



**May 2026**

Dear CLASS Colleagues,

Can you believe that we are in the final stretches of the semester? We are almost there! Looking ahead, I am excited to celebrate our graduating students at Commencement, a milestone that reminds us of why this work matters. I also want to recognize and express appreciation for all of your hard work and dedication that has contributed to the success of each student that will cross the stage on May 15.

I also want to acknowledge that this semester came with added challenges as everyone, and especially staff, navigated new administrative systems, including P2P, Concur, and CHRS. The learning curve has been real, and I appreciate your patience and resilience as we all work together to work through these transitions.

Thank you for everything you do for our students and for each other, and here's to finishing strong! I'll see you on May 15 at Commencement and then again on August 18 at the Fall 2026 Welcome - we'll be providing updates over the summer for those keeping an eye on their email.

Kind regards,

Cami

## ***Opportunities***

Talk about how Artificial intelligence is reshaping teaching, learning, and the future of work is everywhere. **AAC&U's** brought together higher education leaders for an event that highlights *practical* approaches to integrating AI across campus. Recordings are available at their [website](#).

**Online Course Services** is offering a slate of Summer 2026 courses designed specifically for higher ed staff. These programs focus on practical skills and professional development to support teaching, learning, and digital course design. Explore available offerings and registration details [on their webpage](#).

CLASS is a member of the CSU **Social Science Research and Instruction Council**. SSRIC offers access to large data sets and instructional materials. Check it out [on their webpage](#).

The CSU offers Innovative Teaching and Learning modules for all CSU faculty. As you wind down the semester and make mental notes for what to do next time, peruse [this page](#).

Thinking about writing a grant this summer? Thinking about thinking about writing a grant? Check out [Pivot](#), where you can search for grant opportunities by funder, topic, keyword, and kind of grant.

CAFE is hosting a Writing Your Journal Article in 12 Weeks Summer 2026 Workshop. A cohort of 15 faculty will participate in a structured, week-by-week workshop focused on key elements of strong journal articles while actively revising their own manuscript. Meetings will take place on Zoom on Tuesdays, 10 - 11:30 am, from June 2 - August 10, 2026. Apply [with this web form](#) by May 11, 2026

Explore AI in the curriculum on your own using SDSU's AI-ready Curriculum Options Resource Network toolkit, developed with support from a CSU grant. The toolkit and other materials are available [at this webpage](#).

## ***Kudos***

### **Students**

**Cal Poly Pomona's Model UN Team** earned top honors at the world's largest and most prestigious Model UN conference in New York City, winning the highest-tier Outstanding Delegation award for the fourth consecutive year! Students also received multiple committee awards, continuing a decades-long legacy of excellence for the half-century-old program.

**The 14th Annual RSCA Conference** showcased student research and creative work across disciplines. **Ashley Orellana** (English and Modern Languages) and **Mareen Riad** (Psychology) were recognized for standout presentations in behavioral, social sciences, and creative arts, reflecting strong faculty mentorship and academic excellence at CPP.

[CPP's Kellogg Chamber Singers and Concert Choir](#) joined the La Verne Church of the Brethren for a May 2 performance of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Directed by Assistant Professor Niké St. Clair, the concert features soloists, pianists, and percussion in a collaborative production.

### **Faculty**

Professor **Carsten Lange** spoke with [NBC Los Angeles](#) about rising gas prices tied to geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions. With LA County prices already above \$6 per gallon, Lange warns of delayed relief and possible increases up to \$8, citing transport lags and broader recession risks.

Professor **Claudia Salazar Jiménez** has published [Migrating and Other Arts: Writings Out of Place](#), a reflective work on identity and migration. Blending diary and travelogue, the book explores displacement and creativity shaped by life between cultures.

Professor **Álvaro Huerta** was featured by [UCLA](#) for his unconventional path back to higher education. After leaving UCLA in the 1980s to pursue social justice activism in Los Angeles, he later returned to complete his undergraduate and graduate degrees and went on to earn a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley.

Professor **Annie Danis** is featured in "Connecting the Pieces," an archaeology exhibit on the library's fourth floor showcasing artifacts from the WWII Amache incarceration camp, where 10,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned. Created with University of Denver students and previously shown at CSU Chico, the exhibit will remain on display through next spring.

Professor **James J.A. Blair** was quoted in a [New York Times](#) story examining lithium development at the Salton Sea and its environmental and economic stakes. He also appears in Season 3 of USC's [Electric Futures](#) podcast, discussing energy transitions. Listen here:

**Interim President Iris Levine** [surprised the choir students](#) as their guest conductor at a recent rehearsal. She reflected on the collective power of music, noting how each performer contributes to a unified sound. The experience highlighted the emotional and collaborative nature of music-making ahead of the upcoming *Carmina Burana* performance.

Professor **Ernest Harrison** led the [Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles](#) in a free April 18 concert in Pasadena as part of the Third@First series. The 200-member ensemble brought a nationally recognized repertoire, with Harrison emphasizing the life-affirming power of music both on and off the stage.

**Luis Garcia**, a double major in Music Industry Studies and Business Administration, secured a summer internship with a Los Angeles production studio through Bronco CareerWorks. With guidance from the team, he translated academic interests into hands-on industry experience aligned with his career goals.

Professor **Alex Madva** discussed in [The Irish Times](#) how to maintain hope amid negative news, encouraging collective action and shared responsibility. Drawing on his book *Somebody Should Do Something*, he urged people to stay engaged, resist misplaced blame, and act as “happy warriors” working toward systemic change. Congrats to Alex for receiving the 2025–26 Provost's Award for Excellence in Scholarly and Creative Activities - CLASS' first Provost RSCA award since 2016!

Professor **Jarred Cuellar** commented in [NBC News](#) on how stricter immigration enforcement is affecting Latino evangelical communities, contributing to declines in attendance and stability. He noted that many supported Trump in 2024 based on religious values but are now grappling with the personal impacts of those policies.

**Salvador Mendez** (MPA '14) has been named [Palmdale's city manager](#) after serving in an interim role. A recognized public sector leader, he was also honored as the 2024 Top Leader of the Year by the Southern California Chapter of the American Public Works Association.

**Vanessa Perez** was featured in the [Los Angeles Times](#) for her ongoing advocacy following police violence against her son. The story highlights her efforts to promote accountability, transparency, and broader public awareness around justice and reform.