



Stellar students, planetary pioneer star at 2006 Commencement

Colorful academic processions, festive celebrations, and “Pomp and Circumstance” with traditional pageantry—all this and more were part of Cal State L.A.’s 59th Commencement, which conferred more than 3,600 bachelor’s degrees and more than 1,300 master’s degrees.

This year’s Undergraduate Commencement on June 10 was attended by more than 20,000 family and friends. The keynote address was delivered by **Michael E. Brown**, professor of planetary astronomy at Caltech. Brown was recently named by *Time Magazine* as one of the world’s most influential people for his discoveries of new worlds in the solar system beyond Pluto, one of which may soon officially be declared the 10th planet.

Additionally, the Undergraduate Commencement included a special hooding ceremony, recognizing **Julie Ann Seguin** (*Special Education and Counseling*), who received a Cal State L.A./UCLA joint Ph.D. in special education, and **LaWanna Shelton**, who received a Cal State L.A./UC Irvine joint Ed.D. in educational administration and leadership. An honorary doctorate degree was also presented to **David C. Lizárraga**,



At 72, Mary H. Durban was the most senior of Class of 2006—and she plans to return to earn a master’s.

chairman and chief executive officer of The East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU).

At the Friday Master’s Commencement, **Darline P. Robles** (’72, BA), Los Angeles County superintendent of schools, keynoted. In 1991, Robles was named superintendent of the Montebello Unified School District—the first Latina and the first female to serve in this position.

These are just a few of the Class of 2006 outstanding students:

* Anthropology M.S. student **Kent Johnson**, awarded a \$30,000 annual stipend to attend one of the top Ph.D.-granting institutions

* Phi Kappa Phi national honor society graduate fellowship award-winner, **Rex Cheng**, heading to Duke University School of Medicine

* Dual biology and biochemistry major **Ramon Mercado**, accepted to the pharmacology program at the University of Arizona School of Medicine

* Economics major **Joanne Lee**, at 17 the youngest graduating senior—admitted to UC Berkeley

* **Winnie Shen**, accepted to three top psychology doctoral programs

* The fourth graduating class of President’s Scholars, high-achievers who were awarded full scholarships at Cal State L.A.

Both commencement exercises were streamed live online and were also broadcast live on Los Angeles Cable 36. LA

VITA students file tax returns for community

Call it a goodwill dividend: Completing 109 income tax returns and drawing in total refunds of \$94,821 this tax season, Cal State L.A. accounting students recently offered tax preparation and filing services to low- and moderate-income students and residents (\$37,000 and below) in the surrounding community.

The 39 student volunteers, who participated in the Cal State L.A. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, were trained by the Internal Revenue Service and Cal State L.A. faculty to prepare basic State and Federal tax returns.

David Hossain (*Accounting*), faculty advisor and Cal State L.A. VITA site co-

ordinator, says, “We have some students that put in excess of 120 hours of their own time this season.” He says that next year the VITA training may be offered as a service-learning course in taxation to give students course credits for their work.

Michael Duffy ’06, who helped prepare returns, says, “The best thing about VITA as an accounting student is that we know exactly what the benefit was to society. Most volunteer efforts produce gains that we can’t quantify. With VITA, we have the numbers in our hands, and we know the community has been helped.” LA

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Baseball twinbill: Golden Eagles make tourney; Latino exhibit draws crowd



Cal State L.A.'s baseball team had one of its finest seasons in years, reaching the finals of the NCAA Regional Tournament and being ranked 19th nationally in Division II.

After the Golden Eagles finished 36-16-1, three players—**Philip Springman**, **Derrick Loop** and **R.J. Brown**—signed professional baseball contracts.

Meanwhile during the season, the University Library drew baseball crowds to its spring exhibition of "Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles: From the Barrios to the Big Leagues."

The Library's exhibit was a joint effort by The Baseball Reliquary and a Cal State L.A. class in oral history taught by **Francisco Balderrama** (*Chicano Studies/History*). It included displays about Dodger phenomenon Fernando Valenzuela, legendary teams of East Los Angeles and the Inland Empire, the siting of Dodger

Stadium in Chavez Ravine, Hall-of-Fame Spanish-language Dodger broadcaster Jaime Jarrin and other topics.

"The project was designed to document and interpret the historic role that baseball has played as a cohesive element and as a social and cultural force within the Mexican-American communities of the Los Angeles metropolitan area," said **Cesar Caballero** (*Library*).

This exhibit received extensive coverage from the media. It was featured in the Wave Community Newspapers, April 6; *Los Angeles Times*, April 9; *University Times*, April 17; *Delaware Online: The News Journal*, April 18; KCET-28 "Life & Times," April 19; *L.A. Daily News*, April 24; KCAL-9, Dodger's Pregame Show, April 28; KTLA-5 "Pacesetters," April 30; *The Press-Enterprise*, May 5; KVEA-52 Telemundo, May 12; and *Around Alhambra*, May 2006.

From the press box:

"(Quoting Terry Cannon of the Baseball Reliquary) 'In this multi-cultural, multi-ethnic city, America's largest and most diverse melting pot, baseball created a unique sense of shared values, beliefs, customs and language in nearly every immigrant or displaced community that settled here. It provided stability and a permanence otherwise missing in their lives. It became the locus of an extraordinary outpouring of community fervor.'" —*Tom Hoffarth, L.A. Daily News*

"...Balderrama said his students found that many citrus growers, mining companies and railroads organized baseball teams as a way of building team spirit among employees." —*Jerry Soifer, The Press Enterprise*

"The players drifted apart, some falling out of touch over the years, until they were summoned to a reunion last week [March 26] at the library at Cal State L.A." —*David Wharton, L.A. Times*

For the record: In the last issue of *University Reports*, Heidi Mueller's "Moms Mabley" should be noted as a top four paper in performance studies; whereas, the "Negotiations of Past and Present" as a top four student paper in rhetoric and public address.

Fulbright scholar to teach language courses in Taiwan

Antony John Kunnan (*Applied and Advanced Studies in Education*), division chair, will spend the 2006-2007 academic year in Taiwan on a Fulbright Scholar Grant focusing on language assessment, test fairness and other issues.



Kunnan will lecture at Tunghai University and other universities in China, according to the United States Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Scholarship Board.

Kunnan teaches courses in language assessment and research methods in the Teaching of English as a Second Language master's program.

In China, his focus will include the application of mathematical modeling to language assessment, language testing for immigration, citizenship and asylum, and a

professional code of ethics and practice.

Kunnan, who has taught at Cal State L.A. since 1992, was born in Kerala, India, and grew up in Bangalore.

He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in English Language and Literature from Bangalore University, and a master's degree in English Language Teaching from the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages in Hyderabad.

He earned a doctorate in applied linguistics at University of California, Los Angeles, and he has conducted workshops in Argentina, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, India, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

Fulbright selections are based on academic or professional achievement and "extraordinary leadership potential in their fields," according to the program.



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Social work conference to key on older homeless

To bring attention to an often neglected and alienated community, the School of Social Work presented a conference addressing the plight of the aging homeless in Los Angeles on June 21 at the Golden Eagle Ballroom.

The conference sought to raise community awareness about the healthcare and social service needs of "Homeless Older Adults: The Forgotten Population" in the Los Angeles area.

Evelyn Calvillo (*Nursing*) says, "Inspiration for this forum arose from concerns of nurses and social service workers who work with older homeless persons and recent media attention on the plight of the homeless in Los Angeles, such as the *L.A. Times* series by Steve Lopez."



According to a report by the Institute for the Study of Homelessness and Poverty at the Weingart Center, approximately 80,000 people are homeless each night in Los Angeles county.

Speakers included Colleen Keenan, faculty, UCLA School of Nursing; Denise Murray, director of nursing, Los Angeles Mission Clinic; Bridget Wilson, chaplain, Union Rescue Mission; Joe Williams, director, Civic Center Homeless Project; Laura Trejo, manager, Los Angeles Department of Aging; and Jan Perry, L.A. City Councilmember (D-9). LA

Varela to manage employment services

Susan Varela was recently appointed as employment services manager within the Human Resources Department, effective April 25, 2006.



She will oversee recruitment, administer employment policies and procedures, and provide human resources support to Associated Students, Inc., University-Student Union, Public Safety, and Housing Services.

Varela comes to Cal State L.A. with more than 13 years of recruitment experience in an academic setting. LA

For campus events, go to:
www.calstatela.edu/calendar

Kaiser supports PBI's health outreach, policy conference

Kaiser Permanente recently awarded a \$45,000 grant to the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute of Public Affairs (PBI), which is directed by **Jaime Regalado** (*Pat Brown Institute*).

The grant will support the PBI's Health Policy Outreach Center and annual California Policy Issues Conference.

The Health Policy Outreach Center focuses on determining the most pressing healthcare needs affecting Latino and Asian Pacific Islander communities in East Los Angeles and the West San Gabriel Val-

ley. Working with health care organizations and governmental officials, the outreach center also helps develop public policies to address those needs.

The more broadly focused California Policy Issues Conference each year brings together public officials, scholars, corporate and foundation leaders, organized labor, community leaders and students to assess, discuss and debate an array of significant issues facing California's urban and suburban communities. LA

Summers to mean sensors for REU students

"This summer, four multidisciplinary teams of students will engage in hands-on research developing, integrating, and deploying sensors to 'watch' the environment," says principal investigator **Crist Khachikian** (*Civil Engineering*).

With a recent three-year \$300,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Civil Engineering and Center for Environmental Analysis will bring community college students from underrepresented groups in the sciences,

engineering, and technology to campus for summer research opportunities.

Part of NSF's Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program, the project will support a dozen new students for ten-week programs during each of the next three summers.

This REU award will provide each student with a \$4,000 stipend and travel funds as they participate in a program to develop and implement networks of sensors for the study of environmental processes. LA

WOW: Cal State L.A. team takes web design title

The Cal State L.A. team recently won the Third Annual WOW (World Organization of Webmasters) Iron Chef of Web Design Challenge at the TechEd 2006 conference in Pasadena, CA.

The student team—**Thomas Wu**, **Ronnie Cheng**, and **Ben Ubovich** (education majors)—produced the overall winning website based on the following criteria: design appeal, quality of markup and code, accessibility, usability, contestant presentation, audience experience and website optimization.

Pearl Chen (*Applied and Advanced*



Studies in Education), the team's faculty advisor, explains, "The winning project effectively addressed the needs of the client and website goals given by the WOW at the

beginning of the competition. The team members proved their skills that WOW believes today's true web professional should have: that is, to be able to analyze a situation and produce a viable solution, and apply technology and design techniques appropriately for the circumstances." LA

Women's basketball earns its first NCAA berth

Golden Eagle women's basketball had its winningest season in Cal State L.A. history, placing sixth in the West Region and fourth in the CCAA. With an overall record of 20-7, the team earned a coveted spot in the NCAA championship tournament known as "March Madness" for the first time. Head coach **Marcia Murota** was named regional coach of the year by the Women's Basketball Coaches Association. LA



New book explores Aztec war, art, rituals, more

Yes, acknowledges **Manuel Aguilar-Moreno** (*Art*), the Aztecs did rip the beating heart out of those whom they offered up for sacrifice.

But there's much more to their story than blood and conquest, and he covers it in his book, *Handbook to Life in the Aztec World*, a 440-page text published earlier this year by Facts on File.

Aguilar-Moreno examines in his text many realms of the Aztec civilization, including its arts, technology, culture, military, mysticism and ritualistic sacrifices.

"Some people have the idea that the Aztecs were very brutal, ruthless in an abnormal way, excessive and obsessive," said Aguilar-Moreno.

"But they were not just warriors. They had philosophers. They were very refined in many aspects, including education. It's like if the U.S. were only judged by its military. But we also have the best university system in the world.

"Others go to the other extreme," he said. "They suggest that the Aztec didn't even have human sacrifices—that they were an invention of the Spanish to justify the conquest. Yes. They had human sacrifices. They were dramatic. But we need to see it in the context



of their culture, not as an outsider or out of time."

Aguilar-Moreno suggests that most cultures have had human sacrifices far back in their lineage—just "so long ago people don't remember"—and he contends that modern societies may not be so far from the concept.

"Even with our big technological advances in warfare, computers and rockets, at the very bottom line, we are not much different," he said.

"When an army sends soldiers to a mission, it is accepted that some will die."

The Aztecs' dominance of central Mexico extended from the mid- to early 1300s until 1521, when Hernán Cortés

conquered the civilization on Spain's behalf. In the interim, as the new *Handbook* describes, they developed advanced systems of computing, military intelligence, art, irrigation and a concept of an unstable universe that recognized five suns.

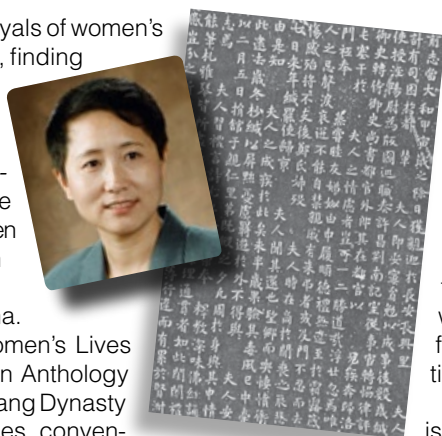
In preparing the book, which is now in more than 1,000 university libraries, Aguilar-Moreno involved more than 20 Cal State L.A. students with his research. LA

Fresh look at epitaphs penned a millennium ago

Uncovering portrayals of women's lives in ancient China, finding tales of marriage, morality and the major events of their lives, **Ping Yao** (*History*) is comparing the epitaphs—4,478 for men and 1,560 for women—from the 300-year Tang Dynasty in China.

Yao's project, "Women's Lives in Medieval China: An Anthology of Epitaphs from the Tang Dynasty (618-907)," challenges conventional wisdom and examines how historical changes affected both genders.

Presented with a \$40,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Yao is one of only eight professors



in the nation to receive this year's NEH Faculty Research Award.

"By focusing on epitaphs, my project contributes to the analysis of an understudied source for Chinese history," says Yao. "During the Tang Dynasty, epitaph-writing was an important form of record and a distinctive literary genre."

According to Yao, this is the first systematic introduction and translation of these important sources for Tang history and women's lives, which she hopes will serve as a resource for scholars of Chinese history and women's studies. LA

Around campus...



University-Student Union excavation for plumbing and electrical work is underway, with steel and foundation work to follow. The construction is scheduled for completion in Winter 2008.



This year's **Reel Rasquache Festival of the U.S. Latino Experience in Film & Art** brought hundreds of fans of Latino cinema to campus May 5-7. Opening night included a "tribute" showing of the 1976 film *Raíces de Sangre*. Among the guests were the film's casting director Bob Morones (left) and actor Isaac Ruiz (right), who played the character Kiki Gomez. Ruiz's visit was also a homecoming: he attended Cal State L.A. from 1972-74. The festival director is **John Ramirez** (*Communication Studies*).



The **44th Honors Convocation** recognized 2,700 Cal State L.A. students with high academic records. This year's speaker was **Carlos Gutiérrez** (*Chemistry and Biochemistry*), recipient of the prestigious CASE/Carnegie U.S. Professor of the Year in 2005.