

Honors Transfer Program

Flasher



Teacher Profile: Luciana Castro

By Nick Donofrio



Luciana Castro thinks of her life as a journey. Her journey to Skyline has been caused by her will to keep on going and keep on teaching, and as a teacher since the age of 17, she has come a long way.

Throughout her life she has learned many languages. She can confidently speak: Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, French, German, and, of course, English, bringing the total up to six languages. This obviously has led her to become the main teacher in Skyline's foreign language department.

Castro has been teaching since the beginning of the Honors Transfer Program and currently instructs three split-section honors courses, Elementary Spanish, Advanced Elementary Spanish, and Intermediate Spanish. This means that in

each of those classes honors students are in the same class as non honors students.

Castro believes that this is quite beneficial to the non honors students because "they feel they can certainly do the work that is required" and so move up to the honors level.

Castro doesn't teach her sections differently but requires instead a different type

of work.

"It has a little more to do with research and the requirements of a research paper" Castro said.

As for honors students themselves Castro said "Believe me, it has always been delightful." She has never had problems with honors students.

The only way Castro said the students could improve would be to "keep on going with this mission of learning to lead the way to their careers." Honors students need "the hunger for more, more content and more challenges."

Castro feels that the Honors Transfer Program gives students a chance to "find themselves academically" because before "some of them used to dislike school", but

after they "[feel] much better about the learning process [and] they get more interested in school. I really like it and I think it's a boost" Castro said.

As an example of this, Castro related the story of a troubled semester a couple of semesters ago -- except for her honors class. In the class "I had a group of students who behaved like a family. It was delightful to be with them." Every class with them felt like a cultural exchange to Castro due to their synchronicity. "They come and visit me. The great chemistry they had [led] them to keep in touch with their honors instructor."

Because of that experience, Castro believes "more teachers should teach the honors classes. The instructors deserve it and should use it to challenge themselves." She also thinks that more teachers and people should be exposed to it, and that the program should sponsor more speakers and reach out to more people.

"[Advanced Intermediate Spanish] would be a perfect part of the honors program."

When asked if this is the end of her journey, Castro quickly replied no. In the future she hopes to do some more translating or interpreting.

"I intend to keep on teaching in other ways" Castro said. "To change, to do it differently."

The Graduates

Note: Some universities haven't reported acceptances yet. We've listed information reported to us as of 5/12/08)

Angelica Cardenas
Anthropology
UCLA, UCSD, UCD, SJSU

Ryan Chan
Economics
UCLA, UCSD, UCI, UCB

Richard Chiang
Business
Haas School of Business - UCB

David Fang
Business Economics
UCLA, UCI, UCD
Kevin Fong
Psychology
UCLA

Jessica Gonzalez
Psychology
UCLA, UCD, UCSB, SFSU SJSU

Jesus Hills
Guilford College, North Carolina

Christian Ignacio
Economics/Philosophy

Majdi Janbay
Computer Science/English

Jonathan Madison
Political Science
Morehouse, Howard Univ.

Froilan Malit Jr.
Political Science
Cornell

Stephanie Nale
Anthropology
SJSU, SFSU, Humboldt

Elizabeth Parr
Kinesiology
UCDE, UCSC, SFSU

Patrice Phung
UCD

Stephen Schaaf
Political Science
UCLA

Alexander Shively

Jason Shmelnik
Business Economics
UCI

Brenda Smith
Urban Studies
Columbia

Marcia Soares
English
UCS, UCSC

Cornelia Spearing
Anthropology
SFSU, UCSC, UCB

Tatyana Sundeyeva
English
UCSC, UCB

Jonathan Tolentino

Marie Isabelle Vives
Political Science
UCB, UCLA

Bill Wu
Business Economics
UCD, UCI, UCLA

Tony Yu
Business Economics
UCS, UCI, UCLA

Skyline Rocks Stanford

By Ashley Good

From robots to erotic art, Skyline honors students rocked Stanford with their academic diversity. Presented by the Bay Honors Consortium, the first annual Community College Research Symposium was held Friday, April 18th. From as far south as San Diego and north to Eureka, over 250 inquisitive minds from 10 community colleges in California met to share their knowledge, inspire each other and learn through intellectual exchange.

When working on a research assignment the goal is usually the grade. However, have you ever found yourself passionately interested and excited about your topic so that simply turning in a finished paper is not satisfying enough? When the opportunity arose to share original research at Stanford University, how could a fervent student say, "No"? While it's true your typical honors student may fret about missing an entire day of classes, this turned out to be a really good reason to miss lectures and

schedule make up tests. Evidently, I was one of the thirteen Skyline honors students whose projects were chosen by the Symposium Proposal Committee to present at Stanford.

The day began with an

inspirational keynote speaker who had transferred to Stanford from a community college. Shortly after this gathering the symposium began. With three sessions of presentations,

attendees were given a tantalizing selection of enticing titles to choose from, including Skyline's presentations: "Wiley Coyote Meets the Leprechaun," "Switzerland: From Choc-

olates to Blood Money" and even "Divine Contortions and Giant Penises." Certainly, Skyline honors students ensured there was a little something for everyone. After an already stimulating afternoon, participants were treated to a roaring percussion performance by Stanford Taiko. The day ended with a very informative admission workshop to help transfer students "Apply and Thrive in Highly Selective Universities," as well as tours of the campus, or "the farm," as it is endearingly nicknamed.

The Honors Symposium at Stanford was a rare occasion that allowed community college students to share their enthusiasm and be rewarded for their hard work. As a presenter and attendee, the one thing I really took from this experience was that choosing fascinating topics that keep you interested adds a special quality to your research. So the next time you "have" to write about something, find a topic that intrigues you. Who knows, next year's symposium could be your outlet when you get all excited about sharing your findings. The event was truly a celebration of student scholarship.



Student Profile: Connie Spearing

By Katharine Harer

Connie Spearing took her first community college class 49 years ago. This spring she graduates from Skyline with her A.A. degree, two scholarships from the college and – *this just in* – an acceptance to UC Berkeley's College of Letters and Science complete with a \$12,000 scholarship.



What was Connie doing between 1959 and 2008? Surely it didn't take her 49 years to finish her A.A. degree! After a year at Phoenix College, she left school and started working in restaurants, which she continued to do for twenty years.

"I didn't know where I was going and I didn't have much guidance," she told me. After twenty years of waiting tables – part of the time at *Zim's*, the venerable hamburger place many San Franciscans still remember, she wanted out. "For the first five years it was fun talking to people. After awhile, I really wanted to get out of restaurant work."

Meanwhile, Connie had gotten married and was busy raising children. "Lots. Lots and lots of children," she said with a smirk. Her husband came with four kids from his previous marriage, and he and Connie made three together, so while she worked a physically demanding job as a waitress, she also reared seven children.

Somewhere around 40, Connie's marriage began to fall apart. She went to City College of San Francisco to consult a career counselor, took some tests and was pointed in the direction of real estate. "It was

the early 80's and everyone was getting into real estate. I thought I should pick up office skills and business 'things', and while I was there, see about finishing my A.A. They told me I had to take English 100 all over again, and I enjoyed that a lot. I loved English and History."

For one reason or another, Connie didn't go into real estate. Her husband had worked in pest control and she found herself with a job in a pest control office, and from there went on to get her Pest Control License. She sprayed for insects and set and emptied rodent traps.

"I enjoyed it, even the vermin, but the chemicals got to me. Once I opened a bait trap and found a live rattlesnake!"

Connie's husband was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, and she thought the exposure to toxic chemicals might have played a role.

She got out of the job -- and the marriage. "I ended up on my own again after twenty years. The kids were gone – the youngest had just turned 18. I got a room; I had a job. I was excited and happy when I made the decision to do it. I walked a lot. I feel like I walked myself out of that marriage. I walked two miles to work everyday, and I thought about my marriage. It was like a meditation. I knew I could live simply on my own."

Connie left pest control and got a job at the Gift Center in San Francisco where she worked for 18 years as a showroom manager. "It was such a beautiful world! I worked with designers and clients. It was very expanding and absorbing."

During this time, the 90's, Connie started taking classes again at CCSF. She took Russian and Chinese with a friend who was a linguist. She also took American History and loved it.

"I was not very focused, just having a good time. I dropped out of school again and moved in with

my daughter and son-in-law when my position at the Gift Center was eliminated. But I couldn't find a job. I didn't have a college degree or any educational background. I felt disadvantaged, an older woman looking for a job with no degree. I felt I had to do something about that."

Skyline was the closest campus to South San Francisco where Connie was living and she noticed that there was a Women in Transition program when she read through the class schedule. She called Lori Sliction, WIT Coordinator, and signed up for the WIT seminar. "It was the best thing," she said with a big smile

From WIT to Honors is a natural step and Connie took it and became a member of the Honors Transfer Program last year. Her first honors class was *Intercultural Communications*, a speech class taught by Phyllis Taylor. She especially enjoyed the project where she was asked to interview someone from a different culture, and she spent time with her Palestinian neighbor. "It was a really good experience. It was original research."

I asked Connie about some of her standout experiences at Skyline. "I adored Dr. Lambert's Geology class. On one field trip we went to San Francisco and walked through downtown looking for evidence from the 1906 quake. I loved the Women on Writing Conference. I worked as a WOW volunteer two years in a row. That was a great thing!"

"Presenting at the honors symposium at Stanford this year was a lot of work but a really outstanding experience. It was good to be there with all those interesting people with their interesting projects. And it helped with my computer skills. It stimulates our own projects and ideas."

The scholarships from Skyline and the acceptance to Berkeley were serious props for Connie. "It was a validation of someone valuing my work. I've been somewhat insecure about being a that-much-older student."

I saw Connie yesterday in the cafeteria with a mound of tiny white and lavender squares, each with a number hand-written on it, in front of her on the table. What was she doing? A statistics project, she answered. She pointed around the room, and I saw that she had carefully taped numbers to the backs of chairs. I didn't have time to get all the details, but I noticed how excited she was. She was waiting for more students to arrive who would sit at the numbered chairs and then she would carry out random questioning. About what? You'll have to ask Connie!

Connie is a great example of *it's never too late to recreate your life*. Skyline College came along at just the right moment, and she grabbed it.

"I really dug in here. I was thrilled to go to school full-time." When I asked her how she felt to be leaving Skyline, she confided: "I'm kind of sad to leave. It's been a good home."

PHIL FLASHER


Wants Your Vote ★

Look out, Jackie Speier, because Skyline College alum Phil Flasher wants to be your next member of Congress.

Flasher, a human anatomy major, completed his honors program requirements last semester and now has his eyes set on Washington. "I'm part thinker and part doer" Flasher remarks. When asked about his platform, Flasher explained, "It's mostly aluminum and makes me look important when I give speeches."

Wearing only his trademark fedora, Flasher addressed his cheering supporters. "Flashing is a way of life. It's my way of life, and I aim to keep it. We live in a very materialistic society, but only one material matters to me – hairy, sweaty human flesh."

A. Shively



Counselor Corner

TRANSFER ADMISSION GUARANTEE

Will you complete 30 transferable units by the end of Summer 2008? Are you planning on transferring to a university in Fall 2009? You may qualify for a Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)! Skyline College offers guaranteed transfer to eleven universities, including most UC's. Requirements vary depending on the university, but the majority of schools require that you submit a TAG agreement through the Transfer Center in the month of September in order to qualify. If you are interested in a TAG, you will need to set up a TAG appointment through the Transfer Center in the beginning of September. For more information, pick up a TAG brochure from the Transfer Center or check out the Transfer Center website at: <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/sts/transferCenter/service.html>

WRITING YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

If you are applying to a UC or private university, you will be required to write a personal statement as part of your application. Summer is a great time to get started on your statement, since it usually takes many drafts before you have a useful and meaningful statement. For tips on writing the statement for the UC's, check out these links:

- http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/undergrad_adm/apply/how_apply/personal_statement.html
- <http://www.californiacolleges.edu/admissions/university-of-california-uc/personal-statement.asp>

CRER 650, Honors Seminar, covers how to write the personal statement as well as how to approach the application and transfer process. This course is offered in the Fall on Fridays, September 5 through October 24, at 12:10-1pm. Sign up through WebSmart today! (CRN# 89310)

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Anyone looking to add an extra unit to their course load is more than welcome to join the HTP Flasher newsletter staff. Contact Katharine Harer at: (650) 738-4412 or email her at harer@smccd.edu

