Mission College President Ernest Moreno has established a goal of reaching out to residents of every corner of the San Fernando Valley. “Traditionally, it has been thought that the Valley was served by two community colleges,” he said. “We need to let our community know that Mission College is committed to providing the best education possible for our students.”

President Moreno noted that Los Angeles Valley College and Pierce College have long and proud heritages as respected institutions of higher education. He pointed out that even though Mission has been in existence for three decades, it does not possess the history of the other two schools. “We are a well-kept secret, but this is going to change,” he said. “The residents of the Valley need to know that while we are not in competition with our sister colleges, Mission has some unique educational opportunities to offer.”

Classes in the Community
Efforts to educate community members concerning the merits of the college include the establishment of several “store-front” locations for off campus classes, publicity of course offerings, and inviting community members to campus. To this end, Moreno recently hosted the Sylmar Chamber of Commerce and plans to invite local high school administrators to visit the campus soon.

Health & Fitness Center
Starting to Take Shape
State-of-the-art facility will benefit students, athletes and community

As a construction date gets nearer, the planned health, physical education and fitness center is generating a lot of buzz at Mission College.

The two-story, 87-thousand-square-foot facility will include five general classrooms, three multi-purpose fitness/dance classrooms, a training and hydrotherapy room, men’s and women’s team and general purpose locker rooms, 12 faculty/administrative offices, reception/secretarial offices, a three-court gymnasium – including a regulation-size competitive basketball court with spectator seating for 600 – a fully equipped fitness center with cardio and weight machines and an elevated jogging track.

“It’s going to add tremendously to our academic program,” said Dr. Karen Hoefel, vice president, administrative services, who oversees Proposition A / AA construction projects. “Right now, we don’t have a space to support the physical education and fitness needs for our current students. This facility will adequately serve future generations of Mission College students and the local community.”

Most students on degree or transfer tracks at Mission College are required to take physical education and health classes. For this purpose, the college currently leases a space several miles off campus. Athletic Director John Klitsner, who teaches P.E. in the facility, describes it as “too cold in the winter and too hot in the summer.” And yet, he added, students never complain.

“That’s the nature of our students,” he said. “But they are just as deserving of a top-class fitness center on campus as all other college students are.”

Klitsner noted that the new facility will give the college the option of expanding its competitive athletics program to include volleyball and basketball.

Provision A/AA Update
“...Is Your Success...”

“All of these activities are aimed at getting the word out that Mission is ready to grow to meet the needs of all of our community members,” Moreno stated.

The connection between the business community and the college was the theme of President Moreno’s meeting with the Sylmar chamber. While the event was primarily social – chamber members marveled at the delicious creations of Mission College instructor and executive chef Rudy Garcia and his staff – President Moreno pointed out that the college is the major source of employment training for community businesses. He encouraged the chamber, whose members include local business and civic leaders, to look to the college for future employees.

“Mission College is a gateway for our students,” said Moreno. “For those seeking entry into a profession, we offer excellent transfer programs to any major university in the country. And for those who want to join the workforce sooner, we’ve got terrific career-path programs.”

Bart Reed, chamber Membership Executive, said he welcomes President Moreno’s attempt to forge better ties with business leaders.

“President Moreno’s efforts to reach out to the community are exciting and something that should have been done a long time ago,” he said. “Besides hosting groups, he’s also sent representatives to public events to let the community know about the college.”
Construction is expected to take about a year. The Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees has approved Mission College’s Facilities Master Plan and certified its Environmental Impact Report. The Master Plan sets forth the framework for the optimum long-term development of the campus. The EIR identifies the potential impacts of that plan on the environment and the measures the college will undertake to ease those impacts. The Board’s approval paves the way for Mission College to proceed in fulfilling the goals of a complete campus that was the vision of the trustees when the college was opened in 1975.

Child Development Center
Emma Construction has been selected to build the campus Child Development Center. A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for sometime in February. Construction is expected to take about a year.

Ready to Go Raw?
Mission College instructor Dr. Ruthie Grant normally lectures to students about English. But of late, she’s getting many requests to talk about the increasingly popular raw, or raw food diet. Grant has become an unofficial spokesperson for the food since “going 100 percent raw,” as she puts it. She said the change helped her overcome health problems. Colleagues and students familiar with her story have asked her so many questions about her choice that she began preparing informal lectures about raw food. At one recent event, more than 50 people heard Grant explain raw food. The lecture was followed by a meal featuring a dozen “live” dishes (photo above), as well as unprocessed refreshments and desserts. Her efforts have led to creation of a live fruit juice bar in the student dining area. A raw food dish consists of foods which are completely fresh (uncooked) or have not been heated above a certain temperature. Food courses may include raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, unpasteurized dairy products, raw meat, raw eggs, and raw honey.

Prop. A/AA - continued
The Health, P.E. and Fitness Center will be constructed on undeveloped land located at the intersection of Eldridge Avenue and Harding Street, referred to as the extended campus site. It is anticipated that this new facility will be an asset to the community and that the public will be invited to participate in wellness-related programs.

Construction is expected to begin this summer, with the facility ready for use in the spring semester of 2009. About a third of its $39-million cost will be borne by the state, with the rest provided by Proposition A / AA bond monies.

Other Key Projects
Campus Master Plan
The Los Angeles Community College Board of Trustees has approved Mission College’s Facilities Master Plan and certified its Environmental Impact Report. The Master Plan sets forth the framework for the optimum long-term development of the campus. The EIR identifies the potential impacts of that plan on the environment and the measures the college will undertake to ease those impacts. The Board’s approval paves the way for Mission College to proceed in fulfilling the goals of a complete campus that was the vision of the trustees when the college was opened in 1975.

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Teaching is One Thing... Doing's Another
Vickie Oddino has been teaching English for eight years. But a second career as a freelance writer gave her new insights, especially in her journalism classes. “Freelancing has helped me become a better journalism teacher,” she said. “I am actually practicing what I preach.” Over the past four years, Oddino has written more than 30 freelance articles for local and national publications. Writing about family issues, current events, travel, and health, Oddino’s work has appeared in Los Angeles Family magazine, the Los Angeles Times, the Los Angeles Daily News, the Christian Science Monitor, Mothering magazine and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. She believes students benefit from hearing from real-world journalists and authors. In recent semesters, she has brought an impressive group of speakers to campus, including (photos clockwise from top) Stephanie Roberts (KNX Newsradio), Ross Becker (NBC-4 reporter), Chris Weinkopf (Daily News editor), and Jeff Britting (Oscar-nominated producer and author of Ayn Rand).

Volunteerism is Guiding Force for Student
Some young people will lie about their age to get into the movies. Or to get into a trendy club. Josephine Jackson (at right in photo with friend Precious Painting) lied about her age in order to do volunteer work at a hospital. That experience – when she was 14 and told hospital administrators she was 16 – defines Josephine’s passion for good deeds. When Josephine attended the annual “Day of the Child” event for foster children in 2005, she was touched by her experience mentoring a Nigerian boy whose parents had died of AIDS. When she learned the 2006 event was short on volunteers, she personally recruited more than 30 mentors by getting her instructors’ permission to address two classes about the event. “I wanted others to experience what I had felt,” she said. In the past, Josephine has helped raise money to fight pediatric AIDS, passed out food to the homeless, helped organize carnivals for children on Skid Row, and worked as a church volunteer. Her focus now is transfer to Pepperdine University to pursue theatre arts…but she doesn’t rule out starting a foundation in the future. She even has a name picked out: Kindness for Everyone.
Eagles Cap a Remarkable Season

The results were kept under seal until the last minute. But they were no surprise. At the annual men’s soccer banquet, Coach E.B. Madha announced that this year’s Most Valuable Player award went to two stars: Julian Lopez, the human scoring machine (at 108 goals), and Jhonathon Bravo, the playmaking sparkplug of this year’s team. Madha spoke about the incredible achievements of this year’s team, which finished 21-2-3, played in the final four and ended the season ranked sixth in the nation. “Of the top 10 scorers in the Western State Conference, seven played for us,” Madha told the audience. “Three of the top scorers in the state were from Mission.” That included Lopez, who led the state with 25 goals. Every Mission starter made either the first, second, or honorable mention all-conference teams. And Madha revealed that Bravo, the conference Player of the Year, has been signed by the Los Angeles Galaxy.

Students Make Blueprints Come to Life

Mission College students and staff can’t wait to see what the new Health and Fitness Center will look like when completed (see page 1 story). Well, they don’t have to wait. Thanks to the Los Angeles Community College District’s e7 Studio, anyone can take a virtual tour through new campus buildings as they will look when completed. e7 is the educational component of the Proposition A / AA bond program, employing the talents of student interns from throughout the district. The animated “fly-through” of Mission College’s fitness gym is so real, you practically hear the sneakers squeaking on the polished floor. Mission College multimedia students Francisco Ortiz and Omar Soto helped create those images. Both Soto, who has worked with e7 for over a year, and Ortiz, for about six months, hope to become filmmakers. They’re in the right spot for that, according to Michael Rendler, director of the studio. “The computer graphics employed in creating a fly-through are exactly what they do in major motion picture simulations,” he said. (To see the visualizations created by Soto, Ortiz, and other LACCD students in the e7 studio visit: http://streaming.e7studio.net/?display=04MW Click on Mission College.)

Former Mission Star in Second Season with MLS

The success of the Mission College men’s soccer team in 2006 recalled for some the 2003 team. That team, like the ’06 squad, also won the Western State Conference title and competed in the state playoffs. And in 2003, as in 2006, a Mission College Eagle was named conference Player of the Year.

Ivan Becerra was that player and the leader of the ’03 squad. After leaving Mission College, Becerra attended UC Santa Barbara and played in the Division 1 championship game in 2005. Soon after, he was drafted by the Columbus (Ohio) Crew of Major League Soccer (MLS).

When Becerra spoke with Our Mission, he was making preparations to return to Columbus for the start of his second professional season. The pre-season will include a trip to Brazil for competition against local teams. Last year, the crew played part of its exhibition season in Greece, Spain, and the Netherlands.

On the Crew, Becerra is adjusting to a new position as a defender after a career as an offensive and assist threat.

“It actually helps that I've been a forward all my life because a lot of the time I can anticipate what the guy I'm guarding is going to do,” he said.

Becerra said he followed the success of this year’s Mission College team. In fact, he gave the Eagles a pep talk before their first playoff victory.

“I told them, ‘All your family and friends are in the stands but you never know who else might be watching,’” he recalled. “There might be pro scouts or college coaches so ‘go out and play your best game.’”

Becerra’s career as a pro athlete might never have happened. After a stellar soccer career at San Fernando High, he thought of playing football at a community college – as a place kicker.

But his teammates and even once rival players encouraged him to join them at Mission. He credits Eagles soccer coach E.B. Madha with helping him develop as a player.

“E.B. believed in me,” said Becerra. “He spent a lot of time and effort on me.”

The result was a ton of awards in 2003, including All America honors.

“Those awards put my name out there and got the attention of Division 1 coaches,” he said. “All the hard work I’d done at Mission paid off,” he said.
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

3000 helps Ashour overcome a condition that affects concentration. The software produces an audio version of his assignment while a specialized cursor highlights (on-screen) the text being read.

On a recent afternoon, student Arthur Ashour came to the high tech lab to complete class work. A program called the Kurzweil 1000 reads the work aloud, allowing a student to verbally dictate an essay and see it transferred to the computer.

"These programs are great for overcoming obstacles. And I love helping others," said Ashour. "It's hard for many people to understand the frustration that disabled students feel when they're trying to learn," he said. "They want equal participation in the college program."

"Our disabled students want to be independent," said Scuderi. "Many disabled students cannot reproduce the assignment as an audio CD. Still other software programs come into play.

For the visually impaired, Gonzalez may take a student's assignment, scan it from hardcopy or textbook, and use the Duxbury Braille Translator to document form on a computer screen. The Duxbury Braille Translator, Text Aloud, Magic 9, and Dragon Naturally Speaking are just some of the software programs found in Mission College's High Tech Center, a specialized lab located in Sylmar, California.

The speed of the audio and the cursor can be adjusted. Across the campus, and the computer screen, students with disabilities complete the assignments.

From the first floor of the college to the second floor, the high tech lab offers a number of ergonomic devices that give her easier access to students with disabilities complete the assignments.

Operations specialist Adrian Gonzalez (standing) and Patricia Gomez.

The high tech lab offers a number of ergonomic devices that give her easier access to students with disabilities complete the assignments.

"They want equal participation in the college program," said Scuderi. "They want equal participation in the college program."