

Fall 2014

"Maybe we should all just shut up and read a good book."

~Mary Sisney

RAMPED

READING ADVISING & MENTORING PROGRAM

A TRIO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER – CAL POLY POMONA

Director's Message

Another academic year has begun and we are excited to share what's new around here. As previously announced in our spring edition, we began this year with our new program name: *Reading Advising & Mentoring Program*. The new name more accurately reflects the array of services the program offers in an effort to help students persist and graduate from Cal Poly. While returning students are accustomed to referring to the program as CRSP, they agree that the new name does the program justice.

With the name change, came our new website, email address, and social media. Check us out at csupomona.edu/ramp, email us at ramp@cpp.edu, and follow us at [cpramp](#) on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

We also began the year with five new peer tutors / mentors. That's ½ our tutoring staff! We welcome Madeleine Gross, Anne Isidro, Andrew Nguyen, Erica Rodriguez, and Ramon Yanez. We are very pleased with their excellent tutoring skills, friendly demeanor, and dedication to their students.

Unfortunately, we did not begin the new academic year with long time advisor, Cynthia Greco. After 9 years as an advisor for the program (in addition to her 2 quarters as a peer tutor), Cynthia accepted a position as the Bronco Tutoring coordinator also within the LRC. While we miss Cynthia's presence in the program, we congratulate her on her new position. We will announce her replacement in January.

The RAMP staff and I wish you all happy and safe holidays and a restful break. See you all in 2015!

RAMP's Night Out with Pippin

By Amanda Riggle

The night started as all good nights start: with burritos. Our burritos were from *Qdoba*. With our students full and happy, we boarded the bus we had chartered for the trip out to The Pantages to see the 2013 Tony award-winning production of *Pippin*. For many of the students as well as the tutors in attendance, this was their first trip to The Pantages to see a professional theatrical production. *Pippin* was a great opportunity for our students to reflect on their current path in life, where they'd like that path to end up, and how the choices and decisions they make right now affect their future. *Pippin* is the story of one boy becoming a man and his quest to be great. While he is also a prince and an educated man, this journey is not easy and he's never sure of where he's going and he doesn't really find instant fulfillment from his immediate actions. A lot of our students can see themselves in the character of Pippin, for a lot of first-generation or low-income students don't have a lot of support at home, nor a clear path laid out ahead for them when it comes to fulfilling their future goals. Pippin does find his happiness, but it isn't from following his father's path, or the path laid out before him by the circus ringmaster of the show, but rather from following his own instincts and staying with the person that makes him happiest. Our students can mirror this lesson and understand that their path isn't going to be immediately fulfilling, nor is it going to be the path their parents followed, but if they stick to it, they'll find the thing that gives them satisfaction in the future. This is the power of culture, theater and art: it enables the viewer to experience life through the fantastic and apply those lessons without having to personally experience the negative consequences in their lives like the pain, the loss, the war, the death, and the sorrow that Pippin experiences in his show.

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

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FALL 2014 PEER TUTOR-MENTORS

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LAUREN SUMABAT

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CONNIE YEH

Professional Mentor Meeting: Dr. Suzanne Mata Matranga

Our fall 2014 professional mentor was Suzanne Mata Matranga, Psy. D. Dr. Mata Matranga spoke to approximately 60 RAMP participants, as well as program tutor-mentors, staff, and program guests. Focusing her message on a “one step at a time” theme, she took the very attentive audience through her educational journey, beginning with having her first child while still in high school through achieving her doctorate degree in psychology. Finally, she spoke about transitioning into her professional career and eventually private practice while balancing work life with a new baby, born 16 years after her first.

She shared with attendees the challenges she faced getting her undergraduate and graduate education, and gave them several “keys to success” for meeting and surpassing similar challenges in their own lives. Further, she encouraged attendees to make use of mental health services available to them at Cal Poly Pomona and in the surrounding community.

Reflecting on the event, one student remarked, “I greatly benefitted from this event because it’s always nice to get inspiration once in a while. It gave me hope that anything can be accomplished and how I should take advantage of the many benefits the school offers.” Another said, “Dr. Mata Matranga gave great insight on experiences and drive. I appreciated hearing her story and advice; she was inspiring! She helped me to consider my mental health and to push myself.”

Upon concluding her talk, she received a hearty applause and many questions from the audience. As the event ended, many students continued to crowd around Dr. Mata Matranga at the podium with additional questions.

Tutor-Mentor Spotlight: Stephanie Martinez

Stephanie Martinez joined the RAMP staff in fall 2013. She studies psychology. When asked why she applied to work for the program, she replied, “When I joined

RAMP as a first-generation, low-income college student, it not only helped me better my study skills, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, but it more importantly allowed me to be a part of a community on campus. All the tutors made me feel welcomed and like I belonged. The decision to apply for RAMP was probably the easiest decision I have ever made; tutoring has always been a passion of mine and having the opportunity to be part of an amazing program such as RAMP has been a wonderful opportunity that has truly changed my life.”

Her favorite aspect of working for the program is that “[she loves] being able to interact with the students on a weekly basis. I love the fact that it is a program that focuses on college retention and graduation and allows the tutors to be mentors to the students as well. I also really like the fact that the RAMP staff, tutors, and students make up a community within Cal Poly Pomona.”

One might think we are writing these responses for Stephanie, but that is false.

Elsewhere on campus, Stephanie is active with the Psychology Honors Society, having been part of the club for 3 years. “It has been a great way to meet new people and network within my major,” she reports.

Asked what she likes most about being a student at Cal Poly Pomona, she notes, “I love that I am part of such a diverse campus. Being a Cal Poly Pomona student has opened various opportunities in my life that I would not have had otherwise.”

On her plans after receiving a bachelor’s degree, she says, “I hope to join the Peace Corp and study English in Cambodia for two years. Then I will pursue my teaching credentials in order to become a teacher. Subsequently I will pursue a master’s degree in a specific field of psychology. I just hope that my future will bring me challenges and adventures.”

On a lighter note, Stephanie is most decidedly a dog person. Why? “I don’t

really like cats; they are mean and scratch everything while dogs on the other hand are friendly and sweet and will forever be loyal to their owner,” she claims. If she could eat only one shape of pasta noodle for the rest of her life, it would be fusilli, the obvious choice because “it twisty and funny to look at.” She feels “it is a type of pasta that will always somehow surprise you when you cook it.”

Book Club Corner: Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?

Well, do they? The question was not quite answered. In fact, it was not clear whether androids dream at all. Nonetheless, the fall 2014 book club had interesting and engaging discussions about the book. Although the RAMP facilitator had brought a number of discussion questions and notes to guide discussion, none of them proved necessary as many book club members eagerly brought up interesting points and each meeting developed organically and better than could have been planned.

It helped that new RAMP tutor-mentor arrivals Erica Rodriguez, Madeleine Gross, and Ramon Yanez participated and added frequently to discussion. Erica Rodriguez developed the first meeting’s introductory materials on author Philip K. Dick.

During the third meeting, a contentious vote ultimately resulted in the selection of *The Road to En-Dor* as the book for winter 2015’s book club.

RAMP, ARCHES, and EOP Deliver Series of Financial Aid and Financial Literacy Workshops

Continuing the collaborative effort, the programs converged before the quarter began to finalize plans for the fall series of financial workshops. In weeks 2 and 4, “Making Sense of Financial Aid” was offered to help students understand the various components of their financial aid awards and how to use BroncoDirect to monitor financial aid information.

Also in week 4, the first of a 3-part series of financial literacy workshops presented by Joy Tafarella of the Cal Poly Pomona Federal Credit Union, “Savings and Budget/Online Budgeting Tools,” was offered, in which students were given tips and resources for managing their money. The second part of that workshop occurred in week 5, with “Credit and Debt.” In that workshop, attendees received information about credit scores and managing credit cards, among other things. In week 6, the third workshop occurred, “Where Does My \$ Go? Paychecks and Taxes.”

Next up in weeks 7 and 8 were two financial aid workshops, “Intro to Scholarships,” covering some important tips and strategies for successfully applying for scholarship funds. Also in week 8 was a workshop on renewing health insurance coverage under Covered California. Finally, week 10 saw the addition of a FAFSA renewal workshop.

Thus, in every week of the quarter except the first, the three programs had some financial workshop available to the participants of the each program.

LRC Corner: Farewell to Graduate Assistant Stephanie Gibbons

Learning Resource Center staff would like to thank our Graduate Assistant, Stephanie Gibbons, for her outstanding contributions over this past year. Stephanie has been with the LRC since Fall 2013 and will be moving on in order to take on a new role within the EFL department as a Teaching Associate. We wish her the best of luck with her new endeavor, and want her to know just how much we will miss her good humor, organizational skills, professionalism, and technological prowess around the office.

RAMP Hosts Fall Orientation and Welcome Back Events

During “week zero,” RAMP hosted its annual orientation event on September 26. Unlike previous years, this time the event focused solely on informing potential new participants about the program. Students who participated with the program before the 2014–15 academic year were instead invited to a casual “Welcome

Back” ice cream social featuring root beer and Coke floats. Although not heavily attended, the event allowed program staff to commingle with several program stalwarts and share stories about the summer break.

The orientation, on the other hand, was quite heavily attended. With support of EOP and Office of Financial Aid sending emails to potentially eligible students, over a hundred students streamed in throughout the 2 and half hour event. Several stations were staffed by RAMP staff and tutor-mentors, including several newly trained arrivals. Attendees started with an “info session” run by the tutor-mentors, and then proceeded through the stations receiving information and documentation to facilitate their entry into the program.

“Crunch N Munch” for Finals Week

Monday through Thursday of finals week, RAMP participants are invited and encouraged to use the RAMP tutorial space and computers for their study needs. RAMP tutor-mentors will be on hand to assist participants during some hours of the day as well, though there is no formal tutoring during finals week. In the morning, there will be an array of light snacks and beverages, such as muffins, donuts, fruit, coffee, and tea.

Fall Quarter Photo Gallery



RAMP Fall Orientation was attended by many students who were assisted by rotating to different stations to complete the orientation & application process.



Fall Welcome Back event included some cookies along with the items to make Root Beer or Coke floats.



Celebrating Halloween in the RAMP office!



LRC Director, tutors, RAMP staff, & family members prepare to participate in Matt's Run.



RAMP students & tutors enjoy pizza lunch as they wait to listen to this quarter's professional mentor's speech.



Suzanne Mata Matranga shares her challenges & struggles of reaching her goals as a first generation college student with RAMP students & tutors.



Andrea Lavilles, Perry Lin, Jazmin Juarez, Marilyn Boudoin Anderson, Kimberly Vongnalith, Madeleine Gross, Mirtha Lopez, & Connie Yeh take a picture before boarding the charter bus heading to Hollywood to watch PIPPIN.



RAMP students, tutors, director, and Professional Mentor Meeting speaker pose for a picture in the Pantages Theatre.

Back to Front: Andrew Russo, Denise Guevera, Anne Isidro, Laura Ayon, Madeleine Gross, Connie Yeh, Stephanie Martinez, Marilynn Boudin Anderson, Suzanne Mata Matranga, Amanda Riggle, Jasmine Martinez, Perry Lin, Jazmin Juarez, Mirtha Lopez, & Lauren Sumabat



Leslie Martinez, Mercedes Benjamin-Jaa, Jimena Estrada, & Gabriela Cortes pose in front of the Pantages Theatre.