The American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) has bestowed its annual Alfredo de los Santos Distinguished Leadership in Higher Education award on Ernest H. Moreno, President of Mission College.

The national organization, in association with the publication The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, selected Moreno from among applicants nationwide. Named in honor of Dr. Alfredo de los Santos, an educator, mentor, leader and champion of Hispanic causes, the award seeks to identify someone who has advanced Hispanic causes in higher education. The award was presented to Moreno at the annual convention of the AAHHE in Costa Mesa on March 3.

Moreno said he was humbled by the award because of the distinguished list of previous winners. Like those winners before him, he said he shares their vision of increasing the role of Hispanics in higher education, who make up less than 3% of full-time faculty and administrators at colleges and universities. He said that while this is a negative situation, there are positive steps that can be taken.

“Robert Kennedy once said that while some people look at problems and ask why, I look at solutions and ask why not,” Moreno said.

The AAHHE noted that Moreno has advanced Hispanic causes at two separate colleges. Under his leadership at East Los Angeles College, enrollment (72% Hispanic) increased dramatically from 13-thousand to 30-thousand students. He also increased minority representation in faculty and staff, efforts for which he was awarded the John Rice Diversity Award by the California State Community College Office.

Bringing the same commitment and vision to Mission College, Moreno has established policies which not only stabilized sagging enrollment, but even reversed the trend.

“Mission College is a rare jewel with an excellent faculty and staff,” he said. “We have a great opportunity to make a significant difference in the lives of those in our service area.”

Of particular note by the AAHHE was Moreno’s commitment to “reach into the community to bring education to those who need it most.” The group said that President Moreno understands that if potential students cannot come to the main campus, you bring education to them.

In receiving the award, Moreno noted that he was “accepting it in the name of all of those who share in his vision of providing the best education possible for Hispanic students so that today’s Hispanic students become the leaders of tomorrow.”
**Investigator Re-Traces Steps on ’North Mission Road’**

In his 26 years as a forensic investigator with the Los Angeles County Coroner’s Office, Lloyd Mahanay has been behind the lens of a camera many times, taking crime scene photos. In fact, he has taught forensic photography at Mission College for the last seven years. But more often these days, Mahanay finds himself in front of the camera. Mahanay, a senior criminalist with the coroner’s office, is a consultant and frequent interview guest on Court TV’s North Mission Road (so named for the street where the coroner’s office is located). Producers of the program select memorable cases from the coroner’s files and then reunite detectives, forensic investigators, and prosecutors to tell the story of how the case was solved.

Mahanay cites as one of his favorite episodes a case that involved two similar attacks which were unconnected because they occurred about 10 years apart. A tip led investigators to a suspect. Mahanay described for the cameras his role in linking the physical evidence from the cases to confirm one person was responsible for both. “It’s entertainment, but it’s also educational,” Mahanay said. “Shows like CSI have helped us out but they give a false impression about how the forensic world really works.” It is also literally educational for Mahanay’s students. He uses the episodes for demonstration and discussion in his Introduction to Administration of Justice class.

**International students benefit from U.S…. but they also ‘give back’** (continued)

International students benefit from U.S. educational opportunities they’ve encountered at Mission College because of its smaller, easier-to-navigate campus.

Erazo, Laing, Yosepha, Eirado, and Dang all learned about Mission College from friends or relatives who had either attended Mission or who live near the college. Some learned about LAMC while researching CSUN. In several cases, students deciding between Mission and other schools chose LAMC based on its smaller, easier-to-navigate campus.

While expressing gratitude for the educational opportunities they’ve encountered at Mission College, the international students interviewed for this story also feel they’re “giving back.”

“IT’s good to have an international student in the classroom,” said Dang. “If you study a country like Vietnam, you can know more about the history or culture of my country from me too, not just books.”

Eirado, who lived in Rio de Janeiro, said her international status is a real ice-breaker. “Classmates tell me they like Brazil because of our soccer (fame) and Carnival,” she said. “In L.A., there are many students from Mexico or Central America but not so many like me from Brazil. I’m new to them.”

**Young Cadet Finds His Calling**

Samuel Kim wanted a career in law enforcement. His family wanted him to do something in medicine. Both got their wish, sort of, when Kim became a state-licensed X-ray technician while taking the Administration of Justice program at Mission College. That led to a campus job as a sheriff’s cadet. Two years later, Kim is about to earn his Associate’s degree in A.J. and no longer has any doubts about his career path. “I always thought I wanted to be a police officer, but I took the classes at Mission to be sure,” he said. “Now I know it’s what I want to do.” Kim was recently honored by the Board of Trustees and by Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca as the Mission College Cadet of the Year, based on work performance, knowledge of law enforcement techniques, community sensitivity, and academic achievement – he has a 3.6 GPA. He hopes to be accepted either into the Los Angeles Police Department or Sheriff’s Department officer-training academies. Meantime, he’s also applied to continue as a security officer at Mission.
LAMC Art teachers Nena Amsler (left) and Deborah Paulsen at "Hausguests" exhibit.

Nadine and All That Jazz

The first time Nadine Cano tried photographing a jazz musician on stage, she made the "mistake" of using poor equipment. "It was a really cheap camera, but the images were startling," the Mission College Life Sciences Lab Technician recalls, as she described photos run amok with color bleeds and fascinating streaks. But Cano (center), an amateur photographer for 30 years, liked the challenge posed by photographing musicians, each with a distinct performing style, in dark, mood-lit nightclubs. Four years later, Cano has an amazing photo collection of performers, including Oskar Cartaya (top photo), Ryan Cross (lower photo), Danny Weinstein, Jennifer Leitham, Plas Johnson, and Poncho Sanchez. Amsler said she hopes the exhibit will raise up to $30-thousand for Darfur assistance. Available artworks can still be viewed at www.hausgallery.com.

Artists Moved by Darfur Tragedy

Several Mission College teachers have donated their talents to benefit the victims of civil strife and starvation in the Darfur region of Sudan. Nena Amsler, LAMC teacher (Art Appreciation), and her husband, Bill Rabe, are art gallery owners in Pasadena. They convinced more than 200 artists to contribute works for the "Hausguests" exhibit, which ran for most of March at a Los Angeles gallery. "The people of Darfur are crying out for help," Amsler said. "But very few people seem to be aware of it. We were moved to try to do something about the misery there."

Among the artists contributing works were Amsler's fellow Mission College teachers Barbara Kerwin, Deborah Paulsen, and John Zarcone. Amsler said she hopes the exhibit will raise up to $30-thousand for Darfur assistance. Available artworks can still be viewed at www.hausgallery.com.

Batter Up!

How long does it take to make an award-winning crepe? Teams representing six high schools had only an hour to impress a panel of respected chefs at the recent Mission College "Crepe-O-Rama". Sponsored by the college's Tech Prep program, the event was designed to give participating students the experience of preparing high quality food under the pressure of time and under the eyes of seasoned chefs. In the end, judges selected the crepes prepared by Monroe High School students as the winning entry. Sylmar and San Fernando highs finished second and third, respectively, Grant, Dorsey, and Polytechnic highs rounded out the field of competitors. The Tech Prep program is a college-bound program that provides high school juniors and seniors a chance to take courses designed to prepare them for careers in several fields, including culinary arts, multimedia, law and paralegal, and more.

Have Fun... and Help Raise Scholarship Funds

A little bit of Europe comes to the San Fernando Valley when the Mission College Foundation once again hosts its annual Food and Wine Festival. European regional cuisine will be the focus of this year's Springfest festival on Saturday, May 12, according to Donna Connolly, Foundation member and festival coordinator. As in past festivals, the food will be prepared and served by Mission College's award-winning Culinary Arts Institute. "Our guest will be treated to gourmet food and they get to sample fine wines and microbrews from over 15 different countries," said Connolly. The annual event – which also features a pastry pavilion, raffles, door prizes and silent auctions – helps raise scholarship funds for deserving Mission College students. Festival hours are 3-7 p.m. Tickets are $50 per person, $35 for Mission College staff. For tickets or information, contact Vilma Bernal at 818/833-3410.
Artists Speak Out for Darfur Victims

Nena Amsler, Mission College Art Appreciation teacher, wants to bring public awareness to the tragedy in Darfur. So she and 200 of her artist friends did something about it...

Lights, Camera, Action

In his 26 years with the Coroner’s Office, Lloyd Mahany has had a hand in solving many crimes. Now the Mission College forensics instructor is helping Court TV re-create some of those investigations...

Work Begins on New Center

With mini-shovels in hand, tots from the Mission College childcare center helped break ground for a new facility that will better serve students and their kids

Students from Abroad at LAMC

They come from Vietnam, Indonesia and Ghana. And most international students agree that easy-to-talk instructors are the best thing about Mission College.

Whether they be from Vietnam…Ghana…or San Pedro Sula in Honduras, international students uniformly point to one thing they really like about Mission College...

“Teachers here are more willing to help you,” said Thao Dang, a 19-year-old student from Da Nang, Vietnam, who is in her third semester at Mission. “If you don’t understand something, you can see the teacher after class or contact by email.”

Or you can talk to the instructor during the office hours they keep, which is not common among university instructors in Vietnam, she said.

Roger Erazo, a Honduran student in his first semester at Mission, echoed those thoughts: “At home, instructors will tell you ‘Study this, study that,’ and leave it there. But here, if you have problems, the teachers are more willing to help you.”

“It’s not that the teachers (in Ghana) won’t help you, but you really have to go after them for help,” said Harriet Laing, a biology major from Accra. “Here they’re just easier to talk to.”

But not all students see it the same way. Andréa Eirado earned a degree in journalism in her native Brazil before returning to college at Mission, in quest of a new degree in accounting.

“(Professors) in Brazil are stricter,” she said. “Here they give students too many chances. I don’t think that’s good.”

Like Eirado, Tien Yosepha also earned a degree – in Management – in her native Indonesia. After discovering she loved teaching, she is now working toward a teaching credential. She is the first international student to get a degree here.

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