



The Student Services Messenger

SBCC Welcomes Megan Ortega as New Financial Aid Technician

Megan Ortega may be the newest staff member in Financial Aid, but she is by no means a stranger to SBCC. After graduating from Santa Barbara High School in 2014, Ortega enrolled as a student at SBCC and quickly became involved in the campus community.

Before transferring to Cal State Channel Islands to earn a BA in Sociology in 2020, Ortega worked for EOPS as a peer mentor. Ortega credits SBCC mentors such as Adolfo Corral and Chicano Studies professor Melinda Gandara with being influential in her own educational journey, describing how Corral in particular “was always there when I needed him. Whenever I showed up to his office, he would stop what he was doing and make time for me.”

Ortega sees her new role as a Financial Aid Technician as a way to give back this same support to SBCC students who are similarly seeking guidance and help. She was also inspired by SBCC’s Financial Aid staff to follow this career path, saying “they went above and beyond when it came to training and guiding me as a student and it is nice coming back to that today.”

Specializing in Financial Aid outreach, Ortega is often the first person students will meet with when they reach out to the Financial Aid office. Ortega also hosts workshops on how to fill out the FAFSA and Dream Act applications. Having worked at the Financial Aid Office at CSUCI, Ortega began the job at SBCC with a strong understanding of many of the complex financial aid forms and processes.



Ortega has also started offering presentations during TAG workshops and is able to speak to students about what they can expect from financial aid packages at CSUs and UCs.

Financial Aid Director Maureen McRae Goldberg has known Ortega since she was a student worker and says, “I was impressed with Megan’s compassion for students during my first weeks as director of financial aid. I was so surprised that she was not full-time staff! I knew then that if Megan wanted to be in the field of financial aid she had a future. When an opening came for a new FA Technician, Megan’s application came in. I think two dreams were granted the day we hired her: mine and hers!”

We asked Ortega a few questions to get to know her a little better. When asked about her greatest fear, Ortega said it was “fear itself,” adding that fear often prevents us from trying something new, taking risks, or being open to new opportunities.

The living people Ortega most admires are both sets of grandparents who immigrated from Mexico to give their children and grandchildren a better life. “I admire their strength and the sacrifices they have made for my family,” Ortega said.

When asked if she has a personal motto, Ortega said it would be “try, keep trying, and then try again,” adding that it’s OK to not always have the right answer or do things perfectly the first time. Ortega describes her current state of mind as “grateful.” While the pandemic has been challenging, she observes that it has also been an important time for people to get to know themselves and really cherish the time we do have with friends, family, and loved ones. Ortega is also grateful to have returned to SBCC. Welcome back to SBCC, Megan!

Recognition Ceremony Held for Students at the SB County Jail

Last month, 22 students completed SBCC’s Personal Development 100 course at the Santa Barbara County Jail. For many, this was the first college course they had ever completed. The course

is offered as part of SBCC’s Transitions Program, whose goal is to help individuals re-integrate into society and support them in pursuing their goal of beginning or continuing college.

In collaboration with the Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Department, an outdoor recognition ceremony was held at the Santa Barbara County Jail yard. The students were honored and awarded with recognition certificates. Present from the Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Department were Chief Custody Deputy Vincent Wasilewski; Custody Commander Kenneth Callahan; Lieutenant Dulce Brooks; and Sheriff’s Treatment Program staff, counselors, and educators.

Representing SBCC were Dean Paloma Arnold, Dean Carola Smith, Chief Executive Officer of the SBCC Foundation Geoff Green, Director of EOPS/CARE Christina Llerena, Academic Counselor Ana Garcia, Transitions Program Assistant Leslie Marin, Admissions and Records Technician Kyle Hernandez, and Student Program Advisor Noel Gomez.





The Student Services Messenger

Re-Enrollment Event Welcomes Students Back to SBCC



Caterer Alex Reyes

The Re-Enrollment Days event held on December 3 and 4 was well-received, with 160+ students showing up to start or finish enrolling for the Spring 2022 semester. A major marketing campaign led by the Office of Communications invited thousands of students who stopped out of SBCC during the pandemic to come back to school. An additional 320+ students who were not able to make it to the event filled out a survey stating what services they needed to re-enroll.

The programs and departments that participated in the event were CalFresh, Umoja, MESA & STEM, Health & Wellness, UTC, TAP, Transcript Evaluation, Admissions & Records, Dual Enrollment, Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, Academic Counseling, The Foundation (SBCC Promise Program), Cashiers, Transitions, and EOPS.



The Student Services Messenger

There were numerous success stories from the event. Academic Counseling Center Co-Chair Sara Hartley said “All of the students I worked with were really glad they had come...and it was clear some of them would not have re-enrolled had they not been invited to the event.”

Hartley added, “One of the students I helped said the postcard gave her the idea to return to SBCC as a Christmas present for her daughter who graduated from SBCC in 2020 and was trying to get her mom to finish her degree alongside her.” Other students who re-enrolled learned that they were only a class or two away from completing their degrees.

Noel Gomez was involved with inviting students to attend the event. Gomez said, “As part of our Transitions and formerly incarcerated student recruitment, two of our staff members contacted our community partners and informed them about the re-enrollment days. Lisandra Barrera, UCSB Underground Scholars Student Ambassador, also connected with the Rescue Mission to meet the students on Friday during our re-enrollment days.”

Gomez added, “With COVID and how some processes have become impersonal, it was great to see the excitement these students had. It helped reinforce that their campus presence is welcomed and that we want to see them succeed.”

The event also served as a mini-reunion for staff and faculty, many of whom had not seen each other in person since March 2020. There was no shortage of tears, hugs, and elbow bump greetings.

For fun, there was face painting, coloring books, and crayons for kids. Staff members were treated to

breakfast burritos from Catering by Rene. Students and everyone working the event feasted on a delicious lunch prepared by Alex Reyes of AR Catering. Friday’s lunch featured street tacos and rice and beans, and Saturday’s lunch was BBQ chicken, pork, or tofu, beans, and macaroni and cheese.

The success of the event could not have been achieved without dozens of SBCC staff, faculty, and managers coming together to make students feel welcome, provide services, support, counseling, and ultimately help get them re-enrolled for the Spring semester.



Thank you to the Office of Communications for taking photos of the event!



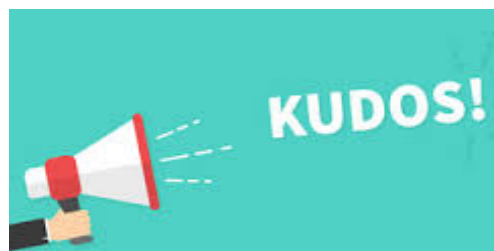
The Student Services Messenger

SBCC Co-Hosts Hiring Fair at the Bacara Resort



On October 26, the Career Center and Global Trade Workforce joined together with The Ritz-Carlton Bacara to host the first-ever SBCC Hiring Fair on The Bluffs at the luxury international resort. Nearly 50 SBCC students attended, enjoying refreshments and hors d'oeuvres, and meeting with managers and staff to discuss the benefits of working in their departments. Students learned about concierge and customer relations positions, culinary internships, and the resort's operations and sustainability department. Former SBCC student Renee Queiroz is now a full-time recruiter for The Ritz-Carlton Bacara, and she confirmed that most of the students who attended had applied for positions and were going through the interview process. The Ritz-Carlton Bacara is looking forward to the next hiring fair and to building a long-term relationship with SBCC where students can put their classroom learning into practice for an international company.

~Thanks to Christina Maguire and Shelby Arthur for this write-up



Mary Saragosa Recognized for 20 Years of Service at SBCC

This tribute for the 11/18 Board meeting was submitted by Financial Aid Director Maureen McRae Goldberg and the entire financial aid team.



In Appreciation of Mary Saragosa

Mary is a calm, steady ocean. In twenty years of service to SBCC, she has seen myriad changes in federal, state, and Board of Governors regulations and SBCC Policy and Procedures. She's seen directors and co-workers come and go; but there she has always been, riding the waves, calm and



The Student Services Messenger

steady. Mary is a consummate professional with an eye for detail and a mind that works like a computer. If we could clone her, she would be capable of handling every job in the office simultaneously. In short, Mary is irreplaceable.

Twenty years ago she was brought over from UCSB with the new SBCC financial aid director. He clearly saw how valuable Mary was and wanted those talents with him at SBCC. The fact that she's hit the 20-year mark at SBCC shows how right he was.

Mary is the go-to person in the office when anyone is stuck with a thorny question (a common occurrence in financial aid). Her hard work and dedication make a difference for so many students at SBCC, and they aren't even aware of it! While Mary does meet with students, most of her work is in the background, bringing FAFSAs in, keeping Banner going. If a student received financial aid, Mary had a direct but silent role.

Mary is not just a team player for FinAid, but for the College as well. She is well respected and has played an active role in CSEA. Mary promotes self-growth by challenging and supporting others. She is always willing to ask hard questions and to fight for others' rights. Her colleagues say it is a pleasure to work and learn from someone who knows how to make a professional, friendly, and fun work environment.

Mary, your friends and colleagues all across the campus celebrate you on this special day. Thank you for making a difference in our office and the lives of the students we serve. Thank you for being a guide and mentor. You truly inspire us all.

Student Spotlight: Franny Lara



Franny Lara with her family

Juggling school, work, a fiancé, moving, and three children under the age of six with another on the way would leave most people overwhelmed to say the least. But not Franny Lara, whose calm and friendly demeanor contradicts the busyness surrounding her.

Raised in Santa Barbara, Lara always wore a smile despite some personal hardships her family endured. Lara reflects that "school was my happy place." She took on a lot of responsibility at an early age and her mother, in an effort to provide a constructive outlet for her, enrolled Lara in violin lessons at her elementary school when she was in the fourth grade. Later, she also took up the viola. Lara played in the orchestra her first three semesters

The Student Services Messenger

at SBCC and continued to play the soothing sounds of the stringed instruments each time one of her children was born. Throughout her life, Lara says, “music would help me relax and release anger in a good way.”

Working as a student worker for the Financial Aid department was a huge change from Lara’s previous job as a veterinary technician. She attributes much of her success in her current position to Financial Aid Technician Leslie Perez and Director Maureen McRae Goldberg. Of Perez, Lara said, she “taught me to be patient. You can’t take things personally.” It also has helped that Lara, a student herself, has been able to help students by “putting myself in their position.”

McRae Goldberg remarks that Lara is “thorough and kind, and she can always be relied on for her patience and good humor.”

Lara’s EOPS mentors - in particular CARE/CalWORKS Advisor and SPARC Program Coordinator Chelsea Lancaster and Academic Counselor Eli Villanueva - have provided much-needed support for her. Lancaster has been there for Lara as she’s navigated the challenges of being a student and mom. Lara said Villanueva has helped immensely with choosing her classes and “trying to help me succeed versus dropping or quitting.”

Lara’s goal is to earn an Associate’s degree in Psychology for Transfer. Her curriculum, which has been supplemented with ECE classes, is preparing her for her dream of working “with children in Psychology in the educational field.”

Lara also draws strength from her Christian faith and takes the responsibility of being a mother very seriously.

Striving to achieve her educational and career goals while always being present for her children led McRae Goldberg to comment, “Franny is an amazing role model, with 3 kids and 1 on the way, she keeps a positive attitude and is a genuine help to our students.”

Student Spotlight: Jakob Cavalli



EOPS Director Christina Llerena describes Peer Mentor Jakob Cavalli as a “celebrity” in the department. Cavalli was born and raised in Santa Barbara and graduated from Santa Barbara High School in 2019. That summer, he participated in the Running Start program and has stayed connected to EOPS ever since. Cavalli describes EOPS as his “second family” and chose to become a



The Student Services Messenger

peer mentor because he wanted to give other students the same positive experience he had.

EOPS/Guardian Scholars Coordinator Christina Lomeli has known Cavalli since he was in the Running Start program. While he started as a “somewhat quiet student,” she said, “we quickly made him feel at home.” Lomeli and other EOPS staff describe Cavalli as “humble, kind, and quite funny,” adding “what we admire most about Jakob is his genuine ability to connect with students at their level. The Running Start students really look up to him.”

Cavalli chose to major in Studio Art and Art History after his EOPS peer mentor encouraged him to take an art class. His favorite medium is screenprinting and SBCC was the first place where he was able to explore his artistic and creative side in an academic way.

In addition to art, Cavalli lists the three Geography courses he has taken with Professor Geordie Armstrong as his favorite classes at SBCC. Armstrong was the first professor Cavalli had at the college and he describes her as “extremely motivating, funny, and really cares about her students.”

After SBCC, Cavalli may transfer to a UC or start a screenprinting company. In the meantime, he is looking forward to spending time in the art studio and taking more in-person classes this Spring. He is also looking forward to continued interactions with students and staff in EOPS, adding “they are all family to me.”

Student Spotlights: Study Abroad Student Workers Rawle Paul, Ania Garcia, and Zhining Cui

Among other things, the Study Abroad program is actively working on five study abroad programs. Program Advisor Nicole Walther says “Without the amazing support and hard work of my student workers, it would not be possible to do the amount and quality of social media and email marketing outreach for all our programs. I am grateful that they exhibit the same enthusiasm about sharing our amazing abroad programs as I do.”

Rawle Paul



Rawle Paul is an honors student and he started working at SBCC in August. He has visited many countries such as Uganda and Ethiopia and he’s been inspired by his travels to help students find their perfect study abroad program. Paul has caught on quickly with all the study abroad program

The Student Services Messenger

details and procedures. He is diligent and proactive about creating email marketing and writes great blogs for the Study Abroad [Academic Adventure blog](#). Walther said, “Within a very short amount of time, he’s proven that with his quality of work I can just give him a project and know it gets done well without much supervision. He comes up with great and fun blog topics and I’m always excited to hear about his next idea.”

Ania Garcia



Ania Garcia is a Marketing/Communications major, so is a great fit for working on the many social media campaigns for Study Abroad. She started in the office over the summer and fittingly had her interview for the position while she was traveling. Garcia has visited many countries including Greece, Italy, Spain, and Venezuela. Stay tuned for Ania to come to your classroom (or virtual classroom) in the spring to tell you all about the Study Abroad programs.

Zhining Cui



Zhining Cui is an international student, an SBCC ambassador, part of the Associated Student Government, a Unibuddy ambassador, and even though she’s so busy, no task seems to be impossible for her. She’s traveled all over the world including Australia and Russia and believes that studying abroad helps people learn about different cultures and recognize and appreciate the differences. Cui enjoys creating awareness about the programs as they also enable her to connect with like-minded people. From redecorating the Study Abroad display window in the IDC building to creating social media campaigns on Instagram @studyabroadsbcc, to supporting Walther with office tasks or helping at events, her talents are diverse.

Study Abroad Mythbuster: A common misconception is that you can only participate in programs if you have a specific major. In fact, there



The Student Services Messenger

is no major requirement on any programs. Studying abroad can help you finish your IGETC requirements and will add to your academic and personal development profile. No matter what your major is, recruiters and admission coordinators know that studying abroad adds a set of skills to a potential employee or student that no other experience can compare to.

Study Abroad in the Time of COVID

Being able to set up meetings via Zoom or joining program information sessions from anywhere has enabled a whole new set of prospective program participants to find out about Study Abroad programs. There has been an increase in students from local high schools and other colleges who apply for the study abroad program and enroll at SBCC.



Kudos to Ivena Sakelarieva

Ivena works closely with collecting data for SBCC Study Abroad scholarships, setting up the scholarship applications, informing the selected students, and if she finds time, she joins our program directors on their information sessions to answer any finance-related study abroad questions students have! Thank you for your support Ivena!

~Nicole Walther

Kudos to Lacy Peters, Dr. JennyErika Barco Quinonez, and Andrew Gil for Becoming Tenured Faculty



Lacy Peters, Dr. JennyErika Barco Quinonez, and Andrew Gil were the three Student Services Faculty members who were honored at the 2020-21 Faculty Tenure Reception.

Andrew “Andy” Gil

One of Andy’s students said: “Andy has been here for me since day one, I remember being a freshman at city college having no knowledge of how or where to start. Andy gave me the necessary tools and support to help guide me in the right direction in order to complete my time here at city college. Not only is he incredibly helpful, but he loves his job. Andy is fully engaged when he is counseling and is very enthusiastic whenever I have overcome a difficult obstacle. I wouldn’t have been where I am today if it weren’t for Andy.”



The Student Services Messenger

Sabrina Barajas said of Andy: “He was effective throughout his counseling session and provided the student with several teaching moments when explaining self-service tools and resources. Andy is great at motivating students and being their personal cheerleader. He will go above and beyond in working with students and his passion for the students is evident in his work and the relationships he has created with each student.”

Dr. JennyErika Barco Quinonez

One of JennyErika’s colleagues Kathie Adams said, “She has consistently demonstrated that she possesses the skills that make her an excellent organizer, coordinator, visionary, and an exceptional counselor. Rarely does one find both these strengths in one individual.”

One of her students said she is an “extraordinary person, very caring, informative, and engaging.”

Lacey Peters

Lacey’s Department Chair Laura Fariss said: “I am so proud of the way Lacey serves our college. She has strong ethics and integrity that serve her and the college well as she represents her profession on campus and in the greater community. She fulfills her faculty duties as she brings much needed mental health care to our students and staff.” One of her students’ said: “Lacey is by far the best counselor I have ever been told I have never found anyone else so easy to talk to in all my years of getting counseling.” Another said “Thank you for the 2 amazing years I could ever ask for. You always believed in me, you were the light in my life.”



Kudos to Kristy Renteria

Just as the Re-Enrollment event was coming to a close and the sun was setting on Saturday, a few students showed up who needed to re-apply to the credit ESL program. They were facing multiple roadblocks and Kristy Renteria patiently stayed for over an hour after the event finished to help them get on track for Spring. Thanks for going above and beyond to help students, Kristy!



If you have anything you’d like to share in a future issue of *The Student Services Messenger*, please email it to studentaffairsoffice@pipeline.sbcc.edu or [fill out this google survey](#).