

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

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Crafton Hills College's State-of-the-Art Public Safety Training Center Celebrated at Grand Opening



A new resource that will enhance the training program for first-responder students was officially unveiled at the Jan. 12 ribbon-cutting ceremony.

CHC's all-new Public Safety Training Center was inaugurated with a celebration, attended by college officials, program alumni, and community supporters almost one-year after ground-breaking and more than a decade of planning.

The three-story building will house several state-of-the-art functions designed to train first responders in the fire and paramedic fields. They include:

- Fire burn simulation rooms modeled after a typical kitchen and bedroom.
- Balcony and window structures that allow for ladder drills.
- Space for rope rescue and rappelling operations.
- A hose drill area.

Crafton's Public Safety Training Center is the first building to be completed with funds from Measure CC; a 2018 bond approved by voters to fund campus upgrades.

Since its launch, Crafton's Fire Academy has produced some of the best trained firefighters in public service, including

dozens working for agencies in our own backyards, such as Redlands Fire, San Bernardino County Fire, and the San Manuel Fire Departments. In turn, San Manuel has lent its support to the Academy, with student scholarships and a \$1.8 million grant to cover student expenses for the program, which requires students to spend five-days a week in-and-outside the classroom for training.

"This program, this project, is transformational for our first responder community, and we absolutely could not have done it without our community partners," said Crafton Hills College President Kevin Horan.

The first cohort of cadets to use the space started their program on Jan. 16 but the program is still in need of support from donors.

Program alumni are being asked to "pay it forward" through the College's San Manuel Pay-It-Forward Campaign, where each donation contributed will be put toward a \$5 million endowment fund to support students enrolled in the academy. Donations may be made with a one-time payment or installments. To learn more, call 909-389-3245.

Photo: Dr. Kevin Horan cuts ribbon at PSTC grand opening.

Paramedic Graduation, Class 101: A Heartfelt and Joyful Ceremony



On January 19, CHC celebrated its 101st graduating class of paramedics.

As the ceremony began, Dan Word, Dean of Career Education & Human Development, talked about how the graduates' loved ones were integral to their success, and he encouraged the crowd to make some noise. He then invited Medical Director Dr.

Phong Nguyen to the podium, who spoke directly to the graduates, saying, "You are here because you dedicate yourself to the profession" and encouraging them to be compassionate to their patients, take care of themselves, and continue to learn and improve.

He closed his remarks by singing a version

of "You Raise Me Up," followed by a parody version relating to paramedic graduates and their studies.

Nguyen and Program Director Amanda Ward presented the student award recipient, all of whom were chosen by faculty members:

- Cardiology Award: Cooper Whitworth
- Skills Award: Spencer Berklite
- Theory Award: Ezra Zaroff
- Assessment Award: Cooper Whitworth
- Pharmacology Award: Taylor Carter
- Field Award: Logan Romo
- Director's Award: Aedon Kenyon
- Clinical Award: Sabrina Bruni
- Director Award: Jaden Teel & Jesselyn Mann

After receiving their certificates, the 22 graduates were told that each would receive a check from the CHC Foundation to help them pay for their licensure fees.

Photo: Paramedic Graduates.

Dr. Takesha Valentine Cooper: Leadership, Education, and Love

When she could not afford to attend her first choice of UCLA, Takesha Cooper began her higher education journey at Crafton Hills College. Cooper now realizes how fate worked in her favor, and beginning her higher education journey at Crafton was the absolute best choice. Cooper notes that being mentored by Mr. E (Computer Science Professor Jay Edwards), taking physics classes from Mr. Thurman, getting involved in student leadership through the Associated Students, becoming president of the campus's Black Student Union, and meeting her future husband were a few of the highlights that have prompted her to become an advocate for community colleges.

After graduating from CHC in 1994, Cooper transferred to UC Santa Barbara, went on to earn a master's from UC Riverside, and earned her Doctor of Medicine degree from the Keck School of Medicine at the

University of Southern California.

Cooper began her career working within the Riverside University Health System and Riverside County Department of Mental Health, where she oversaw regional psychiatric county clinics. She also worked as an adjunct professor of psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine and became a double board-certified child, adolescent, and adult psychiatrist. Cooper used her education, training, and experience to create her own private practice that served patients from a variety of diverse backgrounds.

Though it has been thirty years since she attended CHC, Cooper knows firsthand what an impact a place like CHC can have on a person's life, saying: "The role that community colleges have on the lives of others is so important. I share this with my residents and medical students as well as



high school students who worry that this path will lead to them appearing 'less than' and I reassure them with the stories of how wonderful my experience was."

Photo: Dr. Takesha Valentine Cooper.

Roadrunner Named to The Obama Foundation’s Inaugural Leaders USA Program



Royal Ramey knows the importance of a second chance. And his work as the co-founder of the Forestry Fire Recruitment Program (FFRP) has gained national headlines and the attention of President Barack Obama.

Ramey is among 100 leaders from across the U.S. named to The Obama Foundation’s Leaders USA Program.

After being released from prison, Ramey and FFRP Co-Founder Brandon Smith struggled to find their footing back into civilian life. Although they had experience in fire forestry while incarcerated, their efforts to find jobs that utilize those skills with a record were invariably rebuffed because of their prison records.

But it was while in prison that Ramey learned about Crafton Hills College’s Fire Academy, and after going through the application process, Ramey and Smith finally got their chance to begin their careers in firefighting.

Founded in 2015, the FFRP builds bridges between formerly incarcerated wildland firefighters and California’s forestry fire labor face through in-reach services, post-release training, job coaching, and an employment pre-apprenticeship program. In turn, those supported by the program qualify to help fill the staffing needs for fighting forest fires.

“We want to set them up with tools that will lead them to a better life,” Ramey said. “For me, my work has a higher purpose – setting up the next generation of wildland fire fighters. It’s my duty – from now until my last breath – to be of service for these folks.”

Photo: Royal Ramey.

CHC’s Theatre Arts Department Earns Kennedy Center Recognition for ‘Earnest’ Production



Crafton Hills College’s Theatre Arts Department received an unexpected gift before the 2023 holiday break: adjudication from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF).

Following its final performance of “The Importance of Being Earnest” on Dec. 3, Jodi Julian, head of theatre arts at Riverside City College, critiqued the young performers as part of KCACTF requirements for recognition. This formal adjudication is

the first time that any Crafton dramatic production has been adjudicated in over a decade.

“It was all very informative for the students and myself,” explained Paul Jacques, chair of theatre arts at Crafton. “You can file for adjudication once per year, so this [production] was the one that most represented our talent.”

The KCACTF is a nationally recognized program serving 18,000 students from colleges and universities across the U.S. Adjudication allows theatre professionals to critique productions and provide feedback that will help performers perfect their craft with tips provided.

Crafton’s production of “Earnest” put its theater students to the test by bringing modern touches to Oscar Wilde’s 129-year-old script. The play tells the story of a man named Jack Worthing, who finds himself in a pickle: falling in love with a woman, Gwendolen Fairfax, who believes his name to be Ernest, a name Worthing created to cover up his behavior in dubious circumstances. As per many of Wilde’s

comedies, shenanigans quickly follow.

Jacques said he kept news of the adjudication under wraps until curtain call because he did not want to throw off the actors prior to the start of the performance. But once the show ended, Jacques called his cast to center stage, where Julian gave a critique of the production.

“The students need to get used to hearing critique. It’s a growing process for everyone, a good growing process,” Jacques said. “This means that they are not afraid of hearing critique that’s good or bad. They’re learning how to be a fish in a big ocean.”

The adjudication brings with it a boost of morale to Crafton’s theatre program as it enters its 2024 season with two shows in the works: HAM, a “Twilight Zone”-inspired production in February and “Legally Blonde: The Musical” April 26 and 27 at 8p.m. and April 28 at 2 p.m.

For tickets to future productions, visit craftonhills.edu/tickets

Photo: CHC Theatre Students.

CCCEOPSA Adds Longtime Crafton Counselor and Administrator to its Hall of Fame



The California Community College Extended Opportunity Program & Service Association (CCCEOPSA) has added Rejoice Chavira to its Hall of Fame.

Each year, the CCCEOPSA opens nominations for three conference award categories: Leadership, Outstanding Service, and Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame is the organization’s highest award and is annually given to the person who has “made a significant contribution and actively promoted the advancement and

mission” of the association.

In the early 2000s, Chavira joined the Crafton EOPS team. Chavira said she was completely caught off guard when conference organizers called her up to the stage to receive the award.

“When they started saying why I got it, the tears just started flowing because you’re not expecting this,” she explained. “I think it added more to the moment because it was a surprise.”

“When they were talking about [the award], they wanted me to say something, but I was so in shock because this was such a surprise,” she continued. “But when I finally could, all I could say was, ‘I don’t deserve this.’ To me, it was just all so surreal.”

Since starting her career in education, Chavira has made it her mission to be the voice of those in need of a hand up.

She tells each of the students she counsels, “No matter your circumstance, we see you and we want to help you, I’m going to do all that I can to support you while you’re here,” she continued. “And I’m confident you’re going to graduate.”

Chavira said. “The staff at Crafton really cares about the students and truly believes in them. That’s very important – anyone can come to Crafton, but you have to treat them right and take the time to know each student. Everyone’s story is different.”

Photo: Rejoice Chavira (center) with the EOPS faculty and staff.

CHC Student Selected for California Medicine Scholars Program at UCR



Wendy Chacon Ventura is about to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime journey! Motivated by her love for her daughters and encouraged by CHC faculty, Chacon Ventura has been accepted into the California Medicine Scholars Program (CMSP) at UC Riverside (UCR).

Chacon Ventura is a first generation Central American and a single mom of three girls. With Spanish as her native language, she learned English through reading and developed a love for it.

Initially, Chacon Ventura was skeptical of her ability to succeed academically, but she took the chance and started taking classes at SBVC and CHC. She is now working toward becoming a nurse practitioner after receiving encouragement from faculty she

worked with along the way. Their support helped her move past her self-doubts and pushed her to apply to the CMSP at UCR. She is now one of only 62 community college students to be selected for the program.

The CMSP is part of the new Inland Empire Regional Hub for Healthcare Opportunity (IE RHHO) and provides a pathway from community college to medical school. Students like Chacon Ventura who are selected to be part of this program will be provided with academic and medical school advising, mentorship opportunities, clinical and research experience, and professional development opportunities.

Photo: Wendy Chacon Ventura.