Valley Performing Arts Center: Imagination Becomes Reality

University, Community Leaders Take Part in Historic Groundbreaking at CSUN

Imagination became reality on Wednesday, April 30, as university and community leaders broke ground on the new Valley Performing Arts Center at California State University, Northridge.

The groundbreaking celebration took place at the site of the new center at the southern end of campus on Nordhoff Street near Etiwanda Avenue.

Joining the festivities was director/actor Gary Marshall, who served as the evening’s master of ceremonies, as well as such San Fernando Valley dignitaries as civic activist David Fleming and Los Angeles City Council members Wendy Greuel and Tony Cardenas.

“For the nearly two million people who live in the San Fernando Valley, performing arts productions—including music, dance and Broadway-caliber productions featuring prominent national and international artists—will soon be available just minutes away,” said President Jolene Koester. “The groundbreaking on April 30 was the first step.

“The first curtain will rise in just two years and provide to the community a new level of entertainment and cultural programming that previously was difficult for students and residents to enjoy locally,” said the president. “Best of all, our outstanding students and faculty will benefit from the stages, lecture halls, rehearsal areas and special stagecraft and costume labs that will be located in what will be the largest venue of its kind in the Valley.”

Work already has begun on the foundation of the 1,700-seat, $125 million performing arts center. Construction is expected to be completed by 2010.

Designed by Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc. (HGA), the new center will serve as a cultural and economic landmark for the San Fernando Valley. It will include sophisticated features such as the ability to acoustically tune its main performance hall to fit particular presentations, whether they are music, dance, theater, films or speakers.

The performance hall will also be large enough to accommodate full-scale Broadway productions and operas, opening the Valley to such shows for the first time.

Adding to the center’s cultural offerings is a formal agreement the university has with the Music Center Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County to explore joint programming and other collaborations at the new facility.

The Music Center, one of the three largest performing arts centers in the nation, draws about 1.3 million people annually to performances at its four major downtown venues.

Upon its opening, the Valley Performing Arts Center will be the largest arts venue in the area. It also will serve as a major arts education center for local students and the community.

(More on groundbreaking, pages 4–5)
Michael Spagna to Lead Eisner College of Education

Executive Director of Center for Teaching and Learning to Take Over in Summer 2008

Michael Spagna, the first Eisner chair and executive director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, has accepted the position of dean of the Michael D. Eisner College of Education.

A professor of special education and the current faculty president of his college, Spagna will assume his new duties in August.

“Cal State Northridge is fortunate to have within its education college a powerhouse of talent and leadership,” said President Jolene Koester. “Michael is one of the leading lights of America’s educational spectrum. His stewardship will enhance the influence of a great college already recognized as one of the best in the nation in the field of education.”

In making the announcement, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Harry Hellenbrand invited the campus to join in congratulating the newly appointed Spagna, whom he praised as a leader well equipped to succeed the “visionary” Philip Rusche, who will step down as dean this summer and assume directorship of the college’s Doctoral Program in Education Leadership.

Spagna is keen to guide the college as it launches the new doctoral program. “For the first time,” he said, “we’ll be able to establish and support a doctoral program that fulfills the university mission of regionally focused, nationally recognized by preparing future educational leaders that the community so desperately needs.”

“We are developing a doctoral culture, setting a standard for research and excellence not just within the college but also by working hand-in-hand with faculty partners across the university,” said Spagna. “By fostering research-based best practices, and studying the impact of these practices on student learning, our faculty embrace… the values of a learning-centered university.”

Michael Spagna, incoming dean, Michael D. Eisner College of Education

Q & A with Chancellor Charles B. Reed: State Budget Crisis

Student Access, California’s Workforce to be Affected by Proposed Cuts

Presented here are excerpts from California State University Chancellor Charles B. Reed’s recent remarks on the current state budget crisis and its implications for the CSU system. The Q & A is taken from a transcript made available by the Office of the Chancellor.

Q. A potential $386 million cut to the CSU budget is bigger than the budget of many university campuses. How would this cut impact students?

A. We have closed our admission to the California State Universities effective March 1, so we know that we will be turning away more than 10,000 students that normally would be eligible to come to the California State Universities. We can’t offer the number of classes and sections [needed] and at the same time take over $300 million cut to our budget...

Q. What is the CSU doing to inform current students about the impact of budget cuts?

A. We now have formed a coalition between all of our labor unions—the faculty, the staff, the trades, our presidents, our trustees, the Chancellor’s Office to work together. We’ve held budget summits on all 23 of our campuses so that everybody is informed of the consequences of the cuts and also the problems with raising fees...

Q. Is it accurate to say that even if the students receive another fee increase this year, it still won’t be enough to cover the deficit of the proposed budget cut?

A. That’s right. If we increase our fees by approximately 10 percent, we will still be taking about a $300 million budget cut.

Q. It seems to follow then that employee salaries will be impacted. What are your thoughts on that?

A. Administrators in the California State Universities are 37 percent behind their market. This past year, we made a large adjustment for our faculty who deserve to be paid more because we’re asking them to do more...

Q. In your opinion, what other revenue options could help the state budget?

A. I think you have to look at the California’s economy. There has been a shift, a sea change, in its economy from… goods that are being taxed to a service economy which doesn’t contribute very much back to the state from a revenue standpoint. I think that there is an opportunity to look at services—accounting services, legal services... and say “Do we need to collect some revenue from the new economy of California and have it benefit the rest of the state?”

Q. It does seem that we’re seeing budget crunches more frequently and something needs to change.

A. … (Referring to the CSU, the University of California and the community college systems) If these three great… systems don’t feed the economy with the workforce that it needs, with the research that it needs, with the technical skills that it needs, then California will no longer be competitive as it’s been in the past...

Q. Would underrepresented students— particularly African American, Hispanic and Native American students—be disproportionately affected by the budget cuts?

A. I think that in addition to access being affected for 10,000 students that it will be disproportionately hard on students of color and the underserved communities of California. And that’s particularly disappointing to me because the California State University has over the last two or three years geared up such an enormous outreach program. We’ve seen our African American admissions increase 12 percent, our Latino admissions 15 percent, our Asian admissions up to 12 percent. So that is really disappointing to have an effect on California.
Describing it as an “outstanding” department, a team of national assessors representing the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) has recommended accreditation for the Cal State Northridge Department of Public Safety. The recommendation is a highly prized recognition of law enforcement/public safety professional excellence.

“After four years of effort,” said CSU Chief of Police Anne Glavin, “our very hard work has paid off. We can now count ourselves among the elite five percent in the law enforcement world that are accredited agencies.”

Chief Glavin said she is proud of the contributions of the entire Public Safety Department to the quest for accreditation, during which the department had to comply with some 275 standards. Its efforts resulted in a rating “among the best in the country by national assessors,” said the chief.

Overseen by Captain Scott Vanscoy, the overall process of the department’s accreditation application has truly been a team effort of 15 individuals who assisted in policy and procedure development,” said Glavin.

The formal accreditation will be bestowed in June at the annual IACLEA conference, in Hartford, Conn.

Following interaction with 45 members of the Public Safety Department, the IACLEA team gave the department high marks for professionalism at every level, high morale, knowledge, evidence packaging and storage, crime reporting requirements, emergency preparedness plans, community relations outreach, selection and recruitment, records and parking, and helpfulness. In an occurrence rare for an accreditation process, said Chief Glavin, no adverse assessments were listed in the team’s findings.

The recommendation followed the team’s April visit to CSU, in which its members examined all aspects of the university’s Department of Public Safety policies and procedures, management, operation and support services. Experienced campus law enforcement professionals from agencies outside of California, the assessors reviewed written materials, interviewed individuals and inspected facilities where compliance could be witnessed. University personnel, students and the public also were invited to offer comments on the department’s performance.

Team members included Chief Thomas Younce of the North Carolina State University Police Department, team leader; Commander Kathleen Paleski (ret.) of the Northern Arizona University Police Department, and Lt. John Jacobs of the University of Richmond Police Department.

The accreditation is for three years, during which the department must submit annual reports attesting to continued compliance.

CSUN’s Tribute Under the Stars to Three Star Alumni

Cal State Northridge alumni, friends, administrators, faculty and staff gathered in Studio City on Saturday, April 26, to honor three celebrated alumni who have made their marks in their fields of endeavor: actress/author Teri Garr, ’64; nationally syndicated radio host Bill Handel, ’73, and Adriana Ocampo Uria, ’97, a Science Mission Program executive with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

More than 580 guests joined President Jolene Koester and CSUN Alumni Association President Larry Twersky, ’85, in paying tribute to the three on the occasion of the Distinguished Alumni Awards, the university’s annual salute to alumni achievers who have brought honor to their alma mater by earning distinction in their careers.

In a first for the gala event, the ceremony and dinner were held under the stars at the CBS Studio Center Back Lot, in balmy late April weather ideal for the festivities. Master of ceremonies for the evening was Bill Griffeth, ’80, co-anchor of CNBC’s “Power Lunch” and himself a Distinguished Alumnus of the university, and Northern Trust Bank was grand sponsor.
‘The First Curtain Will Rise in Just Two Years,’ Introduced

The Brass Ensemble’s celebratory fanfare launched the official groundbreaking for the Valley Performing Arts Center at California State University, Northridge, in the historic prelude to the center’s grand opening in 2010.

“It has been said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” President Jolene Koester told some 500 guests assembled at the future performing arts center site. “It has taken many of these steps to bring us to this point today.” The San Fernando Valley’s population of nearly two million would make it the equivalent of the nation’s fifth largest city, she said: “It would be the only major city without a performing arts center.”

The Valley’s need for a large-scale regional performing arts venue will be met by the center, which also will meet “a growing need to upgrade the music and theatre facilities of this university for our students,” said the president. A 250-seat lecture hall, stagecraft labs, rehearsal and classroom space for the arts and modern radio station facilities for CSUN’s broadcast journalism students are planned.
Imagine the Arts Campaign vice chairman David Fleming said the center also will help expand the economy, forge community partnerships and take its place as “an important destination for a sprawling community without a social hub.”

As master of ceremonies, director Gary Marshall (“The Princess Diaries,” “Pretty Woman”) matched with his wit the high spirits of the guests, who heard remarks by President Koester, Fleming, Vice President for University Advancement Vance T. Peterson, California State University Trustee Debra Farar, Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication Dean Robert Bucker, Los Angeles City Council members Wendy Greuel and Tony Cardenas, and Jamie Milne Rojk, lead arts center project architect in the firm of Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, Inc.

The sounds of CSUN’s Masanga Marimba Ensemble and its award-winning Jazz “A” Band added to the evening’s festive air, and the entire event was broadcast live by the university’s public radio station, KCSN 88.5 FM.
Sierra Hall 273A has come a long way. Once a humble lunchroom, it now houses the multimedia collections of the Pan African Studies (PAS) Reference Library. At the April 17 opening ceremony, the transformed space was introduced as a new resource for the entire Cal State Northridge campus.

Development of the reference library, said Pan African Studies Department chair Tom Spencer-Walters, was his “two-year labor of love, and time well spent.”

Spencer-Walters, who works closely with the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), had seen the need for ways to augment the instruction of developmental students who require more intensive help with writing and research techniques. He and his staff realized that this “visual generation” of students was arriving at the university without one of life’s good habits: the need to read deeply, “to delve, to absorb.”

A reference library where the students would have access to reading materials that would help them build self-esteem, learn more about their cultures and at the same time begin to prepare for the kinds of courses we offer in our department” seemed to Spencer-Walters an idea whose time had come.

The PAS chair received support for his idea from EOP director José Luis Vargas and from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, under Dean Stella Theodoulou. The two entities funded the $15,000 required to build out the space and acquire multi-media materials including books, DVDs, CDs, LPs and audiotapes.

Dean Theodoulou led the effort to turn the space into a “smart” library, said Spencer-Walters. In June, installation will begin on a drop-down screen and projector, and a computer to generate images for collective viewing. Faculty will be encouraged to conduct classes in the “smart” library, which also will be used for meetings or research sessions.

“Every CSUN student will have access to this library,” said Spencer-Walters, “including those who are not majoring in Pan African Studies. Knowledge is not something you can mortgage.”

It is important, he said, for students from all disciplines, cultures and ethnicities to visit the reference library “because this is an American experience. They can come in and learn about a component of American culture, which will help them become better Americans. We want this to be open to the whole university.”

Currently, the library is open to all campus students, faculty and staff during PAS tutoring hours, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays. A junior librarian will come on board in fall 2008, after which the facility’s hours will be adjusted.

Acquisitions are still ongoing, said Spencer-Walters. “I look for those things that will enhance learning in our field, that would fill in the gaps and expand the knowledge of those critical skills. Students and faculty also will find works there from independent presses, materials going back to the activist movements of the 1960s, out-of-print books, and videos or DVDs purchased at conferences. Their subjects, said Spencer-Walters, cover the realm of issues in the black diaspora, including the Americas, the Caribbean and the African continent.”

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Senior Showcase Presents Top Work of Film Students

Senior Film Showcase, presenting outstanding student works from the university’s cinema and television arts (CTVA) program, is set for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 7, in the Leonard H. Goldenson Theatre at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, 5220 Lankershim Boulevard, North Hollywood.

Hosting this year’s event will be Hollywood icon Robert Townsend, considered a “godfather” of the independent film world. Townsend rose to instant fame when, without a formal film education, he used credit cards to finance, star in, produce, write and direct the critically acclaimed “Hollywood Shuffle,” a satire about the trials of black actors in Hollywood.

Cinema and television arts alumnus Robert Mitis, executive vice president of actor/producer Michael Douglas’ Further Films in Universal City, and CTVA alumnus and director Spiros Stathoulopoulos will receive special honors at the event. Stathoulopoulos’ film, “PVC-1,” in May 2007 was featured at the Cannes Film Festival; he is scheduled to direct a major feature.

Student films will include:

- “Tango.” A young man uses tango music to right wrong decisions and fight demons in his life.
  Director: Allan Giron.
- “Braceros.” A man recalls his experiences in the Braceros program, during which Mexican farm laborers worked U.S. fields. Director: Belinda Carreno.
- “Armen.” An Armenian watchmaker who has arranged safe passage out of Nazi Germany is asked to bring along a young Jewish boy. Director: Sherryl Festokian.
- “August 5th.” Five minutes in the life of an ordinary man in a war-torn country. Director: Tony Mohareb.
- “Shades of Hope.” The film depicts the daily plight of the American soldier in Vietnam, and the lack of support from the people at home. Director: Brianna Campbell.
- “Finding Bigfoot.” A man and his grandfather embark on a journey of self-discovery as they seek the legendary Bigfoot.
  Director: Robert Larson.
  Sponsored by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association and the CSUN Associated Students Instructationally Related Activities Fund, the documentary is free; seating is first-come, first-served. For more information, contact the CTVA program at (818) 677-3192.

More Murrow Awards for KCSN-FM 88.5

The News Department of Cal State Northridge’s radio station, KCSN-FM 88.5, won five Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards from the Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) in a recent RTNDA competition involving smaller professionally staffed stations in California, Hawaii and Nevada.

Counting the new recognitions, the number of Edward R. Murrow regional awards won to date by KCNS’s News Department totals 27. The five Murrow awards include “Overall Excellence,” “Best Newscast,” “Continuing Coverage,” “Feature Reporting” and “Sports Reporting.”

The “Overall Excellence” win represents the fourth time the KCSN News Department has claimed the RTNDA prize. That category included stories on distracted drivers, teenage prostitution, the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, women’s roller derby, red light camera enforcement, the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival and a 30-minute “Evening Update” newscast.

In the “Best Newscast” category, KCSN won for its September 19, 2007 broadcast of “The Evening Update,” an in-depth newscast airing from 6-6:30 p.m. The newscast included stories on the 9-1-1 emergency system and the cellular phone demand, and a story on the UC Santa Barbara campus response to potential disasters.

KCSN also won a Murrow Award for its Septem ber 19, 2007 broadcast of “The Evening Update,” an in-depth newscast from 6-6:30 p.m. The newscast included stories on the 9-1-1 emergency system and the cellular phone demand, and a story on the UC Santa Barbara campus response to potential disasters.

The “Continuing Coverage” award went to KCSN News Department’s four-day coverage of the “Southern California Wildfires” in October, 2007.

Senior Jennifer Rock received the “Feature Reporting” award for her piece on the “California Institute for Abnormal Arts,” and senior David Lopez received the “Sports Reporting” award for his story on the El Camino Real football team.

~Ashley Hunter
F Y I

Events

Wednesday, May 7

Spanish Club Presents “La Camisa”
The Spanish Club L.U.C.I.A.presents an adaptation of Lauro Olm o’s “La Camisa” (“The Shirt”), with the support of the College of Humanities’ Academic Programming Fund Selection Committee. 6:30 p.m., USC U.S.Northridge Center. Written as a response to the emigration of Spaniards to other European countries during the 1950s and 1960s, the CSUN production has been adapted to reflect the situations of many immigrants in today’s United States. Director: Adrian Perez-Boluda (Modern and Classical languages and Literatures). An exhibit on objects and pictures from the stage design is on display in Sierra Hall, first floor. Free and open to the public. fmi–x2982.

Thursday, May 8

San Fernando Valley Economic Summit
The 2008 San Fernando Valley Economic Summit is set for 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Sheraton Universal Hotel, Universal City. The Summit features the release of the CSUN San Fernando Valley Economic Report, an exhibitor expo, and eight panels including key industry trends, international trade, the state of the real estate market and more. Co-presented by CSUN, the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley and the CSUN Alumni Association. Register at http://www.economicalliance.org/w/index.economicsummit.html. Discounted tickets available at $95 for CSUN alumni. All others $150. For tickets and fmi–Economic Alliance, (818) 579-7000.

Monday, May 19

Honored Faculty Reception
The annual Honored Faculty Reception will begin at 10 a.m., USU Grand Salon. Faculty awards will be presented for Outstanding Faculty; Distinguished Teaching, Counseling, or Librarianship; Scholarly Publication; Creative Accomplishment, Extraordinary Service; and Visionary Community Service-Learning. Emiritus professors and faculty completing 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of service will be honored. Includes continental breakfast. RSVP by May 12 at x3263 or bestda@csun.edu.

Monday, May 19–Saturday, June 14

GeoTrek III Fundraising Hike
Eugene Fritsche (Geological Sciences) and his wife Sue invite faculty, staff and community to join any or all segments of GeoTrek III, a 135-mile Rim of the San Fernando Valley fundraising hike to be completed over a 12-day period with rest days between hiking days. Event benefits The CSUN Geology Student Scholarship Fund. For the hiking schedule, visit http://www.csun.edu/geology/csungeotrek/index.htm. To participate or for more information, contact Fritsche at a.eugene.fritsche@csun.edu. To contribute to the scholarship fund, e-mail pledges of support to the e-mail listed above: checks should be made out to CSUN Foundation, with “Geology Trust Fund” on the memo line.

Thursday, June 26

Staff Service and Excellence Recognition
The 42nd Annual Staff Service and Excellence Recognition Event will be held 7–11 a.m., USU San Fernando Valley Hall. Continental breakfast begins at 8:30 a.m. RSVP by May 19. fmi–Sue Talavera, x5820.

Public Meetings

Personnel Planning and Review Committee
Meets 2–4 p.m.
Wed., May 7
University Hall 211

Educational Policies Committee
Meets 2–4 p.m.
Wed., May 7
University Hall 211

Educational Equity Committee
Meets 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Mon., May 12
University Hall 277

Educational Resources Committee
Meets 2–4 p.m.
Tue., May 13
University Hall 211

CSUN: Pioneer in Accessible Technology

Multiple Grammy Award-winner Steve Wonder joins President Jolene Koester at CSUN’s annual International Technology & Persons with Disabilities Conference, where Wonder presented the president with the CSUN’s first Accessible Technology Pioneer Award. The president accepted on behalf of CSUN, which is honored for advancing the field of accessible technology by bringing together innovators and experts at the conference.

Giving Honor to Those Who Give

The Honorable Joy Picus, former Los Angeles City Council member, and husband Jerry join President Jolene Koester at a pre-game reception at the Maladome, honoring the President’s Associates, CSUN friends who have given generously to the University. The event brought Associates such as the Picus family together with other donors and CSUN athletes prior to the men’s volleyball team victory over the University of Hawaii.

Notices

Staff Awards Nominations
Nominations for the 2008 Presidential Award, the Award of Merit and Team Excellence Award are being accepted. The awards will be announced at the 42nd Annual Staff Service and Excellence Recognition Event, set for June 26. Anyone with two or more years of service, including auxiliary employees, may be nominated, and anyone may make a nomination. Nomination forms are online: http://www-admn.csun.edu/obs/compempawards/index.htm. Deadline: May 15. fmi–Sue Talavera, x5820.

Classes

Professional Development Staff Training
Professional Development Programs provides free training workshops for CSUN staff members in the Oviatt Library, room 16, garden level. Enroll by the day preceding the workshop at http://www-admn.csun.edu/obs/professionaldevelopment/index.htm. fmi–Sue Talavera, x5820.

Workshops:
• “Attention Kaiser Members”
  David Mancilla, presenter. Tue., May 13, 10–11 a.m. and 1–2 p.m.
• “Life Insurance Plans: Protecting Your Family in the Future”
  Derek Giacomuzzi, presenter. Tue., May 15, 10–11 a.m.
China's celebrated Mei Lanfang Beijing Opera Troupe will take the stage at Cal State Northridge Friday, May 16, during the company's first United States tour in nearly 80 years. The performance is set for 8 p.m. in the Campus Theatre, Nordhoff Hall.

Sponsors for the event include the China Institute, the Theatre Department, the Office of Graduate Studies, Research and International Programs, and the Office of Student Development and International Programs.

"This will be a rare treat for an American audience," said Justine Su, special collections curator. "The last visit of the Mei Lanfang Beijing Opera Troupe was when the founder himself brought the company to America in 1930."

Founded in 1922 by Beijing Opera legend Mei Lanfang, the troupe was shaped after the artist's singular vision, weaving traditions of the past into his own creative sensibilities. Mei Lanfang's efforts gave birth to The Mei Lanfang School, a tradition that has promoted stars such as Hu Wereng, Li Hongtu and Don Yuanxian in worldwide tours.

The troupe currently is directed by Mei Baoju, Mei Lanfang's youngest son, who also performs with the company. Trained at an early age by his father and other famed operatic artists, Mei Baoju sings in a style considered the most representative of his father, and performs with an elegance evocative of the old master himself. The opera troupe will present selections from its repertoire of works, including:

- "Havoc in Heaven." The Monkey King, Sun Wukong, discovers he is not invited to the Divine Peaches Banquet held May 16, during the Queen of the Divine Palace. Angered, he steals the peaches and defeats the troops sent to catch him.
- "Picking Up the Jade Bracelet." Set in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), a young scholar falls in love with a beautiful girl. He purposefully drops a bracelet in front of his beloved's house. An old matchmaker promises to help unite them.
- "The Stealing of the Immortal Reishi Mushroom." At a Dragon Boat Festival, a man persuades his wife to drink a potion that turns her into a white snake, her original form. The shock of her transformation nearly kills the husband.
- "Farewell Mei Lanfang." Tricked into surrendering to enemy troops, a defeated military officer drinks a potion that turns him into a white snake. His beloved then goes to catch him.

Complimentary tickets for the performance must be picked up from the Associated Students ticket office in the Associated Student Union.