

Spring 2015

"A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies...the man who never reads lives only one."

~George R. R. Martin

RAMPED

READING, ADVISING, & MENTORING PROGRAM

A TRIO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER – CAL POLY POMONA

Director's Message

Another amazing year is coming to a close. We have had a busy year and an unusually busy spring quarter.

As mentioned in the winter newsletter, RAMP added a part-time advisor to the staff for spring quarter. We welcome Dustin Johnson to RAMP and Cal Poly! Dustin has primarily advised students who joined the program this quarter. He has worked assiduously to learn the advising role while learning the ins and outs of the program and Cal Poly. Dustin has nicely slipped into his role and provides the students with much appreciated individual attention. He has been a great addition to the RAMP team!

Spring typically means celebrations. As you will read throughout the newsletter, we have many reasons to celebrate our participants, and student and professional staff. We are proud of all the students' and staff's accomplishments this year!

As we close out the academic year, we are thankful to the tutors, participants, and campus partners who have contributed to the success of the program. We wish everyone a restful yet productive summer and look forward to greeting you in the fall. As a reminder, the RAMP office is closed the months of July and August.

College Night at the Getty

RAMP seeks to create a culturally aware student cohort by exposing them to the vast artistic and intellectual wealth here at Cal Poly Pomona and in the surrounding community. On Monday evening April 27th, the participants of RAMP and ARCHES

boarded a charter bus bound for Los Angeles to visit the picturesque Getty Museum. Upon our arrival, everyone was in awe of the Getty's incredible architecture and breathtaking views.

For many students, tutors, and advisors this was their first time visiting the museum and it did not disappoint. Participants expanded their artistic knowledge by exploring the Getty's vast collection of antiquities, photographic explorations of light and processing, as well as the work of world-renowned artists such as Van Gogh, Goya, and Monet. According to RAMP tutor Amanda Riggle, "Whether through the photographic displays where different sediments of the lake being photographed were used in the development processes, or the thick strokes used by Van Gogh in his painting *Lilies*, each one of us was able to find something artistic to appreciate, contemplate, and discuss during our trip to the Getty."

It was a unique museum experience that connected students from many other colleges in Southern California through art. Students dined on the terrace amidst the ambience of a live DJ and band and participated in a myriad of activities that tested their artistic acumen. The many activities included: drawing live models, frantically hunting down pieces of art in a scavenger hunt, taking pictures with props at the selfie station, and taking guided tours through the hallowed halls of impressionist artists. RAMP tutor Connie Yeh remarked, "I wish we could've stayed a bit longer to look at more stuff and do more activities."

As participants left the museum to board the tram back to the parking lot, they were bestowed a parting gift, an incredibly colorful table book detailing the collection of art and antiquities housed at the Museum, assuring that the trip to the Getty would always inhabit their memories.

Reading Advising & Mentoring Program In the LRC Library Rm. 2919

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ERICA RODRIGUEZ

RAMON YANEZ

CONNIE YEH

Book Club Corner: The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society and Fall Quarter Book Selection

This quarter, RAMP's book club read *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. The "potato book," as RAMP book club members often referred to it as, is an epistolary novel that recounts a World War II German occupation on the island of Guernsey. In an effort to avoid punishment for being out past curfew, a group of neighbors invent The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society to discuss a wide range of literature from cookbooks to poetry. As a book club reading about a book club, RAMP book club members discussed themes such as resistance, community, and the strong portrayal of women. RAMP book clubbers also discussed the intimacy of the island and its effect on the relationships between Nazi soldiers and Guernsey citizens.

At last, in a close vote, book club decided on *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak as the fall 2015 book. RAMP's fall 2015 Book Club will meet during weeks 3, 5, and 7 for introductions and discussion.

Spring 2015 Financial Aid & Financial Literacy Workshop Series

RAMP rounded out the 2014–15 academic year with four financial aid and financial literacy workshops hosted in collaboration with ARCHES and SSEP. In week 3, attendees of the Satisfactory Academic Progress workshop learned some important policies and procedures. They left knowing how to make satisfactory progress, what happens if they do not, and how to initiate the appeals process to avoid losing financial aid funds in the event they fall below requirements. The same workshop was repeated in week 5.

In week 4, the Scholarships 101 workshop covered key strategies to finding and applying for scholarships. Attendees learned about on- and off-campus sources of scholarships, tips for writing winning essays, and etiquette for requesting recommendation letters.

Finally, in week 6, the programs hosted the Funding Your Future workshop, focused on financial literacy. Professor Eric McLaughlin of the Finance, Real Estate, and Law Department presented. The workshop stressed the importance of distinguishing between good and bad debt and establishing good credit early (like, now).

Spring Peer Mentoring: Beating the Semester Conversion

During weeks five and six, the spring Peer Mentoring Workshop focused on strategies needed to assure graduation prior to the implementation of Cal Poly's conversion from the quarter to semester system in fall 2018. Peer Mentors, Amanda Riggle and Jasmine Martinez researched, developed, and presented the information to audiences of their peers. Students were advised to consistently check their curriculum sheets and roadmaps to ensure they were taking all necessary classes in the proper order and in a timely fashion. Peer mentors explained proper methods of checking transcripts and the all-important degree progress report to ensure proper academic advancement. The workshop stressed the importance of taking difficult courses that may require repetition early enough to beat the conversion deadline, as well as meeting with advisors on a quarterly basis. Overall, the workshop was incredibly successful in conveying complex information about the semester conversion in a manner that was both comprehensible and informative for the participants involved.

LRC Corner: First Tutor Recruitment Fair

In a collaborative effort, RAMP, Bronco Tutoring, University Writing Center, ARCHES, EOP, Upward Bound, and MEP hosted its first Tutor Recruitment Fair. The fair was a resounding success and the group plans on making it an annual event! The goal of the event was to increase the available pool of student-tutor applicants, increase the visibility of

our programs to students on campus, and to convey each program's criteria for student-tutor employment. As a result of the fair, each participating program observed an increase in the number of tutor applicants as well as a broader dissemination of program information. Many applicants came prepared with their resumes for review and were able to inquire about job responsibilities from current student-tutors who provided realistic portrayals of working in the various programs on campus.

Based on the initial launch of the Tutor Recruitment Fair, we learned many ways to improve upon and expand for the upcoming year including: creating a banner for wider exposure, placing ads in the Poly Post, lengthening the event to two days, and having smaller tutor pop-up fairs in front of departments with high tutoring demand in order to target students more directly.

7th Annual Graduate Recognition Luncheon

It was a star-studded event. Naturally, the center of attention was a long list of graduates, many of whom remarked on the meaningfulness of graduation to them and to their families. They were the first to graduate from a University. They struggled as single mothers. They worked long hours. Despite the challenges that come from being a first-generation college student, from being a low-income student, from persevering through physical or learning disabilities, RAMP participants stood proudly before the assembled crowd at Kellogg West on May 21st.

Among them was our keynote speaker, Dr. David Speak, certainly a star at Cal Poly Pomona. He shared his boundless enthusiasm for teaching and learning with Cal Poly students for over twenty years. He had words of advice for the RAMP graduates intertwined cleverly with the theme of the event, "Going Places," based upon the classic book by Dr. Seuss, *Oh, The Places You'll Go*. Though the microphone malfunctioned, Dr. Speak did not. He connected with the attendees, using at once deft lightness of humor and solemn tones of gravity, striking a chord that continued to resonate through the event, as he tends to do.

Attendees were treated to the words of yet one more Cal Poly luminary. After listening to several graduates reflect on their experience at CPP, President Soraya Coley eschewed the podium and paced amongst the tables while she addressed the students. President Coley spoke about the gifts, large and small, that each of them had to contribute to building our society and our future. She encouraged them to be proud, and to put their gifts upon the proverbial table, and to share those gifts, because, in her words, "we need them."

After each of the graduates had been recognized, RAMP recognized the achievements of its own. First, graduating RAMP peer tutor/mentors received a certificate: Madeleine Gross, Stephanie Martinez, Andrew Nguyen, Amanda Riggle, and Connie Yeh. Next, Director Laura Ayon commended new Bronco Tutoring Coordinator Cynthia Greco for her ten years of dedicated, excellent, and wholehearted service as a RAMP advisor, a capacity she used to touch the lives of hundreds of students over the years, many of whom were in attendance. Finally, Ayon acknowledged RAMP advisor Robert Matranga, who graduated *summa cum laude* from the University of La Verne College of Law.

While all of this proceeded, the gentle clinking of silverware and ceramics spoke to the robust and delightful meal of chiles rellenos and tri-tip steak that filled stomachs while hearts overflowed.

The program was proud to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the following RAMP participants:

Vincent Alejandre
Teresa Barretto
Trenae Jackson
Andrea Lavilles
Bin Bin Li
Helen Lowe
Carlos Marquez

Sara Delgado
Miguel Galindo
Stephanie Martinez
Joseph McHugh
Ramiro Montiel
Flordelina Mora
Eliseo Moreira

Mauricio Gonzales
Cindy Hernandez Lara
Cathy Nguyen
Kathy Olais
Amanda Riggle
Martha Rojas
Emily Saenz

Beshoy Metry
Christian Murillo
Jai Oni Sly
Jesse Smith
Carlos Soria
Wai Yi Tsang

Exciting Opportunities for Graduating RAMP Tutors

RAMP had an excellent team of tutors for the 14–15 academic year. More than half of the current group were newly hired in fall 2014. Two of them, Madeleine Gross and Andrew Nguyen, are already leaving because they graduate this spring, with degrees in foods and nutrition and philosophy, respectively. Despite their short stay, each quickly adjusted to their roles and significantly impacted the quality of service we provided this year.

Beyond the accomplishment of earning a bachelor's degree, several RAMPers are doing some exciting things this summer. Madeleine Gross, for example, was accepted into the master's of science program in Neuroscience of Mindfulness at Kings College London in England.

Veteran RAMPer Stephanie Martinez graduates this spring with a psychology degree. She has been accepted by the Peace Corps and will go to Cambodia to begin her next adventure.

Connie Yeh, who joined RAMP as a participant in fall 2010 and became a tutor/mentor in fall 2012, graduates this spring with a biology degree. She will begin a Doctor of Pharmacy program at USC in the fall.

Amanda Riggle, RAMP tutor/mentor since fall 2012, graduates this spring with an English degree, minor in political science. She will serve as an advisor for the McNair Scholars Program.

The RAMP staff offer hearty congratulations and wish these RAMPers well on their future exploits.

Tutor-Mentor Spotlight: Madeleine Gross (pictured on the following page)

Madeleine has been a RAMP tutor and peer mentor since fall 2014. Recently, she was recognized at RAMP's Graduate Recognition Luncheon for earning her degree in Food Science & Nutrition this spring. When asked why she applied to RAMP as a tutor and peer mentor, she responds that she was interested in "learning how to help students and felt [she] might be able to offer support to those who truly deserve and need it." Madeleine adds, "It is a very rewarding job. Most of all, I like getting to know my tutees and learning from them. I feel like my tutees have really helped me and taught me - it is a very symbiotic relationship!" Madeleine's ability to intertwine mindfulness, and her knowledge and experience with reading brings a new perspective to tutorial sessions and it is not uncommon to find tutees thoroughly engaged in discussion with her.

As a participant of several clubs and events such as the Equestrian Drill Team, Arabian horse shows, and the Kellogg Honors Program, Madeleine also finds the time to partake in RAMP's quarterly book club. On the subject of her experience at Cal Poly Pomona as a student, Madeleine exclaims, "It's really exciting to mingle with such a diverse group!" In fact, she points to diversity as her favorite thing about CPP. "There are so many different people with varied and interesting backgrounds," she continues. While Madeleine's interest in diversity extends throughout campus, she plans on stretching her college experience across the Atlantic Ocean this summer. "I'm planning a year abroad to complete a Masters of Neuroscience at King's College in London," she informs. Yet, she maintains an open mind about her future plans and sees herself returning to the U.S. to continue her PhD and possibly a professorship.

Short Shouts for recent RAMPers Achievements and Accomplishments

Stephanie Martinez: Named RAMP's Outstanding Tutor at the LRC Awards Ceremony.

Connie Yeh: Received the tutor award for the Dawn Van Bruggen Memorial Scholarship; given Honorable Recognition at the LRC Awards Ceremony.

Melissa Ugalde: Received the tutee award for the Dawn Van Bruggen Memorial Scholarship.

Amanda Riggle: Given the Director's Award for excellent service to the Learning Resource Center at the LRC Awards Ceremony.

Madeleine Gross: Named Valedictorian for the College of Agriculture.

Student Spotlight: Michael Thompson (pictured below)

Michael Thompson, most commonly known as “Mike” around these parts of campus, became a RAMP participant in fall of 2014. As an Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology major, Mike admits, “I was a big fan of MacGyver and the A-Team growing up. I was always in love with the idea of being given the short end of the stick and using the resources available to me to make it work out.” Continuing on the topic of his major, Mike adds, “A lot of people got into their majors for similar reasons and tend to find out that the real thing does not live up to the image they have seen. Engineering is not like that. Engineering is all about your imagination. Making it happen and getting the job done with the resources available is the name of the game.” While Mike is often found sharing tales of his Engineering adventures, he is also very much involved with RAMP.

When asked how RAMP has influenced his college experience, he notes, “My reading and comprehension has gotten noticeably better. This was never a real problem for me but once I started with RAMP, I noticed that I had improved [...] I realized that there was significantly more room for improvement.” Mike’s participation in RAMP is not limited to tutorial services. He also participates in RAMP’s quarterly book club and recently baked two potato peel pies while the club discussed *The Guemsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*. Aside from RAMP, Mike is also on the Master’s Swim Team at the BRIC and he regularly attends physics seminars hosted by the Astronomy and Physics Department. When asked about his favorite thing about CPP, he responds, “There is always something new to learn or experience. It’s not just classes. There is a club for everything from learning Spanish to building a racecar.” Mike recognizes that there are “endless opportunities available here to help you grow as a person” at CPP.

On a more personal level, Mike describes his ideal Saturday as “getting a good swim in, then sitting on the porch to read while drinking a craft beer.” Lastly, when asked what advice he would give if he could travel in time and speak to himself as a college freshman, he remarks, “I would tell myself not to let getting into a university and moving forward seem daunting to the point where I am too scared to push the subject.” He reflects, “It took me a long time to get here and I wish I would have had enough persistence to have done it sooner, but I am here now and that is what is important.” Typical of Mike to set an encouraging and humorous tone, he concludes with the reminder to be the best senior he can possibly be and a Beavis and Butthead quote: “I think the future’s gonna be alright, Butthead.”



Tutor/Mentor Spotlight, Madeleine Gross



Student Spotlight, Michael Thompson

Spring 2015 Photo Gallery



Connie Yeh and Melissa Ugalde with Dawn's stepmom, Barbara, and father, Neal Van Bruggen.

Dawn Van Bruggen Memorial Scholarship recipients, Connie Yeh (RAMP Tutor/Peer Mentor) and Melissa Ugalde (RAMP Participant).



RAMP campus partners, Dalia Garcia, Crystal Steele, and Marcia Starcher (Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships)



RAMP Graduate, Carlos Soria with his mother.



RAMP campus partners, Liz Hernandez, ARCHES Learning Specialist, and Patricia Duran ARCHES Director



RAMP Graduate, Christian Murillo with his brother.



From top left to right: *Flordelina Mora, Connie Yeh, Amanda Riggle, Christian Murillo, Robert Matranga, Vincent Alejandro, David Speak, Miguel Galindo, Andrew Nguyen; middle row: Teresa Barretto, Helen Lowe, Stephanie Martinez, Carlos Soria, Mauricio Gonzalez, Lauren Sumabat, Wai Yi Tsang; bottom row: Dustin Johnson, Jai Oni Sly, Laura Ayon, Rachel Dominguez, and Eliseo Moreira*



RAMP recognizes graduating Tutors/Peer Mentors. Left to right: *Laura Ayon, Dustin Johnson, Stephanie Martinez, Connie Yeh, Andrew Nguyen, Lauren Sumabat, Amanda Riggle, and Robert Matranga*