President Moreno—Connecting with the Community

After four months on the job, new Los Angeles Mission College President, Ernest H. Moreno is connecting the campus to the community as never before.

Following the mandate to “reach into the community,” Moreno has created bridges between LAMC and a diverse group of organizations and individuals in the service area of the college. His considerable efforts to increase enrollment have focused on removing barriers for those most in need of higher education and activating strategies to open the campus to all interested applicants.

“We have many in our service area who are significantly under-represented in colleges and universities,” President Moreno said. “We’ve got to change that.”

Not satisfied with simply encouraging more students to enroll on campus, President Moreno has moved forward with plans to bring education to the community. A variety of proposals are being considered to develop “storefront” classrooms at various locations within the service area of the college.

A key service provided by Mission College to students – affordable child care so that they may attend classes or work – will expand significantly when the campus Child Development Center is completed.

Construction of the $11-million center (CDC) is scheduled to begin in the spring. A call for construction bids for the 20,000-square-foot teaching and child care facility recently went out, said Dr. Karen Hoefel, vice president, administrative services.

“We can’t wait,” said Janice Silver, instructor and vice chair of the child development discipline. “The CDC will offer a unique combination of service for the community and academic training for our students,” said Silver.

The two-story center will include four classrooms, faculty offices, and an observation room for use by Mission College’s child development students and staff. Separately, but within the main facility, will be a new child care center replacing the current bungalow-style care center.

The new child care facility will serve about 90 children, tripling the number currently served by the existing center. It will also provide care for infants, which the current center does not do.

The observation room will be used by child development students and staff to chronicle development stages and best educational practices for the tots in the center.
President connects with community

While enrollment is vital to the life of the college, Moreno has also developed a number of other approaches aimed at linking college to community. Understanding that LAMC must interface with local high schools, he authorized the sponsorship of a conference among college and high school counselors. The high school counselors got a bird’s-eye-view of the campus and all of the unique programs that Mission has to offer.

Following this highly successful conference, President Moreno is planning a “Meet The President Day” for high school administrators later this school year. Moreno wants to impress upon the administrators the fact that Mission is a gateway to any college or university in the country.

Following the principle that when the community speaks, the college should listen, President Moreno has established a series of methods for community groups to meet with him and other college representatives to discuss issues of mutual interest. He stated that community members are a valuable resource in providing the college with a clear and unified focus.

Soon, the Sylmar Chamber of Commerce will hold a “mixer” on campus. One member of the Chamber enthused that “this will be the first time that many in our group have ever been on campus!”

Good News Abounds in LAMC Business Office

Good news came in a double dose this fall for Zenaida Barredo. No sooner had she completed course work for her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration than she learned she had been selected to run Mission College’s business office. As the supervising accounting technician, Barredo oversees the day-to-day business and payroll operations. Her B.S. from Cal State University Los Angeles is her third degree, adding to two A.A. degrees previously earned. Ironically, Barredo’s boss had good news of his own to share with his staff. At about the same time he hired Zenaida, Andres Guerrero earned his Master’s degree in business administration from Phoenix University. “Several employees in our administrative services and business units have earned or are pursuing higher degrees, and I think that’s a good thing for classified employees to do,” said Guerrero.

A Chance to Check Out Mission College

About 700 students got a first-hand view of Mission College in November, thanks to the college’s Focus on Careers Day. Sponsored by Mission College’s career-oriented Tech Prep program, students from Birmingham, Dorsey, Fulton College Prep, Granada Hills, Kennedy, Monroe, Polytechnic, Sylmar, Van Nuys, and Verdugo high schools spent the day on campus. They heard presentations from career program leaders, as well as from Mission College students. The high school seniors and juniors then toured the campus and had a chance to talk one-on-one with faculty members.

“It’s one thing to read about our programs in a schedule or pamphlet,” said Shapiro. “It’s much better when they can see the college and the classes for themselves.”

Halloween at Mission College

Goblins, ghouls, and trick-or-treaters ran rampant at Mission College, as Halloween and Dia de los Muertos descended on the campus. Activities included a Halloween blood drive sponsored by the Associated Student Organization, on-campus trick-or-treating by tots from the campus Child Development Center, and the placing of altars dedicated to the dead during Dia de los Muertos activities, sponsored by the student group MECHA.

Mission College Chef Takes Top Award

Executive chef Rudy Garcia will have to clear some space on his mantle for his latest award. Garcia walked away with tops honors at the Fourth Annual Chef of the Year culinary competition sponsored by the American Culinary Federation. Garcia bested 11 other competing chefs by preparing a full meal in just 55 minutes for six judges. The mantle is getting crowded. In 2004, Garcia was named Chef of the Year by the Chefs de Cuisine Association of California. That same year, he won an individual Bronze Medal at the 21st International Culinary Exhibition, or “Culinary Olympics,” held in Erfurt, Germany.

Prop. A/AA continued

EIR & MASTER PLAN

The public comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Report on the Mission College’s facilities master plan ends December 4. Comments and questions about the plan will be included in the Final EIR, as will responses to those comments. Completion of the Final EIR is expected early next year, said Dr. Hoefel.

PARKING STRUCTURE

The 1,200-space, three-tiered parking structure is on track for completion in March 2007. Student parking will be free for the balance of the 2006-07 academic year, regardless of when students begin parking in the new structure.

FAMILY & CONSUMER STUDIES BUILDING

Quatro Design has been selected to design and create the drawings for this facility, designed to house the college’s culinary arts program, a new bookstore, general purpose classrooms and faculty offices.
Robotecas: Ambassador for Mission College

To Mission College student Patrick White, it's all about doing — not just talking about it. White and fellow members of the Robotecas share that philosophy as they chart a course for their emerging student club. At first, White said, club meetings featured a lot of talk.

"If I'm in a surfing club, I want to go surfing," he said. "If I'm in a bicycle club, I want to go bicycling. So if I'm in a computer club, I want to work on computers."

With that goal in mind, the Robotecas have set out to educate the public about the fun of computer science and robotics, attending many fairs and community events. They set up their hard drives, monitors, and robotic displays and then invite guests to ask them questions. White said adults want to know why they can't emoji large files or why their computers are so slow. Children, meantime, are fascinated by the robots. White said club members use the interaction to promote Mission College's computer science program and, to the younger set, the importance of education.

White is the Robotecas representative to the Inter-Club Council. The club numbers about 25 members and growing.

Anafe Robinson doesn't like to hear a potential student say, "I'd love to go to college but I can't afford it." Each year, millions of dollars in financial aid, grants, scholarships and other forms of assistance are available to students. But too many people are simply not getting the message. That's why Robinson, director of financial aid for Mission College, and a group of hard-working volunteers took the message to more than 10-thousand high school students at the "Cash for College" fair at the Los Angeles Convention Center. "Last year, we awarded more than $6 million in financial aid to Mission College students," Robinson said. "This event was a great opportunity to let students know that plenty of help is available to them at our campus." Robinson led several workshops at the fair, and a Mission College booth visited by hundreds of students was staffed by Rolando Cuevas, assistant to the president; Vickie Morales, student services specialist (in photo above); and financial aid technicians Martha Perez and Toan Nguyen.

The club numbers about 25 members and growing.

Curtis Stage Exhibit

Curtis Stage, assistant professor of multimedia at Mission College, found himself intrigued by what's referred to as the "bastard pop" music movement. An artist takes a song, removes all vocal tracking, and replaces it with song lyrics from a completely different genre. "The reinterpretation, the plundering and rearranging to create a hybrid of sorts is what fascinates me," he said. Stage applied the principle in creating "Pop Bastard," an installation art exhibit that ran at an L.A. Chinatown gallery during October-November. Stage's exhibit sought to address the possibility that video and sound can be an endless archive of personal associations to be layered and "re-mixed" by the viewer. Using a touch screen, viewers (with lots of time on their hands) can create up to 1,280 audio-video combinations on a master screen. The exhibit will move to Art Miami in December. Stage, who has taught at Mission College for three years, also teaches at Claremont Graduate University and the University of La Verne.

This Alum Wastes No Time

Matt Phillips has never one to waste time. At 23, the former Mission College student (1998-01) already has a list of accomplishments that many scientists would envy.

Matt first raised eyebrows by earning 52 Mission College units (most of them in the hard sciences) while still in high school and before enrolling at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Phillips credits tough, no-nonsense classes taught by Mission College instructors like Maria Fenyves, Richard Rains, Mike Reynolds, and Bob Smazenka for his later university success.

"I loved my time at Mission," said Phillips. "Those instructors helped put me a step ahead of the other students in my class when I started at Cal Poly." Five years later, Matt is about to simultaneously earn Bachelor's and Master's degrees in mechanical engineering. But many of his courses the past five years have been in the emerging bio-medical engineering field.

In fact, his graduate studies are being paid for by a Valencia bio-med firm where Matt has worked the last two summers. Why? Because they want him back! Research conducted by Phillips into how to relieve spinal cord pain led to creation of surgical devices which will soon be patented — with Phillips listed as the co-inventor. Phillips will also go down as a pioneer of sorts at Cal Poly.

He and a couple of other students have been asked to design and operate "Medi-Tec," a real world bio-med lab for students funded by private sector engineering firms.

Matt shares his knowledge with other Cal Poly students as a lab instructor. It's not uncommon for some students to be older than him. But any skepticism about his youthful appearance quickly disappears once Matt begins conducting the lab.

Despite the impressive resume, Matt is not completely unique. Turns out, he's only one of four family members who have attended Mission College. Mother Barbara attended LAMC in the early 80's as a pre-nursing student. Sister Jill had earned 38 Mission College units by the time she graduated from high school and is now a business major at CSUN. And father Dennis has taken several computer and photography classes at Mission College.

The Phillips' live in Sylmar, near the campus. "We can actually walk to Mission College," said Barbara Phillips.

Apparently, they often do.
It's become clear that the balance of power in men's soccer in the Western State Conference lies in the northeast Valley – at Mission College. Led by Coach E.B. Madha, the Mission College Eagles completed a remarkable season by winning their second straight conference title. The squad, headed by conference Player of the Year Jhonathan Bravo (#8) and leading scorer Julian Lopez (#10), finished the regular season with a record of 18-1-3.

It's the third time in four years that the Eagles under Madha (aided by assistant coaches Jose Mejia and Norman Mejia) have been conference champs. Madha collected his third conference Coach of the Year award. In fact, it's been a great year for Madha, who also coached Birmingham High School to the L.A. City Schools boys soccer championship.

Bravo, a spectacular midfielder and playmaker, was named Player of the Year for his ability to keep the Eagle offense revving on all cylinders. In addition to scoring 10 goals himself, he often set up teammates for scores, logging 17 assists. Julian Lopez often benefited from Bravo's playmaking, scoring 24 goals to lead the state. That mark now stands as Mission College's single season scoring record.

"We have a ton of offensive weapons on the team," said Madha. "But what makes this squad great is how unselfish they are and dedicated to winning as a team." Besides Lopez and Bravo, ample offensive support came from Oscar Garcia, Erick Blanco, and Gerardo Bravo. As a unit, the Eagles scored more goals than any other team in the state.

Defensively, the Eagles were not lacking either, giving up only 20 goals all year…an average of less than one per game. Goalkeeper Irvin Hernandez "pitched" 10 shutouts over the course of the season. The defense is anchored by right back Sammy Prieto, with help from Douglas Aguirre, Edgar Guerra, and Esteban Alvarez.

As the Eagles entered the playoffs, they were ranked second in the nation by the NSCAA Adidas National Ranking Committee.