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

"Professor Lacey Kendall is a passionate, engaged and dedicated lecturer who has excelled in the area of teaching and supporting student development," wrote the nominating committee. "When evaluating Professor Kendall's track record as a teacher, (the committee was) incredibly impressed that she has achieved and sustained consistently high levels of performance in that role." ●

SANTOS MANUEL STUDENT UNION NORTH awarded LEED Gold certification in energy efficiency

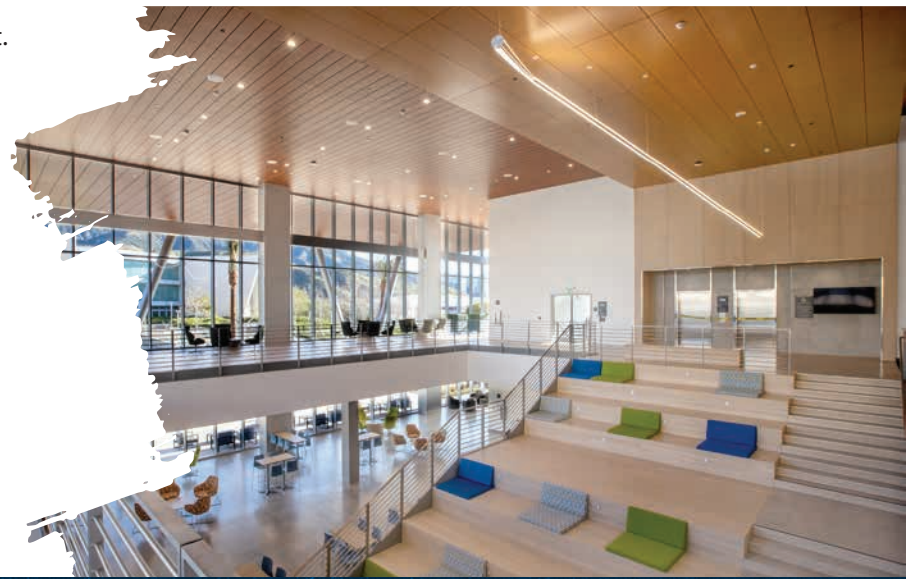


CSUSB's Santos Manuel Student Union (SMSU) North was awarded the green rating Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification for its energy efficiency design and consideration of the university's natural resources.

"The certification is recognition that we are being good stewards of our campus resources and of our natural resources," said Jennifer Sorenson, the university's senior associate vice president for Facilities Planning & Management. "This is a point of pride for our design and construction team as well as for our campus."

To accomplish the LEED Gold certification for the SMSU North, project considerations were made to the site, the building orientation, natural daylighting, energy efficiency, water efficiency, building materials and the building systems, said Sorenson.

The SMSU North becomes the fifth LEED certified building on the CSUSB campus. The LEED rating system expresses how efficiently a building is designed and operated. In order to rate and rank a project, each structure is given a certain number of points based on its environmental impact. ●



CSUSB receives \$3 million grant for students in the arts and humanities

CSUSB received a five-year, \$3 million federal grant as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) to the College of Arts and Letters to help its students achieve academic success and be career ready, including stipends for students participating in mentoring and internship programs.

The U.S. Department of Education Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Division grant also partners the College of Arts and Letters with Norco College and San Bernardino Valley College to help their arts and humanities students and their

families prepare for attending a four-year university and be mentored by upper-division students, said Brian Heisterkamp, CSUSB professor of communication studies, who serves as the grant's principal investigator.

The grant will help the college develop a studio incubator, where students from various disciplines and departments will work together on different projects; focus on internships and training faculty on the best practices associated with internships; partner senior- and junior-level arts and humanities students with students at



Brian Heisterkamp, CSUSB professor of communication studies

the community colleges and lower-division CSUSB students for mentorship; and enable an outreach program to give families a connection so they know how they can help their students be successful. ●



**SOCIAL WORK
PROFESSOR
STRIVES TO BE
'VOICE FOR THE
VOICELESS'**

In 2007, when associate professor of social work Rigaud Joseph arrived in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., from his native Haiti, he had already been teaching K-12 and vocational students across many public and private institutions for 10 years.

He also had already earned a law degree from Haiti State University, Cap-Haitian Law School.

But Joseph learned quickly that his years of education and experience wouldn't translate into a professional position in the United States.

"I couldn't understand a lick of English, and that was very tough for me," he recalls. "I spent all my life speaking French. I had to work as a security guard to find something to do to help the family. I swallowed my pride, basically.

"I understood that I needed a new beginning," he says. "I took my high school diploma from Haiti and started from scratch."

Joseph's "new beginning" meant returning to school at age 37 and shifting his focus from law to social work. "I always wanted to be a voice for the voiceless, an advocate for the defenseless and those who are marginalized, downtrodden. That's what had pushed me toward law," he says.

He completed an associate degree at Broward Community College in only one year before enrolling at Florida Atlantic University. Again, in just one year he completed a bachelor's degree in social work, followed by a master's in social work in only 10 months.

He then gained practical experience as a family therapist in Miami, working with underprivileged children, adolescents and their families involved in the child welfare system.

After two years, he returned to school to pursue a doctorate, this time at Florida International University, where he became a graduate research assistant and adjunct professor.

In April 2017, as he wrapped work on his dissertation, he interviewed for a position at Cal State San Bernardino, and after completing a doctorate in social welfare in July 2017, joined the faculty as assistant professor that fall.

Today, his responsibilities at CSUSB are broad. He remains passionate about teaching, and has "developed a great affinity for certain classes, including human behavior and the social environment, theoretical approaches to social problems, social welfare policy, social work research methods, and human diversity and social work."

He is also coordinator of the Pathway Distance Education, an innovative program that allows those unable to attend CSUSB in person the opportunity to earn a master's degree in social work online.

In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Joseph is an active researcher. Theoretical analyses are vital to his research, he says, noting that the profession of social work places a strong emphasis on using theories in classroom as well as in clinical settings. While still a doctoral student, he developed an instrument — the Theory Evaluation Scale (TES) — to critically appraise social work theories. The TES gives social work students, scholars, researchers and practitioners a practical tool to make sense of theoretical underpinnings in their professional lives.

And he continues to advocate for the defenseless and marginalized through his research and analyses of poverty and social welfare policies, as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of government programs.

He has written and published dozens of scholarly research articles, ranging in scope from "Addressing Engagement Suppression in Black and Brown Racialized Communities" to "Poverty and Social Justice: The Building Stones of Social Work Identity." ●

Months of Celebration at CSUSB

Spring 2023



CSUSB honored Womxn's History Month in March with the theme "Celebrating and Telling Our Stories" to amplify the voices of diverse womxn and recognize their contributions across various sectors and disciplines.

A variety of events, including the highly anticipated Womxn's Leadership Conference, which featured community activist Kim Carter as the keynote speaker, took place.

During Womxn's History Month, CSUSB intentionally spelled womxn with an X as an objection to the patriarchal idea that womxn are an extension to men and the inclusion of all womxn go beyond just cis-women. ●



Kim Carter speaks on stage during CSUSB's Womxn's Leadership Conference on March 22.

Black History Month

*The Legacy
Our Existence,
My Identity*

CSUSB celebrated Black History Month in February with various events both in person and online that paid tribute to the tremendous impact that African Americans have had in the United States.

To launch the month-long number of events, the Black History Month Planning Committee hosted the Black History Month Kickoff, which allowed campus community members to learn more about student groups and campus organizations' resources.

CSUSB's Black History Month, which had the theme "The Legacy, Our Existence, My Identity," also featured the 10th annual Pioneer Breakfast and a virtual SMSU exhibit on "8 Black Inventors Who Made Daily Life Easier," such as Garrett Morgan who invented the three-light traffic signal. ●



Kerry Neal, director of philanthropy for the College of Arts & Letters and James R. Watson & Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education, speaks during the 10th Annual Pioneer Breakfast.



Hareem Khan, assistant professor of anthropology, speaks during the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month kickoff event.

ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER DESI AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH 2023

Rebellion with Love

The 2023 celebration of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month at CSUSB formally opened with the kickoff event "South Asian Stories at Sunset," featuring a Pakistani dinner, breaking fast with those who were observing the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, and highlighted the marginalized histories, stories and struggles of the South Asia diaspora.

Nationally, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Heritage Month is celebrated during the month of May, but because the university has a short month in May with finals and commencement, CSUSB starts its celebration in April.

The theme for 2023 was "Rebellion with Love." ●

WORKING TO INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES AND SKILLED TRADES

Jennifer Sorenson's leadership can be seen in her actions of building connections among women in her profession, creating support systems for women, and holding substantive discussions to address gaps or problems.

All have been in evidence since she joined CSUSB in January 2016 as the director of Facilities Planning & Management. In July 2017, she became the associate vice president for Facilities Management and, in 2022, senior associate vice president.

On her initial promotion, Sorenson reached out to her counterpart, Winnie Kwofie, associate vice president of Facilities Development & Operations at Cal State East Bay. They discussed common issues in their division and the lack of women leaders within this area of campus administration. The outreach was second nature to Sorenson because sharing information and building bridges is what she does.

As she looked around her division at CSUSB, Sorenson saw that it was incredibly diverse in race, ethnicity and culture. However, where it was less diverse was in gender. When she looked into this further, in terms of building leadership from within each area, she saw that women were heavily represented in custodial services and were also part of the architectural team. Where they were less represented was in the area of skilled trades.

She realized that two things were necessary: increase the presence of women in the skilled trades and also construct a leadership pathway for women within all aspects of facilities management.

This led to a CSU TEDTalk in 2020, which discussed the role of women in this area of campus operations, both in leadership and in presence. The talk caught the attention of attendees, and a new program was born: Women in Facilities in the CSU. It was the brainchild of Sorenson, Kwofie, Amy Forte (director of administration, Capital Planning, Design and Construction or CPDC) and Elvyra (Vi) F. San Juan (assistant vice chancellor, CPDC).

Sorenson's talk had spurred the CSU to take action.

The question for Sorenson was, What if we exposed cohort members to all aspects of facilities management and also

introduced them to people? This would encompass: (1) exposure to custodial, grounds, maintenance and capital projects; (2) bringing in speakers to address the topic of impostor syndrome; (3) relying on Zoom for flexibility and access; (4) closing out the cohort with an in-person gathering at the Chancellor's Office; and (5) providing a means for women to support one another.

The Women in Facilities' first cohort included 12 women, each from a different CSU. A second cohort of about 20 participants is scheduled for 2023. Currently, the program is limited to managers by HR as it gets off the ground.

Sorenson notes that the first cohort continues to meet, even after their program ended. Also, several members of that initial cohort have been promoted either on their own campus or to other campuses.

Sorenson found the confidence to assume a place of leadership in this initiative from what she learned by watching and participating in the reinvigoration of CSUSB's annual Women's Conference soon after she arrived on campus. She identified a common thread among the women participants: they were asking, "What can we do to take action?" This energized and empowered her.

In addition to building leadership, Sorenson has kept her eyes on growing the presence of women in the skilled trades, where they are currently underrepresented. The trades and construction remain male dominated, even after changes required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA. For example, there formerly were no restroom or shower facilities for women at construction sites, and men wouldn't think twice about this lack.

So how does an institution of higher education, which does not offer courses in the skilled trades, promote women's engagement in the field? By offering on-campus apprenticeships in the trades. This is a CSU-wide program, which CSUSB offers. Prior experience is not necessarily required. The women who participate can learn and grow their skillset in a more supportive environment. That way, should they wish to continue their post-apprenticeship

employment elsewhere, they will have gained not only skills, but confidence to engage with a world or workspace where they may be an "only."

Sorenson emphasizes that she has not built her career with a deliberate intent of breaking into work that employs fewer women. She explains, "I've never looked at a job or a position with the thought that I can't do this because I'm a woman – that has never crossed my mind." And, she adds, no one has ever told her, "You CAN'T do this."

Rather, she credits her upbringing with providing the mindset to choose a career area that interested her, regardless of gender.

She grew up as the middle of three daughters of a single mother. Her parents divorced when she was 5 years old, so the situation in the house was: if something needs to be done, we have to do it. It was not a question of choosing or not choosing to take action.

She remembers telling her mother when she was small, "I want to be a nurse."

Her mother's response was to ask, "Why not a doctor?" "Because doctors are men," Sorenson replied.

Soon after, her mother (coincidentally or deliberately) transferred their care to a female pediatrician. This real-life example, along with a mother who told her daughters, "You can do whatever you want to do," removed any built-in gendered expectations regarding careers. Her mother also made it clear: her daughters were going to go to college.

"I am a woman," states Sorenson, "but I don't define the work I do through the lens of being a woman. It is the work that I do; it is my job." But that has not changed her awareness that a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion encompasses access to work and fields that are still not gendered as including women.

She adds a final plea, "I hate being the center of attention," she says. "That's why I'm in Facilities Management. I prefer to be behind the scenes."

Whether behind the scenes or (only briefly, if she can help it) in front of them, Sorenson is taking steps through the apprenticeship program and the Women in Facilities program to build the change in her division, both here at CSUSB and in the CSU. ●



TWO DISTINGUISHED WOMEN HONORED AT CSUSB COMMENCEMENT



DORENE C. DOMINGUEZ: LATINA LEADER, CEO AND EDUCATION SUPPORTER

Dorene C. Dominguez received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at CSUSB's spring Commencement for the Jack H. Brown College of Business and Public Administration.

Dominguez is the chairwoman and CEO of Vanir Construction Management and the Vanir Group of Companies, Inc. since 2004. The companies were founded by her father, H. Frank Dominguez, in 1964 in San Bernardino. She has successfully positioned Vanir as a national leader in Program, Project, and Construction Management, and Real Estate Development, delivering \$25.8 billion in value to clients across the United States. Headquartered in Sacramento with 22 offices nationwide, Engineering News Record has ranked Vanir number 32 in the nation for Construction Management firms.

Dominguez founded The Dominguez Dream 501(c)3 in memory of her late father in February 2004. The Dominguez Dream is committed to empowering children in underserved communities to achieve their full potential through literacy, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math), social-emotional learning and parent engagement programs. Among the 12 schools receiving steadfast support from The Dominguez Dream is the H. Frank Dominguez Elementary School in San Bernardino, which opened its doors in 2014.

Dominguez is the first and only Latina to be a governor of an NBA team and is a shareholder of the Sacramento Kings.



MARY M. HECKMANN: DEDICATED TO EDUCATION AND SUPPORTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS

CSUSB alumna Mary M. Heckmann, '95, received an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at the university's Commencement for the College of Arts and Letters and the James R. Watson and Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education.

Heckmann is a philanthropist and occasional writing instructor at CSUSB's Palm Desert Campus. A Coachella Valley resident for 40 years, she is one of the area's most prolific leaders in education. She is a member of CSUSB's Palm Desert Campus' Advancement Board and has served on its executive committee since 2016.

After she served on its board of directors for a decade, The Mary Heckmann School was established on the Shelter from the Storm campus. Shelter from the Storm provides services to victims of domestic violence through professional, ethical and compassionate programs, and is the only comprehensive domestic violence shelter in the Coachella Valley.

In 2000, Heckmann and her ex-husband (divorced 2004), the late Dick Heckmann, generously gave a \$6 million gift that helped establish The Richard J. Heckmann International Center for Entrepreneurial Management at UC Riverside's Palm Desert campus.

Heckmann received her bachelor's degree in English literature from CSUSB in 1995, and her graduate and doctorate degrees from UC Riverside. ●

MORE THAN 350 VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN COYOTE CARES DAY 2023

The ninth annual CSUSB Coyote Cares Day saw about 350 students, alumni, staff and faculty volunteers participate in helping the community's underserved and needy, which this year was done over a two-day period in mid-February.

On the first day, the volunteers, which included CSUSB President Tomás D. Morales and Provost Rafik Mohamed, packed, sealed and boxed dry packages of jambalaya soup mixes, which were distributed to families in need.

The next day, the packaging of the soup mixes continued, but was done primarily by CSUSB alumni, who packed, sealed and boxed the dry soup mix for a two-day total of about 52,000 packages of soup, said Diane Podolske, director of the university's Office of Community Engagement.

The university partnered with U.S. Hunger, a Florida-based nonprofit organization committed to providing healthy meals to those in need. The boxes of the packaged soup mix were delivered to Touching Ministries, a non-denominational, faith-based nonprofit organization, which in turn distributed the boxes throughout the community.

Saturday morning, about 100 students and alumni were shuttled to locations throughout the community to help, including volunteering at a domestic violence shelter, a food bank warehouse, two area community centers and another warehouse where they sorted out holiday toys for children. ●



CSUSB, UC Riverside and Riverside City College host 'Supporting Successful Reentry Conference'

Three programs that assist the formerly incarcerated reenter the community – Project Rebound at Cal State San Bernardino, the Underground Scholars Initiative at UC Riverside and the Rising Scholars program at Riverside City College – joined together with the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to present the inaugural Supporting Successful Reentry Conference.

Annika Anderson, executive director of Project Rebound and associate professor of sociology at CSUSB, was the keynote speaker at the April 19 conference at UC Riverside. The conference aimed to bring awareness to the complex barriers that carceral-impacted and system-impacted individuals face upon reentry in the Inland Empire, the educational opportunities that are available to them, and the resources that are designed to support their success and development.

The event was also geared toward building partnerships among law enforcement, rehabilitative agencies, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations. The ultimate goal is to reduce recidivism in the Inland Empire and create a culture of care for those impacted by the justice system. ●

PROJECT IMPACT FOCUSES ON INCREASING THE NUMBER OF MINORITY MALE TEACHERS

The goal of CSUSB's Project Impact, a community outreach initiative of the James R. Watson and Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education, is direct: Help close the academic achievement gaps in the state's K-12 schools, which will ultimately pay dividends in the classroom and its students through the recruitment, training and deployment of minority male teachers into California's classrooms.

Project Impact was a vision that Watson College of Education Dean Chinaka DomNwachukwu brought with him when he came to CSUSB. It was born out of his own educational journey as a public school teacher in East Los Angeles in the 1990s. He knew firsthand how it felt to be the only Black male teacher on campus at the K-12 schools where he worked.

"Also knowing how my presence had a positive impact on the young Black men who were my students," he added.

For over two decades in California, the academic achievement gap has been talked about. DomNwachukwu saw that bringing more men of color into the classroom could have a direct impact on closing that gap by increasing both graduation and college-going rates and decreasing drop-out rates.

Recognizing that the Inland Empire was predominantly a Hispanic community, DomNwachukwu knew he would need to extend his vision beyond the African American population. But he also knew that Hispanic students had similar experiences and faced similar issues to the population of students he had initially focused on.

Assistant Dean Becky Sumbera was on hand at the outset to help realize the vision. She came to DomNwachukwu's office one day to discuss one of her students, a young African American man who was enthusiastic at the start, but then considered dropping out because he didn't feel like he belonged.

Sumbera immediately connected him with an African American male mentor along with other resources. She has been involved with the program ever since.

Gregory Richardson, who serves as Project Impact's interim director "is doing a lot of leg work, connecting with the men, mentoring them, and holding Saturday workshops to enhance their skills and competencies."

Richardson, who is also the director of the Watson & Associates Literacy Center and a lecturer in the Watson College of Education's doctoral studies program, said Project Impact basically locates, recruits, trains and then deploys



Students participating in the Project Impact program during an event in May 2022 at the James R. Watson and Judy Rodriguez Watson College of Education.



Gregory Richardson, director for the Watson & Associates Literacy Center and Project Impact interim director, meets regularly with teaching candidates in the program.



Chinaka DomNwachukwu, right, dean of the Watson College of Education, shakes hands with a participant of Project Impact at a Rialto Unified School District board meeting in August 2022.

teacher candidates working with men of color – African American, Asian American, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans.

"Our intent is to help them succeed throughout the whole process," Richardson said.

DomNwachukwu said he also knew that making a vision real requires partnerships across the community. He began building those partnerships with then-superintendent for Riverside County Schools, Judy White, who is a CSUSB alumna ('79). She now serves as a member of Project Impact's board.

Riverside provided the first Project Impact cohort of 10 in the spring of 2020. Project Impact is now on its fourth cohort, which began in fall 2022 with 30 men. ●

PALM DESERT CAMPUS hospitality management students travel to learn



A group of Palm Desert Campus hospitality management students and staff traveled to New York City in November to attend the HX: The Hotel Experience Show at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center.

The trip was funded by a CSUSB Instructional Related Activities Grant, and the trade show afforded educational seminars and numerous networking opportunities with industry professionals and peers. The group stayed in the city's Financial District and visited iconic venues and attractions.

In March, hospitality management students and staff also participated in a study abroad trip to Italy that provided them with an opportunity to immerse themselves in Italian culture, learn about the country's hospitality management and travel and transportation systems, and develop their intercultural communications skills.

Visiting the cities of Reggio Emilia, Parma, Modena, Bologna and Florence, the students participated in a variety of activities, including guided tours of food producers and businesses, and museums. They also visited iconic landmarks and participated in cooking classes where they learned how to prepare traditional Tuscan dishes as well as dishes from the Emilio Romagna region.

The itinerary included academic coursework that focused on Italian gastronomy, history and art, and lectures by local experts, business owners and chef instructors from the Florence University of the Arts. ●

CSUSB and its Palm Desert Campus awarded \$2.25 million grant for social work programs

The state of California's Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) awarded a \$2.25 million grant to support the School of Social Work at Cal State San Bernardino.

The grant funding, which specifically focuses on behavioral health, will be used to expand the current social work programs at the San Bernardino campus and create a master's in social work (MSW) program at the Palm Desert Campus, which will start in fall 2024. The funds will also go toward offering an MSW option to current students obtaining a bachelor's degree in social work (BASW) at the Palm Desert Campus.

The university is working to gain approval with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) for the PDC MSW program and develop high quality MSW internship sites in the Coachella Valley and surrounding areas. ●



CSUSB RANKS AMONG THE BEST

CSUSB advanced in **The Princeton Review's** 17th annual rankings for top graduate schools for entrepreneurship studies. CSUSB moved from 50th place overall to 44th in Top Graduate Schools for Entrepreneurship, and from 15th to 8th in the West. CSUSB is the only CSU campus recognized in the rankings, and one of only five universities in California to make the list.

Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education ranked CSUSB at 35th in its ranking of Top 100 Colleges and Universities for Hispanics. The magazine looks at those institutions that not only enroll the highest number of Hispanic/Latino students, but also the proportion of these students on a campus. It noted the negative impact of COVID-19 not only on college enrollment overall, but especially for Hispanic/Latino students.

CSUSB is listed as 36th for its online criminal justice program and 124th for its online MBA program by **U.S. News & World Report's** 2023 Best Online Program national rankings. The online MBA program was listed as fourth in California overall and first in the state in public universities. The online criminal justice program was listed as fourth in the state of California overall and second in the state in public universities.

In its 2023 Best Business Schools rankings, **The Princeton Review** once again listed CSUSB among the best for its business, MBA and entrepreneurial programs.

For Best Business Schools, CSUSB was listed among 243 colleges and universities in the nation and among 62 in the West.

Under the MBA rankings, CSUSB was listed among the Best on Campus MBA programs. In the Top 50 Best Online MBA programs, CSUSB was ranked 32nd in the nation, among the top 4 in California and first in the state in public universities.

In the Top 50 Graduate Entrepreneurship Programs in the nation, CSUSB was ranked 44th in the nation, 8th in the Top 9 Entrepreneurship Programs in the West, among the top 4 in California and second in the state in public universities behind UCLA. ●



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As an accounting student at George Washington University, A. Rafik Mohamed considered a career in corporate or tax law.

But a Constitutional law class he took as an undergraduate redirected him to a different path, one that has led him to be provost and vice president of academic affairs at Cal State San Bernardino. Serving as the university's interim provost since July 2022, the former dean of CSUSB's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences formally assumed the permanent post on Jan. 1, 2023.

Inspired by what he learned in the Constitutional law class and how it helped him make sense of what was going on around him – it was during the height of the war on drugs in the early 1990s – Mohamed switched to studying sociology and criminal justice.

"So, this wasn't my plan. Corporate law and accountancy was my plan. Thank God, that didn't happen," he said with a laugh.

As a faculty member early in his career, he saw his role as working directly with students to help them find their way. As he rose into the administrative ranks as a department chair and then dean, that grew to helping faculty members do the same, helping to create opportunities for them to be successful as teachers and scholars. And as the university's chief academic officer, that has expanded to the campus'

entire teaching corps, with the overall goal of helping students define their own future.

When he interviewed for the dean's position more than seven years ago, Mohamed said he saw the potential of the campus as well as its contribution to the region, the idea of a "steward of place."

Of his time as part of the CSUSB community, he said, "I don't think I could have made a better choice for me, because of, generally, what the California State University is about – access and opportunity. But really, we live that on this campus. And I feel fortunate that this opportunity was here when it was, and that it worked out the way that it did."

In 2015, he came to CSUSB to lead the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Remarking on the caliber of faculty in the college, Mohamed said many could join top-tier research institutions if they wanted to. Many of them have received recognition from the top professional organizations in their fields.

And from the perspective of his new post, that observation of faculty excellence extends throughout the university.

"They love working at CSUSB," he said. "We have wonderful students on our campus. And the joy and fulfillment our faculty get from working with our students is also what keeps them here." ●

NEVER TOO LATE: AT AGE 41, JEREMY SAAVEDRA IS PURSUING HIS DREAMS OF HELPING OTHERS

by Amanda Mattox

It's never too late to chase your dreams – just ask Jeremy Saavedra.

After more than two decades of traveling the roads of Riverside County, San Bernardino County and beyond as a truck driver, Saavedra decided to steer his journey toward the medical field instead.

At age 41, he enrolled in college.

"Going back to a classroom setting was difficult in itself," said Saavedra, who first studied at Chaffey College before transferring to Cal State San Bernardino as a biology major

in fall 2021. "I haven't been in school for some time, so I was concerned with how I would adapt to school life and how I would relate to other students, most of which are half my age."

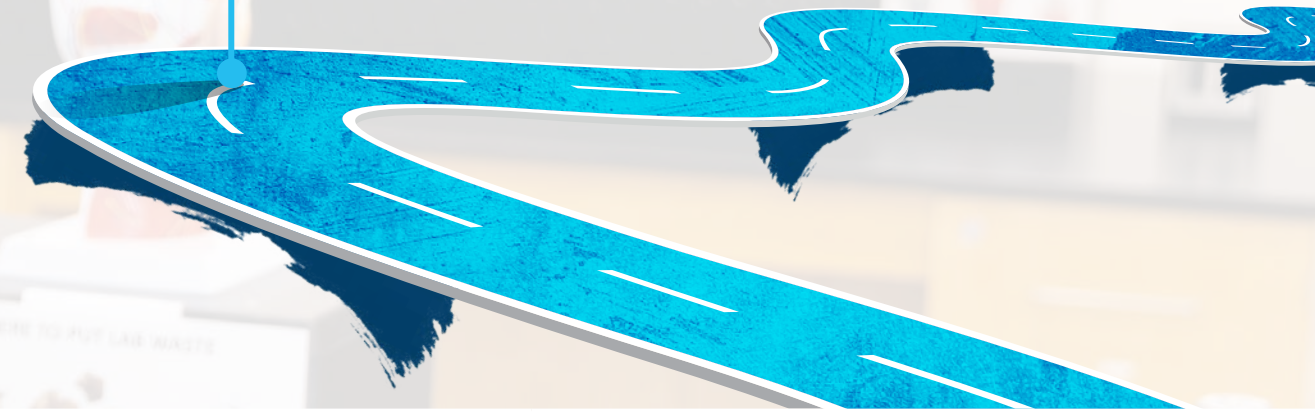
To layer on the challenge, Saavedra is also a first-generation student. "Higher education was not a high priority in my family," he said, "so making it this far has been awesome."

Despite the pressures of working full time while meeting the demands of a full-time, first-generation student, Saavedra has persisted, and is on the path to graduate in fall 2023. His goal is to become a physician assistant.





I'M JUST TRYING TO POSITIVELY IMPACT SOMEONE ELSE IN HOPES THAT THERE'S A WATERFALL EFFECT AND IT LEADS TO A BETTER COMMUNITY



I WANT TO BE A PERSON THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR OTHERS TO TURN TO IN THEIR TIME OF NEED



"The combination of my desire to change career fields and wanting to help people led me to the medical field," he said. "A physician assistant is one of those people that is able to help people who are in need medically. The more I learned about the PA profession, the more I knew that it was the perfect fit for me."

To further his experience in the medical field and offer a helping hand, Saavedra volunteers with Cope Scholars, an introductory program designed to help individuals engage with hospital personnel and patients. He shadows or assists health care workers with patient care and comfort at a non-medical level.

Saavedra's passion for helping others extends beyond the medical field as well. He volunteers his time with local organizations, such as City Link Community Outreach in Fontana and the San Bernardino Civic Center Association.

"If I am able to help, then I don't want to be someone who does nothing," he confirmed. "I've known a lot of people who are hurting or needed some kind of help. I've been the person in need of help. We hear stories all the time about people who have a struggle but nobody to turn to. I want to be a person that is available for others to turn to in their time of need."

Through City Link, he helps with groceries for households in need and assists with events that help the homeless population with things like clothes, haircuts and meals. He also participates in neighborhood cleanups through the San Bernardino Civic Center Association.

And his volunteer service doesn't stop there. Saavedra is also a notetaker at CSUSB, which requires taking notes for fellow CSUSB students who have disabilities.

Simply put, Saavedra just wants to make a difference.

"I'm just trying to positively impact someone else in hopes that there's a waterfall effect and it leads to a better community," he said.

And as a father of three, Saavedra hopes to be a positive role model for his kids, "so that they might push forward through adversity and aspire to be something greater than they thought possible."

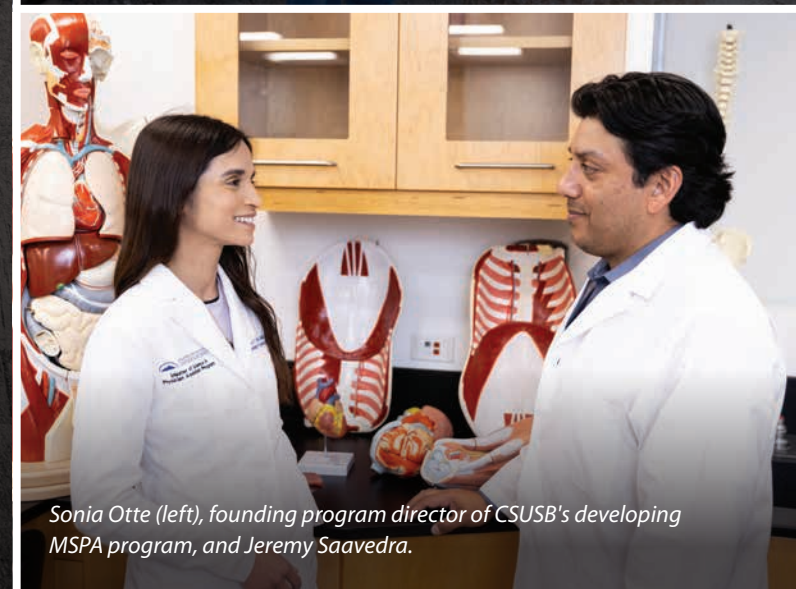
His inspiring story even caught the attention of local news and was featured on ABC7's All Good News segment.

"I was surprised!" he said when he was told that the news station was interested in interviewing him. "I never thought that my story would garner so much attention from other people. I was honored to have this opportunity and for my story to be shared with more people. Sometimes we don't realize that we have the ability to impact the lives of others when we lead by example. It's also confirmation that all of my hard work is paying off. I may not have arrived at my goal yet, but ABC showed me that I am moving in a positive direction."

Also featured within the segment was Sonia Otte, who is the founding program director of CSUSB's developing Master of Science in Physician Assistant (MSPA) program. Pending a successful accreditation review, the 27-month MSPA program will launch in August 2025.



ABC7 interviewed Saavedra on campus in early February for its All Good News segment.



Sonia Otte (left), founding program director of CSUSB's developing MSPA program, and Jeremy Saavedra.



**AS CLICHÉ AS IT
MAY SOUND, FOLLOW
YOUR DREAMS!
YOU'RE THE ONLY
PERSON THAT HAS
TO LIVE YOUR LIFE**



"The interview opened doors to information and mentors such as CSUSB's program director Sonia Otte," said Saavedra, who plans on enrolling in a master's program in fall 2024, a year before the university's MSPA program will begin.

While Saavedra may not join the upcoming CSUSB MSPA program, he still finds the news very exciting.

"The program is a huge development for the university and also the health care field," he said. "The Inland Empire is an area in need of health care professionals, so the MSPA program will help fill that void and assist in the needs of the community.

"Personally, I had hoped to be in the first-ever MSPA class at CSUSB and that may still be a possibility," he said, "but regardless, I will always be a Coyote for life!"

Saavedra credits CSUSB for helping him along his academic journey and supporting him during his career change,

acknowledging the attentive professors who have been there for him when he needs extra assistance and Academic Advising for helping him stay on track.

"The entire support system in place here at CSUSB is amazing," he said, noting the overall positive learning environment. "CSUSB is giving me a solid foundation in regard to my education."

For anyone who hopes to make a career change, Saavedra encourages them to never give up, because the rewards of happiness will be worth it in the end.

"There's going to be times when you question what you're doing – stay with it," he urges. "Take your educational plan one semester at a time. Before you know it, you will be knocking on graduation's door. Above all else, as cliché as it may sound, follow your dreams! You're the only person that has to live your life. Make yourself happy." ●

CSUSB's MSPA program to help bring more physician assistants to the Inland Empire

HEALTH CARE IN THE INLAND EMPIRE

The United States continues to face a lack of equitable access to health care. By 2030, forecasts predict that California's shortage of primary care clinicians may be up to 10,000 jobs. However, some regions of California have been hit much harder than others.

The rapidly growing Inland Empire has just 41 primary care physicians per 100,000 patients, which is the lowest in the state and far fewer than the recommended range of 60 to 80 primary care physicians per 100,000 patients.

CSUSB'S PLAN TO HELP

CSUSB is developing a 27-month Master of Science in Physician Assistant (MSPA) program to contribute to resolving regional and state health care shortages. Pending a successful accreditation review, the program plans to matriculate its first class of 40 students in August 2025.

As essential members of the health care delivery team, physician assistants are certified health care providers who diagnose conditions, develop patient-centered treatment plans, prescribe medications and provide preventative care.

The CSUSB MSPA program plans to recruit, educate and graduate talent from the Inland Empire and other medically underserved areas. By increasing the number of qualified health care providers entering the workforce, the CSUSB MSPA program will help meet the current and future health care needs of communities. This increased access to care helps to promote health equity and improve overall patient outcomes.

The CSUSB MSPA program has begun recruiting for faculty and staff positions. The initial positions include a director of didactic education, director of clinical education and a part-time medical director. Additional faculty and staff positions will be available over the next few years as the program continues to develop.

FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING

CSUSB's developing program has secured \$2 million in federal funding. The federal funding, which has been designated to help purchase teaching and laboratory equipment for the program, was the work of U.S. Senator



Alex Padilla, D-Calif., and U.S. Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-San Bernardino, and was listed in the federal fiscal year 2023 appropriations package, which after being approved by the House and Senate, was signed into law by President Joe Biden on Dec. 29.

California State Sen. Richard Roth, D-Riverside, advocated for CSUSB to receive state funding to launch the MSPA program. Since 2021, Roth has successfully obtained \$11.8 million to support the startup, including hiring personnel and creating new facilities.

ACCREDITATION STATUS

CSUSB has applied for Accreditation-Provisional from the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA). The university anticipates matriculating its first class in August 2025, pending achieving Accreditation-Provisional status at the March 2025 ARC-PA meeting.

Accreditation-Provisional is an accreditation status granted when the plans and resource allocation, if fully implemented as planned, of a proposed program that has not yet enrolled students appear to demonstrate the program's ability to meet the ARC-PA Standards or when a program holding Accreditation-Provisional status appears to demonstrate continued progress in complying with the standards as it prepares for the graduation of the first class (cohort) of students.

MISSION

The CSUSB MSPA mission is to develop multidimensional physician assistants who transform the health of patients and communities using compassion, cultural humility and innovative leadership. ●

Learn more about CSUSB's MSPA program and the admissions process at csusb.edu/mspa.

\$1 MILLION BEQUEST IN NAME OF FOUNDING CSUSB PRESIDENT TO SUPPORT STUDENTS, LIBRARY ENDOWMENT



Elly Pfau's childhood was in many ways, idyllic. She is the daughter of John M. Pfau, Cal State San Bernardino's founding president, and Antreen Pfau. In 1958, 5-year-old Elly, her 7-year-old sister Madelaine and their parents moved from their home in Chicago, where both girls were born, to Chico, Calif. Her father had been named chair of the department of social sciences and professor of history at Chico State, the second oldest campus in the California State University (CSU) system. John and Antreen met as students at the University of Chicago, where he studied history and she studied zoology, and they married in 1942. The move to California would prove life changing.

Elly recalls the beauty of the Chico State campus, catching crawdads in the creek that meandered through the heart of the university's grounds, and collecting mouse bones beneath the pine trees surrounding her grade school, cast off by the owls that nested above.

"I always remember that as a lovely time in life," she said.

Being involved in campus life would remain a constant for the rest of her childhood and adolescence – and it remains today.

When her father was appointed dean of the humanities department at Cal State Sonoma two years later, the family once again moved, this time to Santa Rosa. Elly and Madelaine adjusted to a new elementary school and Antreen commuted to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Berkeley where she conducted research on radiation and its after-effects.

One evening two years later, in 1962, Elly recalls her father answering the phone. "You're kidding," he said to the caller. After some discussion, "He hung up the phone and told us he had been appointed the first president at Cal State San Bernardino. He was stunned. It was just wonderful."

THE PFAU FAMILY MEETS THE COYOTE FAMILY

That phone call would have a resounding impact on the lives of the Pfau family – and the Coyote family that would soon be their neighbors – far into the future.

The Pfaus bought a home in the foothills, where John tended a grove of orange trees and an avocado tree or two. "Those orange trees were his pride and joy," Elly recollected fondly.

When Elly herself went away to college in 1971, she selected Cal State Chico for its speech pathology program, but never felt too far from Cal State San Bernardino. "John regularly sent boxes of oranges and avocados from the grove," she laughed.

She went on to earn a master's degree in audiology from Ohio University and returned to California to complete an internship at Loma Linda University. For the next seven years, she continued to hone her skills as an audiologist and was then recruited by Siemens, an international medical instrument company, as a custom product specialist based in Southern California.

In 1990, at age 36, she seized an opportunity to spread her entrepreneurial wings and purchased a hearing aid business from a retiring business owner in Napa. She refocused its scope as an audiology practice and renamed it Napa Valley Hearing Center.

In the meantime, in the late 1960s, her sister Madelaine had begun studies at the University of California, San Diego, then went on to graduate from Dartmouth College and later earned an MBA at Harvard Business School. "She was a star," Elly said. Madelaine became an executive search recruiter, eventually becoming a partner with Heidrick and Struggles as a mentor and coach in Dallas. She married Charles Jones, and though he was a classmate at Harvard, they didn't meet until well after graduating.

PRESIDENT PFAU'S LEGACY

John Pfau served as CSUSB president from 1962 – three years before the campus opened – until 1982. After his retirement, he and Antreen remained active in the San Bernardino community before moving to Napa in 1999.

Elly describes her father as "a very gentle man, who was constantly trying to educate himself," she said. "He really believed in education and giving young people the opportunity to learn."

Like her father, Elly believes in the power of education to change lives, and in 2008, she included CSUSB in her estate plans with a \$50,000 gift – \$45,000 supported the Pfau Family Scholarship, and \$5,000 supported the John M. Pfau Library Endowment.

Antreen passed away in August 2011 and John in March 2012; they enjoyed a 70-year marriage. "He never ever raised his voice," Elly said softly. "I never heard him do that. And people on campus said the same thing."

In September 2012, Madelaine and Elly ensured their father's legacy by establishing the campus' first endowed professorship – the John M. Pfau Endowed Professor – with a \$100,000 gift. Giving back to Cal State San Bernardino is important, Elly said. "I feel like Cal State San Bernardino was a third child in our family."

The following year, at age 60, Elly sold Napa Valley Hearing Center. "I loved it," she said of her career. Since retiring, she spends time enjoying the beauty of Napa Valley, reading, and "I watch tons of science and history documentaries," she said, noting the influence of her parents. "That was Antreen and John all over," she added, smiling.

Sadly, Madelaine Pfau, who was married to Charles Jones for 36 years, passed away of breast cancer in 2019.

The Pfau family legacy, however, remains strong.

\$1 MILLION BEQUEST TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND LIBRARY ENDOWMENT

In November 2022, Elly generously made a \$1 million bequest to two endowed funds at CSUSB. Ninety percent of the gift will support the John M. Pfau Family Scholarship, which was established by Elly, Madelaine and Charles Jones in 2002 to support CSUSB students. Ten percent of the gift will fund the John M. Pfau Library Endowment. This planned gift – a deferred gift to CSUSB made through a donor's estate plan, strengthening the university's ability to shape the lives of future generations – has allowed Elly, and the Pfau family, to create a lasting legacy that will stand for generations at this wonderful institution.

"John was an intense advocate of education," said Elly. Her gift to the library was inspired by her father's love of reading and her own reading habit, which she describes as "a voracious love for books on history and science."

"I hope this gift allows those who are serious students to get a great education and start life in a good position to go forward," she said. "This is a gift from John and I," she added, in memory of her father.

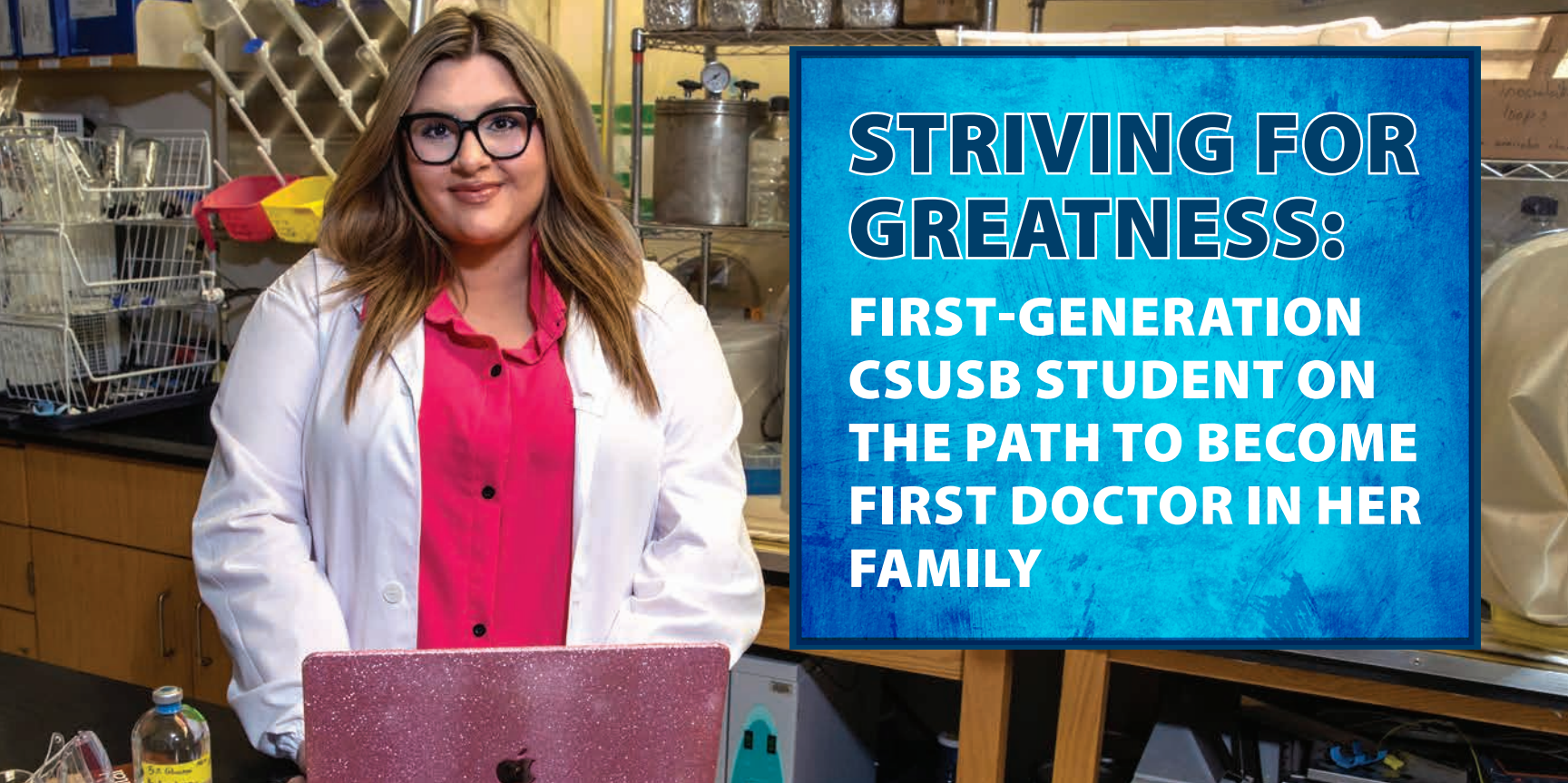
THE JOHN M. PFAU LEGACY SOCIETY

Elly was touched to learn that this year, CSUSB created The John M. Pfau Legacy Society, which is dedicated to recognizing individuals, who, like Elly, have chosen to support the university by including it in their estate plans.

For those considering making a similar gift to CSUSB and becoming a member of the Legacy Society, she emphasized, "It's the future. It's your children, it's your grandchildren. The students who are attending Cal State San Bernardino today will be running the country someday." ●



For more information about The John M. Pfau Legacy Society, contact the CSUSB Office of Planned Giving at (855) 204-0049, by email at planmylegacy@csusb.edu, or by visiting planmylegacy.csusb.edu.



**STRIVING FOR GREATNESS:
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CSUSB 2023 HOMECOMING

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She can still hear it more than 15 years later: “Mexican girls like Ally are made for house cleaning – not college.” Ally Bledsoe’s second-grade tutor had uttered that sentence to her after she had trouble pronouncing a word. “I know I was very young,” Bledsoe says, “but I will never forget when I was sitting there and told myself, ‘No matter what happens in my life, I will prove her wrong.’”

She did.

In 2018, the same year she graduated high school, Bledsoe enrolled at Cal State San Bernardino as a first-generation biology major. She graduated with her bachelor’s degree in spring 2023 and is on the path to become a pediatric oncologist.

“It’s very intimidating and it’s very scary,” she admits. “I will be the first doctor in my whole family. I have nobody to look to, so it’s all on me. But it’s also very exciting.”

In her freshman and sophomore years at CSUSB, Bledsoe worked four jobs to pay for school and help her mother with household bills, while also taking care of her grandmother, who has dementia. “It was very hard,” she recalls. “But I managed.”

Luckily, she was the recipient of the Inland Empire Community Foundation’s S.L. Gimbel Foundation Scholarship, created for low-income students enrolled in certain CSUs, including CSUSB, not once, but twice, at \$10,000 each. “It helped me out a lot,” she says, noting that she was able to put some into her savings for medical school.

While a lot of the financial burden was lifted, Bledsoe was still hard at work, waking up at 3:30 a.m. to catch the 5:20 a.m.

shuttle from Coachella to the San Bernardino campus every Monday and Wednesday.

“Even though I am very tired, I know that it’s going to be worth it in the end because it will pay off,” says Bledsoe, who chose to become a pediatric oncologist because of her love of children.

“I want to help children from all walks of life,” she explains. “I want to show them that there is life during and after cancer because I know cancer is very ugly. I want to find a cure for cancer so no child will have to lose their childhood.”

Bledsoe says part of her motivation comes from those who have doubted her, including her second-grade tutor. A tough childhood also influenced her commitment to succeed. Bledsoe was born and raised in an area plagued with gang violence, was raised by a single mother in a low-income household, and had a troubled father who was in and out of her life.

Despite her barriers, Bledsoe has always been determined to achieve her goals, not only for herself, but for her mother, as well as for her future children and patients.

She is now one step closer to her dreams since she walked across the stage during spring Commencement as a proud, first-generation CSUSB graduate, where more than 80% of its students identify as first generation.

“CSUSB, I think, is the home of first-gens,” she said before Commencement. “When I graduate, I will be graduating with a lot of first-generations, so it will be a milestone for all of us and we will all experience it together. Even if I don’t know them, we are still connected by being first-generations.”



HELPING CSUSB *Students* IN TIMES *of need*

Samantha Gallardo,
Student, Psychology



Determined to focus on his education after imprisonment, sociology major Eric Tafoya had to cut hours at his job as a welder fabricator. With that came the challenge of covering his basic needs.

"I got out of prison three years ago and since getting out, I live on my own, almost self-sufficient, but I wanted to take my schooling a little more seriously," he said. "In order for me to give more of my time to schooling, I would cut back on a little bit of my work. And so, I go to the DEN every week for food."

The university's Obershaw DEN, or the DEN for short, which stands for Delivering Emergency Nourishment, and the Palm Desert Campus (PDC) DEN assist currently enrolled CSUSB students who face food insecurity or scarcity. Located on both the San Bernardino and Palm Desert campuses, the food pantry is part of CSUSB's Basic Needs program to support students' well-being and basic needs.

Samantha Gallardo, a recent CSUSB alumna, fell on hard times when her husband was laid off and she had just begun school. She, too, turned to the DEN in a time of need.

"The first time I went to the DEN, I had just started back at school here at CSUSB and my husband and I had just gotten back from Mexico," she explained. "We had gone to Mexico for his visa appointment. Unfortunately, things did not go well, and we were in Mexico for a month awaiting any answers."

When Gallardo and her husband returned to the United States, they were "completely broke" and were unsure how they were going to continue to provide for themselves.

"My husband had been laid off and I was barely starting school. When I came back to campus, I saw a lot of information about the DEN, and I went in and was able to grab a couple of things for a couple of meals for a week," she said.

That one week of assistance from the DEN helped her and her husband immensely. After that experience, Gallardo felt comfort as a student, knowing that this on-campus resource was available to her if she ever fell into a moment of need again.

For Tafoya, his experience with the DEN continues to be a welcoming one.

"I think with anybody, we go into a food bank, and you feel a little nervous. ... You feel uncomfortable at first, but no, they welcomed me with a smile," he said of the DEN, describing those who work at the food pantry as "always loving" and "always open."

In addition to the DEN, CSUSB's Basic Needs program offers students financial assistance, short-term emergency housing and connects them with additional outside resources.

After an accident at work, Tafoya worried about paying his rent. The program helped him with an emergency grant.

"That grant was able to lift me, to pay my rent, to get me over the hump that I was going through. It really was an emergency in my mind, in my heart. I was stressing on it. It allowed me to get passed it," he said. "That emergency grant money that they have ... helped me in that time of need."

Since the launch of the CSU Basic Needs Initiative in 2016, CSUSB has taken strategic steps to ensure students have access to a variety of campus resources, such as the Obershaw DEN and emergency grants, as well as community resources to meet their basic needs, so that all students can reach their personal and academic potential. The CSUSB Basic Needs program's mission is to empower students to reach their health, wellness and academic goals by connecting them to the resources they need to ensure their success.

For Gallardo, CSUSB's resources helped her tremendously in a time of need and highly recommends the DEN to any student who finds themselves in a similar situation.

"I have told other students that the DEN is super helpful in any basic needs," she said. "You can go in and grab a snack or a couple of necessities."

Tafoya underscores the importance of the DEN, highlighting the fact that there is no shame in needing help. The DEN, he says, has "good food and good people."

"Don't hurt yourself because of your pride. Go there because everybody's ready to help you. That's what they're there for. They're not going to look down on you," he affirms. "They're there to support us, to help us and to help us grow as students and be as successful as we can." ●

STUDENT SUCCESS FROM 'THE CENTER OF THE AEROSPACE TESTING UNIVERSE'

Scholarships. Internships and jobs. Research. And all come with the opportunity to play a role in defending the country from "the center of the aerospace testing universe."

The College of Natural Sciences' School of Computer Science and Engineering launched a series of events designed to provide educational and career opportunities for students pursuing a degree in a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) field and the chance to network with military and defense industry contacts.

One event was the STEM career fair, which was part of a broader, ongoing effort by the college to decrease equity gaps among students, retain students in STEM majors, increase graduation rates, provide access to valuable undergraduate research and learning assistant experiences, and prepare graduates for graduate and professional schools.



These events are supported by the nearly \$5 million Proactive Approaches for Training Hispanics (PATHS) in STEM grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which is designed to increase the number of Hispanic and low-income students who graduate with STEM degrees. ●

THREE CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITIES COMMIT TO GROWING A COMMUNITY OF CYBERINFRASTRUCTURE PROFESSIONALS

Recognizing economic competitiveness and security depends on advanced cyberinfrastructure to enable science and engineering research and education, the National Science Foundation (NSF) initiated a CyberTraining funding challenge to prepare and develop a workforce that can help scientists meet their computational needs.

Accepting the NSF challenge, an interdisciplinary team of cyberinfrastructure (CI) experts led by CSUSB, the San Diego Supercomputer Center at UC San Diego and San Diego State University was awarded \$6.7 million for training and mentoring a cohort of CI professionals. Referred to as CIPs, they will navigate the CI landscape, apply CI tools and work hand-in-hand with scientists to meet their computational, visualization and data analysis needs.

This new interdisciplinary training program focuses on four main areas: recruitment and training, Science and Engineering (S&E) project matching and mentoring, S&E research consulting, and fostering and participating in interdisciplinary CIP communities. ●



CSUSB to offer 8-week summer fellowship workshop on data science as part of NSF grant

For the second consecutive year, CSUSB will be one of the sites of a data science summer fellowship program offered through the Data Science Career Pathways in the Inland Empire Program, funded by a \$1.5 million National Science Foundation (NSF) grant that links six area Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI).

The eight-week Data Science Summer Fellowship Camp for undergraduates and graduate students will provide data science training and team-based projects based on real-world data sets under the supervision of faculty and industry advisors, said Yunfei Hou, an associate professor in the CSUSB School of Computer Science and Engineering.

The fellowship, which includes a \$5,000 stipend supported by the NSF, has the goal of creating flexible pathways for data science education in the inland region through the six HSIs in the partnership, said Hou, who is the principal investigator at CSUSB for the grant.

The partnership includes CSUSB, UC Riverside, Riverside City College, Moreno Valley College, Norco College and San Bernardino Valley College. ●



Using immersive technologies, CSUSB team launches on-ground reporting on earthquake disaster in Turkey

A team of scholars, students and staff at the Extended Reality for Learning (xREAL) Lab at CSUSB, in cooperation with the Immersive Media Lab and Mimesis Center for Documentary and Ethnographic Media at the University of Colorado, Boulder (CUB), started on-ground reporting in mid-March of the aftermath of the devastating earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria on Feb. 6, using immersive technologies.

With a small starting fund from both CSUSB and CUB, the U.S. team hired a mobile team in Istanbul. The Turkey team

started filming the aftermath of the earthquake in order to provide viewers with multidimensional stories of the victims. The U.S. team shipped a Ricoh Theta 360-degree camera.

The project focuses on the humanitarian crisis facing the Syrian refugee population in Turkey. The team hopes to not only raise awareness, but also increase empathy with the refugees in an attempt to increase humanitarian aid to this population that is not fully covered by governmental support since their status is temporary in Turkey.

The idea was proposed by CSUSB graduate alumnus Naim Aburaddi, '22, a doctoral student at CUB, who lost one of his Syrian friends and his whole family in the earthquake.

The same CSUSB team, led by Ahlam Muhtaseb, CSUSB professor of media studies, and James Trotter, assistant director of Academic Technologies and Innovation at CSUSB, started a similar project for immersive reporting on the Gaza Strip in Palestine last year. ●

ALUMNA'S QUEST FOR ACADEMIC 'REDEMPTION' LEADS TO INTRIGUING CAREER IN CYBERSECURITY



When Chioma Nwagbala, '16, began Cal San Bernardino's Master of Public Administration (MPA) program with a concentration in cybersecurity in 2013, she dubbed it her "redemption degree."

As an undergraduate at the University of California, Irvine in 2008, she imagined pursuing a career in medicine, but soon decided chemistry wasn't her strength. Thinking a career in law was a possibility, she began classes and then realized, "I liked criminology, but law was too dry." Ultimately, she earned a degree in Spanish with a minor in education, but concluded, "Teachers don't get paid enough. They do a fantastic job, but they don't pay teachers enough."

"I struggled a bit in my bachelor's degree program because I didn't really know what I wanted to do," she notes. After graduating in 2012 with a 2.97 GPA, she went back home to Eastvale, living with her parents. "Basically, for the next year, I was trying to figure out my life," she says.

When her parents proposed a graduate degree in cybersecurity, she was hesitant. "How could they even suggest I work with computers?" she says with mock indignation. Then, with a laugh, "I guess sometimes your parents know better."

After being admitted to CSUSB's MPA program, she immediately applied for a full scholarship offered through the Cybersecurity Center. Unfortunately, "I didn't get [it]. I didn't have a 3.0 GPA. I think that's probably one of the most disappointing things I'd ever experienced. I cried at the mailbox," she recalled.

So began the "redemption" degree – her second chance to excel academically. With renewed determination, as she launched her master's studies at CSUSB, she also began an associate degree in computer network administration and security management at Mt. San Antonio College. "The master's degree program had five classes for the concentration," she explains. "I wanted more technical

knowledge for when I started applying for jobs. I was bouncing back and forth between two schools for three years. It was a crazy time."

In addition to the academic demands, graduate students were required to complete an internship, an extremely competitive process, she says. "I think I put in hundreds of applications," she says. "As God would have it, I ended up with three internships."

In winter quarter of 2015, she landed an internship at the CSU Chancellor's Office in Long Beach as a student assistant with information security, as well as an internship at the Jurupa Community Services District in information technology. In the summer of 2015, she began a coveted 10-week internship with the Department of Justice (DOJ) in Chantilly, Va., working with the Cyber Division. When the internship ended, she was immediately hired for a position with the DOJ in Los Angeles.

"I'm definitely an overachiever," she says, laughing. "And it truly was my redemption degree. By the time I graduated in 2016, I was in two honor societies, and I had a 3.69 GPA."

After two years with the DOJ, she joined consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton as a government contractor, still working with the Justice Department but in security operations, and relocated to the Washington, D.C., metro area.

After about a year-and-a-half on the DOJ contract, she joined another contract doing cyber-financial intelligence reporting with the Department of Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network. While she enjoyed intelligence reporting, "I still wanted to get my hands dirty," she says, and in January 2021, she joined what is now the Cyber Threat Management team at KPMG in Dallas, helping clients navigate cyber response and recovery as they build cyber resilience.

Her advice for those considering a degree in cybersecurity? "Things are always changing," she says, "so be ready to be a lifelong learner." ●

SOCIAL WORK STUDENT STRIVES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Whether it's through social work, assisting at CSUSB's First Peoples' Center or helping first-year students as a resident assistant for the university's Living Learning Communities, Savannah Hull hopes to make a positive difference in any way she can.

Savannah, who is Muscogee Creek and a fourth-year social work major, says she is grateful for all the opportunities she has been given and hopes to continue to grow and help others.

Through her classes, programs and extracurricular activities, she has been able to meet a wide variety of people and says CSUSB has a great student body. In fact, she credits CSUSB for helping her come out as part of the LGBTQIA+ community because of the acceptance and love she has experienced on campus. ●



Watch at magazine.csusb.edu

Inaugural Alumni HALL OF FAME 2023

On behalf of the CSUSB Alumni Association, we are proud to announce the inaugural Alumni Hall of Fame 2023 registration is NOW OPEN. Join us Friday, September 15th at the Santos Manuel Student Union North for a glittering evening of Coyote Pride. We will honor eight esteemed alumni who are making an impact in our community.

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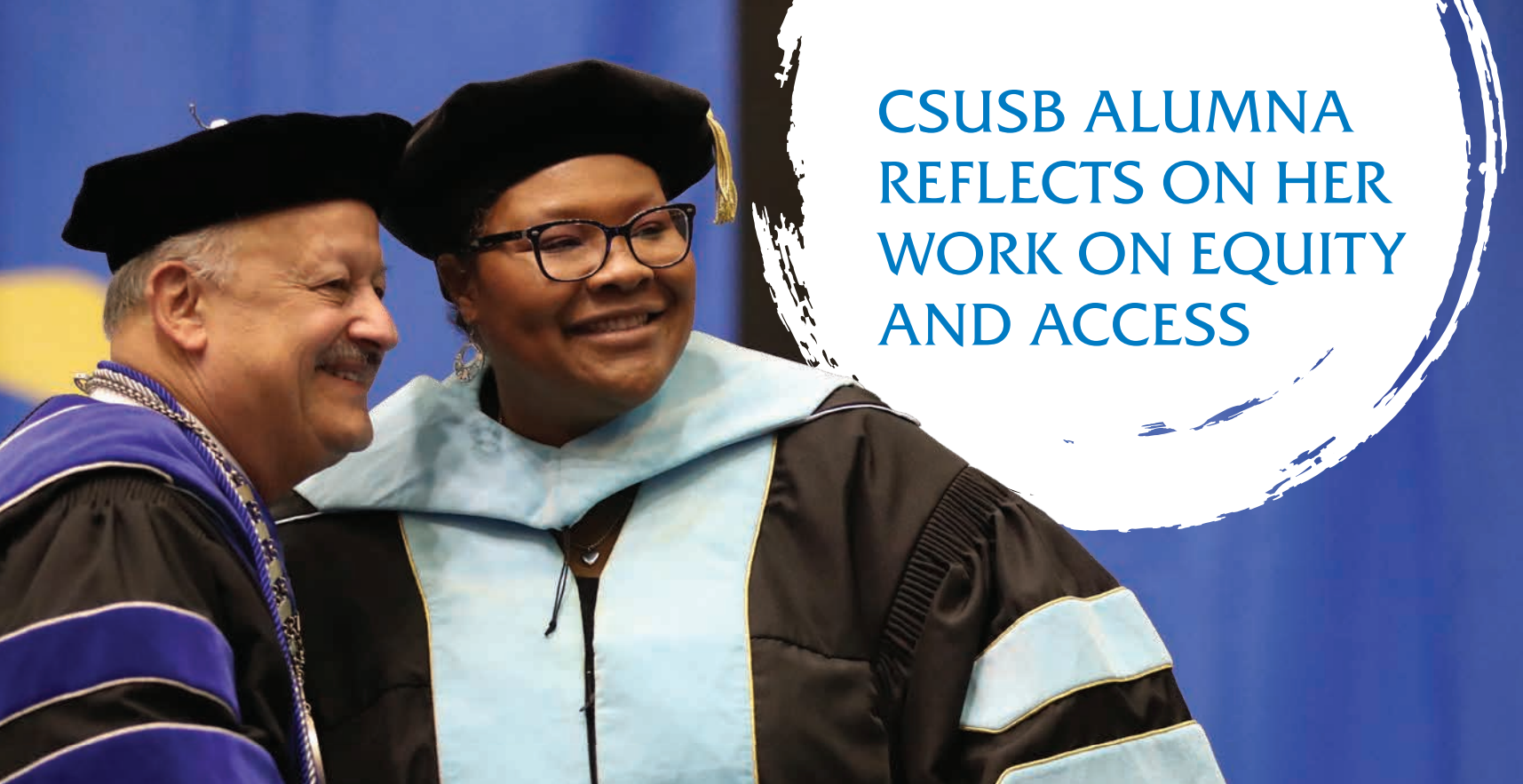
THE EVENT SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

5:30 p.m. Cocktail Hour
6:00 p.m. Program Start

TICKETS TO ATTEND ARE \$50 EACH and include a plated meal and dessert.

REGISTER TODAY AT alumni.csusb.edu/HallofFame!

REGISTRATION CLOSES Friday, August 18, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.



CSUSB ALUMNA REFLECTS ON HER WORK ON EQUITY AND ACCESS



When Cherina Betters, '17, the first chief of equity and access at San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, is asked, "Did you ever imagine this is the work you would be doing when you grew up?" her response is a pause and then a laugh that is filled with gratitude and warmth.

"No," she says. "I never imagined this. I thought I would be an attorney or a teacher. So, I knew I would pursue my education. But this?"

Another pause.
"I am surprised with me."

As she speaks about her career path, Betters frankly admits that where she has ended up is the result of "a series of things I stumbled into." But her thoughtful and deliberative process, which is clear she has brought to her decision making, soon comes to the forefront.

"Before I even applied to getting my doctorate, I had a series of conversations with people. About the work I was doing," she says. "And they said to me, 'Some of the environment you are creating, it can't be duplicated.'"

But Betters disagreed.

"It got me thirsty," she says. "I had to prove these people wrong."

The work she was doing included teaching in San Jacinto Unified School District and Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District. She calls the latter, "the house that built me" (a Miranda Lambert fan, she credits the singer with that inspirational phrase).

"I spent just about my entire adult teaching career in Yucaipa," she says. "By the end of my time there, it broke my heart to leave."

Betters was told, when she arrived in Yucaipa, that she was the first Black teacher to work in that school district. Her response was, "Oh, all right, cool!" She found her reception there warm and welcoming, even as she realized that she was the diversity in the room.

"It was such a flashpoint," she recalls. "What did I get myself into? Not in a negative way; I didn't feel demeaned."

Instead, she thought of it as a great responsibility. By embodying the role of someone who would be viewed as breaking the color barrier, she could bring about change. But she knows that, while progress has been made since then, diversity in the Yucaipa-Calimesa School District remains a work-in-progress.

What Betters learned was the lived existence of working in a community where "the vast majority of demographics were very foreign to people who looked like me," she says. What she gained was a knowledge of the difference between what things may seem like intellectually, and what they are like in reality.

And this is what brought her to Cal State San Bernardino's Ed.D. in educational leadership and social justice.

She appreciated the diversity of her program cohort in terms of racial, religious and LGBTQIA+ members.

"The program helped me see things," she emphasizes. "Every inch of that degree work is poured into what I do today."

The Ed.D. program both fully shaped her and gave her what she needed to anchor her into her groundbreaking position with San Bernardino County Schools.

Betters found that the coursework resonated with what she had come to see as her own personal pursuit: wanting people to have parity, across all dimensions of difference. Because, ultimately, the questions she found are, "How do we have these conversations in ways where we can expose things that need to be exposed? And then use them as leverage for healing throughout our area and our nation?"

The opportunity to have those necessary conversations as part of her degree work has left a deep and lasting impression on her.

She was awarded "Outstanding Doctoral Student" in her cohort. Her dissertation, with a title that also calls on a much-loved piece of music ("the Aretha Franklin version," she clarifies), was: "Bridge Over Troubled Water: Creating an Ecology of Transformative Care for Students at Risk of Their Promise."

In her new role as the first chief of equity and access, she represents 33 school districts and over 400,000 students. Betters notes that, as the first person in this position, she didn't have any guiding models at hand.

The second factor, she observes, is that, "the higher you typically go in education, or in the business world, as a Black person, the fewer people you see who look like you."

Regardless, it is clear she is focused on being the change that she wants to see. And the ultimate winner in all of this? Our children.

"I used to always think that kids were kids, no matter where you were. But I have learned that is only partially true." Kids are shaped by the particular community, and its values, where they reside. "When communities are responsive to the evolution of what it means to be a child and the process of growing up, your outcomes are a lot better," she concludes.

She clarifies that this is not about ranking certain communities as better or worse than the others, but rather understanding that kids' environments provide them with different experiences. "My job is to be a thought partner, responsive to the needs of the adults, individual communities, and the students."

Her role is, therefore, to be a bridge. This means being a constant so that whichever of the 33 school districts she is in or speaking with, they know that she is there to be the connector between their community and the ultimate goals of equity and access. ●



MEN'S BASKETBALL ENDS HISTORIC SEASON IN FINAL FOUR

The Cal State San Bernardino men's basketball team concluded their most successful season ever with a 31-4 record, a second consecutive CCAA title and an NCAA Final Four appearance, challenging No. 1 Nova Southeastern down to the wire.

The 2022-23 team had a historic season, breaking the program scoring record, win record, and tying the deepest run in the NCAA Tournament in program history. Their 31 wins surpassed the 28 set by the 2001-02 team, and their 3,094 points completely shattered the 2,520 points set by the 2006-07 team – who also made the Final Four.

The university community gathered at University Hall Plaza in early April to celebrate the success of the 2022-23 men's basketball team. •



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CSUSB WELCOMES NEW COYOTE ATHLETICS DIRECTOR

Shareef Amer, an athletics administrator with more than 11 years of experience in intercollegiate athletics, is CSUSB's new athletic director.

"He has demonstrated his ability to be an effective administrator in working with diverse student-athletes who not only prioritizes athletic success, but who also understands the critical importance of student academic success," said Paz Maya Oliverez, the vice president for Student Affairs. "I am confident that his leadership will continue to strengthen the championship culture and stellar team of staff and coaches in our athletics program."

"I look forward to leading a competitive athletics department where the individuals and sports teams serve as a point of pride for the CSUSB campus and community," said Amer. "We will emphasize success in the classroom, on the playing fields, and within the community."

At CSUSB, Amer will oversee 10 programs: women's teams in basketball, cross country, soccer, softball, track and field, and volleyball, and men's teams in baseball, basketball, soccer and golf.

Amer comes to CSUSB after having served in an executive leadership capacity at California State University, Northridge. Amer joined CSUN in 2018 as the associate athletics director for compliance before being elevated to associate athletic director for administration and operations in February 2019. •



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CASE STATEMENT



GIVE

TERRENCE FLOYD GIVES MESSAGE OF 'LOVE AND UNITY' AT CSUSB'S SOCIAL JUSTICE SUMMIT

Social activist Terrence Floyd visited CSUSB for the university's Social Justice Summit in early March. The event was an opportunity for CSUSB students to hear Floyd discuss various topics, including how to promote change, how to deal with grief, law enforcement and his brother George, who died while in the custody of four Minneapolis, Minn., police officers on May 25, 2020.

Floyd said that he and a group of friends created the We Are Floyd Foundation to help "stop this from happening and try to stop it from hitting anybody's doorstep."

Since his brother's death, Floyd, who is a board member of the George Floyd Memorial Foundation, has served as a tireless community leader and grassroots organizer, sharing a message of love, unity, equality, criminal justice reform, and civil and human rights. ●



Goal of Pan-African Student Success Center administrator: ENSURE ALL STUDENTS ARE POSITIONED FOR SUCCESS

Five years ago, Roryana Bowman, '22, moved with her two children and partner from her hometown of Columbus, Ohio, to California, with plans to complete her degree in American Sign Language.

"I'm passionate about the deaf community. I'm passionate about sign language. I want to be an ally to the deaf community," said Bowman, interim coordinator of the Pan-African Student Success Center at Cal State San Bernardino. "I wanted to move to a place that's warm and has ample opportunities for me to specialize in performance interpreting, like plays and concerts.

"But life had other plans," she said, laughing.

Bowman's gifts — leadership, inspiring others and making connections — have defined her academic career, as both a student and an administrator.

After arriving in California, she enrolled at Riverside Community College and soon became president of the Ujima Club. She completed two years of coursework in communications in just one year with a 3.6 GPA, and was selected commencement speaker, representing the Class of 2020. She completed her associate degree in American Sign Language this spring.

As a communication studies major at CSUSB, Bowman further honed her leadership abilities, serving as co-president of the Black Student Union, president of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, vice president of the African American Sisterhood and student representative for the Black Faculty, Staff and Student Association.

In August 2022, she was appointed to her current position and uses her leadership skills to connect with students, focusing on their well-being and success as they tap into the center's many services.

"The Pan-African Center serves as a space for Pan-African students to come and get that support, to be around like-minded students, to be around people who can really understand them on a cultural level, and a place for allies of Pan-African students to more fully understand how they can be better allies," she said.

Today, Bowman's goals as the center's coordinator stem partially from her own experience. Last semester she asked the center's graduating student assistants what they planned to do after graduation. "They said, 'I'm not really sure. I haven't figured it out.'"



"Well, that was also me. When I graduated, I didn't know. I didn't really have enough time to apply for jobs because I was juggling all these classes and other responsibilities," she said. "But there are too many students like me who graduate and don't really know what their next step is. My goal for the center is to eliminate that."

Bowman has created a series of weekly workshops for students "who would like to invest in their professional success and build their skills so they're ready to go out into the professional world."

The workshops focus on three areas: the job search, from writing and fine-tuning resumes and cover letters to identifying salary requirements; securing career-appropriate internships; and finally, negotiating job offers.

"The goal is to holistically prepare students," said Bowman, who also actively reaches out to community partners to find internship opportunities for students.

And importantly, Bowman says, the center serves as advocates for students. "A lot of students spend more time with us than they do their families, and they won't have the same type of support after they graduate. We teach them how to advocate for themselves in a professional way, so when they encounter microaggressions in professional spaces, they are prepared. We encourage them: 'Be professional. Be respectful, but set your boundaries,'" she said. ●

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY'S LÚA LÓPEZ STUDYING DNA FROM THE PAST TO SAVE THE FUTURE

Sometimes a tiny plant or a small shell can be a big time machine.

For Department of Biology assistant professor Lúa López, studying a small plant often considered a weed or a mollusk prized as a culinary delicacy can do what the "Back to the Future" movies could never do in real life: provide scientific insights from the past that can help species in the present survive extinction in the future.

With funding from the National Science Foundation and the CSU system, López is moving forward with research in the field of ancient genomics, or the study of the genetics of historical or extinct species. She will study preserved samples of a flowering plant commonly known as thale cress (*Arabidopsis thaliana*). She will also study abalone,

an endangered marine snail that was widely harvested for food and once abundant off the coast of California. Her work will trace how such species adapted and evolved as they grappled with environmental and man-made changes.

"It's like going back in time and seeing exactly what genetic changes happen," said López.

Information about what genetic mechanisms play a role in such evolutionary changes could help guide government agencies, conservationists and others in efforts to preserve species facing environmental pressures. ●



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