Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference is Set
Center on Disabilities Brings Top Technology Talent to Brainstorm at Giant Conference

People with disabilities, academics and some of the world’s leading technology entrepreneurs will meet near Los Angeles International Airport in March to brainstorm about ways technology can make life easier for persons with disabilities.

The meetings will be part of Cal State Northridge’s annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference, scheduled for March 20-25 at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton and Marriott hotels. CSUN’s Center on Disabilities coordinates the conference.

A record-breaking 4,500 people attended last year’s event, which regularly attracts thousands from around the world to learn or share the latest technologies designed to eliminate barriers to personal, academic and career success for persons with disabilities.

The conference—the largest of its kind—addresses all aspects of technology and disabilities. It features a faculty of internationally recognized speakers, more than 250 general session workshops and more than 170 exhibitors displaying the latest technology for persons with disabilities.

Workshop and general session topics will run the gamut of disability and technology issues, from workplace and classroom concerns to the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Materials will be available in alternative formats, including Braille, large print and disk (ASCII). Sign language interpreting services and assistive listening devices also will be widely used at the conference.

This year’s keynote speaker is artist Lisa Fittipaldi, founder of The Mind’s Eye Foundation, a nonprofit organization that helps blind, visually-impaired or hearing-impaired children with adaptive computer technology.

Fittipaldi was working as a certified public accountant at a Texas hospital when she completely lost her vision and was declared legally blind in 1993.

Her needs were not accommodated at the hospital, and she took a buyout.

At the urging of her husband, Fittipaldi turned to art. Her paintings are exhibited in museums and galleries around the world, and continue to astonish viewers when they learn she is legally blind.

“Each year we hear that one of the most exciting things about the conference is the opportunity to meet with experts, practitioners and users and have to informal conversations in which you can dialogue about finding solutions to vexing problems or just share information and insights,” said Mary Ann Cummins-Prager, director of the Center on Disabilities.

“This year’s conference promises to be just as exciting.”

In addition to persons with disabilities and their family members, participants will include special education teachers, university professors and researchers, occupational and physical therapists, clinicians, government policy makers and many others interested in the latest developments in assistive technologies.

New to this year’s conference are sessions called “Chat Rooms,” which will allow conferencegoers to continue discussions started in workshops, to gather resources, to network or simply to brainstorm about new avenues to explore in the world of assistive technology.

For more information about the conference or on how to register, visit the Center on Disabilities’ Web site at www.csun.edu/cod or call the center at (818) 677-2578 V/TTY.

How Does the Garden Grow? With Sun, Soil, and Students
CSUN/Compton College Project Cultivates Scholars, Hope…and Some First-Rate Cucumbers

The unadorned ground outside his office window at Compton College was more than August Hoffman could resist. His hands itched to get at the soil and make something grow in it.

When he arrived at Compton College in 2000, he soon had flower beds making a show for passersby. Interest in his flowers blossomed into involvement, and in short order, Hoffman was helping his psychology students transform a plot near the main entrance of the college into a garden.

Five years later, a two-acre miracle is under student cultivation, bearing seasonal crops of lettuce, collards, and tomatoes. Garden Project continued on page 2.
CSUN Alums Perez and Phelps Join Villaraigosa Team

**Former UTLA and VICA Execs to Handle Civil Service, Business and Job Development Issues**

Cal State Northridge alumni John Perez, former president of United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), and former Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) executive David Phelps are two recent additions to the administration of Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

A 1968 summa cum laude history/geography graduate of CSUN, then San Fernando Valley State College, Perez was appointed by the mayor to the Los Angeles City Board of Civil Service Commissioners and confirmed by the Los Angeles City Council in December 2005.

Perez has served on UTLA’s board of directors almost continuously since 1978, and completed a three-year term as UTLA president. A social studies teacher at Roosevelt High School for 21 years, he received his teaching credential from Cal State Northridge in 1969.

“I am very proud that CSUN gave me the educational foundation to serve our community as a teacher and union leader for 36 years,” said Perez, who added he is equally proud of his two new commission appointments. David Phelps, a 2000 CSUN graduate in political science, recently joined the mayor’s business team in charge of economic development issues for the West Valley, including CSUN. Phelps previously was VICA’s director of governmental relations.

Garden Project...

continued from page 1

Onions, Swiss chard, artichokes, egg plant, cucumbers, tomatoes, mint, strawberries, corn, pumpkins, watermelon, peppers, herbs and flowers. About 60 fruit trees cover the area.

Hoffman’s hypothesis was that gardening would improve Compton students’ self-esteem. The college’s transition rate into the CSU system was a “dismal” 6 percent when Hoffman began there. Currently facing an accreditation crisis, Compton is working to maintain its autonomy as an educational institution.

“We have engaged in empirical research during this project,” Hoffman said, “and have found that Compton students who garden show increases in their grade point averages. In some cases, their academic averages improved from a C average in psychology to a B+ or an A.”

Hoffman saw a way to provide CSUN students with an rich educational experience as well. After the project’s first year, he established a mentoring program in which CSUN students work with the Compton gardener/scholars, earning independent credits in his psychology and research methodology courses.

It is no ivory tower exercise. At 7 a.m. on Saturdays during each semester, about 15 Northridge undergraduates make the 41-mile trek south on the 405 to pull weeds, sprinkle water, rake leaves and plant flowers, developing with about as many Compton mentees the kind of shoulder-to-shoulder relationships that are deepened by warm sun and the smell of good soil.

“It’s the process of working together that creates this positive relationship, one that helps the Compton students make the transition to the CSU,” said Hoffman, twice named Outstanding Teacher of the Year at Compton. The CSUN students provide direction, supervision and inspiration for their Compton gardening partners, about five of whom so far have transitioned to CSU. Others have gone on to CSU Dominguez Hills or Long Beach State, and some have entered the UC system.

“Being in the garden together creates an informal link and camaraderie,” said former Hoffman student Julie Wallach, now a CSUN alumna and devoted garden project volunteer. “It breaks down the academic intimidation that says: ‘These people go to a university and I don’t.’ It breaks down racial barriers. It’s magical. And this happens every semester.”

With Hoffman and Wallach regularly emptying their pockets to buy gardening materials, more funding was needed. Wallach applied for and won a $2,000 grant from CSUN’s Community Service-Learning unit, and the first CSUN/Compton College gardening/psychology service-learning program was set up in spring 2004. “We very gratefully and prudently spend the money on plants and flowers,” Wallach said, “and the garden has been growing in more ways than one.”

From their garden experience, for example, the CSUN and Compton students develop research projects with social/psychological themes, presented at conference venues such as UCLA, UC Irvine, UC Riverside and Stanford University.
Events

Tuesday, March 7
CIO Candidate Forum
The campus community is invited to meet Min Yao, a candidate for CSUN’s chief information officer (CIO) position, at an open forum from 10:15 a.m.–11 a.m. in the Whitsett Room, Sierra Hall. Associate Vice President of Information Technology at CSU Dominguez Hills, the candidate also is that university’s chief information technology officer. fmi–x2121.

Thursday, March 9
Take Back the Night Rally
The Violent Acts Grouped (VAG) student organization hosts its annual Take Back the Night rally and display at 5:30 p.m. at the University Park Apartments on the grassy area between Buildings 8 and 11. Following the rally, a march is planned from the apartment complex to the Women’s Center on Plummer Street, next to Faculty Lot BS, where an open microphone program will take place. fmi–Matador Involvement Center, x5111.

Wednesday, March 15
Holocaust Lecture
Author Lawrence Baron, professor of modern Jewish history at San Diego State, speaks on “Serious Humor: Holocaust Comedy Films,” at 4 p.m. in the University Student Union, La Brea View Terrace Room. Sponsor: CSUN Jewish Studies Program. fmi–x3007 or www.csun.edu/jewish-studies.

Thursday, March 23
Physical Therapy Open House
The Physical Therapy Department will hold its annual open house featuring student demonstrations and tours of the physical therapy labs, in Jacaranda Hall 1625 (formerly Engineering Bldg.) from 4–7 p.m. Refreshments will be served. RSVP by Thu., March 16 to pubinfo@csun.edu, x2205.

Public Meetings

Associated Students Senate
Meets 2 p.m.
Tue., Feb. 28 and March 7
University Student Union,
Grand Salon

Personnel Planning and
Review Committee
Meets 1:15–5 p.m.
Wed., March 8
University Hall 277

Senate Executive Committee
Meets 1–4:50 p.m.
Thu., March 2
University Hall 211

Academic Technology
Committee
Meets 2–4 p.m.
Fri., March 3
University Hall 211

For Your Information publishes announcements of events, public meetings, notices, classes and deadlines. Submission deadline is noon on Monday, one week before the next issue.

North Campus–University Park Development Corporation
Meets 9 a.m.
Mon., March 6
University Hall 250

Educational Policies
Committee
Meets 2–4 p.m.
Wed., March 8
University Hall 211

Educational Equity Committee
Meets 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Mon., March 13
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Notices

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Telling Our Stories Exhibit

Spring 2006 Faculty
Senate Elections
Any faculty member who wishes to run for a Faculty Senate office, but who has not yet been nominated, may submit a petition with 15 faculty signatures to the Faculty Senate Office by 5 p.m. Mon., March 6. Open for election are the posts of president (two-year term), vice president (one-year term), secretary/treasurer (one-year term), state-wide academic senator (three-year term, two positions), senators-at-large (two-year terms, six positions). fmi–Heidi Wollbauer, x3263.

Research Program for Students
Biology professor Steven Oppenheimer has obtained a new university grant expanding lab experience opportunities for CSUN students. Students who sign up for fall 2006 lab research work in Oppenheimer’s cancer/development research lab can start their work during the summer, unhindered by heavy course loads.

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Black History Month Ceremony of Tribute

An African ceremonial libation, honoring ancestors with the pouring out of wine or oil, is performed by Ntsiki Hill, a graduate student in interdisciplinary studies, at the Feb. 1 Black History Month celebration in front of the Matador Bookstore. Planned by the Black History Month Committee of CSUN’s Pan-African Studies Department, the special libation was a memorial tribute to African-American luminaries who died in 2005.

February 27, 2006 - CSUS - California State University, Northridge
College of Arts, Media, and Communication Dean William Toutant has announced he will step down before the start of the fall 2006 academic term, citing ongoing health concerns.

Dean Toutant will continue working with the design team for the new performing arts center to be built on campus and with the center’s executive director, when that appointment is made.

He also will continue to represent the arts in the Teachers for a New Era initiative at Cal State Northridge, and will maintain his oversight of the area-serving KSNN-FM (88.5) campus radio station.

“I am very proud of what the faculty, staff, and especially the students in the college have accomplished during my tenure as dean,” said Dean Toutant. “Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Harry Hellenbrand touted the dean’s ‘irresistible wit and sense of humor,’ and acknowledged Toutant’s dedication, flexible managerial style and willingness to serve in multiple roles.”

“I am pleased that he has agreed to work on specific projects in Academia: Affairs such as preparing for our participation in the new performing arts center and helping to assist in the integration of the current PAC with the new facility,” said Provost Hellenbrand.

Dean Toutant joined CSUN’s music faculty in 1975, serving as associate and then interim dean of the college before accepting its top leadership post in 2001.

An active composer, Toutant’s works have been performed both nationally and internationally, from Mexico to the Czech Republic. His “Small Suite for Pianos” is available on compact disc, as are his orchestral works “Ancara” and “Peregrinations II,” “Anagrams and Aphorisms” for clarinet and double bass, and his “Bagatelle I.”

The dean is also author of two music texts, and has lectured for Los Angeles Opera, UCLA Performing Arts and The Pasadena Symphony. For the past ten years, he has hosted KCSN’s weekly opera program.

Toutant, the former American administrative director of the Romanian-American Music Days Festival, is a graduate of the George Washington University. He earned his Ph.D. at Michigan State.

National Educator Award Goes to Northridge Alumnus

Mathematics and social studies teacher Mathew McClenahan, a product of Cal State Northridge’s Michael D. Eisner College of Education, recently was awarded the prestigious Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award.

During a surprise assembly at the school where he teaches—High Tech High School, on the Birmingham High School campus in the Los Angeles school district—McClenahan received the award from Jack O’Connell, state superintendent of public instruction.

Mr. McClenahan is an innovative, inspiring teacher who brings to the classroom the kinds of advances in technology that keep his students energized and engaged,” O’Connell said. “His teaching style is one of dedication, motivation, and expectation.

The Milken awards, established in 1985 and now one of the country’s largest teacher recognition programs, annually honor up to 100 teachers, principals and specialists throughout the U.S. Teachers are judged on exceptional talent evidenced by instructional practices, on outstanding accomplishments and potential for professional and policy leadership, and on their ability to motivate students with their engaging and inspiring presence.

In one example of McClenahan’s instructional innovations, he used a production of “Romeo and Juliet” as a way to teach math. Working with an English teacher who was producing the play at High Tech High, he helped his students use math principles to design a set for the production.

McClenahan and another local Milken award winner, James Ortizbuela of Cecil B. DeMille Middle School in Long Beach, each received $25,000. Both will travel to Washington D.C. to participate in the annual Milken National Education Conference in May.

The A.S. Ticket Office in the University Student Union sells tickets to many events on campus, except for some held by outside groups. The Ticket Office is open from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Mon.–Fri. For prices not given, call (818) 677-2488. To park on campus for performances, athletic events, lectures and other activities, guests must purchase a $4 parking permit.

Women’s Art of Anatolia Multimedia presentation features more than 100 items from collections in Los Angeles and Turkey.

Men’s Basketball
3/2 Cal Poly 7:05 p.m.
3/4 UCSD 4:05 p.m.

Softball
3/13 Quinnipiac 1 p.m.
3/15 Quinnipiac 3 p.m.

Women’s Tennis
3/12 San Francisco 11 a.m.

Track & Field
3/4 All comers 8:30 a.m.

Men’s Volleyball
3/3 Long Beach State 7 p.m.
3/4 UC San Diego 7:30 p.m.
3/7 Quinnipiac 7 p.m.

Music
Admission to all music events (unless otherwise specified): $10 general, $7 faculty, staff and seniors, $5 students.

Faculty Composers’ Recital
Works by Daniel Hosken, Daniel Kessler, Liviu Marinescu, William Toutant and Elisabeth Stellers.
Fri., March 3, 8 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

Alumni Recital Series
Wendy Mazon, clarinet soloist.
Sat., March 4, 8 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

Voice Recital
Diane Ketchie, soprano, pianist, and William Vendice, pianist.
Sun., March 5, 3 p.m.
Music Recital Hall

Physics/Planetary

CineMathèque

Screenings are free and take place in the Alan and Elaine Armer Theater, on the first floor of Manzanita Hall at the southwest corner of campus. For more info, call (818) 677-3152 or visit www.cinemathique.csun.edu/html/events.html.

“Winter Sky Show” and “The Voyager Encounters” Fri., March 3, 7 p.m.

“Winter Sky Show” and “The Worlds of the Outer Solar System” Fri., March 10, 7 p.m.

“One Upon a Time in the West” Directed by Sergio Leone. Thu., March 2, 7 p.m.

“Failure to Launch” Sneak preview. Starring Sarah Jessica Parker, Matthew McConaughey.
First come, first served. Reserved seating for CineMathèque members only. No admittance after film begins.
Fri., March 3, 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

“Casablanca” Directed by Michael Curtiz.
Mon., March 6, 2 p.m.

“The Driver” Directed by Walter Hill.
Wed., March 7, 8 p.m.

“The Clockmaker” Directed by Bertrand Tavernier.
Thu., March 9, 7 p.m.

“Grand Illusion” Directed by Jean Renoir.
Mon., March 13, 2 p.m.

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Mon., March 13, 2 p.m.

Art and Exhibits

For gallery info, call (818) 677-2456. Main gallery hours Mon. through Sun., 12–4 p.m. Admission is free unless stated. For library exhibits, call (818) 677-2285.

Women’s Art of Anatolia Multimedia presentation features more than 100 items from collections in Los Angeles and Turkey.

Runs through March 30 Main Art Gallery

Florencio Fernandez Collection

Acclaimed artist’s ceramic pottery, sculpture, paintings, etchings, jewelry, wood blocks and more.

Runs through March 25 C.K. and Teresa Tseng Gallery, Oviatt Library, West Wing

Telling Our Stories Exhibit

Photos and vignettes of Japanese Americans in San Fernando Valley, 1910 to 1950s, collected by CSUN students.

Runs through mid-April, Wed.–Sun., 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
San Fernando Museum of Art and History
519 S. Brand Blvd., San Fernando Free

Bianchi Planetarium

For ticket info, (818) 677-2488 or visit www.csun.edu/physics/planetarium. Telescope viewing will follow the second show.

Theater/Performance

Nicole and Dime

The struggle to get by in America, based on Barbara Ehrenreich’s best seller
Elyn Gersh Lerner, director.
Wed., March 1, 7 p.m.
Thu., March 2, 8 p.m.
Fri., March 3, 8 p.m.
Sat., March 4, 8 p.m.
Sun., March 5, 3 p.m.
Little Theatre
$10–$15

for University Advancement

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