

# *Voice*

University of La Verne Magazine

Spring 2018







**THE BROADWAY MUSICAL "CABARET"** came to the University of La Verne in May, transforming the Dailey Theatre into a decadent 1931 Berlin night spot called the Kit Kat Club. With song, music, and bold costumes, University of La Verne students told the story of an American writer and his relationship with an English cabaret performer. The musical is based on the 1951 play "I Am a Camera," which was adapted from the 1939 novel "Goodbye to Berlin."



# Features

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FROM THE EDITOR



**M**oviegoers knew Christopher Reeve best for his silver screen role as Superman, but the Man of Steel did not see heroes as a flashy archetype with superpowers. He said: “A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.”

Sometimes heroism is obvious — such as firefighters rescuing someone from a burning building or a police officer confronting an armed robber. Sometimes it does not make headlines, like when a child donates her long locks to help a cancer patient or a teacher dedicates extra hours after school to help a student.

In this issue of *Voice*, “Everyday Heroes” come in a variety of forms. Some are University of La Verne alumni who served on the front lines of incidents that made national news in the past year such as the Las Vegas shooting and Hurricane Harvey. They showed courage and grace under pressure in the face of unthinkable circumstances. One hero is a professor whose research may one day help to solve world hunger and cure cancer. Others — such as our Integrated Business Program students — display heroism by raising money to feed the hungry and fund cancer and Alzheimer’s disease research. And some heroes work quietly behind the scenes, providing life-changing career training for people who want a better life for their families. They all have one thing in common: great leadership and self-sacrifice.

We thank these heroes for carrying the torch of Leopard pride out into the world, leading by example, and serving as an inspiration to us all.

*Melissa Pinion*

Melissa Pinion  
Editor

BEHIND THE COVER

Computational Biology Professor Tatiana Tatarinova poses with a magnifying glass for her front-cover magazine photo shoot.



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**T**he University of La Verne is flourishing. Our students and faculty are deeply engaged in scholarship and civic activity. Our regional locations across Southern California are evolving to shape the next generation of leaders.

We remain nationally ranked for our academic quality, and our more than 80,000 alumni around the world are leaders in their industries and creating bright futures for their communities.

It is amid this wave of success that the University of La Verne is proud to announce a comprehensive campaign for the first time in its history. **Create the Future: The Campaign for the University of La Verne** will raise \$125 million for student scholarships, faculty support, and facility enhancements, laying the foundation for a new era of growth and achievement.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the university, I am pleased to share that, with your help and support, we have already received more than \$83 million toward that goal.

Every donation we receive has an indelible impact on the lives of our students, and you can already feel the effects across our campuses. Our donors helped launch

new endowed scholarships to support our diverse student body, which you read about in the last issue of *Voice* magazine. We recently broke ground on the Ludwick Center for Spirituality, Cultural Understanding, and Community Engagement, which will house a sacred space, classrooms, a meditation room, study space, and several offices dedicated to student success and collaboration.

We dedicate this issue of *Voice* magazine to each of you who support our commitment to educating and serving our students. Your generosity allows the University of La Verne to continue in its mission, instill values in its students, and continue to contribute to our world.

Thank you for your dedication to the University of La Verne. Together, we will create the future for a new generation of students.

Sincerely,

*Devorah Lieberman*

Devorah Lieberman, Ph.D.  
President



Fast Facts

with Grace Casian, Director of Leadership and Annual Giving



**Q What are some interesting facts about people who have given to the university?**

Our oldest living alumna donor, Mary Hunter, graduated in 1933 and is 104 years old. This year, a donation that came from the farthest away was on #GivingTuesday from a parent in Hong Kong. And more than 2,500 alumni have donated for the first time to the university since I began four years ago, including an alumna from the class of 1947.

**Q How many donors supported the university last year?**

Last year, 3,529 donors supported the university. Of those, more than 2,200 are alumni and roughly 1,266 are friends, parents, corporations, foundations, organizations, and students. During our three-year Count Me In Challenge, which began in

2014 and resulted in the university receiving a challenge award of \$500,000 for student scholarships, 1,882 alumni made their first-ever gift to the university.

**Q Where have the gifts gone?**

Of the \$15.4 million given to the university last year, nearly 80 percent of the funds were dedicated to student scholarships and academic programs. Donations also supported endowed chairs, professorships and lectureships, centers, and capital projects.

**Q Why should alumni and friends consider giving to the University of La Verne?**

Annual gifts go to work immediately. When you give to the university, you are a part of something bigger – you join thousands of other donors who are investing in the university's great young minds. Support helps fuel new academic initiatives and programs, enhances campus life, and provides vital support for students. Annual gifts start by opening doors, which open minds and possibilities. That changes the world! For more information, please visit [thespot.laverne.edu/give](http://thespot.laverne.edu/give).

Leo on the Street

**Damairis Lao**  
President of Common Ground



**What qualities or actions make someone a hero?**

I think the determination to do meaningful, but difficult and tedious work in service of others makes someone a hero. I constantly depend on guidance and inspiration from University of La Verne Chaplain Zandra Wagoner and Daniel Loera, director of the Center for Multicultural Services. To me, their humility and unwavering commitment to the well-being of all people is what makes them heroes. They lead, they educate, they serve, they listen, and they organize. But more importantly, they build future leaders to take up the cause of social justice and that's perhaps the most meaningful work there is.

**Common Ground** is a student organization that seeks to build bridges across religious, spiritual, and philosophical diversity to strengthen our communities and build a better world.

**Dr. Nelly Kazman**  
Interim Dean, Regional and Online Campuses

My Perspective  
The Future of Adult Education

By Dr. Nelly Kazman



**IN A 1995 KEYNOTE ADDRESS**, Stanford University President Gerhard Casper said: "The early decades of the second millennium may bring more changes to universities than in the first 1,000 years." The decades ahead promise this trend will continue for universities such as the University of La Verne. And many of these changes lie with adult learners, who are enrolling in college in increasing numbers.

I have spent more than 30 years at the University of La Verne, a unique institution that has touched the lives of thousands of students and equipped them with the knowledge and skills to succeed. I am particularly proud of having spent my entire career with adult learners, for whom I have the highest respect and admiration.

Serving adult learners is both my passion and expertise. I worked for 27 years as the senior executive director of our Burbank campus, 20 years as an adjunct professor teaching adult learners, and most recently, as the interim dean of Regional and Online Campuses (ROC). In addition, I was an adult learner myself, completing two post-graduate degrees from Claremont Graduate University and the University of La Verne, while working full time. These experiences have given me a deep insight into the adult learners' world and the vision of what it will take for the university to continue being successful teaching adults in today's hyper-competitive environment.

Our mission is to provide our students with a broad-based education that will enable them to thrive and

succeed in today's modern, complex, and interdependent organizations. The same philosophy applies to our adult learners as we strive to empower them to become effective professionals in managing not only their jobs, but also the contextual world "around their jobs." This requires leadership skills, teamwork, critical thinking skills, as well as cultural competency — all of which are integrated into our academic programs. Guided by this educational philosophy, we will continue to provide our graduates a 21st century education that is relevant to their realities as aspiring professionals as well as responsible, engaged citizens.

The University of La Verne's commitment to lifelong learning and student-focused culture has contributed to a long, successful history in adult learner programs. The talent and experience of our adult learner leadership team at ROC is unparalleled in the field of adult education. As the new dean, I am inspired by the overwhelming support that I have received from our President Devorah Lieberman and the entire campus community. Reflecting on the future of adult education, ROC will also need a renewed vision, one that focuses on innovative programs and delivery methods, and an ongoing evaluation of the changing needs, challenges, and opportunities adult learners face. Such a vision will enable the University to continue to meet, but also exceed the needs and expectations of our adult learners and become the university of choice for adult education.



SAVE THE DATE

University of La Verne  
**HOMECOMING**  
& Family Weekend 2018

OCTOBER // 5-7 // 2018





## University Breaks Ground on Ludwick Center

The University of La Verne broke ground on the Ludwick Center for Spirituality, Cultural Understanding, and Community Engagement in May. Facility plans include an expanded sacred space that will accommodate 125 people, the Office of Multicultural Services, the Office of Civic and Community Engagement, the Office of International Student Services, and the Office of Interfaith and Spiritual Life. The multimillion-dollar facility was supported by a significant gift from Art and Sarah Ludwick '94. The Ludwicks are longtime supporters of the University of La Verne. The center is projected to open in fall 2019.

## President Devorah Lieberman Joins Governor's Education Roundtable

California Gov. Jerry Brown has invited University of La Verne President Devorah Lieberman to serve on the California Education Leaders Roundtable, which brings together the state's top college and university leaders to help ensure that Californians will continue to have access to postsecondary education into the 21st century. Lieberman, who also serves as chair of the executive committee of the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, will represent the independent nonprofit higher education sector.



## Physician Assistant Program Receives Provisional Accreditation

The University of La Verne's new physician assistant master's degree program has received provisional accreditation from the field's premier national accrediting body. The approval, granted by the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant (ARC-PA), is for a new PA Program that has not yet enrolled students. The first group of 22 students will begin coursework on Aug. 27. The program is part of the university's commitment to expanding health sciences educational programs in Inland Southern California, and it also complements the mission of the Convergence, an initiative aimed at providing skilled and diverse health care professionals for the region.



## New Programs Launched in IT, Education, and Criminal Justice & Criminology

The University of La Verne launched new academic programs in the 2017–2018 academic year, expanding the comprehensive roster of degree offerings at the La Verne campus, regional locations, and online. New online programs include bachelor's degrees in information technology, criminal justice and criminology, and educational studies. A Master of Arts in Social Justice Higher Education Administration and a child welfare and attendance credential are now offered at the La Verne campus, and a Doctor of Education Organizational Leadership is available through the College of the Canyons campus.



## College of Law Celebrates 10-Year Partnership with Disability Rights Legal Center

The Disability Rights Legal Center, which has had a satellite office at the University of La Verne College of Law for the past decade, celebrated the anniversary of its partnership with the university in October. In the past 10 years, the center has helped an estimated 1,400 people, litigated state and federal discrimination cases, and attended more than 100 Individualized Education Program meetings for clients. About 80 University of La Verne students have received training and experience by working at the center.



## Debate Team Wins Fall National Championship

Members of the University of La Verne debate team won the inaugural Fall U.S. National Debate Championship at Claremont McKenna College in November. Senior political science and speech communication major Joanna Mrsich and junior sociology major Michael Eberle were crowned the champions. Freshman Tania Ruedas, a political science major, and junior criminology major Hannah Reyes took first place in the novice division. More than 100 college debaters gathered for the three-day event, going head to head on topics ranging from the removal of war memorials to state secession.



READERS CORNER

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VHS & ECVHS AVID juniors on the overnight college tour! Stop #3 University of La Verne #GoAVID @valhallahigh @GUHSDTweet @ECVHS @JAXONAAH



Thank you, University of La Verne, Bakersfield @ULaVerne @dani\_amaout #StartupWeekend #Bakersfield @STARTUPBAKO

Guys I got accepted to the University of La Verne! @EMSSPOTT



University of La Verne's 2018 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service – Thank you to the University of La Verne for allowing Rowland High School students and staff to participate in the 2018 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service [edl.io/n809113](http://edl.io/n809113) @ROWLANDHS

Make Your *Voice* Heard

We want to hear from you! Submit comments on *Voice* at [voice.laverne.edu](http://voice.laverne.edu). Please include your full name, class year, degree and the city in which you live. We reserve the right to tailor submissions for style and length.

*“I really like the format of the Voice compared to the past. I look forward to getting it, especially if someone I know is being featured. I enjoy reading about all the great things going on at the university.”*

*Lynn Valdez '69*

Take La Verne With You

Traveling the world? We are calling on all students, alumni, faculty and staff to share their trip with the rest of us by sending a photograph of themselves on location wearing La Verne garb (hat, shirt, sweater, etc.). Please send images that are at least 1MB to [proffice@laverne.edu](mailto:proffice@laverne.edu).



University of La Verne administrators and professors with members of the United Arab Emirates alumni chapter during a January trip to Abu Dhabi.

# Leading Under Pressure

A mass *shooting*. A *wildfire*.  
A violent *protest*. A *hurricane*.

In fall 2017, tragedies turned regions upside down, presenting four alumni in public leadership positions with some of the most challenging circumstances of their careers. They demonstrated strength and composure, drawing wisdom from their Leopard roots to pull through.

Illustrations By **Pete Lloyd**





# Strength in Community

By Elaine Regus

Police know their jobs can be dangerous. But Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Detective Kenneth Mead '97 likely had no idea how bad things would get after first hearing about the Route 91 Harvest Country Music Festival shooting. Community solidarity has helped Mead and his fellow officers stay focused as the investigation continues.

On Oct. 1, Las Vegas Police Detective Kenneth Mead '97 said goodbye to his 7-year-old son and left for work. A few minutes later, he was at the center of something unthinkable.

A gunman opened fire at the Route 91 Harvest Country Music Festival, killing scores of people and injuring hundreds of others. Mead, one of the first officers to arrive at the scene near the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, still recalls the fear and chaos.

"It was probably one of the first times in my 20 years in law enforcement that I legitimately thought 'this might be the last time I get to hug or kiss my son,'" Mead said. "From an emotional standpoint, it was very hard, but it's what I signed up for and it's my duty, so there was no hesitation."

The gunfire at the concert eventually stopped that night. But for Mead and other detectives working the case, that was only the beginning of a long journey. The investigation into the incident remains arduous, and those who were at the scene cannot easily shake the things they saw and heard.

"I don't know if we'll ever be the same to be honest," he said. "The city itself has changed; the police department has changed; the community has changed; the country has changed. It's just very tangible."

Today, Mead, who focuses on domestic terrorism matters and is a member of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, cannot talk about the details of the case or his specific involvement.

But he does say that lessons he learned at the University of La Verne as a psychology major, such as time management, leading by example, and empowering others, have greatly benefitted his professional life and how he has handled the Route 91 case.

"My leadership skills allow me to manage my cases, investigations, and prosecutions to my own style. The University of La Verne taught me that success is self-defined. There are lots of ways to get to the goal. You have to decide which path you will take to get there," he said.

Mead's family, colleagues, and friends have provided him moral support in the wake of the incident. The police department has offered counseling and other assistance. The outpouring of community support has given Mead and his fellow officers hope.

In the hours immediately following the incident, Mead witnessed the Las Vegas community come together to show its support for the department. Counselors, psychologists, pastors, community leaders, children, and even members of the Vegas Golden Knights hockey team showed up at the department. Many brought food and drinks and letters of encouragement.

"It's hard to ever describe how helpful that was for us," he said.

Amid the height of the investigation, Mead also received a call that helped ease the stress. That caller was Deborah Lieberman, president of his alma mater, who thanked him for his service.

"Honestly, it was very touching and felt very emblematic of the university that I knew," Mead said. "It was one of those moments where you're feeling tired and drained and things are wearing on you. To get a call like that really refocuses you and makes you realize that what we're doing is important."

*"The University of La Verne taught me that success is self-defined. There are lots of ways to get to the goal. You have to decide which path you will take to get there."*





# Vintage Leadership

By Barbara Goen

Napa County is known for its lush vineyards and rolling hills. But when Minh Tran '95 was appointed as its chief executive officer in October, the county looked quite different. Four major wildfires were raging through Wine Country, requiring the College of Law alumnus to work hard and maintain a calm demeanor to help residents survive.

**"P**utting out a fire" is a cliché in the business world, a common phrase tossed around in meetings when the need arises to solve an urgent problem.

But when Minh Tran '95 took over in October as the County Executive Officer for Napa County, fighting a fire was quite literally at the top of his to-do list.

Tran, a graduate of the University of La Verne College of Law, stepped into the leadership role just as several of the most destructive wildfires in California history swept across the state, causing widespread damage in Napa County.

While a lesser manager might have panicked during the fires, Tran kept his cool. "He is steady and measured and strategic — all the qualities you want to see in a leader," Napa County District 5 Supervisor Belia Ramos said.

He is also decidedly humble when reflecting on his leadership during the fires, which burned 145,000 acres, destroyed 1,200 structures, and killed seven people. Rather than boasting of his role, he points first to the thousands of residents of Napa County as the "real heroes" of the fires.

"They have been through so much — four natural disasters in three years, floods, earthquakes, and repeated fires," he said. "These are the people helping out at evacuation centers, neighbors taking care of neighbors, looking after farm animals and pets."

Tran came to Napa County as assistant county counsel in 2009, served as the interim CEO throughout much of 2017, and then was formally appointed to the position in October.

His staff includes the 42 county employees who served at the Emergency Operating Center (EOC) during

the fires in addition to their normal full-time duties. He praised them for their selflessness during the ordeal.

"During the fires, much of Napa County was without electricity and phone service," Tran said. "Yet, everyone reported to the EOC even as their own houses were threatened and their families were evacuated. They were all first responders even though they don't wear the uniforms. Everyone was there serving the greater need of the community."

Tran, who immigrated with his family to the U.S. from Vietnam, credits his legal education at the University of La Verne for building the leadership skills that served him well in October.

"It is important to identify all the issues of any given situation," he said. "In law school, you learn to think on your feet and be analytical, so you have to be thoughtful and calm. Being able to think through and spot the issues — for that I credit my training at La Verne."

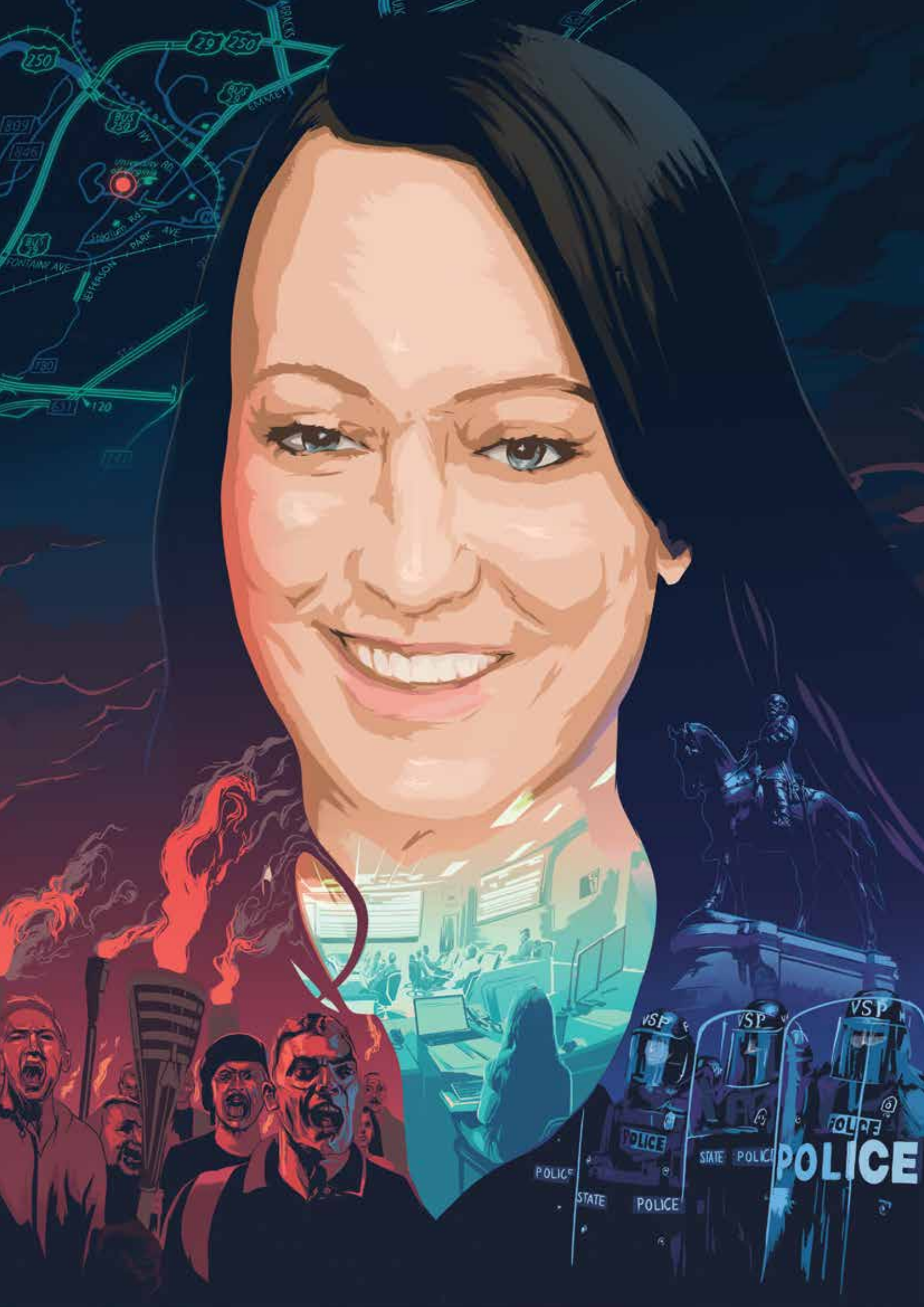
Several of his professors, including current Professor of Law H. Randall Rubin, opened his eyes to how the corporate and government worlds work, he said.

Tran loves sunrise runs through the Napa vineyards. They help with the stress that accompanies his challenging job. He compares his runs to his county's road to rebuilding.

"We have to start running the marathon," he said. "But Napa businesses are open and we are well on our long journey to recovery."

*"They were all first responders even though they don't wear the uniforms. Everyone was there serving the greater need of the community."*





# Managing Chaos

By Melissa Pinion

Allison Farole '07 traded in a dream of becoming a television reporter for a career in emergency management. Though she had faced plenty of stressful situations in her job, a white nationalist rally that arrived on her doorstep in Charlottesville put her leadership skills to the test.

**S**ix weeks. That is how long Allison Farole '07 had been in charge of emergency management in Charlottesville, VA., when trouble came to town.

"It was pretty much a trial by fire," she said.

Farole is the emergency management coordinator for the Charlottesville-University of Virginia-Albemarle Office of Emergency Management. She worked alongside law enforcement, firefighters, and medical personnel during an Aug. 11-12 white nationalist rally near the University of Virginia that drew widespread media attention and became a flashpoint in the national dialogue about race relations. The event escalated to violence, claiming one life and injuring dozens of other people.

Farole focused on communication and prioritization to manage through the crisis. Prioritization was especially important, considering that at the time she worked in a department of one.

"It was very much an adrenaline rush — trying to take it one day at a time and knowing what I could put off and what I couldn't," she said.

Farole was prepared for the moment. She received a bachelor's degree in communications from the University of La Verne in 2007. She planned to pursue a career as a television reporter, but a relief trip with the Church of the Brethren to Louisiana following Hurricanes Rita and Katrina planted a seed that would grow into a passion for what she calls "management of chaos."

After graduation, she worked as a counselor for the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Alabama. Part of her job involved teaching sixth graders the importance of emergency preparedness through the "Be Ready Camp."

Farole left that job after a year to work in advertising and marketing in Virginia, but had her eye

on public service. She pursued a Master of Public Administration and volunteered with the Community Emergency Response Team in Charlottesville.

Farole later worked as the assistant emergency management coordinator for the Charlottesville-University of Virginia-Albemarle Office of Emergency Management.

She helped coordinate the massive community search for University of Virginia student Hannah Graham in 2014, an incident she previously considered the most challenging of her career. The case garnered international attention. On June 30, 2017, she moved into her current position.

Eight days later, white nationalists held their first rally in Charlottesville, an event that would fuel several more racial clashes in the college town. She coordinated a virtual emergency operations center — an interface that allows emergency responders to access files, maps, and other important resources electronically.

Following weekly preparation meetings with law enforcement, firefighters, and other emergency officials, she worked with a team to respond to resource requests and communicate information at the regional emergency operations center, set up at the University of Virginia on the day of the Unite the Right Rally.

Farole's communications background helped her convey information simply and effectively to officials.

Professor of Communications Mike Laponis, who taught Farole, said she is uniquely qualified for her position because of her combined experience in communications and emergency management.

"Her communication skills and care for others truly makes her a person who makes a difference in her community," he said.





# A Flood of Pride

By Melissa Pinion

Bravery, strength, and determination helped residents of Houston, Texas, survive the floods and whipping winds of Hurricane Harvey in August 2017. Alumnus Art Acevedo '05, chief of the city's police department, relied on valuable lessons of trust to lead his department — and the city — through the disaster.

**H**ouston Police Chief Art Acevedo '05 stood with strength and calm before hundreds of his officers in August. In a few days, Hurricane Harvey would make landfall in Texas, bringing what Acevedo described as destruction of “biblical proportions.”

He urged officers to pack extra clothes. He told them they probably would not be going home for a while. And he prepared them to be under the world's microscope.

“Your career and the success of this organization is going to be defined by how we respond to what's coming our way,” Acevedo told his team. “Our actions will be studied and talked about for a generation to come.”

The hurricane reached Texas on Aug. 24, taking dozens of lives and becoming the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history. That part of the story has been well documented.

But Acevedo said there is another side to the tale — one in which his officers and the city shined in the face of disaster. For six days, officers under Acevedo's leadership slept on cots, took showers, and ate meals in police stations across Houston. Nearly 5,200 sworn officers and several hundred civilian staff continued to serve the community throughout the storm, even as their own homes were being washed away. No task was beneath anyone. Officers cooked for co-workers. Lieutenants cleaned bathrooms. Staff washed clothes.

Instead of stress, Acevedo saw unflagging heroism from officers who rescued more than 6,500 people as the hurricane transformed the city into a series of islands.

Throughout the storm, Acevedo drew upon the lessons he learned from his University of La Verne public administration bachelor's degree program: the importance of earning, keeping, and building trust.

Dr. Matthew Witt, professor of public administration, said managing a crisis means paying attention to good

will and communicating to employees that obligations are reciprocal, something Acevedo does well.

“Great leaders have an instinct for cultivating this process,” he said. “They know that strength is a shared asset that originates in good will. The more it is given, the more it returns. Art exemplifies the kind of leadership we seek to cultivate at the University of La Verne.”

Acevedo, just nine months into his position as chief at the time of the disaster, had invested so much time in emotional capital that his officers deeply respected him as a leader. He spent those months going on regular patrols with officers and getting to know them on a personal level.

“If you demonstrate that you're willing to get dirty with them and take risks with them, regardless of job title, they will walk through a wall of fire for you,” Acevedo said.

Or, perhaps, wade through a torrent of water. Acevedo joined about 15 homicide detectives who drove out into the pouring rain to save lives. The chief found himself in waist-deep floodwater in Houston's Greenspoint Bayou, rescuing stranded residents.

Acevedo, who did not sleep much for more than two weeks, finally collapsed after returning home on Sept. 13 following the funeral of Sgt. Steve Perez, one of his officers who died in the hurricane.

The moment of rest was well earned.

“I cannot begin to express the sense of pride I had from watching the collective spirit of this organization,” he said. “Everybody did whatever it took to get it done.”

*“Your career and the success of this organization is going to be defined by how we respond to what's coming our way.”*



# The Gift of Possibilities

**ANNAMARIE MONTAÑEZ '02, '14** remembers the encouragement her parents showed her when she decided to go to college and become an educator.

She draws inspiration from that support as principal of the Jurupa Valley Unified School District Adult Education and Community Day School. There, she pays it forward by mentoring other Latina professionals and helping them counter cultural expectations that can hamper them from following a similar path.

"For myself, not being married and not having kids, I've been freed up," Montañez said. "But I know other women I've worked with or mentored who must deal with all these challenges and expectations."

Montañez mentors and supports Latinas as a member of the California Association of Latina Superintendents and Administrators. She previously served in University of Southern California's Latina Leadership Academy.

Montañez chose to get her master's at the University of La Verne on a friend's recommendation.

"I had such a good experience that I selected La Verne to get my doctorate as well," said Montañez, who completed her coursework in 2012 and her dissertation in 2014. She is currently working on clearing her administrative credential.

The district hired Montañez in July 2016 as assistant principal of the Jurupa Valley Adult Education and Community Day School after she completed her doctorate. The district promoted her to principal five months later.

"I had spent most of my career in Los Angeles Unified School District on the east side, which is very low

income and highly Hispanic," Montañez said. "In Jurupa, I found the population of students to be very similar, so it was a good fit for me."

Montañez brought energy, enthusiasm, and a desire to expand the program offerings in a community that is in dire need of basic education and low-cost career technical education training. The school launched a medical assistant program in October 2016 with 23 students. All but one of those students completed the program in June 2017, and more than half of the graduates were hired by area hospitals and medical offices where they interned. This year, the school will add programs for pharmacy technicians, security guards, phlebotomists, heating, ventilation and air conditioning technicians, and solar panel installation.

Montañez considers one of her biggest challenges to be giving people in the community the confidence to be successful.

"Many of them work day-to-day and worry about paying bills or putting food on the table," she said. "It makes it hard for them to see the possibilities of what can be with a little education and training."

Montañez credits the University of La Verne's doctoral program with giving her the tools she needs to be successful.

"A big part of what we're working on is changing the culture and understanding change and the difficult conversations that come with that," she said. "I would be at a great disadvantage without skills in group dynamics, change models, and making sure people understand what's in it for them."







# The Genome of Genius

*Tatiana Tatarinova is a computational biology professor whose research could affect world hunger, cancer, and even understanding of Jewish ancestry. The trail-blazing spirit and curiosity that drive her cutting-edge work also keep her moving far beyond the classroom and laboratory.*

BY MELISSA PINION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON OKAYAMA





## A PACK OF FERAL DOGS

roamed the Moscow suburbs in 1976, keeping most nervous villagers at a distance.

Tatiana Tatarinova, then 7 years old, did not shy away. She began feeding the dogs with help from her grandfather. They became her friends, following her wherever she went.

Four decades later, the University of La Verne professor continues to take fearless approaches to her research and life, solving problems that might scare away others and building a growing pack of friends and admirers.

“I realize when a topic is controversial, but I am so curious to find out the truth, I cannot sleep,” she said. “And they say ‘curiosity killed the cat,’ but somehow I am still alive.”

Tatarinova, the university’s inaugural Fletcher Jones Endowed Chair of Computational Biology, joined the Leopard community in 2017. She has laid the foundation for an academic program in computational biology, a cutting-edge discipline that uses computers, mathematics, and algorithms to unlock long-held secrets of biological processes. She has introduced research opportunities for students and published her own research on genetic analysis of plants.

Tatarinova came to the United States in the 1990s, obtaining a physics master’s degree. After taking a teaching assistant position with University of Southern California in 1995, she earned a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics in 2006, and became an associate professor of research in 2013.

Her childhood encounter with the dogs drove her toward science because she found parallels between animal and human emotion. She even researches dog genomes with a team of biologists to learn more about their lifespan, an interest she links to her 18-year-old pit bull Zaraza (Russian for “infection”).

Her primary scientific focus now is “agroinformatics” — involving plant genome analysis that can eventually be used to assist farmers worldwide in growing higher-yield crops.

She has also researched pharmacogenetics, determining appropriate drug dosages for the general population based on mathematical modeling.

And, she has examined ways to improve cancer treatment, including how drugs are administered — a path she pursued in response to her mother’s decades-long battle with the illness.

*They say  
'curiosity  
killed the  
cat,' but  
somehow  
I am still  
alive*

Her grandfather’s heritage spurred her interest in determining the provenance of Ashkenazi Jews. She and other scientists have been examining ancient bones to put to rest ongoing debate about their origin.

College of Arts and Sciences Dean Lawrence Potter called Tatarinova a game-changing faculty member whose knowledge of scientific research approaches will prepare students to easily transition from the classroom to a professional environment.

“Dr. Tatarinova is an innovator who enriches the University of La Verne with her bold ideas and research,” Potter said. “I admire her dedication to giving her students the most current, relevant practices available and look forward to seeing what her scientific exploration will reveal next.”

Tatarinova’s diverse interests do not stop at the lab. By day, she unlocks vexing biological riddles and examines ancient bones. By night, she fights in karate tournaments, does rock climbing, and sings in nightclubs.

“I believe a person can stay mentally and physically young until 100 by challenging himself or herself at multiple levels,” she said. “Mental efforts need to be balanced by similarly intense physical training. Music and poetry help bring body and soul into harmony. Onstage performance is a perfect confidence booster! If people can survive my songs, they should easily survive the lectures.” 🧡





By Kate Kealey

practice makes

# profit



\* Most business programs stop at the theoretical stage. The University of La Verne's College of Business and Public Management is one of the few in the nation that takes students a step further, challenging them to create real businesses with real money.



# W

## WHEN ALEXANDREA FLORES ENROLLED

at University of La Verne, she never dreamed that she would be a CEO before graduation.

The first-generation business student from Chino Hills, California, had always been happy with a supporting role in group projects. That changed after she interviewed for an executive position in a student-run business in her junior year.

Flores served as CEO of Recharging Hope, a retractable cell phone charger company, in fall 2017. After weeks of leading staff meetings, reviewing financial reports, and guiding company strategy, her initial apprehension gave way to confidence. And her team's profits rose.

"Now that I've actually done it, I realize I should have given myself a little more credit. I don't know what made me think that I couldn't do it," she said.

Experiences like Flores' are exactly what College of Business and Public Management administrators aimed for when they launched the Integrated Business Program, which requires undergraduate business students to create a real company before graduation.

The university developed the program after noticing a trend in job placements involving alumni who seemed reluctant to apply for the kinds of high-skill jobs for which they were qualified.

"We were giving them a degree, but we were not giving them confidence," said Rita Thakur, associate dean of the College of Business and Public Management. "Many of our students are first-generation college students. They don't







From left: Students Henry Jimenez, Katelyn Winiecki, Keaton Gaibler, and Cynthia Corona ran student businesses in the Integrated Business Program during the 2017-18 academic year.

always know what to expect. They don't know what is out there, or how to interview, or write a good résumé. If we don't show them that they can be successful, they may not ever believe it."

So college administrators and faculty created a series of programs to help all students identify their strengths, chart a career path, and learn the soft skills — like interviewing, communication, and teamwork — that are an asset in any workplace. The centerpiece of the undergraduate curriculum is the Integrated Business Program, which launched in 2011. For a single semester, the students take courses together in finance, management, and marketing. Students apply those lessons to a fourth course in which they break off into teams and create businesses from scratch.

Students apply for leadership positions within the startup, do market research, select a product, calculate financial projections, and develop a business plan. But whereas other business schools stop at the theoretical stage, the University of La Verne's program is one of only a few in the nation to introduce real money.

The teams pitch their business ideas to a Wells Fargo

bank representative in a "Shark Tank"-style presentation to secure a \$2,500 loan. Then, the competition intensifies as the teams market and sell their products over the next 10 weeks.

"There is a major difference between creating a business plan and actually managing a business with real money," said Paul Abbondante, an associate professor of finance who helped develop the program.

When real money is on the line, students must solve real problems within the business, putting business strategy to the test.

What if the Chinese distributor mails the first shipment of products to Alaska? What if the second order of sunglasses does not match the quality of the first? What if a sudden drop in temperatures cools demand for cell phone-powered fans? These are all real problems that teams had to deal with in fall 2017, but each semester presents new challenges.

The faculty advisers take a hands-off approach, only intervening if a team is about to make an error that could sink the business.

"This program gives our students the ability to experience things that no classroom exercise can give them," said Ibrahim "Abe" Helou, dean of the College of Business and Public Management. "This is a great playground because if they make a mistake in this program it won't be devastating. It is a learning experience."

The bank loan must be repaid by the end of the semester, and the remaining profits go to local charities selected by the teams, a practice that supports the university's commitment to community engagement.

"We wanted our students to learn the value of giving," said Helou. "Partnering with a charity allows them to promote sales and get involved with the community at a deep level."

Student businesses have raised more than \$155,000 for local charities since the program started.

Each student has a different takeaway from the program and new skills to add to their résumé. For some, like Annette Covarrubias '13, it offers the first chance to try out a role for which they had been preparing for years.

Covarrubias worked in sales and marketing for T-MAJik, a T-shirt company, in fall 2011. Now, she uses her Integrated Business skills daily as a sales planner for CBS Corporation.

"When I think of the University of La Verne, I think of the Integrated Business practicum. It was not just a great experience during my college years, but something I could take into the real world," she said.

The experience became a talking point in job interviews, she said.

"I always mentioned it and employers thought it was amazing. They had never heard about a program like that," Covarrubias said.

For other students, like Flores, the program reveals strengths that they did not know they had.

"The Integrated Business Program taught me that I can be successful in business," she said. "Now, I'm not going to waver when people give me an opportunity. I'm just going to take it."\*





A sense of *community*, Church of the Brethren *roots*, and a reputation for producing top-notch *teachers, superintendents*, and other *educators* has drawn **65 members** of *C. Ernest Davis's family* to the University of La Verne *since 1910*. The Davis family tree — branching out across *three generations* — has more Leopard connections than most others.



**Previous Page:** Three generations of the Davis family and friends gather for a family reunion in Pagosa Springs, Colo. in 1993. The C. Ernest Davis family contains one of the largest numbers of University of La Verne alumni.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY COLBY

1 Rosemary Robinson  
2 Kristin Robinson  
3 Laura Davis  
4 Kathryn Bache  
5 Jesse Davis  
6 Andy Levin

7 Darrell Stark  
8 Naomi Levin  
9 Pam Enberg  
10 Jessica Alley  
11 Pat Alley  
12 Robin Davis

13 Casey Davis  
14 Sara Davis Bache  
15 Christopher Bache  
16 Stephen Bache  
17 Gary Colby  
18 Aaron Colby

19 Tracy Taylor  
20 Charles Davis  
21 Elinor Levin  
22 Molly Davis  
23 Daniel Enberg  
24 Sally Enberg

25 Eben Dickenson  
26 Robbie Davis  
27 Vanessa Davis  
28 Scott Levin  
29 Barbara Enberg  
30 Rodney Davis

31 Mildred Davis  
32 Virginia Stark  
33 Trish Shumaker  
34 Michelle Carlton  
35 Sabrina Dickenson  
36 Mel Stark

37 Adrienne Dickenson  
38 Rollin Dickenson  
39 Matthew Ewert  
40 Margaret Davis  
41 Alan Davis  
42 Dwight Enberg

43 Kara Lay Sternadori  
44 Rich Sternadori  
45 Randall Davis  
46 Craig Enberg  
47 Cynthia Ewert  
48 Robert Dickenson

49 Rebecca Ewert  
50 Randy Ewert  
51 Alex Enberg  
52 Rachel Robinson  
53 Jim Robinson  
54 Benjamin Robinson

country boy from Tennessee named C. Ernest Davis chose an “old field school” nestled among Southern California orange groves when he set out to go to college in 1910.

Davis likely did not imagine that Lordsburg Academy — renamed La Verne College in 1917 and the University of La Verne in 1977 — would one day boast a roster of 65 of his family members including alumni and staff that have carried the Davis lineage through three generations.

University record keepers say it is one of the largest numbers of La Verne Leopards in one family tree.

Davis married Grace Heisel, who also attended Lordsburg, in 1915. He earned two degrees before ultimately becoming president of La Verne College in 1938.

*“There is a very strong sense of family, both literally and figuratively, and a sense of belonging to the community and the university.”*

The Davises produced five University of La Verne graduates: Philip ’39, Barbara ’42, Chuck ’48, Rodney ’48, and Virginia ’51, whose allegiances did not end with their diplomas.

Barbara Davis (Enberg) went on to teach English at the college and ultimately served on the Board of Trustees. Rodney taught psychology and started an accelerated degree program for working adults.

And, of course, each of the Davis children married and produced new La Verne Leos.

“There is a very strong sense of family, both literally and figuratively, and a sense of belonging to the community and the university,” said Melvin Stark ’88, Virginia’s youngest son.

Stark is one of 17 Davis grandchildren who grew up in the university’s neighborhood and is a proud University of La Verne name dropper.

“As a kid growing up, my best friend was Don Hanawalt, and his dad Dwight would bring us down to the college to hang out with the football team,” he said. “We got to watch players like Roger Hanawalt and Curtis Frick and we hung out in the student center with Len Harper. So, it was just sort of assumed we’d go to La Verne.”

He and his family share a sense of pride about the foundation established by his grandfather as well as the evolution of the school to a successful modern university.

Along the way, marriages have extended the many branches of the family tree to include not only the last names of Davis, Heisel, Stark, and Enberg, but Dickinson, Robinson, Johnsen, Wickert, Woody, and Ott, among others.

C. Ernest’s daughter-in-law, Mildred Streit Davis ’46, was director of alumni relations. Grandson Craig Enberg ’70 was the university’s librarian; granddaughter Cynthia Ewert ’75 worked in the school of education, and grand-niece Gail Heisel ’82 worked in the American Armenian International College.


*“We got to watch players like Roger Hanawalt and Curtis Frick and we hung out in the student center with Len Harper. So, it was just sort of assumed we’d go to La Verne.”*

There are two Alumni of the Year among Davis’ proud lineage: half-sister Alice Davis Ott ’21 in 1956 and Mildred Davis in 1984.

The expansive Davis clan has included editors of the yearbook, writers for the *Campus Times*, debaters, and theater students both in front of and behind the curtains. But not many athletic superstars.

“We weren’t that encouraged in the sports areas,” said 87-year-old Virginia, although she did run the scoreboard during campus basketball games.

That could all change with the enrollment of Stark’s daughter, Madison, a nationally-ranked soccer star who is applying to University of La Verne’s law school for fall 2018.

That would make her the fourth generation of C. Ernest Davis’ legacy at the University of La Verne. And probably not the last. 



**THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE**  
announced the campaign at the 2018  
Scholarship Gala, which contributed  
to the goal by raising more than  
\$900,000 for student scholarships.

# Create the Future: University Launches Largest Ever Fundraising Campaign

By Melissa Pinion

**C**heers, dance music, and a cascade of green and orange balloons marked the official unveiling of a \$125 million comprehensive fundraising campaign for the University of La Verne in late March.

Create the Future: The Campaign for the University of La Verne will support student scholarships, new facilities, faculty teaching, and other key initiatives that will enable the university to elevate minds and inspire greatness for decades to come.

"This is a historic moment for the University of La Verne," President Devorah Lieberman said. "Create the Future: The Campaign for the University of La Verne stands as the largest ever launched in our 126 years, and I am proud that we have already surpassed 65 percent of our goal. The tremendous generosity shown by the Leopard community is a testament to contributions the university makes to the lives of students and the community as a whole."

Lieberman announced the campaign inside the Sheraton Fairplex Hotel and Conference Center in Pomona during the 2018 Scholarship Gala. More than 650 guests, including elected officials, business leaders, alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends gathered for the event.

The university has received more than \$83 million in gifts and pledges toward the \$125 million goal.

Those gifts and pledges, totaling more than 24,000, have already made a meaningful impact: they have established 30 scholarship funds, supported four new research centers, and funded endowments for three faculty chairs.

They include an unprecedented \$10 million gift from Anthony "Tony" LaFetra to name the LaFetra College of Education, as well as a generous donation from Art and Sarah Ludwick '94 to support the construction of the new Ludwick Center for Spirituality, Cultural Understanding, and Community Engagement.

"This campaign will have a lasting impact on the lives of students," Board of Trustees President Luis Faura said. "And that impact extends globally, as our more than 80,000 alumni are out in the world serving others and solving issues on local, national, and international levels."

Priorities for Create the Future include student scholarships, attracting and retaining distinct faculty, educating students to become compassionate citizens, providing quality learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom, and expanding modern facilities, technology, and learning methods.

The university raised \$914,000 for student scholarships during the gala, an amount that surpassed all previous gala events.

"The heart of this community is our students," Lieberman said. "They are the reason we are all here tonight. They are the reason our faculty members choose to teach at the University La Verne, why our staff members choose to provide support services, and why all of you choose to be a part of the University of La Verne."

**Create the Future for a new generation of University of  
La Verne students at [createthefuture.laverne.edu](https://createthefuture.laverne.edu)**







# Year-end Showcases Spotlight Student Works

**STUDENTS CELEBRATED** their writing, music, and artistic achievements in three May events showcasing creativity.

The Harris Art Gallery opened “Dancing in the Milky Way,” an exhibition of works by advanced art students, on May 8. The final exhibition of the academic year featured paintings, drawings, sculptures, and more by studio art students interpreting the joyful, celestial theme. Art history students assisted faculty with the curating and design of the exhibition, which remained on display at the gallery through May 17.

“Many professional artists have exhibited on our campus. To have students exhibiting in that same space is a pretty exciting professional experience,” said Dion Johnson, director of University Art Galleries.

On May 6, the university hosted the “Best of La Verne Music Department” concert at the Ann and Steve Morgan Auditorium. Graduating seniors were highlighted as students and faculty shared the stage in the season’s final Sundays at the Morgan performance.

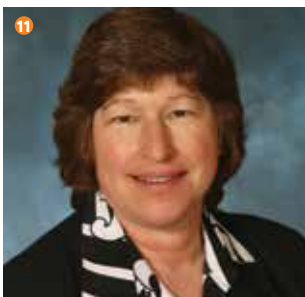
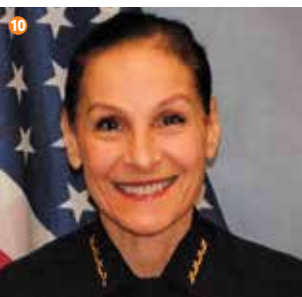
Student writers had their moment in the spotlight at the Creative Writing Showcase on May 23 in the Interfaith Chapel. The creative writing program invited students to read from their own fictional works and answer questions about their writing process and inspirations.

“The student panel is my favorite part because they have to articulate how and why they are doing what they are doing. It gives them more ownership and puts them in a position of expert and author rather than student,” said Creative Writing Professor and Program Director Sean Bernard.



WHAT'S NEW ALUMNI NOTES

What's new with you?  
Tell us at [voice.laverne.edu](http://voice.laverne.edu)



**Todd A. DeMitchell '69, '73** recently celebrated numerous professional honors. His endowed professorship at the University of New Hampshire was extended, he published numerous articles in publications such as the Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal and Education Law Reporter. And the New Hampshire Institute for Civic Education elected DeMitchell to its board of trustees.

**1 Marshall Miranda '74** retired from teaching after 42 years. He taught for the Sweetwater Union High School District for 12 years and Poulosbo Middle School in Washington for 30. He taught social studies, English, elective classes, and was also a basketball coach and advisor for student groups.

**2 Brittany Martinez '13** has been appointed deputy director of Hispanic media for the Republican National Committee. She previously served as press secretary and legislative correspondent for the U.S. House of Representatives.

**Sarah Adams Christian '90** retired as Riverside County Superior Court judge in California. She was first elected to the bench in 2004.

**3 Margo Cash '12** married University of La Verne Assistant Professor and Archivist **Ben Jenkins '11** in October. The couple met at the university and worked together at the Writing Center and in the honors program.

**4 Henry Noble '04** appeared in the major motion picture "The Competition" with Chris Klein and Thora Birch. The film released in January 2018.

**5 Bryan Bradshaw '15** became executive director at Lantern Health Group in October.

**Gerald Moore '91** received a promotion from the Federal Aviation Administration to director of personnel security.

**Matt Hill '08**, an adjunct professor in the theatre department, directed the feature film "Burning at Both Ends," starring Cary Elwes, Judd Hirsch, and Jason Patric. The film is set to be released this year.

**6 Lori Gagliardi '95, '07** was elected as secretary-treasurer for the Dental Auxiliary Learning and Education (DALE) Foundation board of trustees.

**7 Andre De La Cruz '02** was appointed judge by California Gov. Jerry Brown for Orange County Superior Court in November. He previously worked for the international law firm Troutman Sanders LLP and was a senior associate at Sheppard, Mullin, Richter, and Hampton LLP.

The Fontana Unified School District appointed **Antonio Viramontes '02** as principal of Sequoia Middle School. Viramontes previously served as assistant principal for Oleander Elementary School and principal of Oak Park Elementary School.

**8 Kevin Brouard '12** lives in Colorado Springs where he trains twice a day for the 2020 Paralympic Games. He is a blind athlete who is a member of the USA Paralympic National Team and is aiming to compete in judo.

**Eric Esquivel '03** was named director of operations for BigRentz, an online construction equipment rental company. He previously served as senior manager of customer service for Verizon Wireless.

The Parlier Unified District appointed **Jaime Robles '99** as superintendent. He previously served as executive director of human resources for the Lindsay Unified School District in Central California.

**9 Rialto, Calif.** hired **Mark Kling '99, '03** in October to develop a transition plan to help the city move from an interim to a permanent police chief. The city's previous police chief retired in December. Kling also previously served as chief.

**10 Torrance, Calif.** hired **Eve Irvine '00** as chief of the Torrance Police Department. She is the first woman to lead the department. She previously served as police chief in Manhattan Beach.

**Steven Bloomberg '98** was hired as president of Southeast Arkansas College. He previously served as vice president at Oklahoma City Community College.

The Vista Unified School District hired **Linda Kimble '86, '94, '99** as superintendent. She began her new role in January after leaving the Anaheim Elementary School District, where she had served as superintendent.

**Ray Shams '01, '02** joined the San Francisco Federal Credit Union as chief lending officer. He previously worked as chief operating officer at Xceed Financial and chief credit officer at Financial Partners.

**11 Kathy Thomas '93** was named editor of the Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology. She has more than 40 years' experience in nuclear medicine technology.

**Kimberly White '15** was accepted into the athletic training doctoral program at Indiana State University and awarded a graduate assistant position. She is set to begin the doctoral program in July.

In Memoriam

**Louis Gilbert Lopez '83**, a retired legislative analyst for the Riverside County Economic Development Agency, died Nov. 6, 2017 in Riverside, Calif. Gilbert, who had multiple sclerosis, served as a patient advocate with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

**Karen Lyn Burgess '97** died in the spring of 2017 in Fort Worth, Texas. She served as an executive and development officer at Freedom in Christ Ministries, the International School of Theology, and at Biola University.

**Mae Bridgeforth Melendez Hodge '97** died in November 2017. Hodge was a retired teacher who dedicated her life to community service and philanthropy. She was 99.



# Pitch Perfect

Members of the softball team step up to the plate annually to coach members of the Pomona Valley Wildcats Special Olympics teams.

Softball is a spring sport, but for the University of La Verne Leopards softball team, the season started early in the fall with a visit from some local Olympians.

The defending Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Champion softball team hosted the Pomona Valley Wildcats Special Olympics teams for a September clinic.

“We love working with the Special Olympics,” softball Head Coach Julie Smith said. “It gives our players an opportunity to teach and give back to a highly-respected organization.”

The Leopards began working with the Wildcats in 2012 with the help of La Verne’s Student Advisory Athletic Committee, and have since hosted them annually.

The Wildcats, whose players range in age from 12 to 46, brought two teams to the clinic. The Leopards worked with them individually and in small groups on hitting drills, defensive drills, and base running. Athletes spent other parts of the day working on fundamentals of situational play to help prepare the Wildcats for upcoming tournaments.

This was the second time junior outfielder and business administration major Carly Condon helped with the clinic.

“La Verne is all about community and being able to help a local Special Olympics team really adds to the

La Verne experience,” Condon said. “It helps expand my perspective and shows softball and sports in general can bring enjoyment to people.”

Along with the clinic, the Wildcats also used the University of La Verne’s Campus West field in the fall for practice.

“Our relationship with La Verne has been extremely beneficial for our Special Olympic athletes and has really helped us grow,” Wildcats Head Coach Kim Ennis McCrory said. “The La Verne softball team gives our athletes personal attention and teaches them skills that they can later work on independently. It helps keep our athletes motivated, makes them feel special, and provides them with the tools they need to succeed while practicing in a safe and supportive environment.”

The Leopards were nominated for the National Collegiate Athletic Association Special Olympics Spotlight of the Month last October for their work with the Wildcats.

“Some of our players had never worked with the Special Olympics before, so this experience was very rewarding and humbling for them,” Smith said. “Everyone walked away with a huge smile.”

Smith hopes to expand the relationship and host a regional tournament for the Wildcats next fall.





# HEART OF LA VERNE UNIQUELY LA VERNE

**LEGEND OF THE SQUIRREL** Tales of the Hanawalt House squirrel have abounded at the University of La Verne for years. Is he hungry? Is he just plain nuts? The answers could remain stashed away forever.

Share your stories and photos on Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag **#HanawaltSquirrel**



Photo by Jasmin Miranda '15 @jazzomirdan



# HEART OF LA VERNE THROWBACK

Fill in the blank for a chance to win La Verne swag. Submit your answer to **voice@laverne.edu**.

## Way-Back-When Trivia

The \_\_\_\_\_ Festival parade traveled through downtown La Verne during spring in the mid-20th century.





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