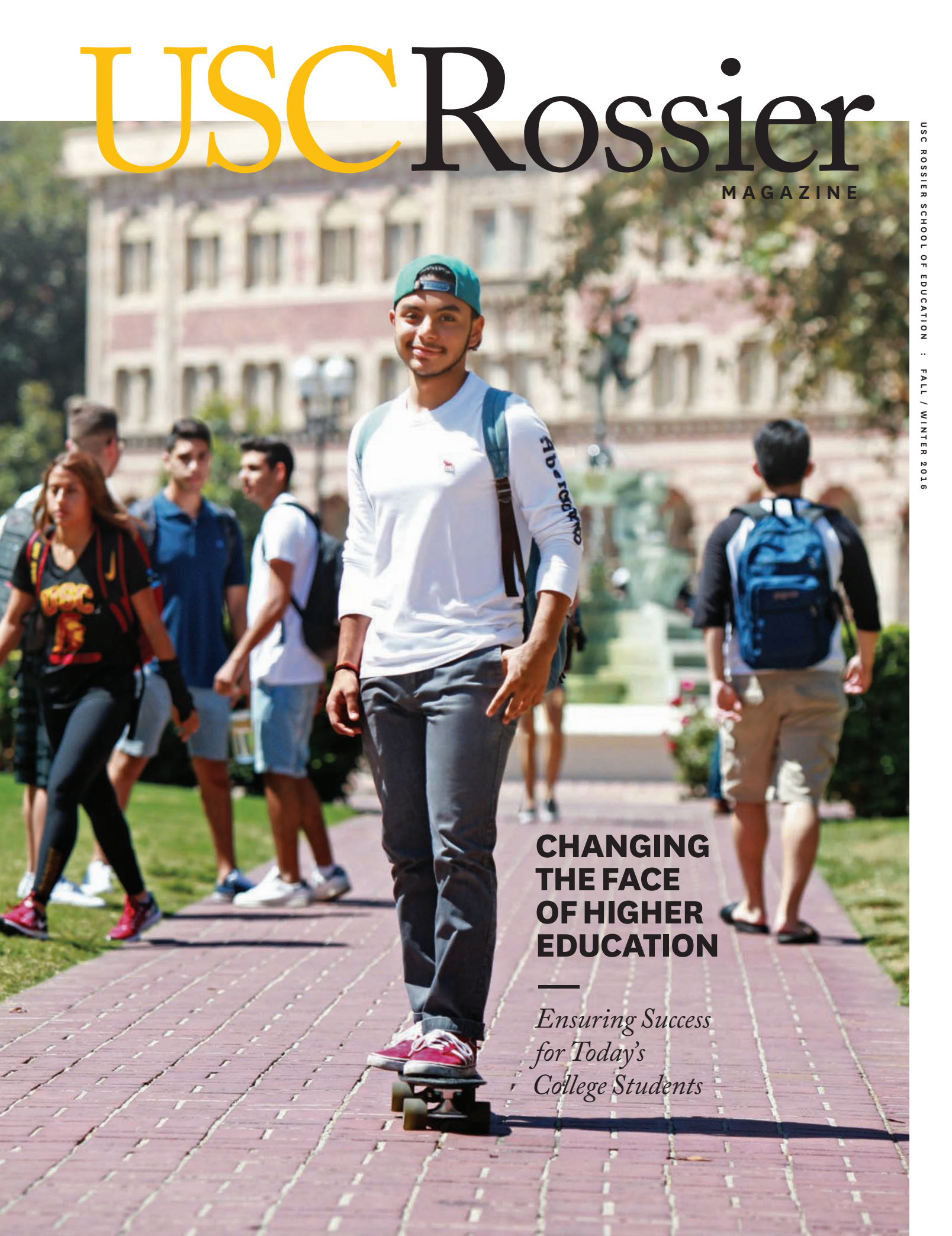


USC Rossier

MAGAZINE

USC ROSSIER SCHOOL OF EDUCATION : FALL / WINTER 2016



CHANGING THE FACE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

*Ensuring Success
for Today's
College Students*

Dear Friends of Rossier,

I'm happy to introduce you to our newly redesigned magazine. While there's a new look and a new name, our purpose remains the same as ever — to take an in-depth look at one pressing educational issue and at what USC Rossier is doing to address it.

In this issue, we focus on the critical topic of college access and persistence. USC is a leader among private universities in recruiting low-income and first-generation students. About 24 percent are eligible for Pell Grants, compared to 14 percent for private universities nationwide, and one in six students — some 3,000 in all — are the first in their families to attend college.

But nationwide, about 90 percent of low-income first-generation students don't graduate within six years, and 14 percent of all enrolled freshmen drop out within their first year. Students can often struggle with developing study skills, becoming familiar with college life and finding out where to go for help; however, with mentoring and support their odds of persisting get much better.

Junior Peña, pictured on the cover, graduated from USC Hybrid High School in June and is now a freshman at USC. He is the first in his family to attend college. At USC Rossier, we devote considerable effort — through research and field programs — to understanding how students like Junior can better access higher education and persist once enrolled.

In these pages you will see our mission in action. You will see how we are tracking Junior and the other recent graduates of Hybrid High to help them Fight On. You will learn how the Pullias Center's long-running SummerTIME program helps students improve their writing skills and "college knowledge." You will also meet USC Rossier Professors Shafiqah Ahmadi and Darnell Cole, a married couple with three children who practice a form of 24/7 student support as faculty residents in student housing. Dr. Cole is also part of a team of researchers examining living/learning communities for predominantly low-income students at the University of Nebraska and what it takes to ensure success.

That research is the perfect model for what we also hope to do for Junior Peña and the other recent graduates from Hybrid High. By following these students into their college years — and exploring why they struggle and thrive in and outside of the classroom — we will ensure that all students, regardless of circumstance, not only gain access to higher education but persist and graduate as well.

Fight On!

KAREN SYMMS GALLAGHER, PHD
Emery Stoops and Joyce King Stoops Dean
USC Rossier School of Education



USC Rossier

MAGAZINE

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University of Southern California

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USC Hybrid High School graduate Junior Peña poses for a photo with a fellow graduate at their commencement in June. Junior is now a freshman at USC (see cover).

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PHOTO BY MARGARET MOLLOY. COVER PHOTO AND BACK COVER PHOTO BY MARGARET MOLLOY



PHOTO BY MARGARET MOLLOY



Changing the Face of Higher Education

T

he hopes and dreams of father and daughter are captured in this picture from USC Hybrid High School's graduation ceremony this past June. Thanks to the high school's model of personalized learning and its mission to create Positive Multigenerational Change, 100 percent of its graduates gained acceptances to selective four-year colleges and universities.

In the following pages, we look at the many ways USC Rossier professors, students and alumni are helping students and their families turn the dream of a college degree into a reality. —R

“SOME- THING YOU CAN ACHIEVE”

Recent
USC
Hybrid
High
School
graduates
begin their
college
journey —

By Rebecca Trounson





USC freshmen Junior Peña (left) and Pamela Joya (above center) are adjusting well to college life.

It is the first day of the fall semester at USC and freshman Pamela Joya has a few opening day jitters. But not many.

Pamela is a member of the first graduating class of USC Hybrid High School, USC Rossier's downtown Los Angeles charter school, and one of six Hybrid High grads to be admitted to USC. She feels well prepared.

"They expected so much of us at Hybrid High," says Pamela, an 18-year-old from Gardena, as she stops to chat before her first USC class. "I feel like they taught us well. We're ready. More than anything, they taught us that college is something you can achieve."

Her only real nervousness is about making friends and pushing herself to be social, says Pamela. Her father is a locksmith at L.A. County-USC Hospital and her mother works in finance for USC Marshall's marketing department.

A psychology major, Pamela likes to get ahead and has already done some of the reading for her first class. "Now, I have to meet people, create study groups and figure out how to balance everything," she says.

A fellow Hybrid High alum, Eunice Barragan, her hair dyed a bright purple, arrives fresh from calculus, her first class. It went well, she says.

A cheerful 18-year-old from Compton, Eunice is a biochemistry major whose father works at a restaurant on campus and her mother at Taco Bell. The youngest of six children, she is taking 18 units this semester and is comfortable with her tight schedule.

With a confidence she credits to her teachers and counselors at Hybrid High, she also "walked on" to the Trojan marching band, a commitment of at least 10 hours a week.

Eunice played the xylophone in Hybrid High's small

band. At USC, she chose the trumpet, although she had never played it before. She is among half a dozen freshmen in the band's large trumpet section who had no previous training.

She laughs about her first day of summer band camp. "I had to ask, 'How do you make noise out of this thing?'" she says. "It was hard! I have to practice a lot, but the teachers are good. I can hit most of the notes now."

Junior Peña, another Hybrid High grad, comes up, carrying the skateboard he uses to get around campus.

He has just finished his first class, a calculus course aimed at future engineers and scientists. In high school, he and another student attended a nearby community college to take advanced math courses, and he felt well prepared during his first math lecture at USC.

"It may take more physics than I've had, but it's just differential equations," says Junior, 18, who grew up a few blocks from USC, in South Los Angeles.

"With math, you've got to practice — one of my friends at Hybrid High said it's not homework, it's 'practice,'" says Junior, who plans to major in physics, math or both.

Math and physics are his favorite subjects. "It all just makes sense," he says thoughtfully.

But he also likes philosophy and, in high school, took two community college philosophy classes. Heidegger and Kierkegaard are his favorites.

In 2012, after years of research and planning by USC Rossier, USC Hybrid High School opened in downtown Los Angeles.

The high school is run by Ednovate, a charter management organization developed by Rossier. Most Hybrid High grads are the first in their families to go to college.

Pamela Joya, Junior Peña and Eunice Barragan, along with fellow USC freshman Angeles Medina, are among Hybrid High's first graduating class.

Ednovate and Rossier have recently opened two additional high schools. Both are based on Hybrid High's model of personalized learning, combining highly effective teachers with cutting-edge technology and intensive advising for all students.

"They expected so much of us at Hybrid High... More than anything, they taught us that college is something you can achieve."

— Pamela Joya, 2016 Hybrid High graduate and USC freshman

After a challenging first year, Hybrid High's education model — and the school's charter — were revised in the second year to allow for more teacher autonomy over classroom instruction, making way for all types of learning.

"It was pretty chaotic," Junior says of the first year. "Later, it became more structured and that helped many of us."

Nearly half of Hybrid High's first class and some teachers left that year. Their spots were filled quickly and school leaders describe the first year as difficult but essential, as they learned what worked, and what didn't, in their new charter school.

Two years later, Ednovate's second school, USC East College Prep, opened in Lincoln Heights near the USC Health Sciences Campus. This fall, a third opened, USC College Prep-Santa Ana Campus.

In April, the Los Angeles Unified School District approved an even broader expansion. Two more Ednovate high schools, in East Los Angeles and Pico-Union/Westlake, are opening in fall 2017.

Even for its first class, however, Hybrid High managed to meet a key goal: 100 percent of its seniors graduated and were admitted to at least one selective four-year college or university. In fact, the school's 84 graduating seniors earned 437 college admittances.

The graduates also received \$4.8 million in scholarships and grants to help pay for college, a major boost for a class in which 85 percent of students come from low-income households.

In June, the graduates, their families, teachers and leaders from Rossier and USC, including USC President C. L. Max Nikias, filled USC's Bovard Auditorium for a jubilant commencement ceremony.

"All of you — students and families — are now the role models for those who will follow," USC Rossier Dean Karen Symms Gallagher, who chairs Ednovate's board, told the class.

Indeed, as she and others have said, Hybrid High students carry with them the college dreams of their families and communities.

Their success, and that of their school, underscores USC's longstanding efforts to revitalize the neighborhoods near the campus, as well as the university's commitment to use its research and resources to help reform public education in the Los Angeles area.

Ednovate follows in the tradition of USC's Neighborhood

"We try to help students learn to advocate for themselves. It's a skill set that not a lot of college students have."

— David Hernandez, Hybrid High history teacher and adviser

Academic Initiative, a long-running program that has helped hundreds of neighborhood students gain acceptances to college, including USC. The Foshay Learning Center, a K-12 public school less than a mile from the University Park Campus, is the most represented high school in this year's freshman class at USC, with 19 incoming students.

Hybrid High students are told from their first days that they represent what school leaders call "Positive Multigenerational Change," a slogan printed in gold letters on the school's bright red P.E. shirts. They are encouraged to use their college degrees and careers to help boost their communities and families.

Students take the message to heart.

They volunteer in community projects, often working with children and youth. And those now at USC also hope to give back through their intended careers: Pamela as a psychologist, Eunice as a pharmacist and Junior as a professor or researcher.

Another part of Hybrid High's model involves intensive advising; from the first day of school, all freshmen are assigned to a teacher adviser, who meets with each student twice a day and remains with them all four years. This structure helps students develop a deep relationship with an adult mentor and creates a community that fosters academic and emotional support.

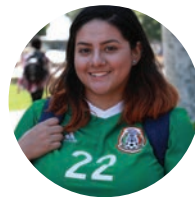
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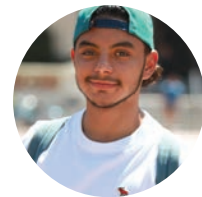
Eunice Barragan is a biochemistry major aspiring to be a pharmacist.



Pamela Joya is a psychology major with an emphasis in forensic science.



Angeles Medina is a USC Norman Topping Scholarship recipient.



Junior Peña received a Sainer Scholarship from Ednovate.

HYBRID HIGH BY THE NUMBERS

All
84

Hybrid High seniors graduated and were admitted to at least one selective four-year college or university.

They earned
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They received nearly
\$4.8
million in scholarships and grants.

85%
of students come from low-income households.

In these “Advisory” sessions, teachers get to know their students and their families and instill time management and study skills, says David Hernandez, a Hybrid High teacher and USC alum who serves as adviser this year to 21 students.

Last year, his advisees included Eunice Barragan, who benefited from his time management lessons. “Procrastination is still a thing, but it’s better,” she says, grinning.

“We try to help students learn to advocate for themselves,” Hernandez said. “It’s a skill set that not a lot of college students have. We really try to set up our students for success, to learn to be self-aware and recognize their strengths as students, and also areas for growth.”

Hybrid High’s leaders also seek to ensure that another of its aims is achieved: That at least 90 percent of the school’s graduates make it through their first year of college, a crucial period during which many students become discouraged and drop out.

Meeting that goal is the charge of Hybrid High’s new alumni coordinator, Nathan Olmeda.

In August, Olmeda began checking in with the 84 new graduates, offering to answer questions about registration, housing issues or other concerns. Much of his initial work has involved interpreting financial aid forms, he says, and where needed, trying to resolve problems.

Eunice Barragan has joined the Trojan Marching Band.



Twice, worried students have told him about bills for \$3,000, only to learn they had financial aid credit in that amount. “They were really relieved,” he says.

Other issues may involve a student’s home life.

“Many of our students are first-generation or low-income, and their parents may be immigrants,” Olmeda says, who was himself a first-generation college graduate. “I try to help everyone understand the benefits and the commitments of college and how those may change family dynamics.”

He plans to be in direct contact with each Hybrid High graduate at least once a month. In between, he sends group messages on social media, offering general encouragement and tips on study habits and money management.

“We want everyone to make it through,” he says.

Junior Peña and the other Hybrid High grads at USC appreciate that support. Each day, Junior says, he looks at the Ednovate sticker he placed on his computer long ago and remembers his path to college.

“We owe it to Hybrid High that we’re here,” he says. —R



“We Have Surpassed Our Past”

USC Hybrid High School upheld its bold declaration that every graduating senior would be accepted into a four-year college.

Putting the exclamation point on the acceptances was Juan Castro (above, second from right), who landed a full Ivy League scholarship. He’s now enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania, months after his valedictory address at Commencement summed up the Hybrid High experience for him and his classmates: “We have surpassed our past.”

Castro is one of only five alumni now attending an out-of-state institution. However, Hybrid High’s college counselor, Takirah Crenshaw, believes the rate at which graduates leave California will increase every year.

Meanwhile, Crenshaw reports that 12 graduates are registered at community colleges with high rates of transfer to four-year institutions.

Many factors contributed to the success of these graduates, and one big reason is Hybrid High’s commitment to the personalized learning model. Tailored to individuals’ developmental needs, skills and interests, personalized learning significantly advances the academic proficiency

and depth of learning in students through a mastery-based college prep curriculum.

Two Hybrid High graduates praised personalized learning for how it allowed for efficient management of a valuable resource: time.

“When it came to math and other subjects,” said Sureima Castaneda (above, second from left), now at Cal State Northridge, “I was able to move ahead and even help my peers, which furthered my experience.” Her stellar coursework earned her one of Ednovate’s two Sainer Scholarships, made possible by a gift from Ednovate board member Elliot Sainer and his family.

Ana Martinez, who now attends University of California, Riverside, said personalized learning allowed her to work ahead of the pace of her class, completing the week’s work early, allowing her to reduce stress and participate in more school activities.

“However,” Martinez added, “when I would struggle on certain topics, teachers were understanding of the circumstances and even allowed us to continue working on the concept in order to better understand it.” —*Mike Branom*

A Unified Vision

Tustin's Connect Initiative expands opportunities for its high school students —

By Susan L. Wampler

Future engineers, computer programmers and welders work side by side in the Tustin Unified School District (TUSD). From building a car to designing a prosthetic hand, they are empowered to craft their own futures. It's just one example of a districtwide effort to expand the aspirations of every student.

Under the leadership of Superintendent Greg Franklin '83, EdD '97, the TUSD Connect Initiative combines engaging instructional strategies with rigorous academic standards supported by technology to increase the percentage of students completing the A-G course requirements for admission to the University of California and California State University systems. TUSD students' A-G completion rate has risen from 48.7 percent in 2012 to 58 percent in 2016.

The primary goal, Franklin says, is putting every student in charge of his or her decision to attend college, rather than the district determining who is on the college-versus-vocational track.

The curriculum was restructured so that even non-college-prep courses lead to a certification or postsecondary training. Courses increasingly follow the flipped classroom model, with more collaborative, hands-on learning and fewer lectures.

A prime example is the Engineering Pathway coursework in which seniors build a car. In addition to utilizing engineering and computer design skills, students also construct the vehicle. Another class designed and built a prosthetic hand using a 3D printer to help a middle school student missing the lower portion of his arm since birth. Yet another team is part of a multi-school consortium supported by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to create and launch a satellite.

Every TUSD student now takes both the SAT and PSAT, raising aspirations to college. The district also eliminated course prerequisites — opening access to honors and advanced placement classes.

"If a student wants to try the hardest class we offer in English or history, she can do that without having to jump through hoops," adds Franklin. In four years, TUSD witnessed a 40 percent increase in AP enrollment, while the pass rate remains strong. The district also has seen a 20 percent increase in four-year college attendance in just two years.



Students at Beckman High School in Tustin.

Franklin credits TUSD's participation in the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program with helping first-generation college-bound students succeed. "If a student is taking AP physics, he doesn't just sink or swim," Franklin says. "He's got twice-a-week tutoring for that class."

The district also works hard to accommodate students with busy class schedules, adds Grant Litfin EdD '07, director of secondary education. "We may let a student take a seventh class or shift one class to summer school to free up a period to allow them to be in AVID, Model United Nations or complete a Career Technical Education Pathway," he says.

For the district's large number of English-language learners, Litfin says, "We want to get them into the AVID pipeline earlier, so we've started AVID Excel [a program designed to accelerate English language acquisition] at two of our most EL-heavy middle schools this year."

TUSD further benefited from a general obligation bond in 2012 that generated money to upgrade technology in each of its approximately 900 classrooms, while also providing an iPad to every fifth through eighth grader and a laptop to every high school student. A recent grant enabled the district to secure 2,000 Wi-Fi hotspots for students who otherwise lack Internet access at home, eliminating the "homework gap."

Of the Connect Initiative's future plans, Franklin says: "Right now, we're just trying to do more of the same and continue to engage every kid, every hour." —R

SUMMER TIME

Long-running program focuses on tools needed by
aspiring and new college students —

By Susan L. Wampler



Breyen Taboada is one of 69 high school students and college freshmen to have participated in the 2016 SummerTIME program.

Breyen Taboada has wanted to attend USC since he was 7 years old, but for years he was concerned that his dream might remain out of reach. Then he enrolled in SummerTIME at USC Rossier, where he gained not only critical writing and research skills but also tools to help him apply to and afford college.

“The instructors in the SummerTIME program were really good,” said Breyen, now a senior at John C. Fremont High School in South Los Angeles. “I really enjoyed preparing for the speech we had to give in class. We also learned about FAFSA [the Free Application for Federal Student Aid], which helps you pay for college. For someone like me, who comes from a low-income family and will be a first-generation college student, it gave me hope.”

Now in its 15th year, SummerTIME — short for tools, information, motivation and education — has helped hundreds of aspiring college applicants from low-income backgrounds by teaching intensive research and writing skills, as well as “college knowledge” aimed at easing their transition to university learning and living. The program is part of the Pullias Center for Higher Education’s Increasing Access via Mentoring (I AM) initiative at USC Rossier.

“The majority of the students are the first in their families to attend college,” said Michelle Cadena, outreach senior program specialist at the Pullias Center and the SummerTIME program director.

While many of their peers were enjoying time off from school, the 69 students taking part in the most recent SummerTIME program were working harder than ever academically. Each weekday for a month, they traveled to the University Park Campus for three hours of writing instruction emphasizing the thesis building, research, writing and editing skills essential for producing an effective college-level paper. They also gained access to more intensive and personalized instruction than is usually available within public school systems.

“The lack of public funding creates gigantic classes in freshmen year at our public universities,” said University Professor William G. Tierney, Pullias Center co-director and the Wilbur-Kieffer Professor of Higher Education who created

“The intensity of the writing component is what really differentiates SummerTIME from other college access programs.”

— Stefani Relles PhD ’13, assistant professor at University of Nevada, Las Vegas

and heads SummerTIME. This overcrowding is just one of the factors putting the futures of underserved Los Angeles students at risk when they head off to university.

“A lot of the problem also is that students don’t know how to study,” said Tierney.

RESEARCH, WRITING AND CONFIDENCE

“Learning how to do scholarly research in the library — versus the Google searches they’re used to doing for papers in high school — was revolutionary to them,” said Chris Tsihchlis MAT ’13, a USC Rossier alumnus who taught the writing class Breyen and 13 other rising high school seniors took over the summer. “This program changed the way they approach working on a paper.”

“This was the first paper I’ve had to write that was not just on Internet-based research,” Breyen said.

Oscar Muñoz, now a freshman at UC San Diego, agrees. “The program definitely helped prepare me for college by improving my writing,” he said. “I’ve never written so many drafts before.”

“The intensity of the writing component is what really differentiates SummerTIME from other college access programs,” said Stefani Relles PhD ’13, an assistant professor at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who spent her sixth summer working with the program. This year, she is conducting an evaluation of SummerTIME.

Marshall High School senior Shariqa Hossain would certainly give Relles a positive assessment. “The teachers were really helpful,” she said. “I didn’t know how to use the library and online databases before.” As part of the program, all students must complete a full research paper and presentation on a social issue they’re passionate about. Hossain wrote about gender equality in the Middle East.

Alex Montenegro, a fellow Marshall High School senior, addressed racial profiling. He appreciated learning how to verify the credibility of sources and how to reference them.

COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

In addition to three hours of writing every day, the students also took daily college knowledge courses on time management and other self-reliance skills, and received guidance on how to navigate the application and financial-aid processes. For SummerTIME students, this information can be as crucial as how to write well. They also had the opportunity to hear about college firsthand from panels of current and recent college graduates.

Such college knowledge is often passed down from parents or siblings who attended college, said Tierney, and thus remains a mystery for first-generation college students.



Instructor Christine Rocha '16 (above, right) leading a "College Knowledge" course, which covered time management as well as the application and financial aid process.

Nor can these students necessarily rely on guidance counselors who have traditionally helped ease the transition to higher education. "Public schools in Los Angeles and throughout the state don't have enough college counselors," Tierney said.

"Students need advice," he said. "They need encouragement."

Montenegro, who plans to study psychology, feels that the program provides ample supplies of both. "I appreciated learning how to apply for college and financial aid, and how many resources are available to pay for and get to college," he said.

SMALL COHORTS, BIG RESULTS

With six dedicated writing teachers and several academic advisers, the program provides another advantage not found in underfunded high schools: intimate class sizes of approximately 12 to 14 students each.

"The research is pretty definitive that smaller class sizes improve learning," Relles noted.

Iona Cano, who completed her second year as a Summer-TIME writing instructor, agrees. "The small groups allowed me to take a more individualized approach," she said.

Cano's group included students from the Kayne Scholars program who had just completed their freshman year in college. The Kayne Foundation recently selected USC Rossier's SummerTIME program as one of just three partners to help fulfill its mission of fostering success throughout college and in launching careers.

A freshman-level composition instructor at Pasadena City



Instructor Chris Tschlis MAT '13 (above, left) passes out certificates to students at the end of the four-week program.

College during the academic year, Cano provided real-world context to convey lessons aimed at improving her Summer-TIME students' writing.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

In addition to helping each student identify his or her writing strengths and areas where growth was needed, Cano worked with her group on the biggest challenges they faced during their



Shariqa Hossain, a senior at Marshall High, credits SummerTIME for boosting her confidence in research and writing.

freshman year of college — which ranged from homesickness to feelings of cultural alienation.

“Most of these students went to high schools with lots of students of color,” she added. “Then at UC and CSU, they really felt like minorities. They had to learn how to find their stride.”

In Tschlis’ SummerTIME class, discussions similarly extended beyond writing instruction. As both a Trojan and an Ivy Leaguer, he was happy to informally contribute to his students’ college knowledge. He answered questions about life at Boston College, where he received his undergraduate degree, and Harvard, where he earned a master’s degree in history, as well as the summer he spent at Oxford and Cambridge. In doing so, he further demystified what the students may once have thought as exotic settings beyond their reach, making them sound real and accessible.

“You’ll fail at something,” he said. “That’s OK. Everyone does. Just stick with it.” Offering further reassurance, he added, “You should know that your papers are better than many I have read from graduate students.”

EXPANDING REACH

In previous years, the SummerTIME program focused on high school seniors about to head off to college. This year, the program not only expanded to include rising college sophomores, but it also added high school juniors who are entering their senior year.

Michelle Huerta, currently a senior at Fremont High School, said she appreciated how demanding the program was.

“Even though there were no grades, we were challenged to learn and grow,” she said. “And the teachers were awesome. They were very accessible and helpful. You could speak with them one on one. In addition to teaching us a lot about how to do research, the program also helped us with how to find the right college as well as information on the application and financial aid process.”

Reaching these younger students is important, Tierney said, because in preparing for college, “you need to think so far in advance.”

In terms of his own advance planning, Tierney hopes to raise enough money to add mathematics to the SummerTIME curriculum, calling it the other key cognitive variable, besides reading and writing, in proper preparation for college success.

Such plans illustrate an important factor in SummerTIME’s success: the program continues evolving based on the evaluations of Relles and other experts. Unlike many other college-preparatory programs aimed at underserved youth, SummerTIME’s location at a school of education means the program’s pedagogy is continually being refined based on feedback and outcomes to ensure its continued effectiveness. For example, students are tested both before and after the program to measure their progress. According to Tierney, the tests show that four weeks in SummerTIME can improve students’ writing abilities by about one grade level.

Tests show that four weeks in SummerTIME can improve students’ writing abilities by about one grade level.

But the true benchmark for the program’s success, he explains, is getting students through freshman year of college, which exponentially increases their odds of graduating. More than 90 percent of SummerTIME graduates made it through their first year, Tierney noted.

Over the years, SummerTIME participants have gained acceptance at institutions ranging from the California State University system to Dartmouth and Harvard — as well as Breyen Taboada’s first choice, USC, where he plans to study business administration or marketing. “I’m so grateful for the opportunity to participate in SummerTIME,” he said. —R



VIDEO: To watch a video about the SummerTIME program, go to rossier.usc.edu/summerTIME2016

Through the Lens of Equity

Center for Urban Education helps
students by focusing on improving the
institutions that serve them —

By Dan Gordon



Joseph Guerrieri hadn't viewed seating patterns within his classroom as an equity issue.

"I knew some students always chose to sit in the back, but I just figured they were the quiet ones, while those in the front were more active and engaged,"

says Guerrieri, who teaches digital media at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College (LATTC). "But when you begin to look at those decisions through the lens of equity, it forces you to ask why certain students make those choices."

LATTC is one of many two- and four-year colleges and universities that have partnered with the USC Rossier-based Center for Urban Education (CUE) since the center was established in 1999. CUE assists the institutions in closing gaps that adversely affect historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in areas such as enrollment, retention and academic success — taking faculty and administrators through the Equity Scorecard, a process of looking inward to identify policies and practices that contribute to the inequities and then developing, implementing and evaluating potential solutions.

The oldest of the nine public two-year community colleges in Los Angeles, LATTC boasts a highly diverse student population. Many come from disadvantaged neighborhoods in South Los Angeles, where an institution focused on a technical education represents a route to a good job with a middle-class income. "Over the past few decades, the emphasis has been on building diversity in higher education by increasing college access for students of color," says CUE Associate Director

Lindsey Malcom-Piqueux PhD '08. "However, diversity is not enough. Latinos, African-Americans, Native-Americans and other minoritized groups continue to experience inequities in outcomes — even at very diverse institutions. Through our partnerships with institutions like LATTC, CUE works with faculty to identify the structures and practices that create barriers to student equity."

LATTC began working with CUE in the summer of 2014 by launching a series of workshops designed to raise awareness among faculty and administrators. Through the partnership, CUE is facilitating three LATTC "evidence teams." The process focuses on race discussions, campus collaboration and buy-in, examination of data to identify racial/ethnic gaps and self-inquiry to explore the causes. "When you look closely at the numbers, you're forced to recognize that there's something there," Guerrieri says. "Then, we begin to consider how we are contributing to the gaps."

CUE helps faculty members and others at colleges like LATTC explore how their practices, beliefs and values might be contributing to inequality in outcomes.

"We assist professors in becoming critically conscious of race within their classrooms and showing African-Americans, Latinos and other marginalized groups that they are cared for and their success is important," says CUE Director Estela Mara Bensimon, professor of education at Rossier. "For too long faculty and others have misinterpreted color-blindness as fairness; CUE helps them see that color-blindness is an obstacle to racial and ethnic equity."

Guerrieri says working with CUE has made him more aware of the impact of common teaching practices on student achievement and equity. "This has opened my eyes in so many ways," he says. "I'm looking forward to seeing what informed strategies we can implement and then using this inquiry process for continuous improvement." —R



Professors Shafiqah Ahmadi and Darnell Cole, married with three children, live in a student residence hall on the edge of campus.

USC
Rossier
professors
Shafiqah
Ahmadi
and Darnell
Cole make
a home in
student
housing —

All in the Family

The three-story Annenberg House north of Jefferson Boulevard on the edge of the USC campus features 48 apartment units, each with a kitchenette and a sitting/dining area. It's occupied entirely by USC students — a mix of graduates and undergraduates, among them many students of color and first-generation college students. But what sets this residence hall apart from others is the family living among the students: two USC Rossier professors and their three children, ages 12, 11 and 3.

By Dan Gordon

Shafiqah Ahmadi and Darnell Cole host viewing parties for big television events like the Oscars, Grammys and the Super Bowl. They take the students on outings that are a combination of education, social experience and engagement with Los Angeles' culture and history — horseback riding through the Hollywood Hills, visits to museums, trips to sporting events, dining at a tapas restaurant at L.A. Live. They support students with advice and referrals on applying to graduate school, exploring careers, preparing résumés and thinking about life after college.

Whether retrieving mail, riding the elevator or visiting their complex's fitness center, Ahmadi and Cole inevitably find themselves rubbing elbows with students. Some professionals might chafe at the thought of such an inextricable link between work and home life, but the couple, who have lived in Annenberg for the last four years, wouldn't have it any other way.

For Cole, it's a chance to live what he studies and teaches. An associate professor of education with an emphasis in higher education and education psychology, Cole focuses on the impact of college experiences on students' academic performance, educational satisfaction and civic engagement. "People typically define college success as how well the student performs in the classroom," he says. "But classes take up a relatively small portion of students' time. What are they doing with the rest of it? We know that their peer groups and interactions with other students make a big difference, and that getting to know faculty members outside the classroom is significantly correlated with college success."

Ahmadi and Cole offer their student neighbors the type of perspective that can be obtained only through life experience. After holding a session on preparing for graduate school and careers, Cole found himself counseling two students who admitted to feeling overwhelmed by the thought of life after college. Other times, he provides gentle guidance to students feeling isolated — like the student who transferred to USC last spring as a second-semester freshman and was having trouble finding a peer group. Cole encouraged the student to attend one of his programs, where the Rossier professor helped to connect him with other student residents, who in turn connected him with their circle of friends.

When the opportunity to become residential faculty was first presented, Ahmadi was more hesitant than her husband, in part because of her own college memories. A first-generation college student who was born in Afghanistan and arrived with her family in the United States in 1987, Ahmadi initially struggled to fit in as an undergraduate at the University of Washington. "I commuted to campus every day by bus, then went back home to west Seattle, which was an hour away," she recalls. "I did well academically, but had no out-of-classroom experiences with faculty or my peers."

Like Cole, Ahmadi spends much of her professional time learning about and promoting the interests of students. The associate professor of clinical education is an expert on diversity and legal protection of underrepresented students. She holds a law degree and, prior to joining the Rossier faculty in 2006, worked for the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission investigating alleged civil rights violations and discrimination cases. Ahmadi

“Getting to know faculty members outside the classroom is significantly correlated with college success.”

— Darnell Cole, associate professor of education

has been particularly interested in learning about the experiences of Muslim students post-9/11, as well as how campus policies can support potentially marginalized student populations.

Ahmadi says that as a woman of color, she has served as a role model for several students in a way that wouldn't be possible if she knew them only through her faculty position — including the immigrant student and occasional babysitter who confided that she was unhappy with her decision to follow her parents' wishes that she go into medicine (and is now pondering law school). "The students can see that I'm an attorney and faculty member as well as a mother devoted to raising her kids, and they realize that it's doable," Ahmadi says. "I share a lot about myself and what I've been through."

Twenty-one USC faculty live in Residential Colleges and Communities, including another Rossier associate professor of clinical education, John Pascarella. Although the university has had residential faculty for several decades, the number has increased in recent years, according to Emily Sandoval MED '04, a Rossier alumna from the Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs program and current EdD student who also oversees the program as director of USC's Office for Residential Education. The increase is part of a stepped-up effort to promote a sense of community and support while also cultivating a seamless learning environment extending from the classroom to the living spaces.

"We believe education should be promoted in all facets of university life, and this helps to break down the walls between students and faculty," Sandoval says. "The students get to see the human side of the residential faculty members at barbecues or playing games out on the lawn with their family, and it contributes to a feeling of home and familiarity."

In his role as the residential faculty master, Cole offers more than just programming. "The concern he has for the residents is obvious," Sandoval says. "He knows what students are going through, he knows the campus resources and he truly cares. This is his field, so he gets it."

Cole describes his own college experience as pivotal. While earning undergraduate degrees in finance and philosophy at the



Ahmadi and Cole speak to resident Osagie Ero, a junior majoring in physics and computer science.

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, he became active in developing programs, fundraising, working within budgets and organizing events through the university and his fraternity; meanwhile, he was forging relationships with faculty and staff, one of whom helped to launch him on his current path.

“I never realized that what I was doing in college could become my career until a mentor who worked in student affairs told me,” Cole says.

That mentor encouraged Cole to attend the annual conference of the National Association for Student Personnel Administrators so that he could network and explore graduate opportunities. A month after doing so, Cole was recruited to enroll in the master’s program at Indiana University, and by the time he met Ahmadi, he was on his way to earning his PhD in Higher Education Administration and Education Psychology.

Cole continues to be driven, both on campus and at home, by his personal experience with the value of a well-rounded college life — and the importance of guidance in that pursuit, particularly for first-generation students and students of color. He is currently working with Rossier colleagues on a five-year, \$6.2 million grant from the Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation examining the keys to the success of living/learning student communities at the University of Nebraska, which have led to increased retention and graduation rates among the participants, nearly all of whom are first-generation college students.

At their residence hall, Cole and Ahmadi let students know

they are available for support, whether it’s dispensed while walking in the halls or when a student comes to their unit seeking counsel. The couple go out of their way to be especially visible during stressful periods, such as around the holidays and toward the end of each semester. They make sure students are aware of campus resources that can bolster their résumés and psyches, and structure activities designed to relieve any stress.

“The ability to be with them in more casual environments makes it so much easier to have the personal conversations that you can’t always have with professors when you just see them in the classroom and maybe briefly during office hours,” says Donté Miller, a second-year Rossier master’s student who has collaborated with Cole in planning programs for the Annenberg building’s students in Miller’s role as graduate residential community coordinator.

In the process of working with Cole, Miller has found a mentor. Like the Rossier professor, Miller is African-American and is currently eyeing PhD programs and a possible academic career. “I’ll see him at a program or just in passing and I’ll tell him all the things I’m doing or am interested in pursuing,” Miller says. “He’ll either say, ‘Slow down, take your time,’ or ‘You know what? You need to get on top of that.’ Having that kind of sounding board has been so important, and on a more personal level, to be able to get to know a successful black man with an amazing family who is doing the kind of work that I’m interested in is inspiring.” —R



SOURCE of SUPPORT

Carlos Cervantes '97, EdD '08 has a stake in the success of college students —

By Rebecca Trounson

Carlos Cervantes '97, EdD '08 remembers the day his career path became crystal clear.

He and other candidates in the Educational Leadership doctoral (EdD) program at USC Rossier were listening to a faculty presentation on college student retention.

As the professor spoke, Cervantes said, he and a friend looked at one another and said, "This is it! This will set us up for the rest of our careers."

Cervantes, now the associate dean of academic support and retention services at the University of La Verne, about 30 miles east of Los Angeles, would write his dissertation on the impact of learning communities on the academic integration of Latino students, a subject that he is still passionate about.

At La Verne, which enrolls 8,300 undergraduate and graduate students, Cervantes oversees academic advising for the university's 2,800 "traditional" undergraduate students, those between 17 and 24 years of age. The university, with a Latino student population of nearly 50 percent, is also a federally designated Hispanic Serving Institution.

Cervantes helps lead La Verne's retention task force, a major initiative aimed at bringing together everyone on campus who has a role to play in making sure students persist to graduation.

"My view is that everyone has a stake in the success of students," he says. "And this has to be institutionally driven. It takes building relationships on campus, primarily with faculty, but also with co-curricular professionals — coaches and athletic personnel, housing staff — they all work with us. Even staff from the financial aid office or registrar; their relationships with students really matter."

His own life experience, and the mentors who helped him along the way, have also shaped his research and his advice to young people.

"I come from a similar background as so many of our students," he said. "I'm able to use a lot of storytelling from my life to relate to students, with the hope that something will stick."

Cervantes was born in Mexico and moved to the Los Angeles area with his family when he was 6. His parents supported the family through minimum wage jobs in manufacturing, his father at a plant that made commercial walk-in freezers and coolers, and his mother at a clothing factory.

Cervantes and his brother attended Catholic elementary schools, then Santiago High School in Garden Grove. "That's where things for me really changed for the better," he said, crediting a cohort of caring teachers at Santiago and one very special adviser.

Carolyn Rust '65, a USC alum, was Cervantes' high school counselor and made it clear from the beginning that she believed he was college material. "She said she knew I had potential," he said, his voice cracking with emotion. "She changed my life."

Rust advised him on his college applications, set up informational sessions with several USC alumni and even drove him — and other students — to those meetings, he said. He was stunned when he was admitted to USC.

After 23 years, he has remained close to Rust, who is like a grandmother known as "Mama Rusty" to his two children.

At USC, he majored in political science and international relations and found other key mentors.

He went on to earn a master's degree in Latin American Studies at the University of California, San Diego, then was recruited back to USC, becoming an academic adviser in the Spanish and Portuguese department.

About 2004, he decided to apply to USC Rossier's EdD program with his wife's encouragement.

"The Rossier faculty was amazing and very clear in what they wanted to instill in us as professionals and change agents," he said. "They really showed us that we could make a difference for students and schools in this area — and that came through in the curriculum and even the spirit of the school.

"It has made such a difference in my life." —R

A SAFE PLACE TO LEARN

Global Executive EdD student Azizullah Amir opens first school and university in Afghanistan dedicated to girls and women —

By Robin Heffler

As a young boy in Afghanistan, Azizullah Amir lost his mother in a way that has both haunted and stirred him as an adult, propelling his decision to become a physician and launch a one-of-a-kind educational facility.

Out of modesty born of cultural tradition, Amir's mother didn't want to see a male doctor, and there were no female doctors to treat her skin infection. As a result, the infection spread throughout her body and she died a few weeks later.

"From that time on, I was motivated to become a doctor and help prevent other kids like me from becoming orphans because their mothers had contracted a preventable disease," says Amir, a cardiologist and founder of a private Afghan hospital, who is enrolled in USC Rossier's Global Executive Doctor of Education (EdD) program. His plans expanded as he considered the barriers to education faced by many females in his country.

"Girls and women in Afghanistan are often prevented from attending coeducational facilities and have been deprived of educational opportunities for decades," he explains. "Especially in the provinces, girls have been marginalized."

According to UNESCO, in 2015 the literacy rate among Afghan women age 15 and over was one of the lowest worldwide, just 24 percent compared with 52 percent for Afghan men. And, the United Nations found that last year at least 96 schools that educate girls in the country were attacked.

So, in April 2016, he opened the Moraa Educational Complex in Kabul and invited Rula Ghani, the first lady of Afghanistan, to help inaugurate the new school. It's remarkable for being the first center in the country dedicated exclusively to the educational needs of females from preschool to university, with a medical school as its centerpiece.



Azizullah Amir, a medical doctor in Afghanistan, is earning a Global Executive EdD from USC Rossier.



The complex was inaugurated by the first lady of Afghanistan, Rula Ghani (in green), and the Ministers of Education and Higher Education of Afghanistan.

In addition to awarding medical degrees, the complex offers specialized programs for women in midwifery, nursing, anesthesiology, radiology, medical technology, dental prosthesis, physiotherapy and pharmacy as well as undergraduate degrees in computer science, business administration and education. All the staff are women, including faculty, administrators and support personnel.

To perform his new role of running this enterprise more effectively, Amir turned to the two-year Global Executive EdD program. "Because my profession of cardiology is a very different field, I wanted to get a formal education in leading and managing educational projects to be able to head this successful program for women in Afghanistan," he explains. "USC Rossier is giving me the power and knowledge to deal with the challenges and policies required to implement and advance a successful educational complex."

On track to obtain his doctorate in 2017, he points to valuable tools and lessons from his studies to date.

Before he joined the program and while managing his private hospital, Amir says, he used to jump to solutions before digging deep into the root causes of problems. He also did not focus on assessing the difference between current performance

and required or desired performance, the process known as gap analysis, which students learn.

“That usually resulted in coming up with the wrong solutions and the real problems remaining,” he explains. “Now, in the program, once we carefully assess the current performance and find the gaps, we brainstorm for their potential causes. Then we start looking for the solutions systematically, and as we proceed with implementing the solutions, we continue evaluating performance as we reach toward our goals.”

From his fellow students at Rossier, Amir says, he also has learned critical thinking and patience.

Shafiqah Ahmadi, associate professor of clinical education at Rossier and Amir’s doctoral dissertation adviser, is well aware of current conditions for women in what was her home country, and is very supportive of Moraa. Her family fled Afghanistan in 1984 during the Soviet occupation, when she was a child, and settled in the United States in 1987. At that time, she says, there were no barriers for girls seeking an education. Now, she points out, girls, particularly in rural areas, are sometimes threatened when they attend school.

“I think Aziz’s educational complex is an amazing endeavor that will be really helpful for women in Afghanistan,” says Ahmadi. “Aziz knows that without an education, women will not know about their fundamental rights. His school also gives families peace of mind that it will be run mostly by women, and there will be no mixing of genders.”

Amir knows from personal experience what it means to make critical family decisions. He is the father of eight, including five daughters who are all studying at Moraa, including one in the medical school.

Currently, there are 220 students at Moraa, with plans to expand by establishing branch campuses in the provinces. Amir especially wants to attract students who would otherwise not be allowed to get an education because of family objections to co-ed schools, and women whose education was interrupted because they married very young and had children.

Although optimistic about the complex’s future, he still has concerns. Chief among them is security, especially given the recent violence at the American University of Afghanistan. Amir says that Moraa is probably safer than other educational centers in Kabul because of its location — away from main roads as well as military and other government targets — as well as its physical structure. Still, security has been increased at Moraa, and more funding is being sought for further improvements.

Amir also faces various infrastructure challenges, such as a lack of high-speed Internet and inadequate library resources. To meet these needs, he is hoping that Moraa can affiliate with universities in the United States.

Despite such difficulties, Amir plans to remain in Afghanistan and expand the complex’s outreach.

“Our country will not remain the way it is now for our whole history,” he says. “So why not stay in Afghanistan, provide education, especially for women, and make dreams come true?” —R



VIDEO: To watch a video about Azizullah Amir, go to rossier.usc.edu/AmirGlobal

Program Draws Students Worldwide for Leadership Training

While USC Rossier has had an educational doctorate for some 90 years, it was always about and for American education — until 2012. That’s when the school launched the Global Executive Doctor of Education program.

It came after years of inquiries from leaders around the world seeking a program for their countries’ educational needs, according to Mark Robison, professor of clinical education and history and co-chair of of Rossier’s Global Executive EdD. “We modeled the program’s format on executive MBA programs, where people fly in for their classes,” he says. “All the things that people can do at their own pace are done online, in preparation for the times when students are together discussing, collaborating and debating.”

The program is designed for full-time, working professionals with a master’s degree and significant leadership experience who are seeking to bring about large-scale improvements across educational systems through strategic use of policy, innovative practice and assessment.

“Azizullah Amir is very much the kind of person we envisioned when we created the program,” Robison said of the founder of the first educational complex for women in Afghanistan. “We saw it as a program that’s ideal for people who have bold visions, who want to be educational change agents and who are looking for the kind of skills, knowledge and professional networks that are needed to fulfill their visions.”

Each cohort has 18 to 24 students. About 75 percent of their two-year program is conducted in nine immersive sessions held in Los Angeles, Hong Kong and the Middle East. A fourth, moveable location is being considered.

Improving the Odds

Educational Counseling student Lila Mendoza making an impact as “near peer” adviser —

By Robin Heffler



Lila Mendoza says she appreciates what it took for her immigrant parents to support her dream of attending college.

“They had to sacrifice a lot to get here, and worked twice as hard to provide me with opportunities they weren’t afforded, mainly educational ones,” she says of her mother, an émigré from Honduras, and her father, who came from Mexico. “They worked late nights in a fast-food restaurant, drove me to SAT prep classes and were patient when I became frustrated with the college prep process.”

But despite their devotion, they didn’t have the knowledge or resources to help their daughter, born and raised in South Los Angeles, to achieve her higher education goals. The gap, she says, was filled by a nonprofit mentoring program in which professional women boost the self-esteem of young girls and help prepare them for college. Mendoza credits that help for her acceptance into and success at Pitzer College as an undergraduate, and later as a Fulbright scholarship recipient teaching English in South Korea.

The first college graduate in her family, Mendoza is now helping others prepare for and succeed in college through the Southern California College Advising Corps (SCCAC). Launched in 2013 by USC Rossier’s Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice (CERPP) in conjunction with the national College Advising Corps, the program places recent college graduates in high schools as college advisers. For two years, these “near peers” work directly with students, making significant strides in increasing college attendance among those who are low-income, first-generation and from underrepresented populations. She is now in her second year of serving at the Diego Rivera Learning Complex in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

She is among 31 SCCAC advisers working in 23 schools at 6 Southern California school districts during this academic year.

In 2015–16, advisers assisted with 14,507 four-year-college applications, almost 2,200 two-year-college applications and more than \$3 million in awarded scholarships. In addition, fall 2015 University of California and California State University enrollment increased by 34 percent among students in the schools served by the program; LAUSD students showed the biggest gain, with a 114-percent increase.

Her advisory work has benefited from her studies at Rossier, where she is enrolled in the Educational Counseling master’s program. Particularly helpful, Mendoza says, has been learning the various approaches to counseling and finding the one that suits her the best. “Because no two students are alike, I usually take a person-centered approach that meets the student wherever she or he is,” she explains.

That’s the way she mentored Guadalupe Nufio, now a freshman at Columbia University. Guadalupe says relating to Lila was easy, in part because they both grew up in South Los Angeles and are the first in their families to attend college.

“I think that if I had a different counselor, I wouldn’t be here at an Ivy League school,” says Nufio, who initially only wanted to apply to California public colleges. “Lila encouraged me to look at private universities, where I could get better financial support, and not be afraid to go out of state and experience new cultures. She really cares about students personally, and never let me settle for what I knew I could do.”

This past summer, Mendoza had a special opportunity to assist her fellow advisers and boost her own professional growth when she was asked to chair the summer training committee for SCCAC. “I’m really grateful for the experience because it helped me realize that I possess leadership skills,” she says of her role organizing teams of people and managing multiple agendas and calendars as well as planning out a short and intensive training.

When Mendoza completes her master’s degree, she hopes to advise community college students. “Although I love the work I’m doing now, there is also a great need once students step foot onto a college campus, especially at community colleges, where retention and transfer rates are low,” she says. “I want to be part of the solution, helping them to access the resources they need to succeed.” —R

Q+A

Demontea Thompson

PASA student thriving as a USC Rossier Dean's Scholar

Demontea Thompson is in his second year in USC Rossier's Postsecondary Administration and Student Affairs (PASA) program and is a recipient of a new initiative that provides scholarship awards and programming to uniquely qualified master's students.

Designed to increase the caliber and diversity of Rossier's student population, the Dean's Scholars Program enables students to pursue careers in public service regardless of their personal financial situations. Thompson is also a recipient of the prestigious USC Norman Topping Scholarship.

What has it meant to receive these two scholarships?

The possibilities are endless when you have the support and guidance of people who care. The support of this community has allowed me to transform into a Trojan who is not afraid to be courageous, talented, scholarly, skillful and ambitious. And these scholarships have allowed me to be among the small percentage of foster youth who are pursuing graduate degrees. I am excited to one day do the same for others.

What have you been able to do?

It's really amazing how a scholarship can contribute to a person's character and improves one's sense of self-efficacy. And they have unlocked many doors for me. They've allowed me to conduct research in Japan, present research in Bermuda and serve the aging and disabled in Peru.



Last April, you were selected to speak at TEDxTrousdale, USC's TED Talks event. What was that like?

I spoke about my student trajectory and expressed my failures as a way to inspire those faced with adversity. I also shared some of my successes to demonstrate that perseverance and passion can often outweigh traditional perspectives. Before ending the talk with an original spoken word piece, I discussed three things students should do to become resilient: First, fail like you've never failed before — learn more from your failures than your successes. Second, talk to yourself, encourage yourself; focus on your own goals because you know yourself better than anyone else. And third, duplicate excellence — forge mentorships and don't take mentors for granted.

If I was able to change even one person's perspective through my talk — to convince just one person to see the light at the end of the tunnel — then I've fulfilled my purpose.

How do you see your career unfolding?

I aspire to work within higher education to support marginalized students. I plan to pursue a PhD with a focus on foster youth and homeless students, specifically. I am not shy when it comes to aligning my work with my passion for social justice. I see obtaining a doctorate as a means to influence policy. My postdoctoral plans will be to teach at a program similar to the PASA program at Rossier. —R

The Dean's Scholars Program enables USC Rossier to compete on equal terms with public peer institutions as it seeks to recruit students of the highest caliber. To support this program, please contact Diana Hernandez, director of development, at dehernan@usc.edu or (213) 740-3499.



VIDEO: To watch a video about Demontea's journey from foster youth to college graduate, go to rossier.usc.edu/DemonteaThompson. You will also find a link to his TED Talk.

Teaching the Teachers

U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. and Undersecretary of Education Ted Mitchell announced long-awaited federal rules governing accountability for teacher preparation programs in a visit to USC Rossier in mid-October. The new rules, designed under the Higher Education Act, are meant to heighten accountability of traditional certification, alternative certification and online programs.

“There’s a sense of clarity the president has — and that Ted and I have — that teachers can save lives,” King said at a roundtable discussion with Dean Karen Symms Gallagher and USC Rossier faculty, students and alumni. “We need to make sure that teacher preparation equips teachers with the skills to be as effective as possible in their classrooms.”

King and Mitchell also visited online and on-ground courses from the Master of Arts in Teaching program.

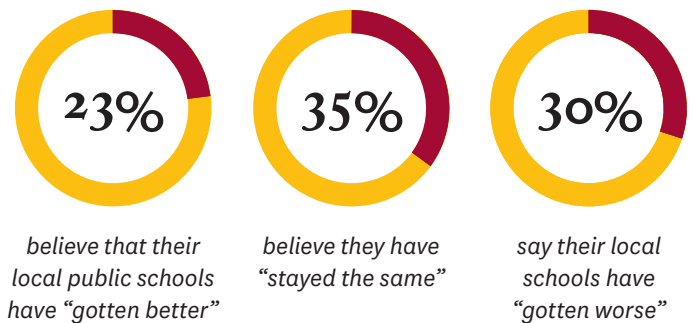


Undersecretary of Education Ted Mitchell, Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. and Dean Karen Symms Gallagher led a roundtable discussion with USC Rossier faculty, students and alumni in October.

Better and Better

Californians are showing an increased faith and optimism in local public schools and teachers but believe there is room for improvement, according to the latest results of the fifth annual PACE/USC Rossier School of Education poll, which was released in September.

The research team includes associate professors Julie Marsh and Morgan Polikoff; Marsh is also co-director of PACE (Policy Analysis for California Education).



When the same question was asked four years ago, only 11% said schools had gotten better and 45% said schools had gotten worse.

Emotions, Learning and the Brain



It's been a big few months for **Mary Helen Immordino-Yang**, associate professor of education, psychology and neuroscience at USC Rossier and the USC Brain and Creativity Institute.

In September, her research addressing the neurological effects of poverty on children made the cover of *Newsweek*. That same month, she discussed the critical role emotions play in learning in "Schools of the Future," an episode of Nova on PBS. And in October, she was named a member of the National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development, a new committee created by the Aspen Institute that strives to integrate social and emotional development with academic learning in K-12 education.

Center Established to Advance Personalized Learning

Imagine a Fitbit for the classroom. Instead of counting calories, it might use eye-tracking technology to tell a teacher when students are losing focus in reading assignments, or where they might be struggling with a word.



That's the goal of a new center at USC Rossier created in partnership with the USC Viterbi School of Engineering. The Center for Human-Applied Reasoning and the Internet of Things (CHARIOT) will seek to improve the usefulness of education technology in classroom instruction by bringing education psychology and engineering together in a way that will help educators gather real-time data about how their students learn.

A pilot program will outfit a fully sensorized, wireless classroom, including wearable technology for both teacher and students that will enable ongoing data collection.

"Using cognitive science as a more direct pipeline to implementing cognitive sciences in the learning environment is very exciting," says Kenneth A. Yates, professor of clinical education at USC Rossier. Yates will co-direct the joint venture with Bhaskar Krishnamachari, a professor of electrical engineering at USC Viterbi, and Rao Machiraju, who will be an executive in residence at USC Rossier.

New Members of Board of Councilors



Robert Abeles



Lydia Kennard

USC Rossier welcomes two new members to its Board of Councilors. Robert Abeles served most recently as the chief financial officer at USC before retiring earlier this year. Lydia Kennard, a USC Trustee and president and CEO of KDG Construction Consulting, has been a crucial supporter of USC East College Prep in Lincoln Heights.

Roger Rossier Honored

Roger Rossier MA '63, EdD '72, who, along with his late wife, Barbara, transformed USC's School of Education with a naming gift of \$20 million in 1998, is among the latest inductees into the university's Half Century Trojans Hall of Fame.

Roger had a long career in education and service, including positions as a geography teacher, a dean of guidance at Pacifica High School in Garden Grove and a counselor at Cypress Community College.

In 1980, he and Barbara founded a private school dedicated to special-needs students with delays in academic, social and/or emotional development. Roger became vice president of their successful corporation, Rossier Educational Enterprises, directing the career counseling, transportation and travel divisions, which built on his expertise in counseling international students at Cypress College.



Roger Rossier MA '63, EdD '72 with Dean Karen Symms Gallagher.

He has also served on numerous USC boards and alumni groups.

At the time of their naming gift — the largest ever made to a school of education in the United States — Roger and Barbara explained that they valued their alma mater's emphasis on urban education and wanted to stress the importance of a school of education that focuses on teaching practice as well as research. They said the school offers "a very nice balance."

In introducing Rossier at the awards luncheon, USC Rossier Dean Karen Symms Gallagher noted the influence of the Rossiers on her ability to launch the online MAT program in 2009 and build the Phd program into one of the strongest in the nation.

"I have not taken it for granted that this balance of teaching practice and research has been possible only through the remarkable harmony of volunteerism, leadership and philanthropy practiced by educators like Roger," she said.

Verna Dauterive, 1922–2016

Verna Dauterive passed away in June at the age of 93. USC held a memorial service for her in September. She received her master's degree in 1949 and her EdD in 1966, both from USC, and later became a USC Trustee. She was an indispensable leader at USC Rossier: the first president of EDUCARE, the school's first support group; the first minority president of the Society of Delta Epsilon, USC Rossier's doctoral honorary society; and in 1985 she and her husband, Peter, endowed the Dr. Verna B. Dauterive and Peter W. Dauterive Scholarship — the university's first scholarship for doctoral students of color. She was also a longtime member on Rossier's Board of Councilors.



Rossier Alumni Recognized as Top Educators

In August, Grace Nimnualrat '00, MAT '02 was recognized as one of Los Angeles Unified School District's Teachers of the Year at a ceremony in USC Town & Gown. She teaches first grade at the San Antonio Elementary School and STEM Magnet Center in Los Angeles.

"My teachers were very helpful, especially with my home life," she said. "They encouraged me and they made me feel special; they made me feel like I could make something of myself. And I felt like, if these teachers did that for me, I wanted to do it for other kids too."



Grace Nimnualrat '00, MAT '02



Marcia Reed '78, MS '81

And in October, Marcia Reed '78, MS '81 received the National Distinguished Principal award during a special banquet in Washington, DC. Reed is the principal of 186th Street Elementary School in Gardena.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson offered praise for Reed: "Under her direction, 186th Street Elementary School became a Title 1 Academic Achieving School, a California Distinguished School and a California Gold Ribbon School. I am so proud that she has received this award, which is a testament to her hard work and innovative leadership."



A new web app, Rate My Media, allows crowdsourced reviews of biased language in media. The app was developed by Associate Professor of Education and Psychology **Brendesha Tynes**. Users can rate movies, books, TV shows, social media, video games and other forms of media on criteria including “equity and inclusion, learning and general content quality.”



Video Spotlight: “The Educator in Me”

“The educator in me is having an impact on science, technology, engineering and mathematics teaching and learning in K-12 public schools. The engineer in me wants to help invent ways to make teaching and learning more personalized using new technologies and the sciences of learning. This is my way to address diversity, equity and inclusion.”

—Anthony Maddox, Professor of Clinical Education and Engineering

 **VIDEO:** To watch video, go to rossier.usc.edu/AnthonyMaddox



Professor of Clinical Education **Mary Andres** visited with Obama administration officials at the end of September as part of a community briefing organized by the White House Office of Public Engagement to bring attention to the needs of the bisexual community.

Five new faculty members



Research Assistant Professor **Yasemin Copur-Gencturk** specializes in teacher knowledge and mathematics.



Assistant (Teaching) Professor of Clinical Education **Ekaterina Moore** is a specialist in second language learning.



Associate Professor of Education **Erika A. Patall** specializes in educational psychology, including the development of student motivation.



Professor of Clinical Education **Ginger Clark** has been named USC’s assistant vice provost for academic and faculty affairs, as well as director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching.



Assistant Professor of Education **Julie Posselt** researches equity in higher education.



Assistant Professor of Education **David Quinn** focuses on measuring, explaining and ending educational inequities in K-12 policy.

Honor Roll 2015–2016

Thank you to all of our donors who generously supported the USC Rossier School of Education during fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015–June 30, 2016). Your gifts play an essential role in sustaining and expanding our student experience, programs and faculty research. The following Honor Roll includes Academy members who supported Rossier with gifts of \$500 or more and corporations and foundations who contributed \$5,000 or more.

As of November 1, 2016, **\$61.7 million** has been raised in support of the **USC Rossier Initiative.**

The Rossier Honor Roll of Donors is updated at the conclusion of each fiscal year. We make every effort to ensure completeness and accuracy. If you discover an error or omission, please contact Diana Hernandez, director of development, at dehernan@usc.edu or (213) 740-3499.

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Richard Rasiej and Joan Herman have donated \$1 million for a new initiative.

\$1 million gift to USC Rossier established to boost effectiveness of K-5 math instruction

The Joan Herman and Richard Rasiej Mathematics Initiative will explore strategies to support current teachers —

By Matthew C. Stevens

A \$1 million gift to USC Rossier from a Pacific Palisades couple has established the Joan Herman and Richard Rasiej Mathematics Initiative, which will seek to improve the mathematics knowledge and teaching effectiveness of current teachers in K-5 classrooms.

The initiative team — including USC Rossier faculty members Yasemin Copur-Gencturk, Angela “Laila” Hasan, Morgan Polikoff and Gale Sinatra — will identify the gaps in knowledge of current K-5 teachers, develop a research agenda, pilot solutions at USC’s neighborhood schools and inform evidence-based policymaking. The five-year effort will include a symposium in spring 2017 bringing together scholars in mathematics education, policy and learning sciences.

“The generosity, passion and commitment of Joan and Richard will allow us to leverage USC Rossier’s strengths in research to identify scalable ways to improve math instruction and change student outcomes,” said USC Rossier Dean Karen Symms Gallagher.

Herman and Rasiej have shared a lifelong passion for math. They each earned master’s degrees in mathematics — he from Columbia, she from Yale — before building successful business careers. Rasiej returned to his original passion following his retirement from a career in actuarial and financial services in 2005 — he became a math teacher in the Los Angeles Unified School District.

While teaching middle school and high school students, Rasiej became acutely aware of the challenges students were facing in attempting to master new material when they had never absorbed fundamental knowledge as grade school students.

“The areas that gave my students the most trouble were not what I was teaching them but what they should have already known before getting into my classroom,” he said.

Indeed, only 40 percent of fourth graders in the country are deemed proficient in mathematics, according to data compiled by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In 2015, scores for fourth-graders and eighth-graders dropped for the first time since the federal government began administering the exams in 1990. Scores in California have been stagnant. —R



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