

A first leap into *Second Life* Class of avatars creates virtual coffee shop

Imagine attending a class as an avatar character in a virtual world with classmates named MsFabulous Walpole, Ama Runningbear, Leftern Blinker, XtremeSalsa TigerPaw and, the manager of your group project, Gerdofal Kondor. For students in Professor **Penny Semrau's** Multimedia Design & Production classes (Instructional Technology 550), it is virtually a reality; and those avatars—or fictional online identities—are all pursuing master's degrees at Cal State L.A.

Last winter they were among the roughly 16 students in the first class at Cal State L.A. conducted entirely in *Second Life* (<http://secondlife.com>), an innovative online 3-D world where all the content is created by its users, who are referred to

as residents. (The class gathered socially at least twice during the quarter, giving classmates a chance to connect avatars to actual people.) Semrau will offer the experience anew in winter 2009.

"With the advent of Web 2.0 and its emphasis on social networking tools," Semrau said, "having classes in immersive 3-D environments is the wave of the future for educators." She said that Cal State L.A. joins more than 250 accredited universities worldwide, including Harvard and Yale, with a presence in the *Second Life* environment.

For the complete article on *Second Life*, go to www.calstatela.edu/UniversityReports.

Fall fanfare begins with stunning changes

Want to work out? Grab a cup of coffee? Find out about student or alumni activities? All these and more will be available soon when the University-Student Union opens its doors for fall, with a celebration planned for Friday, Oct. 24.

The U-SU features an outdoor plaza area, expanded computer lab, a student-run Xtreme Fitness center, 200-seat theater, a Starbucks, Sbarro restaurant, Alumni Center, and more.

- Other upgrades in services and scenery:
 - ☑ Greenlee Plaza drops its forlorn look with new tables and seating.
 - ☑ Student Housing residents now enjoy new furnishings and appliances, technological upgrades, and wireless Internet access.
 - ☑ The concept of a convenience store/sandwich shop is in the works at Salazar Hall, making a quick bite for arriving evening students that much easier.
 - ☑ In time for soccer season, Jesse Owens Track and Field was leveled and re-sodded.
 - ☑ Baseball fans have a brighter and more eco-friendly Reeder Field with energy-saving lights replacing the old fixtures.
 - ☑ In the coming months, solar panels will be mounted on the rooftops of the Salazar Hall, Physical Education, and/or Fine Arts buildings as part of the CSU Statewide Photovoltaic (PV) Initiative. Helping to eliminate 495,000 lbs. of greenhouse gas emissions, the PV system will generate 300 kilowatts of solar power energy, which is estimated to produce about 450,000 kWh of electricity annually (the equivalent of lighting up 750 average homes for a month).

New deans for two colleges

As the 2008-09 academic year dawns, two new deans will be leading their respective colleges: **Philip Romero** in the College of Business and Economics, and **James M. Henderson** in the College of Natural and Social Sciences.



Romero, previously dean of the Lundquist College of Business at the University of Oregon, also taught strategy and economics. While at Oregon, he secured reaccreditation for its programs and oversaw the building of the largest privately funded academic facility in the state.

Romero earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in policy analysis from the RAND Graduate School and his bachelor's degree in economics and political science from Cornell University. A distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution and a senior fellow in business and economics at the Pacific Research Institute, he brings experience from the academic, government, business and research realms.



Henderson served as the vice chancellor for student success and enrollment management at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. He was also responsible for admissions, financial aid, the registrar, academic advising, academic support units, housing, the student center, recreation sports, the day care center, the student health center, counseling, and disability services.

Henderson earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in mathematics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his bachelor's degree in mathematics from the University of Texas-Austin. He has served as dean of the summer session and chair of the Department of Mathematics at Colorado College. He was an American Council on Education Fellow at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, where he was most previously a tenured professor.



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For expanded stories and more, go to: www.calstatela.edu/UniversityReports.

A grand entrance

La Kretz Hall at the Annenberg Integrated Sciences Complex ready for fall classes

A grand exterior 63-step stairway switchbacks against a three-story wall of glass, giving those who approach the new Wallis Annenberg Integrated Sciences Complex an opportunity to ascend and reflect simultaneously.

The La Kretz Hall represents the complex's first wing, a \$42 million project begun in 2004. With the start of fall quarter, it will be home to Cal State L.A.'s programs in chemistry, biology and other disciplines. A formal dedication will occur later. The second wing, budgeted at \$64 million, is in the design phase. Combined, the complex will encompass 120,000 square feet of classrooms and laboratory spaces with a sophisticated mechanical, electrical, computer, data, and telecommunications infrastructure.

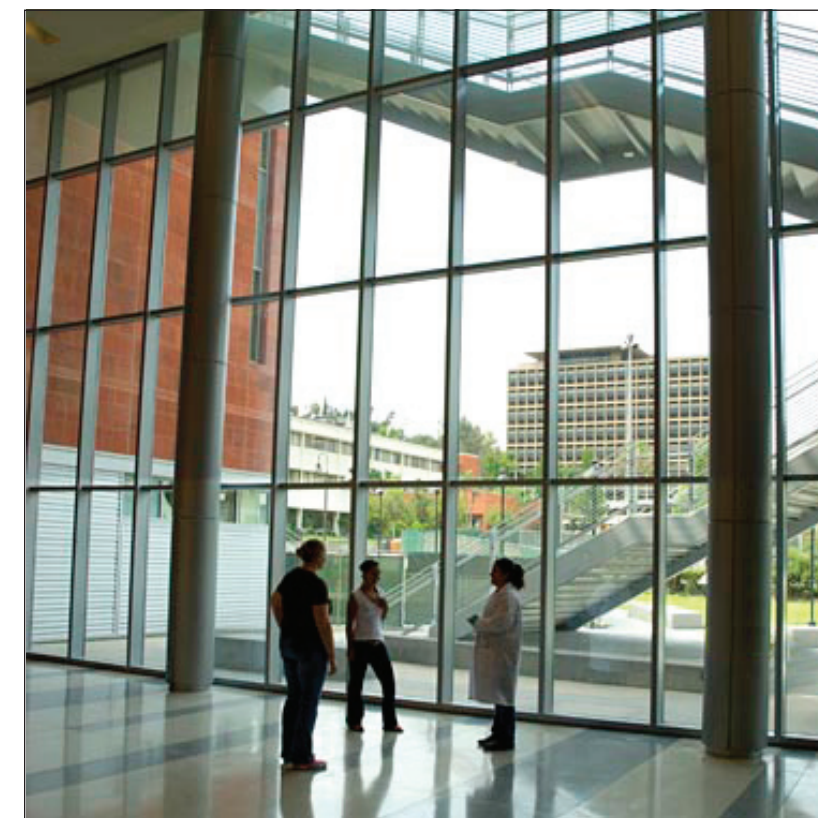
A \$5 million grant from the Annenberg Foundation will allow the University to complete the complex. In approving the naming of the complex for Wallis Annenberg, the CSU Board of Trustees cited her philanthropic support for education, research and environmental stewardship. The grant, the largest cash gift in Cal State L.A. history, developed from a strong relationship between Wallis Annenberg and Barry Munitz, the former CSU Chancellor and now Cal State L.A. Trustee Professor.

Cal State L.A.'s science programs have been recognized for outstanding K-12 outreach efforts, undergraduate research opportunities, educational support programs and faculty mentoring. For example, since 1973 student participants in the biomedical portion of the University's Minority Opportuni-

ties in Research programs have authored or co-authored more than 500 journal articles.

Each year Cal State L.A. awards roughly 300 bachelor's degrees and 100 master's degrees in biology, health sciences, physics and mathematics.

A related news release is online here: www.calstatela.edu/univ/ppa/newsrel/annenberg-complex.htm.



Balli's initiative, vision achieve recognition



"The best part of this award is to know that everything you try to do in an honest fashion is being recognized," said **Diana Balli** on being honored as the 2008 Outstanding Staff member.

Balli said she cherishes the experiences, memories and friendships of her 17 years on campus.

Administrative support coordinator for the Department of History, she was selected from among 21 nominations by colleagues, faculty and students.

According to a colleague, Balli shows initiative and vision in all aspects of her position responsibilities and has an uncanny ability to anticipate issues that need to be addressed within the department.

Students often acknowledge Balli's courteous help and assistance even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Serving also as vice president and chief steward for the Los Angeles chapter of the California State University Employees Union, Balli has been noted as a key player in Cal State L.A.'s organization of the Alliance for the CSU.

A Cal State L.A. alumna, she achieved her bachelor's degree in social science while working on campus. She was a member of the Phi Alpha Theta history honors society.

The annual awards reception also honored employees with 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35 years of service. For the listing, go to www.calstatela.edu/UniversityReports.

Have someone in mind?

Please send your nominations for the 2009 Outstanding Staff Award to the Human Resources Management office at Admin. 606. (Please mark confidential.) For more details, call ext. 3-3673.



www.calstatela.edu hits the refresh button

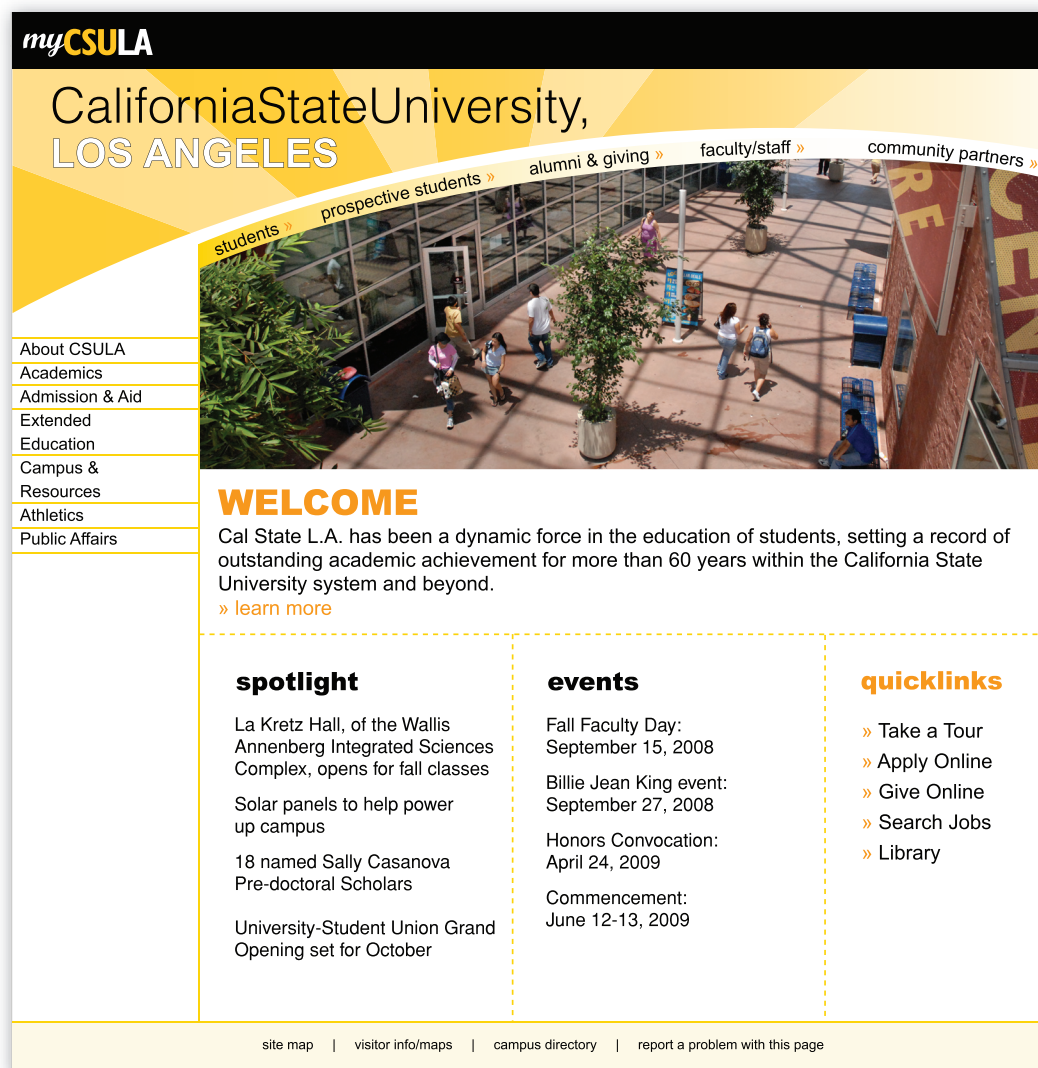
Beaming in Golden Eagle black and gold, the redesigned Cal State L.A. website was launched July 21, 2008. Also included is an expanded Google search tool, possible through a CSU system-wide agreement.

The new CSULA web presence—the first major redesign of the site since March 2003—worked to achieve the following, based on user studies:

- Reorganize external page navigation based on user needs/tasks, appealing specifically to prospective students and the community-at-large because an expanded internal portal will be focused on the campus community
- Create friendly, user-centered overviews for sections
- Makeover pages to substantially improve brand impression, aligned with the University's mission and objectives
- Develop a more caring, professional tone reflecting the excellence of the University
- Implement mandatory and accessible web templates that open the resources on the University's web pages to those with disabilities

Steps for updating your web pages:

1. Remove all outdated pages from your site and review all content to see that it is currently up-to-date and useful to those you are trying to reach
2. Download the new templates at www.calstatela.edu/webtemplates/
3. Check the accessibility of your pages at www.calstatela.edu/accessibility
4. Submit your new pages to Information Technology Services to verify that they are web compliant. They are then forwarded to Public Affairs for content and design review before upload to the server.



For questions about the new web templates, contact the Office of Public Affairs, at ext. 3-3050.

Congrats...

Crime-solving potential of research nets Hoover award

Flanked by law enforcement leaders and her academic mentors, L.A. criminalistics graduate student **Alejandra Ramirez** was presented the \$25,000 J. Edgar Hoover Foundation's Scientific Scholarship in recognition of her scholarly success and her commitment to enhancing evidence analysis. Nationwide, only one student each year receives the award. Ramirez earned her bachelor's degree in biology at Cal State L.A. in 2007. As an undergraduate, she co-authored several biochemistry journal articles on a technique called capillary electrophoresis as a member of **Frank Gomez's** (*Chemistry and Biochemistry*) research team. Currently her work focuses on developing forensics methods based on microfluidics, the manipulation and analysis of fluids as they course through tiny chambers controlled by microvalves.

MicroMouse, Super Eagle II cap year of engineering triumphs

A robotic rodent designed by a team of Cal State L.A. engineering students recently placed first at the 2008 Intercollegiate MicroMouse Competition; and Cal State L.A.'s student-built supermileage vehicle, the new *Super Eagle II*, was named Best Looking Vehicle at the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Supermileage® competition in Marshall, Mich.

Earlier this year, a team of Cal State L.A. engineering students placed first in a concrete bowling ball competition at the American Society of Civil Engineers' Pacific Southwest Regional Conference; and another team designed a boundary-layer turbine that placed first in the University Category at the WESTEC 2008 Manufacturing Challenge cosponsored by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers.

Marketing students yield sweet success

A new Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory (RMCF) franchise store may soon be opening at the Fashion Valley Mall in Mission Valley due to a prize-winning site selection and business plan by Cal State L.A.'s student marketing team. For placing first among 30 entries at the American Collegiate Retailing Association's (ACRA) third annual Undergraduate Student Retail Analysis Competition, the CSULA team received \$750.

The entries were judged by RMCF senior management teams. Under the direction of sponsoring faculty **Shirley Stretch-Stephenson** (*Marketing*), the student team included **Marlena Baldonado**, **Ashley Hardwick**, **Ken Houang**, **Nancy Moreno**, **Mark Norashkarian**, and **Boilam "Maggie" Trinh**. To view the prize-winning site selection and business plan for RMCF, go to www.acraretail.org/documents/rmcf/RMCF08_1stplace.doc.

Student magazine makes literary statement

Cal State L.A.'s 2007 *Statement Magazine* (www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/st-2007.htm), a literary publication produced by Cal State L.A. students, was selected for the Content Award in this year's National Program Directors' Prize for Undergraduate Literary Magazines, a contest sponsored by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP). According to faculty advisor **Lauri Ramey** (*English*), the AWP award is "the nation's highest honor given to a university literary magazine and a remarkable acknowledgment of [CSULA students'] achievements."

For more achievements by members of the CSULA community, visit *University Reports* online—www.calstatela.edu/UniversityReports—and follow the links to searchable professional activities, honors, publications and "in the news."

Safety tips for an earthquake

'Act on what you know, not on what you don't know'

The earthquake that struck the Los Angeles area at 11:42 a.m., July 30, 2008, was a rocking, rolling wake-up call. While it was strongly felt at Cal State L.A., damage on campus was generally limited to a few ceiling tiles falling, a little bit of cosmetic plaster chipping, and a few books rattling off shelves. Alarms sounded, buildings were evacuated, a notice went up on the web site. Then buildings were assessed, alarms were reset, and, about 75 minutes later, campus operations were pretty much back to normal.

But what about next time? You feel it. Now what do you do? Get under a doorway? Leave the building? Call home?

As an all-around piece of emergency-

response advice, Cal State L.A. University Police Chief **Greg King** says, "Act on what you know, not on what you don't know."

Here are five other things to know in the event of an earthquake, particularly if you are on campus.

1. While the earth is moving: If indoors, drop, cover and hold; get under a heavy table or desk and hold on; or sit or stand against an inside wall. If outdoors, move quickly away from buildings, utility poles and lines, and other structures.
2. If you are inside, evacuate the building in an orderly fashion as soon as possible and head to that building's designated Evacuation Assembly Area.
3. Do not use elevators.
4. Keep outside pathways clear, including main walkways.
5. Use text messages instead of phone calls. (When trying to reach others, avoid using phones, particularly cell phones, unless your need is critical; cell service is deliberately curtailed for general use to maintain access for emergency authorities. Instead, send text messages or emails. They will be more reliable for you and less disruptive to response efforts.)

For details and five more tips, visit the Cal State L.A. web site at www.calstatela.edu/univ/ppa/newsrel/earthquake411.htm.

An **emergency text notification system**, which sends official campus notices directly to subscribers' cell phones in an emergency, has been successfully tested and launched. How do you register for this emergency alert service? For faculty and staff members, sign up at www.mir3.com/csula_faculty-staff/. For students, sign up at www.mir3.com/csula_student/.

Distinguished women honored

Offering eight different models of commitment to students, women's issues, the University and its surrounding communities, eight Cal State L.A. faculty, staff and administrators were honored at the University's tenth annual Distinguished Women Awards: **Mary L. Bailey**, counselor, Educational Opportunity Program; **Beth Baker-Cristales**, professor of anthropology; **Lisa Bautista**, administrative coordinator, Minority Opportunities in Research Programs; **Connie S. Corley**, professor of social work and director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute; **Diane L. Fazzi**, associate chair and professor of special education and counseling; **Yolanda Galvan**, administrative service coordinator, Department of English; **Alice K. Kawakami**, University librarian, John F. Kennedy Memorial Library; and **Heidi Riggio**, assistant professor of psychology.



Pictured: (front, l-r) Beth Baker-Cristales, Mary L. Bailey, Heidi Riggio, Diane L. Fazzi, (back, l-r) Alice K. Kawakami, Lisa Bautista, Yolanda Galvan, and Connie S. Corley.