

## Cal State LA continues impressive rise in U.S. News & World Report rankings

For the seventh consecutive year, Cal State LA has continued to ascend as one of the nation's top regional universities in the U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges rankings.

Cal State LA ranks 26th among all private and public regional universities in the western United States, rising five spots from the previous year, according to the 2021 rankings released recently.

During the past seven years, Cal State LA has jumped 70 spots among all private and public regional universities in the West.

In the latest rankings, the university recorded strong marks for its undergraduate engineering and business programs, low student debt, social mobility, and commitment to teaching students.

Among top public regional universities in the West, Cal State LA ranks 9th. Last year, the university was ranked 12th.

"These rankings reflect Cal State LA's unwavering commitment to student success," said Cal State LA President William A. Covino. "I'm proud of the hard work by our students, faculty, and staff that helped us achieve these impressive gains."

Two Cal State LA programs were fea-

tured among the nation's best undergraduate programs and have been included in the U.S. News & World Report rankings for more than two decades.

The engineering program in the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology is one of the top five in the nation among public, master's awarding institutions, excluding military academies, the rankings show.

The business program in the College of Business and Economics continues to be one of the top 10 in California among public institutions.

Cal State LA earned a spot in a new ranking category this year for undergraduate computer science programs. The program in the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology was ranked among the top 20 in California.

The university was also ranked 16th among regional universities in the West for faculty and administrators who are committed to teaching undergraduate students in a high-quality manner.

Last spring, Cal State LA awarded more than 7,200 degrees, the highest number in the history of the university.

## Alhambra mail carrier retires

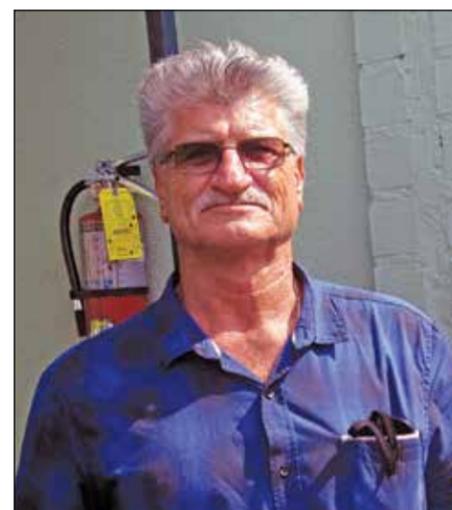
Elizandro Monarrez has delivered the mail in Alhambra for 40 years. He served other cities for eight years before that. His postal career has spanned 48 busy and fulfilling years. Most of the time in Alhambra he handled Route 61, which included the downtown area, City Hall, the Court House, Police Station, Chamber of Commerce, homes, and businesses.

It is a busy route for a postman. Mr. Monarrez, who retired Aug. 31, estimated he made 800 deliveries or more each day. In addition, postal customers constantly approached him with questions. He put in a full day's work in Alhambra.

Born in Durango Mexico, Mr. Monarrez moved, along with his family, to Los Angeles in time for him to attend Wilson High School in El Sereno. After graduation, he served in the Army and is a Vietnam veteran. Soon after his discharge from the military he became a United States citizen.

With his GI Bill benefits, he first took courses in auto mechanics before switching to Police Science courses at East Los Angeles College. He was even offered the opportunity to enroll in the Police Academy but, at age 23, he chose the Postal Service instead and never looked back. His growing family benefited from the steady job, and he soon saved up enough to buy a home in La Puente, where he still lives.

Mr. Monarrez began his career in the Post Office as a letter handler in the City of Bell and was soon promoted to a letter carrier with his own route. When a



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vacancy came up in Alhambra in 1980, he happily transferred to his new permanent assignment. He was one of the first Latino letter carriers in town. Through the years he has made many friends in Alhambra. He remembers, for instance, when one of his postal customers, long serving pastor Foster Shannon, retired from the pulpit at the Presbyterian Church at First and Commonwealth.

Mr. Monarrez now looks forward to traveling, once the COVID situation is over, and has bought a van to help him get away. The downtown community is grateful for his steady service over the last 40 years and wishes him well with his next endeavor.

## Academy of Special Dreams strives to bring awareness to those with special needs

Michael Dergar is a visual artist living in Pasadena whose life mission is to bring public awareness to those with special needs in an effort to create a better and more inclusive society. As CEO and founder of the Academy of Special Dreams Foundation, Mr. Dergar seeks ways to encourage, support, and promote the artistic talents of people with disabilities, instill pride in these artists by encouraging and showing their artwork, and impart the hope that everyone regardless of disabilities can make a better future for themselves.

"We at the Academy of Special Dreams Foundation believe in helping the most vulnerable communities," said Mr. Dergar. "Our mission includes educating the larger society that disability is a natural part of the human experience. We strive for the day that having a disability will in no way diminish the right of anyone to live independently, and they can

be free of discrimination or bias to enjoy self-determination, to pursue a meaningful career, to contribute to society, and to be part of a loving family. In this country, life for many people living with disabilities, whether physical, intellectual or other, has improved since the ADA became law. For people with disabilities in countries like Mexico and Central America, it is a daily battle to just be recognized as part of



The Academy of Special Dreams supports both national and international efforts to make an important impact on families facing difficulties during this pandemic in collaboration with many friends and families.

society."

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