

Winter Quarter 2014

"If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you only think what everyone else is thinking."

— Haruki Murakami

The CRSP Sun

...Bask in our news!



COLLEGE READING SKILLS PROGRAM

A TRIO STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM
LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER ~ CAL POLY POMONA

Director's Message

As some may be aware, many federal programs including CRSP (a TRIO Student Support Services project) began the academic year with a 5.23% reduction in funding. As a result, CRSP had to make some changes to our services including the reduction of off-campus cultural events and grant aid awarded to program participants. While we are expecting most of the funds to be reinstated next year, we are reminded about the importance of advocating for the existence of programs that assist underrepresented students. When asked at the CRSP Professional Mentor Meeting how we can protect instrumental programs such as CRSP, Hilda Solis responded by stressing the importance of communicating with our legislators and encouraged program participants to not only email their Representatives and Senators but to visit their local offices "because they need to hear from you." It is essential to advocate for continued funding and communicate the importance of TRIO programs to our federal legislators. Without funding, CRSP could cease to exist. If you or someone you know has benefitted from one or more of the TRIO programs (Student Support Services, Upward Bound, McNair, Educational Talent Search, and Educational Opportunity Centers), take a minute to share your experience with your legislators.

Book Club Corner

Winter Book Club read and discussed the feminist near-future dystopian novel, *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood. Through our discussions, members considered current social trends and attitudes that could result in a similar future: one in which an ultra-conservative religious regime could feasibly seize power and restructure our society to

resemble an exaggerated, traditional version of itself in which a woman's value is based solely on her reproductive ability. During the last meeting of the quarter, members voted on our spring reading, which will be *Invisible Monsters* by Chuck Palahniuk. Meetings are scheduled for Thursdays during U-Hour of weeks 3, 5, and 7. For more information about Book Club, please contact CRSP staff at (909) 869-4349 or crsp@csupomona.edu.



Professional Mentor Meeting

CRSP was honored to feature Cal Poly's Scholar-in-Residence Hilda Solis at the winter 2014 Professional Mentor Meeting. An alumna of CPP, Solis shared her perception of how the campus has changed since she studied here. Also a local, Solis traced her story beginning with growing up in La Puente. In high school, she told over sixty attendees, she had not realized attending a university was a reachable goal for her. Some had told her that the path for her was to find an office job somewhere after graduating. It was not until a counselor inspired her by encouraging her to apply to college that she considered the option. With this point, she was able to drive home to attendees the importance of finding mentors who will help them realize their potential.

She then related the tremendous experiences she had as a student intern at the White House and the new opportunities doing so offered her. She shared the development of her professional career after graduating college, eventually becoming a Congresswoman and Secretary of Labor for President Obama's first administration. It was clear that most of

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College Reading Skills Program In the LRC Library Rm. 2919

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WINTER 2014

PEER TUTOR-MENTORS

MOLLY DUONG

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JOHNATHAN LOPEZ

JASMINE MARTINEZ

STEPHANIE MARTINEZ

AMANDA RIGGLE

LAUREN SUMABAT

CONNIE YEY

MICHAEL ZHOU

the attendees hung on her every word, listening intently, because none of them noticed that the event had run a little over time. They could not even be bothered to go back for seconds of Round Table Pizza, graciously provided by the Learning Resource Center. Many remained after the event's conclusion to meet Solis in person, to continue asking questions, and to pose for a large group photo.

CRSP truly appreciates the time that Hilda Solis took with the program's participants.

Financial Literacy Workshops

The triumvirate of CRSP, ARCHES, and EOP offered a treasure trove of workshops throughout the winter quarter. Each quarter, the group meets to plan offerings for the next term. Beginning in week three, Crystal Steele led the first of two FAFSA renewal workshops for the quarter, the other taking place in week six.

At the FAFSA renewal workshops, Steele shares important updates about the financial aid process with attendees. For example, as of this year, she explained, there is a unit cap on Cal Grant funds, where students who have more than a set number of units become ineligible for the funds. Steele also answers attendees' questions to help them accurately fill out their applications. For those who have questions that involve personal information, Steele generously lingers after the workshop to speak to students individually.

In week four, a two-part workshop on scholarships took place. The first session focused on the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships' new interface students use to apply for on-campus scholarships: Bronco Scholarship Application (BSA). The presenters, Marcia Starcher and Saul Ramirez, walked attendees through the system so that they could apply to over 300 scholarships using the streamlined, online system.

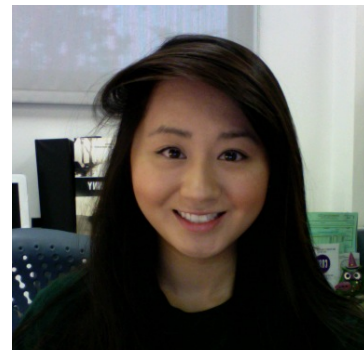
Part two of the scholarships workshop featured Patricia Durán, Director of ARCHES. She focused on key elements of successful scholarship applications. For example, she shared with students the importance of establishing relationships

with faculty members. Doing so, she explained, allows students to procure high-quality letters of recommendation. She also focused on strategies for writing strong personal statements. With the tools and strategies Durán shared with attendees, each of them was better prepared to submit successful scholarship applications.

Finally, in week eight, Joy Tafarella of the Cal Poly Federal Credit Union presented a workshop entitled, "Money Matters: Savings & Budget." Attendees received a wealth of information to help them organize and plan for financial success. In an interactive session, she spoke about the importance of establishing priorities, including by labeling expenses as "needs" or "wants."

Spring quarter workshops will focus on other areas of financial literacy and aid including Satisfactory Academic Progress and planning for retirement as a college student.

Tutor-Mentor Spotlight: Molly Duong



Molly Duong joined the CRSP staff in spring 2013. She studies biology and has been accepted to a graduate program in optometry. When asked why she applied to work for the program, she replied, "Initially, I wanted to find a job where I can utilize my skills to teach and aid other students. I considered applying to multiple tutoring groups on campus, but was ultimately attracted to CRSP due to its mentorship approach. I like the fact that I can help students with questions beyond academics and that I can follow up with them on a weekly, and even quarterly, basis."

Her favorite aspect of working for CRSP is that she can “always be reading something here, whether it be an article that a student is working on or my own personal novel. Reading is one of my favorite hobbies, and I feel that it is encouraged and in abundance here.”

Molly is widely involved on campus. She currently serves as co-president of the Pre-Optometry Club. And she is a member of the Tri-Beta and Circle K International organizations. Since joining the program, she has also been a regular member of the CRSP Book Club. A music talent to boot, she has performed in CPP’s string ensemble group “a few times.” Private violin lessons continue to hone her skills.

Regarding Cal Poly Pomona, Molly favors the diversity of the campus. “In all my years here,” she says, “it never ceases to surprise me how different and unique each student is and how divergent our backgrounds and future aspirations are. I think it makes for an interesting environment.”

After earning her bachelor’s degree, she will attend graduate school in optometry at UC Berkeley, with hopes to eventually practice as an optometrist. She would also “like to participate in research towards improving the technological designs of current vision aids.”

Molly’s favorite condiment is honey mustard. When asked to defend her choice, she parried with this: “I don’t like traditional mustard, but the honey part magically makes it better.” Who can argue with a magical condiment?

LRC Corner

Last quarter, the Learning Resource Center hosted a Student Open House that included a re-naming contest for MaSH and General Tutoring. The winning entry was penned by Joy Chang. The new name bristles with school spirit and campus pride: *Bronco Tutoring*. It is, after all, where Broncos go for excellent support in wide variety of courses, with both walk-in and appointment-based tutoring available.

Look out for new signage to appear in the LRC that reflects the updated identity of the tutoring programs.



Joy Chang and Robert Matranga



Professional Mentor, Secretary Hilda Solis (*left*); Solis with CRSP participants (*right*)