

RAMP ED

Director's Message

As a grant funded program, RAMP is restricted on how it can expend funds. Therefore, we depend on our various partnerships to help achieve our mission. Over the years, we have greatly benefitted from the generosity of the Foundation and the Learning Resource Center.

This quarter, Foundation sponsored three RAMP staff members, a RAMP tutor, and a RAMP student to participate in Matt's Run on October 15th. Foundation also provided snacks during finals week when RAMP participants were invited to use the lab for studying and writing papers. The snacks serve as fuel to help get the students through finals week.

The LRC provided the funds to serve Round Table pizza to 50 participants at the Professional Spotlight on November 1st.

A big "thank you" for the financial support provided by Foundation & the LRC.

The various collaborative efforts (including Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, Library, ARCHES, SSEP/EOP, Theatre Department, and English Department) assist us in meeting the three objectives required by the U.S. Department of Education. For 2015-16, RAMP set the following rates for the three objectives:

*90% of RAMP participants will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate with a bachelor's degree during the academic year. **RAMP achieved a 96% fall to fall persistence rate.***

*90% of all enrolled participants will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing. **RAMP achieved a 97% good academic standing rate.***

*60% of 2010-11 new participants served will graduate with bachelor's degree within six years. **RAMP achieved an 84% six-year graduation rate.***

The Department of Education also requires that at least 2/3 of our 250 participants are low-income and first-generation college students. For 2015-16, 84% of participants were both low-income and first-generation.

FALL 2016



RAMP Fall New Participant Orientation

2



Student Spotlight feature RAMP participant Bernardina Fuentes

3



RAMP, ARCHES & McNair participants attend *College Night at the Getty Villa*

4



2nd Annual First-Year Transition Student Panel

6

"The unread story is not a story; it is little black marks on wood pulp. The reader, reading it, makes it live: a live thing, a story. - Ursula K. Le Guin."

RAMP Fall Orientation

RAMP's Fall Orientation on September 23rd kicked off the new academic year for CPP students interested in joining the program. This year, there were a few changes to the format of the orientation process. For instance, students signed up for a brief information presentation first and then they followed a sequence of topic-specific tables, which included the program's manual and participant contract, RAMP Challenge Grant, 1-unit LRC reading course, folder of resources, and ultimately ended with the program application. This new format gave students the opportunity to receive as much information as possible about the program in order to make an informed decision before applying.

Though fewer students attended compared to last year, the lower turnout allowed students and staff to more thoroughly discuss information about TRIO Student Support Services and the many benefits of participation. Some topic-specific tables such as RAMP's Challenge Grant included new updates to the application requirements for supplemental aid. For example, the minimum required tutorial sessions to apply for the grant changed from 10 sessions to 12 sessions (sessions can be completed over the course of fall and winter quarter). Another addition included a mandatory field that requires all applicants to meet with their RAMP advisor during both fall and winter quarters.

Thanks to campus partners such as the Office of Financial Aid, Student Support & Equity Programs, and the LRC, RAMP was able to reach over 65 undergraduate eligible students during this year's orientation event.



RAMP Tutors/Peer Mentors Alfredo Raygoza & Anne Isidro meet with students regarding the RAMP Challenge Grant



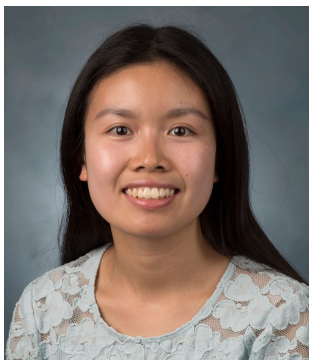
Rachel Dominguez & Dustin Johnson assist students with the program application



RAMP Tutor/Peer Mentor Rudy Alvarez provides students with a TRIO folder including a campus resources list and a RAMP calendar of events

Tutor Spotlight:

Tammy Wong



Tammy Wong has been working with RAMP since fall 2015, but started out as a participant in 2013. As a Communications major and Women Studies minor, Tammy chose to apply to RAMP because it would fortify her future plans to become a college professor.

Tammy enjoys working for RAMP because it gives her the opportunity to work with students from diverse communities. As one of the most diverse campuses in the western region, Cal Poly is also an intellectual and stimulating environment, according to Tammy.

Her campus involvement includes working with the Women's Resource Center. "When we have events on campus to educate people about sexual assault and domestic abuse, I help facilitate the event by preparing for the event, tabling, and spreading awareness of the issues we are trying to resolve," says Tammy. She also contributed to an event known as the Little Black Dress Campaign. "I was in charge of tabling and selling little black dresses and candied goods," states Tammy. She adds, "the campaign addresses the negative stigma surrounding women who suffered from sexual violence." Tammy has had multiple roles within the Women's Resource Center and she has enjoyed each role. In addition to her work with the Women's Resource Center, Tammy is a McNair Scholar, focusing her research on issues women face throughout the world.

When asked if she could travel in time for one day, when and where would she go, Tammy responded, "I would want to fast forward into the future so I could see where I would be." Tammy is applying to graduate programs and looking for teaching assistantships that will help her develop more experience in the teaching field. No doubt, Tammy's commitment to learning will jumpstart her in the right direction to reach her goals in higher education.

Student Spotlight:

Mina Fuentes



Bernardina "Mina" Fuentes is an example of how dedication and perseverance can bring about beneficial academic results. Mina can often be found studying at the library and is often still there when the LRC closes. Mina has been a RAMP participant since fall 2015 and credits RAMP with enhancing her overall college experience and academic success. According to Mina, "RAMP staff and tutors are always willing to assist you and are very supportive." She also improved her reading comprehension and understanding of her class material with the help of her tutoring sessions.

Mina is an accounting major because she is interested in helping corporations with cost cutting measures, revenue projects, and forecasts. When she is not occupied by studying, Mina is an active participant in the National Society of Leadership and Success, Sigma Alpha Phi and enjoys watching soccer, traveling, and hiking. One of Mina's favorite things at CPP is U-Hour. She says, "It is a great way to meet with your friends and enjoy club meetings. Also, it is a great 1-hour break because there are a lot of activities during that time that you get to experience."

When asked what advice she would give herself as a college freshman, she responded, "Never be afraid to ask for help and utilize all resources available. As a transfer student, I had a lot stress, doubts, and fears because I didn't know how the transition to a quarter system was going to affect me. Adapting to this new system was challenging the first few months. Being afraid of asking for help can prevent you from becoming a better student. But being able to interact with professors and asking staff members what resources were available to transfer students made the transition much easier. Here at CPP there are friendly staff and students who are always willing to assist; you simply have to seek them out."

RAMP Attends *College Night at the Getty Villa*

On the first Tuesday evening of November, RAMP, ARCHES, and McNair staff and participants embarked on a journey along Pacific Coast Highway 1 to celebrate the bi-annual event, *College Night at the Getty*. Located in Pacific Palisades, The Getty Villa, modeled after a villa in Herculaneum, Italy, served as the perfect vista point for a west coast sunset. Before reaching the entryway to the museum, students were given vouchers for food and activities.

The event was attended by college students from all over Southern California including University of Southern California, University of California Los Angeles, Pomona College, Cal Lutheran, Loyola Marymount University and many more. For dinner, students had their pick of chicken or veggie burritos and chocolate brownies for dessert. Free activities consisted of Greco-Roman style Jeopardy, also known as Certamen. Students had the opportunity to use olive branches from the Getty garden to create victorious laurels and also received temporary Greco-Roman tattoos. Some of the most popular activities included free caricature drawings and hourly tours of the museum.

Within the Inner Peristyle, a garden filled with Roman replicas and a narrow pool surrounded by bronze statues and basins, a DJ near the middle of the pool livened the night sky with festive music, luring students to dance. RAMP participant, Valentin Lopez won one of the ongoing raffles and chose a Cerberus figurine as his prize. To add to the celebration, the gift shop offered 20% off all items including olive tree seedlings.



Top: View of the Getty Villa

Middle: RAMP participant, Devon Woodfine searches for clues for the scavenger hunt

Bottom: Devon Woodfine, Dustin Johnson, Sarah Yoa, Ahmed Ahmed, & Juan Renteria

Photo credit: Patricia Durán-Quezada

Professional Spotlight: *Marcos Piñeda*

On November 1st during U-hour, Marcos Piñeda addressed RAMP participant at the fall RAMP Professional Spotlight speaker. This event provides an opportunity for participants to learn about the educational and career experience of a professional who comes from a similar background as them.

Marcos is the Administrative Support Coordinator for the Department of Ethnic & Women Studies at Cal Poly. Marcos graduated with his Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design & Marketing from CSU San Bernardino. As a student at CSUSB, he participated in SAIL (Student Assistance in Learning), which is also a TRIO Student Support Services project. Marcos recently received his Master's degree in Higher Education from the University of Redlands and conducted research on how underrepresented students of color can obtain student success in retention while developing their social, personal, and intellectual capital through social support programs.

Marcos is a first-generation college student who grew up in poverty but was always surrounded by the love and support of his family. According to his story, although his family did not have an abundance of resources, there was always a wealth of motivation to strive for greatness. The primary motivation for his success came from his parents, who immigrated to this country and exhibited grit to support his family. His parents worked multiple

jobs to provide for him and his siblings. Because his parents were often working, caring for his siblings often fell on Marcos' shoulders. He prepared the food and helped his siblings with their homework while fulfilling his own educational obligations. As an AVID participant in high school, Marcos realized the importance of accessing tutoring and other resources to improve his academic survival skills.

Marcos credits his difficult upbringing with helping him develop the resilience necessary to succeed in college and his current career. He explained to the students in attendance that their life experience, even though it may have been challenging, can be drawn on as a source of strength. Growing up in adversity, Marcos was able to develop coping skills that propelled him through his studies and graduate work. He learned to be persistent, ask questions, and, most importantly, utilize the resources offered to him.

Marcos encouraged the students in the audience to consider attending graduate school. He acknowledged that it is difficult for first-generation college students to enter this uncharted territory but emphasized that graduate school is an opportunity to study an area of interest with intensity with like-minded individuals. He also acknowledged that it could be uncomfortable being one of the few students in a cohort who comes from a low-income, first-generation background. However, he noted that courage and resolve to seek out resources and mentors will help you develop tangible academic and career skills.

One of the primary themes of his talk was that success is within the grasp of everyone. He stressed that nothing in life, academic or otherwise, is easy, but if you put forth adequate effort, and are willing to seek help to work on your shortcomings, your goals are achievable.

Marcos Piñeda addresses participants during the RAMP Professional Spotlight



2nd Annual First-Year Transition Student Panel

On November 3rd during U-hour, five junior, senior, and graduate students sat on a panel to share their experiences transitioning into Cal Poly. RAMP tutor, Sarayu Ramnath moderated the panel. The panel included RAMP tutors, Jasmine Martinez and Nyla Simjee, Bronco Tutoring tutors, Emilio Medina and Erin Bullard, and RAMP participant, Caroline Gomez-Peña.

The panel was designed to foster non-cognitive skills based on strategies described in a 2014 study, “Closing the Social-Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First-Generation Students’ Academic Performance and All Students’ College Transition” (Stephens et al). The panel was “to provide a framework to help students understand how their backgrounds matter [...and] can shape their college experience in both positive and negative ways and that students need to utilize strategies for success that take their different backgrounds into account” (2).

Panelists introduced themselves by name and major, and several mentioned if they were a first-generation college student. They were asked six questions but only two or three panelists answered each question. The first question required the panelists to think back to their first quarter at CPP and discuss what stood out. In another question, they were also asked to describe an obstacle they faced their first year and how they resolved it. Another question asked to what extent they felt like they belonged when they arrived at CPP and what factors increased their sense of belonging.

The panelists ended with a pearl of wisdom encouraging the students to be involved, utilize their resources, and have confidence.

In his reflection, one student wrote, “I’ve learned that not everybody is comfortable at the beginning. We have to learn to force ourselves to become more involved in campus and get out of our comfort zones.” Another student indicated that she learned that she needs to “take advantage of [her] professor’s office hours. By going there, you will create bonds/relationships with them.” A third student wrote, “Be proactive in everything you do. It will not come to you.” He also wrote, “Don’t allow your past [to] be something that determines your future success.”

Responding to the question how she will put what she learned to use, one student wrote that the panel gave her “a boost of energy to try and get things done.” Another student wrote that he will apply what he learned “whenever I’m at a low to remind myself I’m here for a reason and I need to reach my goal.” A third student indicated that she will apply what she learned “by organizing myself and changing my mindset.”

Students in the audience learned about the challenges others encountered transitioning into Cal Poly and what steps the panelists took to overcome the challenges. It is our hopes that they were able to relate to the panelists and will heed their advice for improving their college experience.



Panelists, Caroline Gomez-Peña, Erin Bullard, Emilio Medina, Nyla Simjee, Jasmine Martinez

Book Club Reads *American Gods*

Fall book club delved into the fantastical realm of the gods in Neil Gaiman's science-fiction/fantasy novel *American Gods*. The book follows the life of Shadow, a forgotten, small-town prisoner released into the similarly forgotten, middle-American landscape. His life is shattered when he discovers that his wife, the only person who had given him hope and direction, dies in traumatic accident just days before his release. On the plane ride on his way to his wife's funeral, Shadow meets a strange and charismatic character, Mr. Wednesday, who knows far more about Shadow than he should and offers the sense of purpose and guidance he is lacking. After some initial reservations, Shadow soon follows Mr. Wednesday on a mythical journey to unite the forgotten gods brought to America by its many immigrants. Shadow soon finds himself immersed in a fierce battle waged between the "old gods" and the "new gods" of technology and progress that are threatening to eclipse relevance and worship of the spiritual beings of the past. Shadow acts as a shamanic conduit between the spirit world of the gods and the human world, shuffling back and forth between reality and the dreamlike state of the gods.

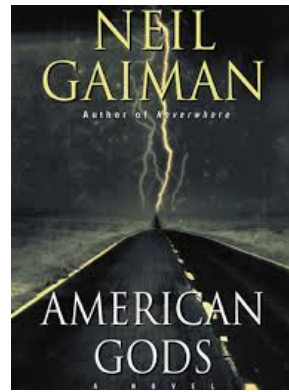
The book club often had trouble coming to grips with the often shocking, explicit plot twists of the novel. Members were simultaneously repulsed and enthralled by certain aspects of the book. Gaiman effortlessly blurs the lines between reality and spiritual realms, leaving it up to the reader to discover whether each new character is a human or a god. Many characters introduced early on in the book seemed perfectly normal, only to reveal themselves later on as deities. Gaiman depicts gods as imperfect and at times immoral, a portrayal antithetical to mainstream versions of monotheistic gods who are often represented as omniscient and flawless. In a discussion with Shadow, a god, Loki reveals the essence of being a god. Loki, explains, "It's not magic. It's about being the *you*, but the *you* that people believe in. It's about being the concentrated, magnified essence of *you*. You take all the belief and become bigger, cooler, more than human. You crystallize.

And then one day they forget about you, and they don't believe in you, and they don't sacrifice, and they don't care, and the next thing you know you're running a three-card monte game on the corner of Broadway and Forty-third" (443). Due to a diminishing belief in them, many of the older gods are forced to live life on the fringes of society as conmen, prostitutes, or undertakers, as their powers steadily weaken because of a dwindling amount of believers and the overpowering onslaught of the new gods of technology and progress.

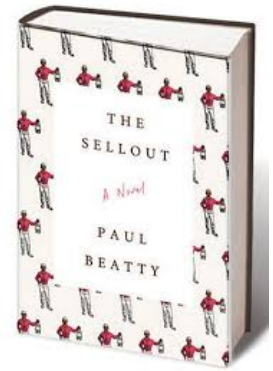
During the course of our three meetings, book club members grappled with several themes that ignited many profound philosophical questions. We were forced to come to grips with the various pressures that old world religious traditions face when people transport them to new countries. Book club members wondered if these religious traditions were jettisoned or do they coexist contentiously alongside newer spiritual or cultural mores? We questioned whether or not people in our society are losing the essence of spirituality that sustained us for centuries under the weight of the incessant stampede of technological advancement. Moreover, many of us wondered what was the cultural significance of the war between the gods of old and the "new gods of credit card and freeway, of internet and telephone, of radio and hospital and television, gods of plastic and of beeper and of neon?" In what ways have Americans shifted their reverence from spiritual to material and technological gods and what are the consequences of such a dramatic shift?

During the final meeting, members discussed the entire book and voted on next quarter's book selection, *The Sellout* by Paul Beatty. The following is a brief Amazon description of the novel: "Born in the 'agrarian ghetto' of Dickens—on the southern outskirts of Los Angeles—the narrator of *The Sellout* resigns himself to the fate of lower-middle-class Californians: 'I'd die in the same bedroom I'd grown up in, looking up at the cracks in the

stucco ceiling that've been there since '68 quake.' Raised by a single father, a controversial sociologist, he spent his childhood as the subject in racially charged psychological studies. He is led to believe that his father's pioneering work will result in a memoir that will solve his family's financial woes. But when his father is killed in a police shoot-out, he realizes there never was a memoir. All that's left is the bill for a drive-thru funeral." The book club offers an opportunity to critically analyze literature in a fun and comfortable setting. Please consider joining us during weeks 3, 5, & 7 of winter quarter to read and discuss *The Sellout*.



Fall 2016 selection



Winter 2017 selection

Fall Financial Aid & Literacy Workshops

The following is a list of fall workshops offered in collaboration with ARCHES and EOP. A total of 139 students attended the seven (7) fall workshops. The Winter 2017 Financial Aid & Literacy Workshop schedule will be available on our website.

Making “Cents” of Your Financial Aid Award	Oct 11
Saving, Budgeting, & Online Tools	Oct 20
Credit and Debt	Oct 25
Funding Your Future	Nov 8
Exploring Scholarships	Nov 15
FAFSA/ CA Dream Renewal	Nov 17 & 29

FALL 2016 RAMP Tutors/Peer Mentors

Rutilio Alvarez	Sarayu Ramnath
Sarah DeAgüero	Alfredo Raygoza
Anne Isidro	Erica Rodriguez
Alice Lu	Nyla Simjee
Jasmine Martinez	Rachel Walker
Wayne Page	Tammy Wong

Connect with RAMP @CPPRAMP



CAL POLY POMONA

CONTACT US

Library, Room 2919
(909) 869-4349
ramp@cpp.edu
www.cpp.edu/ramp

RAMP STAFF

Laura E. Ayon, Director, lemunoz@cpp.edu
Rachel P. Dominguez, Admin Asst, rpdominguez@cpp.edu
Dustin S. Johnson, Advisor, dsjohnson@cpp.edu
Lauren S. Ramos, Advisor, lsumabat@cpp.edu



The contents of this newsletter were developed under a grant from the Department of Education. The contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.