



# SYNERGY



## THREE LACCD COLLEGES AWARDED NATIONAL ACHIEVING THE DREAM LEADER COLLEGE STATUS

BY STEVE SPRINGER

Three Los Angeles Community College District schools – *East Los Angeles College*, *Los Angeles Harbor College*, and *Los Angeles Pierce College* – are among the 16 community colleges selected from across the country to be designated the 2014 Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges.

“This is a very proud day at LACCD,” said Board of Trustees President Scott Svonkin. “Achieving the dream is not just something we talk about. It is something we do every single day in every single classroom.”

“Student success is our district’s highest priority,” said Dr. Francisco Rodriguez, LACCD chancellor, “and this national recognition of our colleges reaffirms the transformational work that our colleges are engaged in to improve student outcomes.”

This national honor is bestowed on community colleges that commit to improving student success and closing

achievement gaps. These colleges have shown how data can inform policy and practice to help community college students achieve their goals, resulting in improved skills and better opportunities for employment.

The LACCD colleges are the only California schools awarded this ATD status. While it was achieved through the hard work of their students, credit should also go to the faculty of these schools, who embraced the program, designed the curriculum, set the goals and empowered their students in their quest for success.

The three LACCD institutions were specifically singled out because:

- East Los Angeles College increased developmental-education English success rates for all first-time-in-college students from 21.8% in 2007 to 34.1% in 2010. The developmental-education English success rates for African American students increased by 20 percentage points and for Pell recipients by nine percentage points. Said ELAC President Marvin Martinez: “It is indeed an honor for East Los Angeles College to be selected as a Leader College by ATD. This type of recognition certainly makes ELAC a national leader in its ability to serve students of color in our region. Our faculty and staff also deserve this honor for their hard work in developing programs that help students of color succeed in the classroom on a pathway to college and career success.”
- Los Angeles Harbor College increased fall-to-spring persistence rates for all students in the ATD cohort from 64.6% in 2009-10 to 69.6% in 2012-13. The fall-to-spring persistence rates for Hispanic students increased by eight percentage points.

*Continued on the next page* ▶



The participants at an LACCD Achieving the Dream press conference were (left to right) **Dr. Otto Lee**, Harbor College president; **Scott Svonkin**, LACCD Board of Trustees president; Emily McNabb, Harbor College student; **Kit Lee**, ELAC student; **Erick Valadez**, Pierce College student; **Dr. Francisco Rodriguez**, LACCD chancellor; **Marvin Martinez**, ELAC president; and **Dr. Kathleen F. Burke**, Pierce president.

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## ACHIEVING THE DREAM (CONTINUED)

Said Harbor College President Dr. Otto Lee: “Los Angeles Harbor College is extremely proud of our successful partnership with Achieving the Dream, resulting in more students attempting and completing more units, staying enrolled from one semester to the next, and completing English and math at a higher rate through innovative interventions such as our First Year Experience program. Building on that success, we’ve expanded that program to include all new incoming students through the creation of the Harbor Advantage. As an Achieving the Dream Leader College, we look forward to sharing our successful and sustainable interventions with community colleges throughout the state and nationally.”

- Los Angeles Pierce College increased the ratio of all credit hours successfully completed from 66.3% in 2009-10 to 69.5% in 2012-13.

Said Los Angeles Pierce College President Dr. Kathleen Burke: “This recognition is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our faculty, staff, and administrators to achieve our collective goals of engaging the completion agenda, demonstrating accountability, cultivating

partnerships, and ensuring student success. Our teams have worked hard and we have integrated our plans to focus on the college vision of seeing more CAPS (Completion, Accountability, Partnerships, Student Success) at commencement. To be recognized as a Leader College validates our student-centered approach and affirms our commitment to providing quality educational programs. Most importantly, this recognition highlights the hard work of our students. It is their commitment to learning and progressing that allows Los Angeles Pierce College to be a Leader College.”

This year’s honored community colleges come from 10 different states.

“These 16 institutions have demonstrated that better student outcomes are possible when institutions focus on policies and practices that help students learn at high levels and overcome challenges life throws at them,” said Carol Lincoln, Achieving the Dream Senior Vice President. “These colleges are working hard to move the needle for whole cohorts of students, and deserve recognition for their relentless efforts and promising achievements.” ■

## BOARD PRESIDENT’S FORUM



*To all those connected to the Los Angeles Community College District,*

As we approach the holiday season, I am happy to share some great news. My fellow trustees and I are proud to announce that Standard & Poor’s ratings services have upgraded LACCD’s rating from “AA” to “AA+.”

This means lower borrowing costs, saving taxpayer’s money. We are pleased by S&P’s confidence and the higher rating, which results from strong management of District finances by both our board and our District leadership. This rating is also an affirmation of our relentless commitment to best practices, whether it be in the classroom, in our financial management or on the construction sites.

We are also pleased to share that the accounting firm of KMPG LLP has released its annual independent audit with no major findings and states that the District’s financial statements fairly reflect our financial position and the District is following generally accepted accounting principles.

It’s often said that, if you manage well in the hard times, the good times will be even better, and we are proud that

the prudent and sometimes tough decisions we’ve made as trustees are now bearing fruit, as reflected in our strong financial ratings and audits.

I also wish to use this opportunity to thank fellow trustee Miguel Santiago, a two-time president of our board, for his service and wish him a fond farewell as he departs the board and begins his new role as a State Assemblymember. Trustee Santiago first joined the Board as an appointee to fill a vacant seat in 2008 and subsequently went on to be elected to two additional terms. He effectively led us through The Great Recession, his influence evident in so many areas. Along with the board, he worked for the passage of Measure J, a \$3.5 billion bond measure to help fund the District’s building program. I am honored to have served with Trustee Santiago and am inspired by the example he set.

With a recovering economy, the generous support of our voters who supported our facilities bonds and the passage of Prop 30, our goal has been to restore classes and focus on student success as the board’s highest priority. On behalf of the board, my thanks to all the hard-working faculty, staff, and administrators of the District. Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and an exciting new year ahead.

— **Scott J. Svonkin**,  
President of the LACCD Board of Trustees

# EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE ENGINEERING STUDENTS WIN SECOND PLACE AT INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

BY DR. JOHN C. RUDE

Christopher Aguayo and Alex Zaragoza represented East Los Angeles College last month in Montreal at the International Congress and Exposition of American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Accompanied by ELAC Associate Professor Kamyar Khashayar, the two young men were on a mission. They wanted to prove that their 3-D design of a rocket launcher could compete in the global gathering of student engineers.

ELAC was the only two-year college invited to go up against powerhouse schools like SUNY-Buffalo, New Jersey's Stevens Institute of Technology and Purdue University along with several world-class universities from India and Canada.

The ELAC team qualified after preparing a 3-D printable model, video presentation, a business plan and a strictly-formatted report, as well as computer-aided design and STF computer files that described the rocket launcher.

"To prepare, we made four CAD designs, analyzed them for fluids and stress... and for safety," Zaragoza said.

The team demonstrated their rocket to elementary and middle schools in the area, and incorporated feedback from the young students before they completed their final 3-D print of the launcher.

There are few more cutting-edge technologies than additive 3-D manufacturing design. Given moral support and guidance by engineering professors Khashayar and Brian Vasquez, the two students had earlier competed in several other engineering design contests, including the Human Powered Vehicle Challenge. Motivation was not an issue.

"At the age of six I would take apart cars and modify them to increase their speed," Zaragoza said.

Student competition at the International Congress was fierce. Future engineers presented their designs, ranging from duck calls and ketchup bottles to a reusable space orbiter. Judges came from the 3-D printing industry, and observers came from as far away as Russia and several European countries.

Aguayo and Zaragoza held their own against 23 competitors.



ELAC Associate Professor **Kamyar Khashayar** is flanked by students **Alex Zaragoza** (left) and **Christopher Aguayo** at the international engineering event in Montreal.

"Alex and Chris are disciplined, organized and motivated," Khashayar said.

Sheridan College and University of Toronto won first place in the Best Re-Engineering Collaboration competition. ELAC finished second.

"It was an exciting opportunity to showcase our work, and represent ELAC on an international stage," Aguayo said. "We look forward to pursuing our passion for STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills... a passion that Professor Khashayar and the engineering department instilled in us."

"Our students' local and international accomplishments show the college's amazing commitment to diverse STEM education," said Paul De La Cerda, dean of economic and workforce development at ELAC. "This success demonstrates that we have established strong pillars in our college's engineering and technologies programs." ■

# BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROPOSED FOR WLAC DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

BY MICHELLE LONG-COFFEE

*California State Senate Bill 850* authorizes the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to establish a statewide baccalaureate degree pilot program at no more than 15 community colleges.

Each district is allowed to submit only one proposal to the state chancellor's office for consideration. Los Angeles Community College District Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez, after consulting with the presidents of the nine LACCD schools and the LACCD Academic Senate,

ranked in the top ten nationally on board examination scores. The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredits the program, and students obtain licensure through the Dental Hygiene Committee of California (DHCC) upon successfully completing the program and passing state and national exams. All graduates obtain licensure.

Senate Bill 850 would provide community college students access to a higher degree.

Currently, a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene is not offered at California's state colleges and universities. This degree is only available at private institutions where the cost can range from \$80,000.00 to \$120,000.00 versus the significantly lower cost of delivering an equivalent program in a community college setting.

"We are very proud that our proposal was selected," said Dr. Nabil Abu-Ghazaleh, West president. "A Bachelor's degree in Dental Hygiene will provide graduates employment opportunities in alternative settings beyond private dental practice such as research, administration, education, public health, community-based health clinics, and working with special needs populations."

Labor market information provided by the state's Employment Development Department projects the following growth in employment opportunities in the dental hygiene profession: 33% nationally, 23% in California and 19% in Los Angeles County. O-Net Online predicts a bright outlook for dental hygiene with a 22% or more increase in employment opportunities.

In the future, with new and evolving health care initiatives, the role of the dental hygienist is expected to expand, requiring a degree beyond the baccalaureate. As one of the interdisciplinary team members in the healthcare delivery model, graduates of the West bachelor's program would have a direct pathway to the master's degree program at the University of California, San Francisco. ■



WLAC dental hygiene students show their certificates for participating in a California Dental Hygienists Association competitive event.

selected the proposal from the West Los Angeles College Dental Hygiene program. If approved, the college will be able to offer a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene.

West's associate degree program in Dental Hygiene has been in existence since 1972. It has traditionally had 100% graduation and employment rates, and historically has been

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