

WINTER 2014

VITAE

THE MAGAZINE OF
VALENCIA COLLEGE

BUILDING A BIOSPHERE

How Proximity to Medical City is Changing
the Educational Landscape



VITAE

Rooted in the Latin word for “life,” vitae (vee-tay) means: the course of one’s life or career; a short account of a person’s life; a resume. Because the purpose of this magazine is to keep you connected to Valencia, the title Vitae reflects the collective resume of alumni, faculty, staff and students who have proudly walked through our doors.

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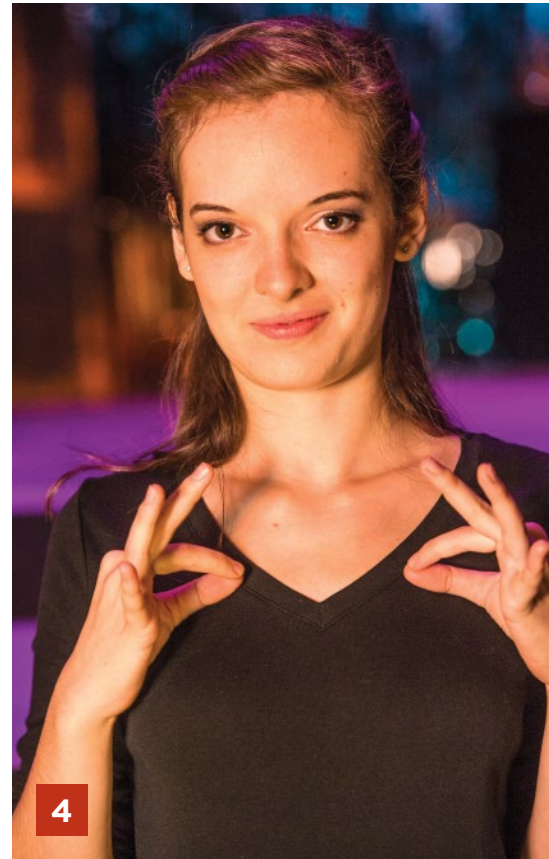
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VALENCIA NEWS



Adopting an Elementary School

It's official. Valencia College has "adopted" Lawton Chiles Elementary School.

Now Valencia students who are interested in becoming teachers will have the chance to volunteer at the Orange County elementary school and learn more about a teaching career through volunteer opportunities and field experience at the school, which is located near Rouse Road in east Orange County. In addition, students at Lawton Chiles Elementary will also benefit from exposure to college students—and the idea of going to college.

An "adoption ceremony" took place in October at the elementary school. Principal Sheila Burke presented a framed adoption certificate to Dr. Stacey Johnson, president of Valencia's East and Winter Park campuses, and Dr. Johnson presented a framed adoption certificate to Burke.

Lawton Chiles Elementary serves a disadvantaged neighborhood—with 76 percent of the students receiving a free or reduced-price lunch.

Valencia Named 'Military-Friendly' School for Second Year

Valencia College has been named a "military-friendly school" for the second year in a row. The Military Friendly Schools designation is awarded to the top 20 percent of colleges, universities and trade schools in the country that are doing the most to embrace military students and ensure their success in the classroom and after graduation.

"Inclusion on the 2014 list of Military Friendly Schools shows Valencia's commitment to providing

a supportive environment for military students," said Sean Collins, vice president at Victory Media and a nine-year Navy veteran.

More than 3,300 veterans were enrolled in classes at Valencia last fall. Valencia provides veterans services on all of its campuses, including assistance with VA benefits, student support, workshops and activities. There's also a student veterans' club, a veterans-only speech class, and professional development to help faculty recognize the unique challenges veterans face as they integrate into the college environment.

Photograph by Brandon Albert





Cuban Activist Yoani Sánchez Enthralls Crowd

Famed Cuban dissident Yoani Sánchez, whose commentaries on life in modern-day Cuba have made her an Internet sensation, says that technology is opening doors and minds in Cuba—and that access to the Internet could change the island's future.

Sánchez, 38, whose blog, Generation Y (<http://generacionyen.wordpress.com/>), gets more than 15 million hits a month and is translated into 20 languages, spoke at Valencia College on Oct. 31 at the invitation of West Campus professor Richard Sansone.

Since starting her blog in 1994, Sánchez has become one of the voices of dissent on the island of 11 million people. In 2008, Time magazine

named her one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

In addition to telling her story about life under Communist rule, she encouraged young people to become active, both on social media and in person.



valenciacollege.edu/yoanisanchez

Watch the video.

Poinciana Will Be Home to Valencia's Next Campus

The State Board of Education in November approved Valencia College's plans to create a new campus in Poinciana, paving the way for Valencia to begin the process of looking for a site for the new campus.

When the campus will be completed depends on state funding, but college officials hope to get it added to the list of state-approved building projects. Plans call for a 60,000–70,000 square foot building,

which would serve about 2,500 students. Eventually, the campus would encompass 150,000 square feet of classrooms and offices and would serve about 4,000 students.

Poinciana is one of the fastest-growing communities in Central Florida. Census figures show that the area's population grew from 13,600 residents to more than 53,000 from 2000 to 2010.

Currently, students who live in the Poinciana area must commute about 45 minutes during rush hour—or two hours by bus—to reach Valencia's Osceola Campus.





Signs of the times



Photograph by Roberto Gonzalez

Valencia's sign-language students demonstrate the artsy side of interpretation.

By Linda Shrieves Beaty

When Tess Carr takes her spot near the stage for the musical “Chicago,” she can feel hundreds of eyes on her. Her nerves flutter.

Sitting in the front row are her professors, along with other students in her sign-language interpretation program. Nearby, her parents and grandparents are watching.

Although she has plenty of experience onstage from her days as a child actress, she is at Valencia's Performing Arts Center on this night not to act, but to translate. For the college's production of “Chicago,” she and two other sign-language students will translate the songs and words onstage for deaf patrons in the audience.

But after the team signs “All That Jazz,” Carr's nervousness disappears. As the vixen

Roxie, she must not just sign the words, but act out the play too. When Roxie is angry, so is Carr. When Roxie is sexy, she must be sexy. However, on this night Carr has a bigger role—helping deaf people understand and enjoy the Bob Fosse show as much as their hearing counterparts.

“It's terrifying to interpret for the first time—to have everyone looking at you,” says Carr, who's in her second year in Valencia's acclaimed sign-language interpretation program. Now 20 and a veteran of Orlando's Repertory Theater and some Mad Cow productions, Carr isn't nervous about being on stage. Instead, she worries about her skills as a sign-language interpreter. “You're creating the bridge of language. And to have people expecting you to help them understand the play, that's scary.



Jordan Kralik ('13) and Sasha Quintana sign during Valencia College Theater's production of "Chicago."



Debbie Drobney, director of Valencia's sign-language program, translates songs into American Sign Language for the team of student interpreters.

There's a lot of pressure."

It's also physically and mentally demanding. While there are dozens of actors in the play, the three student interpreters—Carr, Sasha Quintana and Jordan Kralik—must play every role in the musical.

"We have to know everyone's part," says Quintana, who plays the role of Velma—and many others in the production. With a theater background, Quintana loves signing for plays but is still learning to keep her signing in bounds. She notes, with a laugh, that translators are "not supposed to 'out-act' the actor."

Let's put on a really great show

For seven years, Valencia's sign-language students have interpreted the college's fall musicals, from "Little Shop of Horrors" to "Urinetown."

The student interpreters aren't available for every night of a play's run. Typically, they interpret for one night, a carefully choreographed production in which a team of sign-language students stand below the stage, within view of the actors, and re-create the play so that deaf patrons can watch them signing and see the actors performing onstage.

In 2006, when the Orlando Gay Chorus was struggling to find sign-language interpreters who would sign the group's performances for free, Valencia sign-language professors Eli Sierra and Debbie Drobney suggested that Valencia students could help.

Since then, Valencia students have interpreted at a wide range of public events—from Orlando Magic games, where this year they're signing the national

anthem, to concerts at Universal Studios Florida.

First, however, students must submit audition tapes to Drobney. Widely known as a perfectionist, Drobney studies the tapes to determine which students are ready—whether it's to sign the national anthem or a Universal Studios concert. Last year, when Drobney suggested that Jordan Kralik submit an audition tape for Universal's "Rock the Universe" concert series, he was thrilled.

"Just the fact that she asked me to send an audition tape really confirmed that I was doing something right," says Kralik, 21, now a junior at the University of North Florida, where he's working on his bachelor's degree in sign-language interpretation. "I was so ecstatic to have that opportunity."

The theme park began using Valencia's sign-language students four years ago when the park's team of three full-time interpreters and 10 part-timers couldn't cover the increasing number of concerts. Since then, Valencia students have shared the stage with groups including The Roots, Boys Like Girls and Trey Songz.

"There were times when we would be struggling, when our regular staff or other interpreters couldn't go," says George Costa, senior interpreter for Universal Studios, "and Debbie would invariably step up and say, 'I've got this really talented student or former student who can do this.' And she'd invest the energy and do the prep work with them, so that under her tutelage, they can get up there and do what they say they can do."

For Drobney, it seemed like a perfect marriage. Many of the

visiting singers are young hip-hop artists and, in some cases, the students already knew some of the songs. But she won't send just anybody there.

"I hand-pick the students who go to Universal. I can have them stand up and not be perfect here at Valencia," she says, "but at Universal, I have to have the crème de la crème. People have paid astronomical prices to get in there and go to their concerts, so we owe them a professional performance."

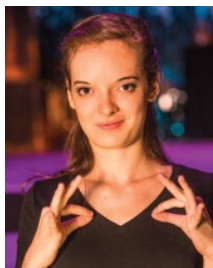
Wanted: A few brave souls

It is one thing to know American Sign Language and use it in a classroom or while interpreting in an everyday situation. It is quite another, says Drobney, to interpret the nuances of a musical or theatrical performance—while standing next to the stage.

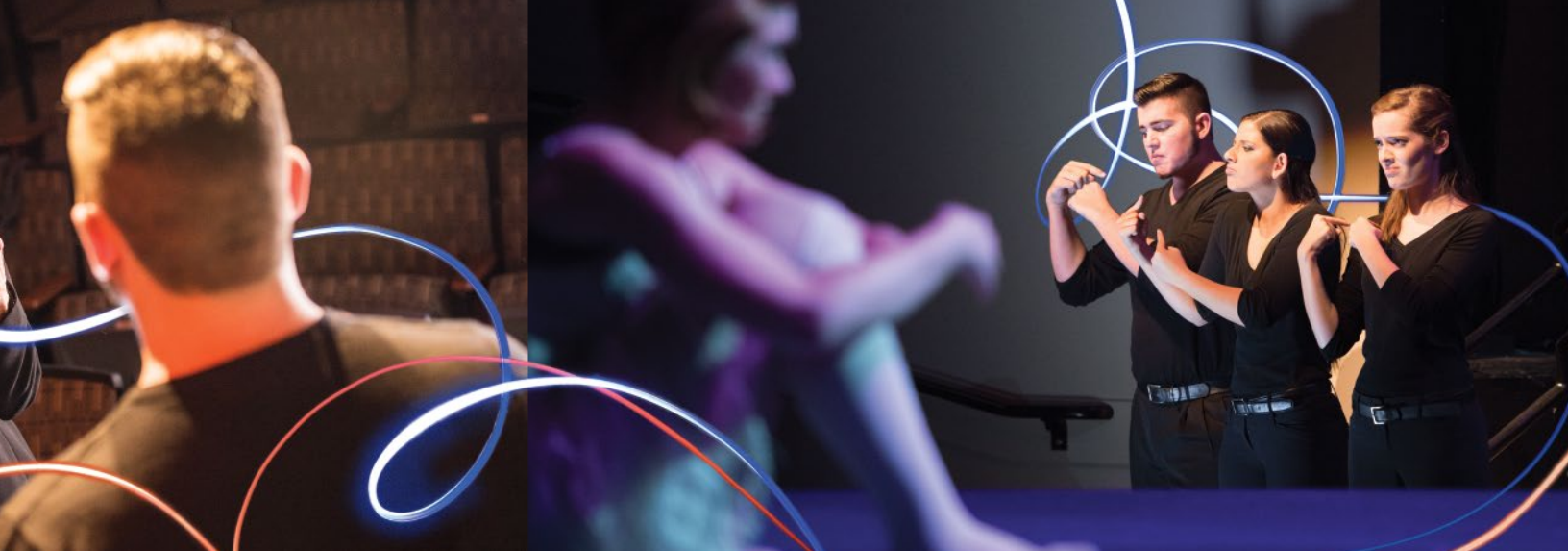
"Artistic interpretation is not for everyone," says Drobney. "Just like not everyone can work with elementary school kids, not everyone can do this type of interpretation."

One of the biggest worries is stage fright. "People are going to look at you," says Drobney, "even if they don't know what you're signing."

Drobney began interpreting plays and music when she was a student at Rochester Institute of Technology's National Technical Institute for the Deaf. There, she immersed herself in deaf culture. After graduation, Drobney moved to Florida to escape Rochester's harsh winters. In 1989, she began teaching at Valencia part-time, and by 2005, the college had so many sign-language students that Drobney helped create an Associate in Arts pre-major program. Today, 228 Valencia students are working on their associate's degree in sign-language interpretation.



Tess Carr



The three student interpreters auditioned for the chance to interpret for “Chicago.”

Photography by Roberto Gonzalez

Yet few of Valencia’s sign-language students actually start as sign-language majors. Many, like Kralik—who started as a film production technology major—stumble into a sign-language class and discover they have a penchant for it.

“I fell in love with the language and with the (deaf) culture,” says Kralik. “I have not looked back since.”

Quintana, who signed up for sign-language classes to fulfill a foreign-language requirement, now dreams of a career signing plays and music. “I grew up in a musical family—my dad’s a musician—so I was pushed to do singing, dancing and drama. My first opera was in third grade,” says Quintana. “So when I tried theatrical interpreting, I thought, wow! I can be onstage again! That was my aha moment.”

A force to be reckoned with

Drobney, as her students will tell you, is a force of nature.

She pushes and prods, needles and nags, cajoles and encourages.

“It’s like ‘The Devil Wears Prada,’” says sign-language student Oriana Ramos, a student assistant in Drobney’s office.

In the weeks before a musical, Drobney

rewrites the script in American Sign Language. She doesn’t pay much attention to the play’s dialogue, which the student interpreters will interpret on the fly (so that if the actors forget their lines and improvise, the deaf members of the audience will get the same dialogue that hearing audience members do.) Instead, Drobney focuses on the songs, rewriting the lyrics into American Sign Language.

That’s not as easy as it sounds.

A song, after all, has flow and rhythm and emotion. So Drobney carefully choreographs the signing, so the signs flow together and follow the beat of the music.

Meanwhile, the sign-language students have already spent weeks listening to CDs with songs from the show. Drobney has strict rules: Listen to no other music, she tells the students, so the music is ingrained in your brains. After they receive the sign-language script that Drobney has prepared, they practice signing to the music.

Four days before the play, it’s go time. The student interpreters dive into all-day sessions with Drobney in her office or a vacant classroom. With music blaring out of a boom box, the students practice the songs repeatedly, so Drobney can make sure they are signing

correctly—and in sync. As with synchronized swimming, every movement must be carefully choreographed, so the signing is as polished as the stage production.

The pace is frantic. “For the actors in a play, there’s a lot of down time” and it’s spread over many weeks, says Drobney. “With us, it’s go-go-go-go-go.”

After a performance, the exhausted interpreters pack it in. But for Drobney, there’s not much time for celebration. It’s time to move on to the next production—whether it’s the UCF musical “The Drowsy Chaperone” or an upcoming performance by the Orlando Gay Chorus.

The point, says Drobney, is to give students opportunities. “I do a lot of pushing. I’m out there at events and I ask people to take on our students,” she says, “because I want to show the community what our students can do and what they’re capable of. But most important, the sense of accomplishment and esteem-building that these opportunities give students is something they cannot get in the classroom.” ♦

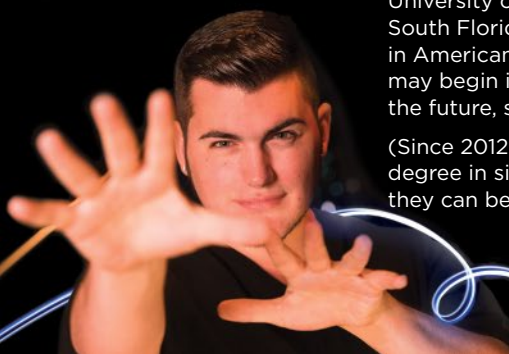
▶ valenciacollege.edu/signlanguage
Watch the video.

SIGNING BONUS

Although only two state universities—the University of North Florida and the University of South Florida—currently offer bachelor’s degrees in American Sign Language Interpretation, Valencia may begin its own bachelor’s degree program in the future, says Debbie Drobney.

(Since 2012, students must earn a bachelor’s degree in sign-language interpretation before they can become nationally certified.)

Is sign-language interpretation a viable career? Since the enactment of the Americans With Disabilities Act, schools, court systems and other government agencies must provide interpretation services. In school systems, sign-language interpreters earn about \$30 an hour, while freelancers—who juggle many types of assignments—earn \$35 to \$45 an hour. Interpreters who work on legal cases earn about \$80 an hour.



VALENCIA EVENTS



Mask by
Linda Hall

FEBRUARY

Jan. 17–March 7: Linda Hall: Paintings & Sculpture

Opening reception: Jan. 17 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Anita S. Wooten Gallery, East Campus

Works by a Tallahassee artist who explores the connection between humans and the animal world.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

Feb. 25: Spring Symphonic Band Concert

7:30 p.m.

East Campus Performing Arts Center

Students in Valencia's Symphonic Band will perform.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

Feb. 5-9: "Jealousy" by Ricardo Soltero-Brown—Winner of Florida Playwright Competition

Feb. 5, 6, 7, 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 9 at 2 p.m.

East Campus Black Box Theater

Valencia Theater presents the winning play from the college's 23rd annual playwright competition.

Note: The Feb. 7 performance will be followed by a question-and-answer session with the playwright, director, cast and crew.

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for students, faculty/staff, alumni and seniors

valenciacollege.edu/arts

Feb 13-21: 7th Valencia Brazilian Film Festival

7 p.m.

West and Osceola campuses

View some of the best current

Brazilian films moderated by renowned producer Elisa Tolomelli.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/brazilian

filmfestival

MARCH

March 2: Valencia-Orlando Magic Night

Orlando Magic vs.

Philadelphia 76ers

6 p.m.

Amway Center, downtown Orlando

valenciacollege.edu/alumni

March 14-15: Valencia Spring Dance Concert

8 p.m.

East Campus Performing Arts Center

Valencia and Rollins College dance students perform faculty works and those of a guest artist.

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for faculty/staff, alumni and seniors; \$6 for children under 12. Free for Valencia students with college ID.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

March 20-22: 19th Annual Film Celebration

East Campus Performing Arts Center

Screenings of shorts and feature

films made by students in Valencia's acclaimed film program.

Tickets: \$5 general admission each night

For times: valenciacollege.edu/arts

March 25: David Pogue

1 p.m.

East Campus Performing Arts Center

Gadget guru David Pogue, who writes for Yahoo and the New York Times and appears on PBS and CBS News, will discuss and demonstrate the technological advances that will have the greatest impact on society in the coming years.

valenciacollege.edu/east/humanities/speakersseries.cfm

David Pogue





March 27-April 6: "As You Like It" by William Shakespeare

March 27, 28, 29, April 3, 4, 5 at 7:30 p.m.

March 30, April 6 at 2 p.m.

East Campus Black Box Theater
"All the world's a stage" in one of Shakespeare's best loved comedies.

Note: Audience members can participate in a talkback with the director, cast and crew after the April 4 performance.

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for students, faculty/staff, alumni and seniors
valenciacollege.edu/arts

March 27: Faculty Recital

7:30 p.m.

East Campus Performing Arts Center
Valencia music faculty performs.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

March 29: 9th Annual Run, Walk & Roll 5K

6 p.m. West Campus

Funds raised support scholarships for criminal justice, firefighter, nursing and EMS students.

valenciacollege.edu/alumni

APRIL

April 1: Spring Choral Concert

7:30 p.m.

East Campus Performing Arts Center
Valencia's Contemporary Ensemble and the Valencia Singers will perform contemporary and classic songs.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

April 8: Jazz Band Concert

7:30 p.m.

East Campus Performing Arts Center
Students in the college's Jazz Band will perform.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

April 11: House Band Concert

7:30 p.m.

Location: TBD

Students in the college's Commercial Ensemble class perform a rock concert.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

April 11-12: Student-Directed One-Act Festival

7:30 p.m.

Lowndes Shakespeare Center,
Loch Haven Park, Orlando

Santos Dantin Studio Theater

Note: Audience members can participate in a talkback with directors, cast and crew following the April 11 performance.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

April 18-May 16: Annual Juried Student Exhibition

Opening reception: April 18 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Award ceremony begins at 7:30 p.m.

Anita S. Wooten Gallery,
East Campus

A showcase of new works by Valencia's fine arts and graphics students.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts



April 25-26: Spring Opera Workshop

7:30 p.m.

East Campus Black Box Theater
Opera and musical theater students take the stage to share music from favorite operas and Broadway shows.

Admission is free.

valenciacollege.edu/arts

Music performance major Hannah Roman in the musical "Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens"

Valencia guest artist program inspires students who've just 'Gotta Dance'

By Roger Moore

It's a long way from Central Florida to the limelight of America's dance capitals. So there are just a couple of ways for a two-year dance student at Valencia to get the attention of the nation's top choreographers and teachers.

They can tour and compete with other college dance departments in national dance events, says Suzanne R. Salapa, chair of the dance department at Valencia. Or they can get the attention of the guest artists, teachers with well-known college dance programs or choreographers with established dance companies who come to Valencia every February and March for an intense week of rehearsing and choreographing for the annual spring dance performance.

"Because the dance world is not so big, who you know is important," says Salapa. "These guest artists are their pathway out into the bigger dance world."

The guest artist might be from the Isadora Duncan Dance Ensemble, Pilobolus Dance Theatre, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Martha Graham Dance Co., or companies run by José Limón or Jon Lehrer. They come from colleges

across the state and from around the country.

And "they provide a springboard for our students," Salapa says, a chance for dancers in jazz, modern dance or ballet to impress someone who can further their career.

Erin-Elizabeth Morton (Valencia class of 2002), danced professionally for The Georgia Ballet for eight seasons and now teaches at the University of South Carolina. Her time with a member of the Isadora Duncan company sticks with her to this day.

"The movement quality of Isadora Duncan's style suited me better coming from a VERY classical background," Morton says. "I found, with this experience, stepping out of my comfort zone was not as scary as I believed. I think that this opportunity allowed me to gain some ease of different movement styles, which helped me be more versatile in my dancing career."

Samantha Hudson (Valencia class of 2010) just graduated from the dance program at Miami's New World School of the Arts and plans to move to California or Chicago to start her professional career.



Dance student Daylan Sleva



“Kelly Drummond Cawthon from the Shapiro & Smith Dance company really inspired me to enrich my movement as a dancer and to not be afraid of letting go while performing,” Hudson says. A 50- or 60-hour week of rehearsals with Cawthon taught Hudson to understand the “storyline” of choreography, “which is key in having a dance career.” Professional companies want “you to tell the world their story through dance.”

The Valencia dance program, which began in 1980, has anywhere from 200-250 students in any given year, ranging from career-track dancers, choreographers and teachers to students who just love to dance, and love the milieu of dance and

hope to find work doing physical therapy for a dance company, or working in administration with one. Because dance is a demanding art form where the shelf-life of performers is short, students have to be flexible enough to consider other ways to stay in that world.

“Even though I am ‘only’ 22, I felt very behind in the dance world as I was graduating with my A.A. with classmates who were still in their teens,” says Emily Luedtke, who got her Valencia degree in 2013. She was inspired to stick with it by Jon Lehrer from Buffalo, N.Y.’s LehrerDance, who told her “that it was never too late,” and that there are companies on the lookout for dancers of all ages and experience

levels. Luedtke is pursuing a B.A. in dance at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro.

Camille Arroyo (Valencia class of 2007) has danced with companies in Orlando and Miami and is working on grants to land a choreography residency overseas. Emily Pozek (Valencia class of 2010) was another dancer inspired by Kelly Drummond Cawthon to audition for and attend the University of Florida, where Pozen got her B.F.A. in dance. Now, Pozek is Dancer in Residence at UF Health Shands through the Center for Arts in Medicine and is pursuing her M.A. in Arts in Healthcare while teaching at a local dance studio.

“Dancers are like a quilt,” Salapa says with a laugh. “We have to stitch a lot of stuff together to make a career. Then, years later when you look back on it, you see what an interesting life you’ve had.”

Some dancers find work on cruise ships, and some become Orlando Magic Dancers. Others move straight into academia, teaching and working with dance companies at other colleges—dancing as long as they can, then passing on what they’ve learned from their teachers at Valencia, guest artists and others.

“The baton gets handed, from generation to generation,” Salapa says, noting that Valencia’s “conservatory-based approach” casts a broader dance net than many schools, with an eye toward dance-for-life students. “We have to encourage everybody’s gifts, because if they were all alike, they’re just robots, and dance is first and foremost an art.

“Our bottom line here? Good training will keep you dancing.”

“Dancers are like a quilt. We have to stitch a lot of stuff together to make a career.”



Photograph by Nikki Peña-Infante

LET EVERYONE KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO!



To be featured in Class Notes, visit valenciacollege.edu/alumni/class_notes.cfm and fill in the submission form or mail to: Class Notes Editor, Valencia Alumni Association, 190 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32801.



If you wish to include a photo, please use the following guidelines:

- Candid shots of you interacting in an authentic setting are preferred. Avoid sending traditional portraits.
- If sending electronically, files should be in jpeg or tif formats. Files should be 300dpi resolution at 4"x6" (this would be a file approximately 1mb to 3mb in size).

The Alumni Association can also help to spread the word! Let us know about your meetups, networking events, annual retreats, reunions and save-the-dates that your

fellow alumni might like to attend or did attend with you. Whether it's getting a group together for sporting events, charity fundraisers, a day at the parks or just brunch and lunch, let us know. And if you send pictures, we might just include them in the next issue. We can share your adventures and good times with our readers, so that next time they can plan on joining in on the fun!

And don't forget: If you have an idea for a future article, please contact the Alumni Association. Send all suggestions to alumni@valenciacollege.edu.

BUSINESS

Gert Garman inspires creative problem-solving and ‘disruptive thinking’ at Valencia’s new Collaborative Design Center.

By Susan Frith

The chairs have been rolled into a corner at Valencia’s Collaborative Design Center. Two dozen leaders from the Continuing Education division stand in a circle and wait to see what their new colleague—the one with the spiky red hair and contagious energy—is going to do with the football she’s holding.

That’s Marifrances “Gert” Garman. She’s the center’s director and their guide for a day of strategic planning.

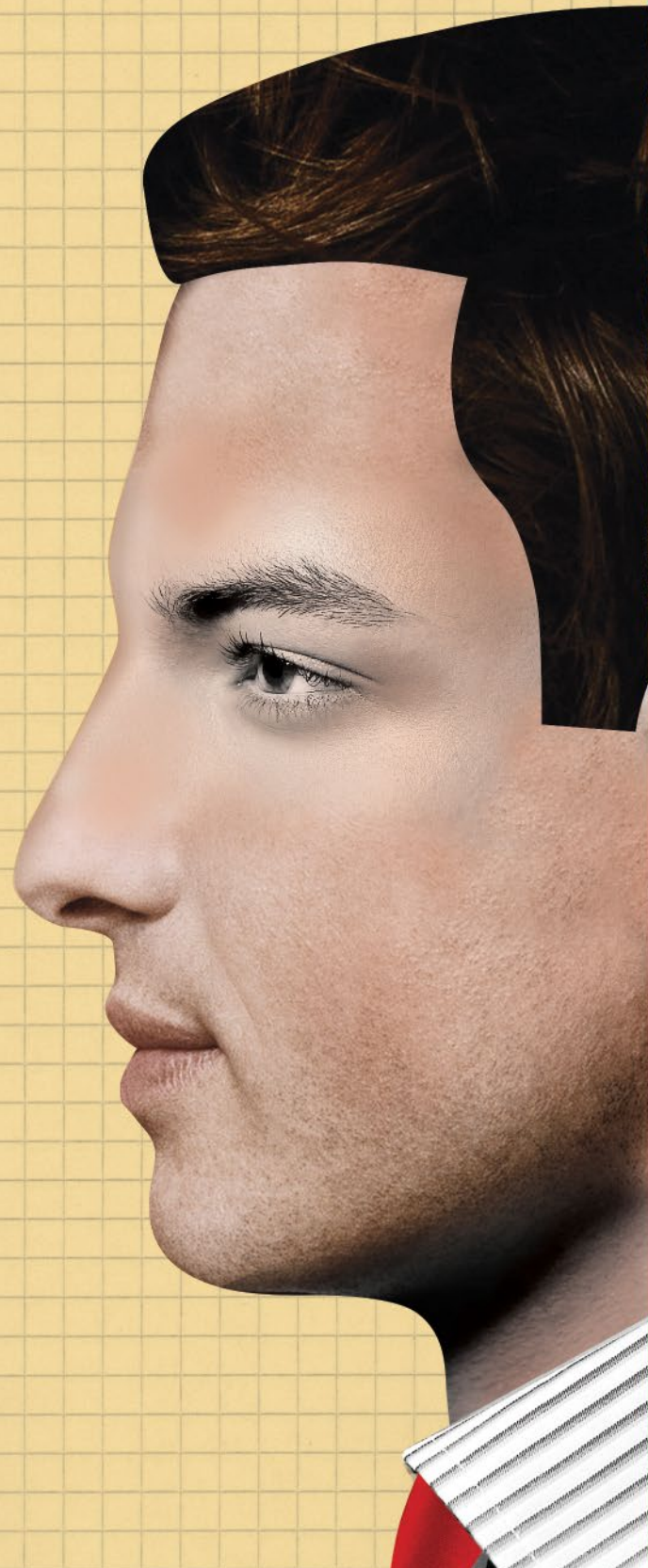
On this late November morning, they have the place to themselves—an 11,000-square-foot facility on Valencia’s West Campus with floor-to-ceiling windows, walls to write on, jazz playing on the sound system and movable furniture. All of it has been designed to promote creative thinking. Over the next several hours, the team members will brainstorm ideas and focus on how to meet certain challenges.

But first, Garman tells them, it’s time to play.

Innovative thinking

Completed in early 2013, the Collaborative Design Center is the brainchild of Valencia President Sandy Shugart. He envisioned “a place where we could really change and grow the culture of the college from the inside out, as well as grow the capacity of our community to solve problems in creative ways,” explains Amy Bosley, Valencia’s interim vice president for human resources and diversity. Bosley worked to ensure that Shugart’s vision was carried out during the center’s construction. Everything about the space is supposed to communicate “limitless possibilities,” she says.

In addition to hosting a variety of groups from all of Valencia’s campuses, the center and its dynamic new director are reaching out to local nonprofits and businesses.



NOT as USUAL



“Seventy percent of my job is changing the culture on campuses, working with internal groups to help them think a little differently,” says Garman, “and 30 percent of my job will be bringing in different groups from the community. They get the space for the day and me as a facilitator.”

But the center is not a place for business-as-usual meetings. It’s meant for innovation, planning and creative problem-solving, plus a little improv theater. (But we’ll get to that later.)

Just as an accordion contracts and expands to make music, creative problem-solving involves moving back and forth between two modes of thinking: convergent (focused) and divergent (expansive, sky’s-the-limit). Both are essential, Garman says,



“It’s an unfinished ship, because design work and ideating are never quite done.”

and the center’s various spaces help enable this process.

According to Bosley, not only will the faculty and staff who come here benefit from what they learn, but “they’ll be able to run their classrooms and their departments this way. So students will ultimately benefit from their having this experience and learning to problem-solve in a new way.” Similarly, business and nonprofit leaders who train at the center can take those tools back into the larger community.

The center already has facilitated a brainstorming session for Darden and retreats for the boards of Heart of Florida United Way, Workforce Central Florida (to be renamed CareerSource Central Florida in February), and Goodwill. Garman says it will offer its services to more organizations in the coming year.

According to Pamela Nabors, Workforce Central Florida’s president and chief executive officer, “Valencia’s invigorating Collaborative Design Center was the perfect venue to host our board’s strategic retreat. It was both relaxing and stimulating, making our event even better than we envisioned. It is the perfect place to reflect, invent, collaborate, brainstorm and create.”

Setting a new course

Push open the thick glass doors to the center and you leave the day-to-day world behind, entering a space that’s expansive, filled with light, and, with its rough-hewn surfaces and nautical lines, built to look like an unfinished ship.

“When you come in here, you are navigating new waters,” explains Garman, who joined the center this fall. “It’s an unfinished ship, because design work and ideating are never quite done,” she says. “That’s why we always say, ‘You can date an idea, but you can’t marry it.’ It’s going to morph; it’s going to change.”

Groups typically start and end the day in the center’s large Compass Room or adjoining Navigation Lounge. These rooms are where participants work as an entire group to identify problems and goals and later put together an action plan.

In the Compass Room, octagonal tables encourage eye contact, while walls covered with washable “idea paint” beg to be drawn on. Equipped with a camera, projectors and Apple TV, the room’s got all the tools needed to “get grounded in the challenge you’re working on,” Garman says.

Over in the Navigation Lounge, everything is on wheels. “This is my favorite room,” says Garman. “I just think there’s a

groovy energy in here.” The room’s modular furniture gives groups the flexibility to push chairs around into different configurations for all kinds of conversations.

A couple of professors seeking to change their classroom dynamics have visited the center for inspiration, Garman says. “I told them, ‘In order to get (your students) to not sit in the same places, buy some modular furniture. Every time you have a class, move it around. Shake things up.’

“When it’s time to brainstorm,” says Garman, “we go over here.” She opens the door to one of the center’s three design studios and points out the industrial atmosphere of the room—perfect for “building ideas.”

At some point, choices have to be made. The center’s small breakout rooms provide the venue for those very focused conversations. Then, at day’s end, the whole group reconvenes in the Navigation Lounge or Compass Room to report on its findings and set up an action plan.

On top of that, the center offers a galley for coffee and conversations and a laptop bar so folks can check their emails during breaks. “We want it to have a Ritz-Carlton feel to it.”





Far left: Garman leads a group in the Collaborative Design Center. Left: As part of a “divergent” thinking exercise, participants share their ideas in the form of a jingle.



Sorcerer's apprentice

Garman, a University of Central Florida graduate, comes to Valencia after working for UCF, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, and, most recently, the Walt Disney Co. In that job, she served as a “creativity and innovation catalyst” and traveled around the world training fellow cast members and facilitating brainstorming sessions. “They polished my skill set (as a facilitator) and taught me so much,” she says. But she’s also excited to work for a great community partner like Valencia, she says. “And to be back on a college campus is amazing, because you get such great energy from being around the faculty, students and staff.”

Apparently, they feel the same way about her. “She’s a wonderful facilitator, and the space gives us the opportunity to use our minds in different ways,” says Jamy Chulak, co-facilitator of Valencia’s Pivot 360 leadership-training academy and chair of the college’s respiratory care program. When the Pivot 360 team came in for a training session, “we had a great time in terms of finding ways to overcome challenges within our organizations and creating innovative solutions to problems,” he says. Garman “put together some ice-breakers that got everybody feeling very open and relaxed and creative, using that part of your brain, so we could go on with the other activities.”

Garman establishes certain ground rules to help everyone get the most out of a day at the center. She illustrates them, rebus-style, on the walls. Just a few examples:

- A bumblebee beside a wrapped package: “Be present.” (i.e., Turn off your Blackberry.)
- A picture of two talking heads: Everyone’s voice needs to be heard.
- Vegas: Whatever happens in the Collaborative Design Center stays there, so feel free to be a little wacky.

Most of all, Garman encourages a positive attitude and asks people to suspend judgment when they’re in brainstorming mode.

“Everybody shut your eyes,” she tells the group from Continuing Education. “I want you to imagine we are in the Hollywood hills at a fabulous mansion, having a pool party. Those of us who need be spray-tanned are all spray-tanned.”

All of a sudden, someone screams, Garman says. There’s “poo” in the pool, and now no one wants to go swimming.

“It only takes one piece of poo to ruin a Hollywood hills party,” she says. “So if I tell you we’re into divergent thinking and you go into convergent thinking, I will signal you (to stop). Because nobody wants to be the poo in the pool.”

Selling invisible wallpaper

When it’s time to brainstorm and engage in what Garman calls “disruptive thinking,” it’s important to get into the right state of mind, she says. She likes to start these sessions with warm-up exercises and improv activities.

“What would we get fired for?” she might ask. “People have a really good time with that. Or what would we end up in jail for?” Behind that crazy impulse might lay a useful idea that can be applied (legally) to the real-world situation. “Now you’ve got to save your jobs,” she says. “So what does that look like?”

When the center hosted Valencia’s Pivot 360 leadership-training academy, Garman gave all the participants a chance to polish their improv skills.

For one exercise, Garman divided people into groups of three and pronounced each of them the world’s authority in “some very interesting subject matters. One of them was sex therapy for bees,” Chulak says.

“As a professional you would be bombarded by questions by the other two participants, and you would have to come up with responses that were consistent with who you were,” he explains. “I was the professional sales rep for invisible wallpaper, and I had to answer questions related to the application process.”

While it may sound silly, Garman says, an exercise like that “changes the energy of the whole place” and encourages divergent thinking. “I like to play,” she says, “but you have to play with purpose.” Which brings us to the football.

Want to be more creative? It starts with an attitude

Gert Garman keeps a purple feather boa in her new office at Valencia's Collaborative Design Center. It's a souvenir from her Disney days, when she assumed a sunglass-toting persona known as Gigi Fabulous. "I made Gigi Fabulous pretty famous all over the world," she says, and we suspect she's only half kidding. Though not everyone has Garman's improv skills or flair for the flamboyant, you can still achieve the right mindset for creative problem-solving.

"There's the doing of the creative process," she explains. "That's the brainstorming. There's also the being, cultivating the right attitude and an openness to allow new ideas to surface. I think the being actually eats the doing for breakfast."

According to Garman, a few important attitudes are involved in creative thinking and problem-solving. Here are some simple tips for incorporating them into your own life:

Freshness

- Take a new route to work.
- Order something different for lunch.
- Talk to children about a challenge and see how they would solve the problem.
- Buy yourself a magazine you would not ordinarily read and make yourself look through it. "At Disney we would buy magazines for each other when we traveled," Garman says. "It was really funny. I think I got Log Cabin Monthly one time. It's not going to get you to an idea, but it could stimulate something that could get you to an idea."

Curiosity

- Ask lots of questions. "Little kids ask why 47 times because they get a better answer," Garman says. "So keep asking why."
- Listen, and don't judge ideas ahead of time.

Playfulness

- "Instead of being so crazy-busy you can't think, just add that light touch" to your life, Garman recommends.
- Play music you enjoy.
- Try a ropes course or another activity. "I don't know if bungee jumping will get you in a playful mood," Garman says. "It will probably frighten you more than anything. But do things that stimulate you."



Garman uses humor to help participants loosen up.

Playing with purpose

Turns out there's no scrimmage this morning, but Garman's got a few instructions for her Continuing Education colleagues. As the ball goes around the circle, she says, "Tell us your name and tell us what you do. But tell it like you're telling a five-year-old. Keep it nice and simple." Then she adds, "Tell us what you wanted to be when you were five."

She demonstrates: "Hi, honey. I'm Gert. How are you? What do I do? I run this cool center where I help people kind of think like you: childlike, not childish." At age five, she says, she wanted to be the Singing Nun when she grew up.

Now the others give it a try:

Crouching down to a kid's-eye level, one team member says: "I help people who want to study in the U.S. and don't live here

make lots of friends." As a child, she wanted to be a counselor.

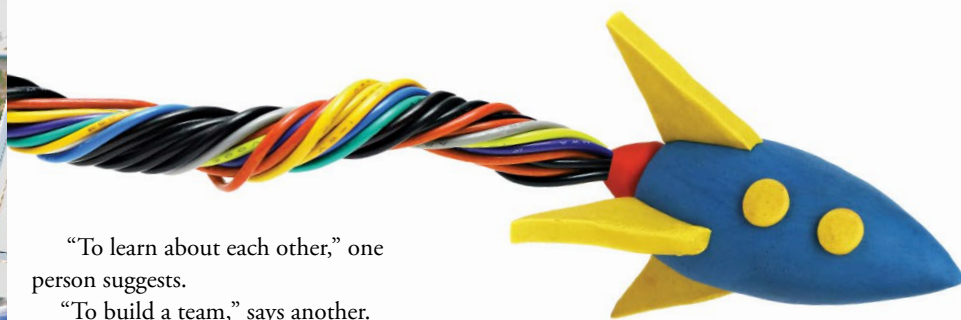
"I help teachers teach grown-ups how to learn new skills so they can get jobs and take care of their families," says a colleague who wanted to be a firefighter.

From a once-aspiring model: "I help students who want to take in the bad guys in the world, and also the firefighters who want to fight fires."

One by one, they reveal their childhood dreams: International spy. Pro baseball player. Veterinarian. Luke Skywalker. As the team members laugh and comment, the atmosphere softens.

Then Garman calls out a name and tosses the football to someone. The person who catches it must shout another person's name and toss the ball to them, and so on, until everyone's been named. The task gets trickier as Garman has them repeat the same sequence with a soccer ball and a pink spiked ball added to the mix.

"Why do you think I chose this game?" she asks them afterward. (Debriefing is key for playing with purpose.)



"To learn about each other," one person suggests.

"To build a team," says another.

Garman affirms all those answers.

"To pay attention. To create energy. Yes! Now what happened when someone dropped the ball?"

"They picked it up and kept going."

Garman nods. "It's the same thing with innovation, you guys."

Joe Battista, the Continuing Education division's chief operating officer, takes a break during the day to underscore the importance of the center and Garman's role as a facilitator.

"The college has gotten so much larger," Battista says, noting the planned construction of another campus in Poinciana. "It's getting very diverse over a fairly large region, so we need this type of space where groups can come together and be creative, and maybe refine a process, or develop new things."

"When you come in here, it's not like going into another conference room where you'll have another meeting," he says. The flexibility of the space inspires creativity, and Garman's "creativity and energy level are outstanding, as is her background."

Amy Bosley agrees that the facility is special, but without someone like Garman there to guide the way, "it's just square footage."

"Without a really seasoned facilitator like Gert," Bosley says, "we would fall immediately into our old habits in that new space," replicating a board room or committee meeting. "Gert understands where we're trying to go, and she helps us get there in some unconventional ways. But beyond that, she can help us to go places we didn't even think we could go." ♦



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Cool customer takes helm of hot new program

By Loraine O'Connell

Stephen Chancey isn't one to get excited over things.

During his 18 years as a firefighter and paramedic with the Orlando Fire Department, Chancey saw it all. "We see people on their worst days," he says. "You can't be excitable all the time."

But as he describes the training opportunities available to students of the Central Florida Fire Institute at Valencia, and outlines his vision for the program's future, the new director exudes a quiet excitement befitting a man who knows how to keep his cool. As a fire chief and emergency manager for the Orlando International Airport Fire Department for 11 years, Chancey guided his staff through the 9/11 attacks and three hurricanes. It was in the aftermath of 9/11 that firefighters' roles took a major turn, he says.

"Fire services added responsibilities," Chancey says. "We expanded our role into bioterrorism and hazardous material."

Fire science training has had to adapt to the changing environments of the job, and Chancey says Valencia's fire institute, which opened in the fall, will be a leader in cutting-edge training.

The institute's seven-acre training facility on Oak Ridge Road had been home to the Central Florida Fire Academy since 1977. Chancey was executive director of the academy from 2012 to 2013 and oversaw its transition from an Orange County Public Schools' facility to Valencia's new training site. The facility features mazes, a three-story burn building, a four-story rappelling tower and a liquid-propane gas field that simulates car fires and broken gas mains.

Another hallmark of Valencia's fire institute is a new Fire Science Technology Associate in

Science degree program designed to help fire service professionals move up.

"Fire departments want to raise the level of education," Chancey says. "They're tying promotion requirements to degrees. So we're emphasizing critical thinking by educating firefighters to deal with specialized situations and to think on their feet."

Chancey's vision, he says, is to "increase the educational level of the community's firefighters and to have Valencia's fire institute be a community resource center for all firefighter training."

For instance, Valencia is now offering Advanced Specialized Training, which includes confined-space and underground rescues.

Chancey also plans to increase the use of virtual reality as a teaching tool. One example is the interactive, immersive "Incident Command Simulator" developed by the University of Central Florida. The simulator positions students as site commanders at a house fire. Under rapidly changing circumstances, they must make quick decisions about how to deploy firefighters. The institute's A.S. students are using the simulator as part of their leadership training."

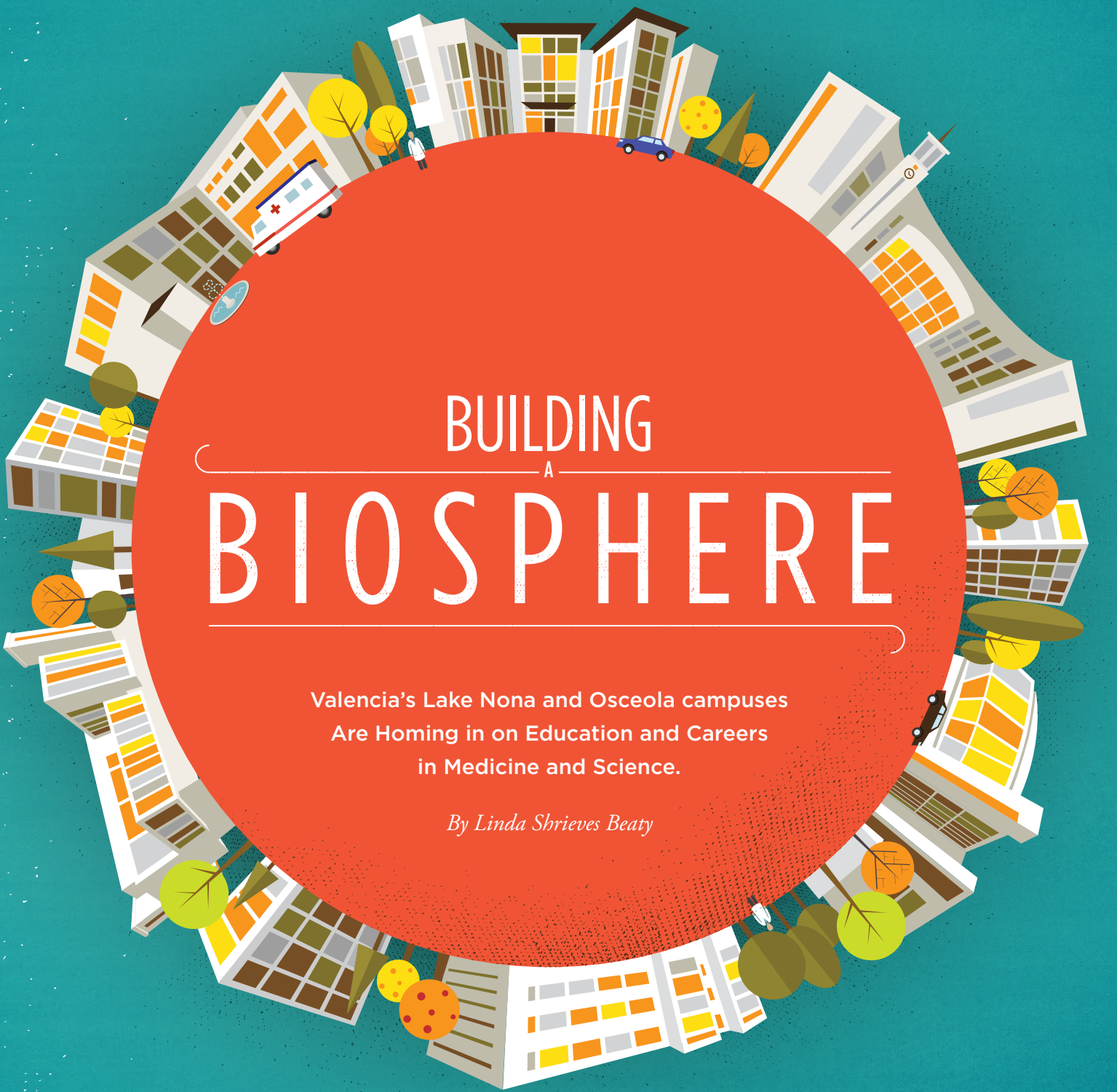
Chancey's enthusiasm is palpable as he describes other scenarios he wants to bring into classrooms and the partnerships he hopes to pursue with Central Florida's simulation developers.

There's just no getting around it. Chancey is excited about the future.

"Valencia has a great reputation and the Central Florida Fire Academy has a great reputation," he says, "so together we're going to have a world-class program."







BUILDING A BIOSPHERE

Valencia's Lake Nona and Osceola campuses
Are Homing in on Education and Careers
in Medicine and Science.

By Linda Shrieves Beaty

Since she was a kid, Amina Lakhani has had one career goal: To become a doctor. She has no designs on becoming a specialist—a neurosurgeon or a dermatologist. Instead, 21-year-old Lakhani wants to become a family physician and open her own practice.

To get there, Lakhani is a member of the first class of students working on their bachelor of science degrees in biomedical sciences at Valencia's Osceola Campus. And instead of commuting to the University of Central Florida—which would require her to commute an hour each way to UCF's main campus—she's taking classes close to home and right down the street from her part-time job.

But even better than saving two hours each day, Lakhani has discovered one of the great secrets of the new Valencia-UCF 2+2 biomedical science program in Osceola: The classes are much smaller.

"I have a friend who is taking the same neurobiology class with the same professor at UCF's main campus—and there are more than 200 students in her class. In my class, we have 12 students. We're a lot more interactive with the professor," says Lakhani. "The professor actually knows me by name!"

Amina Lakhani – who earned her Associate in Arts degree from Valencia last summer—is just the kind of student that Kathleen Plinske envisioned when she urged UCF administrators to create one or two science degrees for students at Valencia's Osceola Campus.

"We have all of these students who are talented in math and science living in Osceola County, and what are their other options?" asks Plinske, president of Valencia's Osceola and Lake Nona

campuses. "If they're placebound—and can't go away to college—what are we going to say? 'Switch your major to business?' It didn't make sense."

Besides, with a campus at Lake Nona—the heart of Orlando's burgeoning Medical City—and the Osceola campus only 11 miles away, Valencia is poised to take advantage of the scientific synergy happening there. While the West Campus is home to the nursing and allied health programs, the Lake Nona and Osceola campuses are laying the groundwork to become a Life Sciences Institute that would offer students degrees and internships in the life sciences and biomedicine.

"The idea is to build the pipeline of local students to go to Valencia, UCF, medical school and Medical City," says Plinske. "Everyone at Medical City is interested in growing locally that body of talent. And I think that's where Valencia can contribute."

Already, students from Lake Nona are landing internships and doing volunteer work at Medical City. Liem Dang, who graduated from Valencia in spring 2013, spent three months last summer working in a lab at Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute. Under the tutelage of a post-doctoral researcher, Carlos Zgheib, Dang read scientific papers on diabetic wound healing and was given his own project—studying gene extraction. "I wasn't sure what research would be like," said Dang, whose original college plans involved studying biomedical engineering. Now he's weighing his options, debating whether to pursue a career in medical research or biomedical engineering. "Originally, I wanted to work in prosthetics, but I can see myself doing research on wound healing."

Field of dreams

Plinske is a firm believer that if you build it, they will come. And so far, she's been right.

Although the most popular majors at Valencia are psychology and business, in January 2013, when the Osceola Campus opened the doors to its newest building—which houses 10 science labs—Plinske witnessed a spike in the number of students taking science classes.

"We've increased the number of seats in biology and chemistry by 40 percent and they're all still full," she adds. So when UCF unveiled its biomedical sciences program at the Osceola Campus this fall, Plinske crossed her fingers and prayed that Valencia students would take advantage of the opportunity. They did. There are currently 20 students in the program and half are Valencia graduates.

One of those Valencia grads is Nida Viqar, a Celebration High graduate who earned her A.A. degree last spring. Viqar spent her first two years of college at the Osceola Campus and was thrilled when she

learned that she could earn her biomedical sciences degree there—without trekking to UCF's main campus, which is more than 35 miles away from her home.

Viqar and her brother are both planning to go to medical school. But while her brother must commute more than an hour each day to UCF's main campus, Nida can take her classes much closer to home.

"I got very lucky," she says. "This program started when I was transitioning to UCF." Now she works at a nearby pharmacy 20 hours a week and still has time to study. She's also grateful that her Valencia professors, particularly her biology and chemistry instructors, prepared her for the upper-level classes she's now taking.

"They were awesome. They used visual methods and hands-on methods that really helped me understand the concepts," says Viqar.

Students like Viqar and Lakhani will likely do well in medical school—or any number of graduate programs in the health field, says Dr. Richard Pepler, dean of UCF's Burnett College.



Chemistry students conduct a transition metals lab in one of the new science labs on Osceola Campus.

“

This is a very rigorous program that gives students the foundations in some of the core sciences so they can be successful in medical school.

”

— Dr. Richard Peppler, dean of UCF's Burnett College



“This is a very rigorous program that gives students the foundations in some of the core sciences so they can be successful in medical school,” says Peppler, who previously worked at medical schools at Louisiana State University, the University of Tennessee, and East Tennessee State University.

But that's not all. Armed with a degree in biomedical sciences, students can choose many paths: dental school, medical school, veterinary school or pharmacy school, or they could become physician assistants or podiatrists, Peppler says. And don't forget the growing field of medical research.

“It's just unlimited,” Peppler adds. “The only thing is how big they want to dream.”

From science desert to oasis

For Valencia students, there's another perk that comes from Valencia's relationship with Medical City: the chance to take classes from scientists who are working there. Among the scientists who are teaching part-time at Lake Nona or Osceola campus are:

- Evan Gomes, a postdoctoral researcher studying cancer at MD Anderson Cancer Center Orlando. Gomes earned his Ph.D. at City University of New York and has worked at Wake Forest University's Medical Center and now at MD Anderson Orlando.
- Melissa Burmeister, who earned her doctorate in pharmacology at LSU, then worked as a postdoctoral researcher at Cornell University. Burmeister now works in the research labs at Sanford-Burnham, studying glucose function and diabetes.

- Dr. Kapil Kapoor, a cardiologist and researcher at Sanford-Burnham, also teaches anatomy and physiology II. Dr. Kapoor also has a doctorate in pharmacology.

- Ada Kane, a researcher studying metabolic disorders at Sanford-Burnham, is teaching biology at Lake Nona Campus. Kane studied at Boston University and Harvard University.

The growing number of researchers and scientists teaching at Valencia delights not just Valencia administrators but faculty members, including Kris Dougherty.

When Dougherty moved to Orlando in 2002, the Johns Hopkins-trained scientist wondered if she'd made a mistake. “I felt like I was in a science desert,” recalls Dougherty, a full-time faculty member who teaches biology at the Lake Nona Campus.

She and her husband, a pharmacist, had moved to Central Florida to be close to her parents, but after living in Ann Arbor, Mich., home to the University of Michigan and a large number of corporate and government research labs, she felt isolated in Orlando's small scientific community.

Today, that's no longer a problem. With the renowned Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, Nemours Children's Hospital, UCF's medical school, a branch of the University of Florida pharmacy college established at Lake Nona, and a Veterans Affairs Hospital and simulation center in the works, she feels surrounded by science.

Everywhere Dougherty turns, she sees opportunity. And part of her mission is to help students grab those opportunities.

“I tell my students, ‘If you want an internship, come talk to me... we'll work out some ideas for you.’” Dougherty says.

But getting internships for students requires some glad-handing. So Dougherty, who serves on Nemours' Family Advisory Council, has used that opportunity to ask doctors and scientists if they'd be willing to take on Valencia students as interns. One of the first takers was Dr. Kenneth Liechty, chief of surgery at Nemours, who also operates a research lab at Sanford-Burnham. Last summer, his lab gave Liem Dang the chance to do an internship; this fall, Valencia student Michael Martinez is working in Liechty's lab.

“In the lab I'm actually working on my own research project,” says Martinez, 21, a graduate of Oak Ridge High School. “So I'm learning the entire research process, designing experiments, protocols and lab techniques.” Martinez, who wants a career in medical research, specifically neurological research, says the internship has reinforced his plans for the future.

For Dougherty, it's gratifying to help students figure out their paths. Though she isn't a counselor or advisor, she enjoys guiding students who are interested in research or pharmaceutical careers.

“I tell them, ‘Come talk to me about your career plans, your academic plans.’ A lot of times they don't understand the commitment, how many years of school it will take, or what GPA they'll need to get into graduate school. I'm not a counselor but I've been there, so I can talk to them about it.”

On the drawing board

What's next on the drawing board for Valencia? A Life Sciences Institute housed at the Lake Nona and Osceola campuses. In 2015, Valencia officials plan to launch an Associate in Science degree in biotechnology laboratory technology—a two-year degree that would enable graduates to work at Medical City science labs.

The new program will be modeled on one that Santa Fe College operates at its Alachua Campus, which is located near a nationally recognized biotech incubator. Students in that A.S. program get internships at one of the incubator companies and most are being hired as entry-level biotechnicians when they finish their internships.

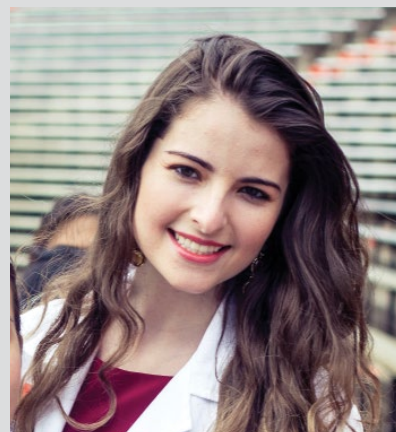
If they choose, graduates can work full time or part time and continue their schooling. Part of the key will be the new Florida Blue Center for Innovation, a biotech incubator scheduled to open in Lake Nona in 2015, says Mike Bosley, executive dean of the Lake Nona Campus. "That incubator will house businesses where our students could work in internships or part-time jobs while they're still in school and get that experience they need," Bosley says.

For Valencia officials, the idea is to create a program with many job opportunities. So they're working with Medical City teams to figure out what kind of workers will be needed in the future. Bosley serves on the Lake Nona Human Resources Council to learn what employers are looking for. And, together, he and Plinske are looking at degrees that can lead to careers in biomedical engineering and lab sciences.

"We're looking at a whole complement of A.S. programs—biomedical engineering, histologic technology, which would train someone to be a lab technician," says Plinske. "All of these things are on our radar."

Part of the job, Bosley says, is teaching students the range of careers available in the biomedical science field. The Lake Nona Campus now offers a "Hungry Minds" lecture series, in which people from nearby Medical City come to the college to discuss their work and careers.

"I think we have to help them understand that there are other careers in life sciences other than primary researchers—just like in medical sciences, we have to help them understand that there are more careers other than doctor or nurse," Bosley says. ♦



Where can Valencia take you? For Rafaela 'Ella' Uwaibi, all the way to medical school

Ella Uwaibi, a Brazilian immigrant, knew she wanted to go to medical school, but couldn't afford tuition at many of the colleges she considered. So she turned to Valencia, where she earned her A.A. and a scholarship to Rollins College. Today, she's in her second year of medical school at the University of Florida.

"Being at Valencia was one of the best things that I did. The student-professor ratio was so great that you get a lot of individual attention. I wouldn't trade that for anything," she says. In addition, her Valencia professors and advisors helped her study for the MCAT, giving her books and extra materials that would help her.

Now in her second year at UF, Uwaibi has started a peer-mentoring program to help first-year med students. "I don't think anything prepares you for the amount of information you have to study," she says. "But even just speaking with upperclassmen, they can tell you the ins and outs of medical school."

She also goes on mission trips to places like Nicaragua, where last year a team of students from UF's dental, medical and pharmacy schools treated 2,000 patients in four days.

"Medical school is so hard," she says. "You have to do things that remind you why you came here in the first place."



Valencia students are getting the chance to work alongside researchers at Lake Nona's Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute.

Scholarship Winners Get a ‘Taste’ of Success

It’s tough being a first-generation college student—the first one in your family to go to college.

First-generation students come to college with more questions—and more challenges—than other students. They need help navigating the complex financial aid system. They need help figuring out what classes to take and in what order. But they also need encouragement and financial support.

Many have witnessed the financial struggle that can ensue without a college degree. And they recognize that they are setting an example for their siblings and younger family members.

Danielle Jordan, for instance, graduated from Valencia in 2013, studying public administration and health services administration. She is continuing her studies at the University of Central Florida. Yet without a scholarship from the Valencia Foundation, Danielle says that she wouldn’t have been able to finish her associate degree. Thanks to the financial support and security that the scholarship provided, she was able to “finish strong.”

For other first-generation students, scholarships aren’t just about paying bills—they serve as motivation.

Sophie Ramdas is currently pursuing an Associate in Science degree in diagnostic medical sonography, and plans to become a professional sonographer. To pay for her educational expenses, she took out a student loan. The Valencia Foundation scholarship, however, helps pay for her books—and has motivated her to persevere. “Your generosity has inspired me to help others and give back to the community,” says Sophie. “I hope one day I will be able to help my fellow students achieve their goals just as you have helped me.”

To help students such as Danielle and Sophie, Valencia Foundation and Orlando Health Foundation hold Taste for Learning, a fundraiser that celebrates gourmet food, international wine and spirits, while raising money for college scholarships and medical education.

The cost for the May 17 event is covered by donations from companies such as ABC Fine Wine and Spirits and Rosen Shingle Creek, so that every dollar spent on tickets, sponsorships and auction items goes to support education. The last five Taste for Learning events have raised \$2.27 million for education support.



Danielle Jordan

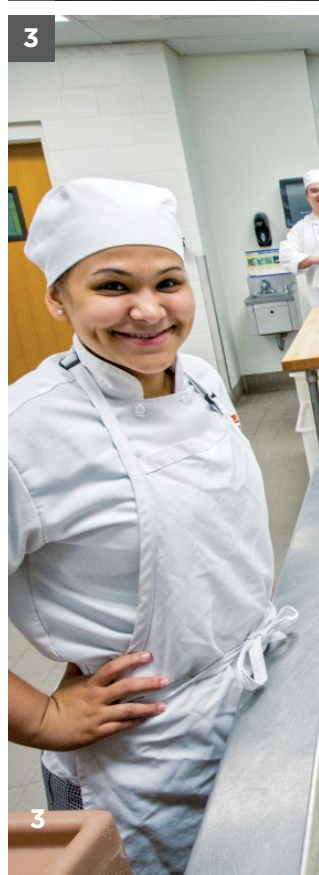
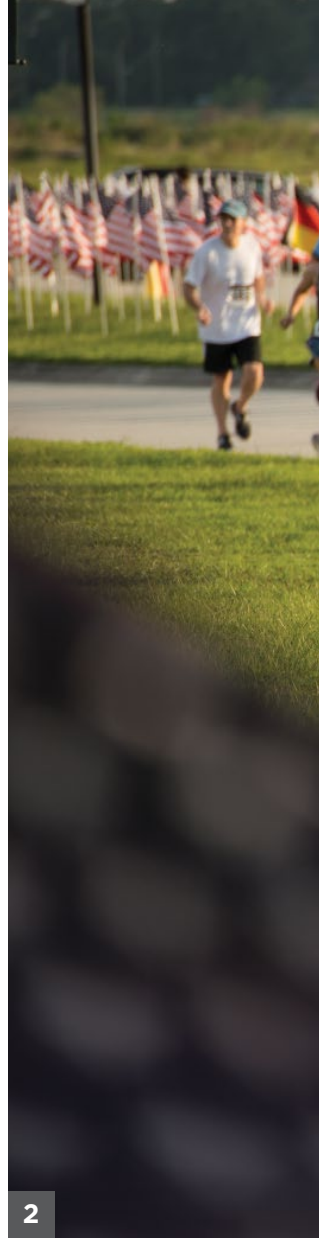
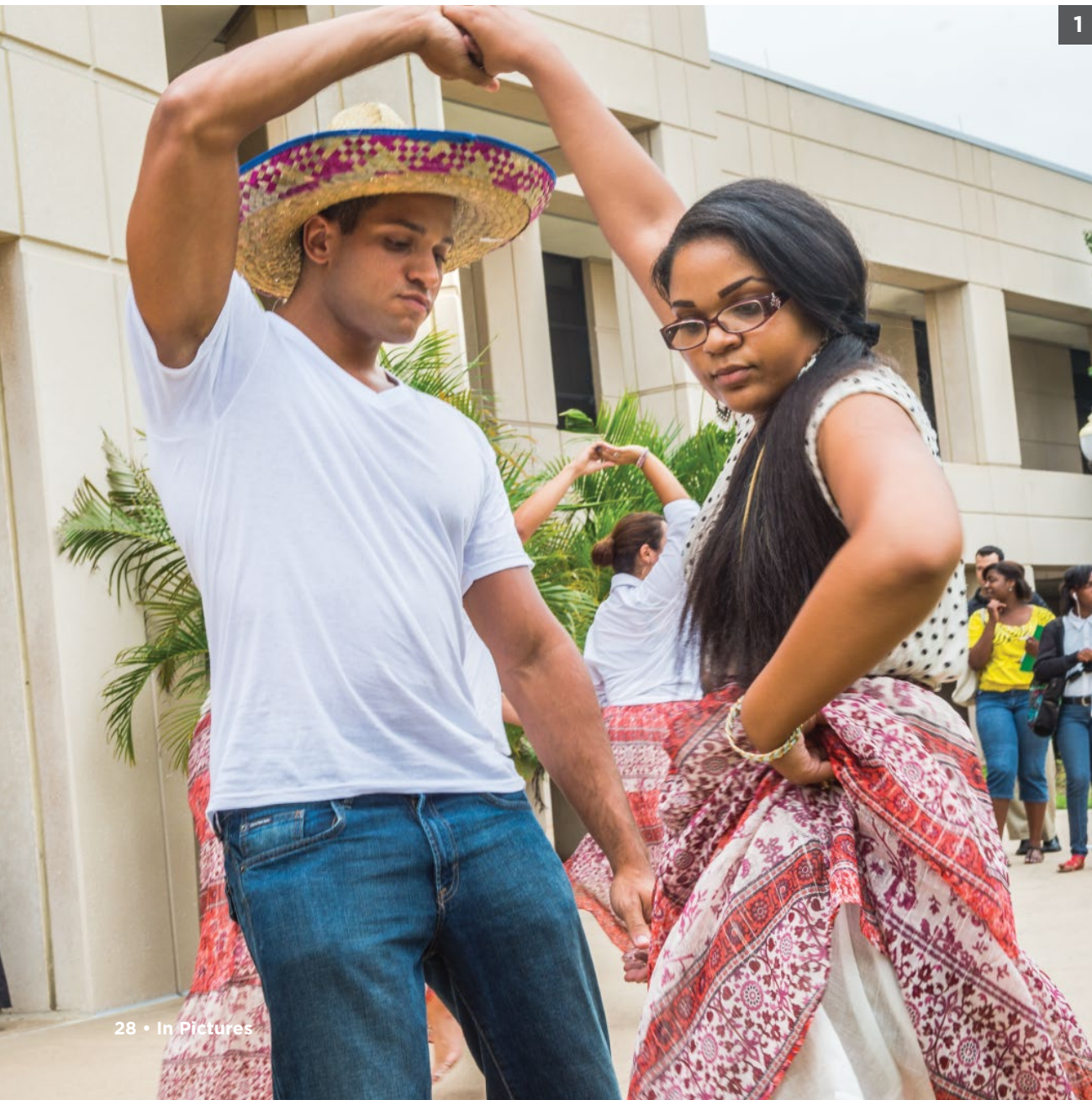


Sophie Ramdas



In Pictures

Covering the spectrum of campus life in photographs.





Photograph by Roberto Gonzalez



1. The East Campus Latin American Student Organization (LASO) hosted a Hispanic Dance Festival in October.
2. Runners at the 9/11 Memorial 5K raised \$2,400 for scholarships for first responders.
3. Culinary students hammed it up in the baking and pastry kitchen on West Campus.



4

Photograph by Paul Eisenbrown

5



4. Former staff and faculty traded stories at the Retiree Connection Luncheon in October.

5. Wood ducks checked out the view from the new duck boxes, assembled by volunteers through the office of Sustainability.

6 & 7. Students played lawn chess and performed during Spirit Day.

8. East Campus faculty, staff and students spelled out the name TEDx to celebrate a simulcast of the popular TED Talks that the campus hosted.



6



7



8

CLASS NOTES

1 John Brackin '69

Dr. John L. Brackin is the director of missions for the Hill Country Baptist Association in Kerrville, Texas. The association of 35 Southern Baptist churches covers a 5,000 square mile area in southeast Texas. He assists the churches by providing seminars and training in English and Spanish.

2 Richard Gerber '74

Richard is a consultant to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Infectious Diseases (flu). He and his wife Valerie recently celebrated 37 years of marriage and just welcomed their first grandson. Richard and his son, Adam, have started a courier business, AllPoints Courier Express, specializing in medical courier deliveries (www.allpointscourierexpress.com). He would love to hear from any members of the class of 1974.

3 Patricia Joan Helligar '89

Patricia recently moved back to Orlando from Boca Raton, and is currently pursuing a master's degree from Capella University. She is chapter director for On The Cutting Edge Outreach Programs, Inc., a program that offers after-school tutoring, GED services and social services to Orange County residents. She is also executive director for Kingdom Affairs, Inc., where her father, Bishop A.L. Helligar, provides mentorship and counseling services for those in the ministry. She is also president of two corporations, Daughters of Purpose, which provides social services for women and their families, and Positively Yours, which provides professional services and life skills coaching.

4 Tammy Cope-Otterson '92

Tammy is currently employed as the chief human resources officer for the School District of Osceola County.

Steve Cushman '93

After publishing two novels, Steve recently published his first poetry collection, "Hospital Work." Since graduating from Valencia 20 years ago, he has worked as an X-ray technologist, and the poems in "Hospital Work" deal with some aspects of hospital life—from a patient's point of view to a doctor's, and even an X-ray tech's.

5 William Johnston '93

William is currently employed as emergency manager for the City of St. Cloud.

6 Aubrey Ducker '94

After graduating from Valencia with honors, Aubrey attended UCF and went on to attend UF Law. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Mustard Seed of Central Florida. He also serves the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty as a member of the Religious Liberty Counsel and board of directors. Finally, he is chair of Christian Ethics Today. His education at Valencia became a cornerstone for each level of achievement in his professional life. Today, his daughter attends Valencia.

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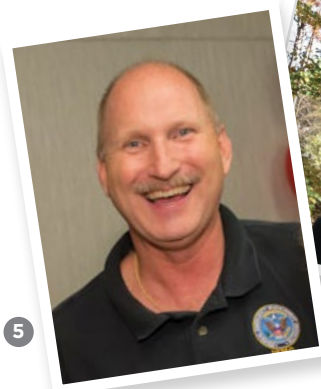
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7 Dave Sklarek '94

Dave currently serves as deputy sheriff, Osceola County.

8 Anthony Cook '00

Anthony is happy to be serving students as a guidance counselor at Poinciana High School.

9 Sara Wolfe '00

Sara is the assistant principal at Liberty High School in Osceola County.

10 Donna Marino '01

Donna, who is a Certified Fund-Raising Executive, has been elected president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), Central Florida chapter. AFP advances philanthropy through ethical and effective fundraising. The core activities through which AFP fulfills this mission include education, training, mentoring, research, credentialing and advocacy. A member of Central Florida chapter of AFP since 2007, Donna is now serving her third term of service on the AFP Central Florida executive board, serving most recently as vice president of education.

Travis James Thomas '06

After moving to Perth, Australia, a year ago, Travis took on a management role with a consulting firm and was just accepted into western Australia's top MBA program at the University of Western Australia.

11 Robert Burke '07

Robert was proud to be selected as the 2013-2014 Teacher of the Year at Arbor Ridge K-8 School!

12 Kirsten Lim Enriquez '07

Since graduating in 2007, Kirsten has worked on a surgical floor and is currently working in the emergency room as a nurse. She married her high-school sweetheart and has two kids, Liam and Penelope. Orlando was a great place to live, but Kirsten and her family are currently living in West Palm Beach.

Ibrahim Hashim '07

Ibrahim recently opened his own store, Fix Stop, Inc., and he invites Valencia students and graduates to visit his website, www.fixstop.com, or stop by his location on 12548 Lake Underhill Road, Orlando.

13 Vanessa Hornedo '08

After transferring to the University of Central Florida to study journalism, Vanessa decided to take a leap of faith and try something new that would allow her to explore her love of writing as well as her interest in traveling and serving others. She is participating in a year of service in the Dominican Republic, where she teaches workshops and hosts reading sessions with the children in the isolated villages located in the Central Cordillera Mountains. She frequently updates her blog—mygrasssalwaysgreen.wordpress.com—to keep folks at home connected to what she's doing and to share her cultural experiences. She's very excited to be able to use the skills she learned in college for the good of a community of people in need.

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Martha Lucia Zapata '08

After many years of hard work and dedication, Martha started her first year as a graduate student at the University of Denver in the university's Global Finance, Trade and Economic Integration program. When Martha started at Valencia in 2005, she would never have believed that she would one day become a graduate student. She's excited about this new opportunity, and cannot wait to see where it leads.

14 Kwame Walker '09

After graduating from the University of Central Florida in spring 2012 with a bachelor's degree, double majoring in management (entrepreneurship) and marketing, Kwame joined Burger King Corporation. He is now a resident of the golden state of California, where he works as a Burger King regional area manager as a sales, profit and operations coach. His main responsibilities include overseeing and managing 38 franchise restaurants (13 franchise group operations, 11 district managers, 38 restaurant managers, 152 assistant managers, and 570 team members) within the Los Angeles market.

Sahadeo Ramjatan '10

Sahadeo is currently studying aerospace and mechanical engineering at the University of Florida. He was recently accepted to attend a short training program at the Von Karman Institute for Fluid Dynamics in Sint-Genesius-Rode, Belgium, this fall. The institute is one of the top schools in the world for the study of aerodynamics and fluid dynamics! He would like to attend to learn more about aerodynamics and to develop his skills as an aerospace engineer.

15 Anais Munoz '11

Anais is the chef and co-owner of Breck's Cookies in downtown Kissimmee. She invites Valencians to try her original recipe for the delicious Valencia cookie!

16 Priscilla Conlon, '11, '12

Since graduating from Valencia with A.S. degrees in building construction and drafting and design technology, Priscilla graduated summa cum laude from UCF—one of a handful of students who was selected to receive the Honor Medallion for Top Honors and sit onstage with UCF President John Hitt. She invited her Valencia mentor and advisor, Charles "Chaz" Davis, to attend the commencement ceremony and sit with her onstage. Priscilla is now working toward her

master's degree at UCF in industrial engineering.

17 Robert Stio '11

Rob is attending Rollins College, where he has his own weekly radio show on WPRK-FM 91.5 every Friday from 10 a.m. to noon. The name of his show is "Fight Back Friday: AKA The Grunge Before Lunch." He plays a variety of '90s grunge and hardcore rock 'n roll. He also works part time at the House of Blues in Downtown Disney as a bartender and a bar back. Taking advantage of scholarship money and grants, he will be taking 22 hours at Rollins including a guitar class which has been described by the professor as kind of like "School of Rock!"

18 Jonathan Travis Simpson '11

Jonathan is excited to share this news: Over the next eight months, he will be interning at Deloitte and KPMG, two of the largest accounting firms in the world! He is looking forward to traveling, learning about accounting, and collaborating with people who are at the top of their game. Jonathan currently serves as vice president of outreach and resource development for the Valencia Alumni Association, as well as the president of the National Association of Black Accountants at UCF. Serving in both



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of these capacities has afforded him an opportunity to give back in the communities where he works and attends school.

19 Carmen Cruz-Venie '11

Early this year, after getting her bachelor's degree in sociology from Saint Leo University, Carmen created a nonprofit organization to assist and support disadvantaged families and individuals in the community. The Family Empowerment Fund of Osceola, Inc., is geared toward helping Osceola County residents. Having moved from New York City to Osceola County 25 years ago, Carmen wanted to give back to the community where she established roots. With monetary and food donations from family and friends, she has partnered with a local elementary school for its "Summer Backpack Food Program," to help feed needy families during the summer break.

Chelsea Hughes '12

Chelsea is currently attending UCF and hoping to get into the nursing program.

20 Steeve Bein-Aime '13

Steeve transferred to UCF last summer to get his undergraduate degree in sport and exercise science, (human performance track) from the College of Education. His is now a senior and scheduled to graduate in fall of 2014.

21 Erik Narvaez '13

Erik recently worked for Goodwill Industries of Central Florida and plans on attending the University of Central Florida in the spring of 2014.

Melodie Cros '11 Jonathan Luna '13

Since they were children, Melodie Cros and Jonathan Luna dreamed of one day creating sound effects for films.

For Melodie, the magic moment came while she was watching a Disney Channel special on how sound effects were created for "The Lion King." Jonathan, growing up in South Florida, was mesmerized by a YouTube video on the sounds used to create the cracking of a dinosaur egg in the movie "Jurassic Park."

Now the two Valencia graduates are on their way to realizing their dreams. In October, at the 135th convention of the Audio Engineering Society, Melodie and Jonathan won second place in the "Sound for Visual Media" category. There were more than 40 entries in the category, including students from renowned film schools such as New York University and the University of California at Los Angeles, as well as students from Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico and Japan.

The students won for their work creating sound effects and cleaning up dialogue for the 86-minute film,

"The Tailor's Apprentice," which was directed by University of Central Florida film student Jeff Lehman.

Judges for the category included Skip Lievsay, who was nominated for Academy Awards for sound mixing and sound editing for "No Country for Old Men" and "True Grit," and Bob Brownaw, who has received two Primetime Emmys for his work on Discovery's "Deadliest Catch."

"Just making it to the three finalists, that is a big accomplishment. Coming in second place is really good," said Valencia professor Raul Valery, a veteran electronics engineer who spent decades working in the music and TV industries in Los Angeles and Caracas, Venezuela.

Their win not only burnished their resumes, but may have lasting impact for Valencia's sound and music technology program. When Melodie and Jonathan accepted their award, the head of the student competition, John Krivit of the New England Institute of Art, told them, "You should be very proud. You just put your college on the map."

Left: Melodie Cros
Center: Jonathan Luna



SURVEY RESULTS PAINT PORTRAIT OF VITAE READERS

Thanks to all of our readers who participated in a recent email survey about Vitae magazine. Here's some of what we learned:

75%



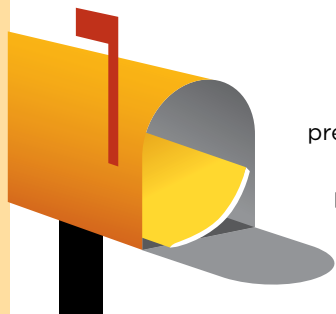
You're Loyal

75% of survey respondents said that they read most, if not all issues, of Vitae.

But You Want to See Some Changes

Based on your suggestions, here's what you can look for in the future:

- A redesigned Web edition of Vitae that will be easier to use (including on tablets).
- Sharing more about Valencia's history and legacy, especially leading up to our 50th anniversary in 2017.
- More information on Valencia resources and continuing education for alumni and job seekers.



You Prefer Paper

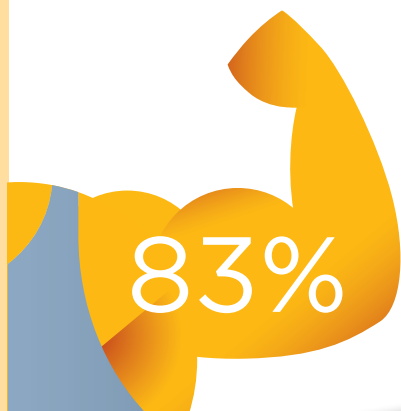
More than half of respondents said they prefer to read Vitae in print. Maybe that's because 43 percent of you hold on to your magazine copy for more than a month.

But You Dig Digital Too

While print is the preferred medium for the magazine, 30 percent of respondents said that they read both the print and online versions of the magazine. In addition, 85 percent of respondents indicated some interest in reading bonus content online.



83% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Vitae strengthens my personal connection to Valencia."



You Want to Remain Connected to the College

The top three subjects that readers indicated they were most interested in knowing about were:

1. Campus facilities and growth
2. Cultural events and performances
3. Alumni events

You're Valencia's Biggest Recruiters

When asked what actions readers have taken as a result of reading Vitae, the most common response was that they recommended Valencia to a potential student or family member.



If you know of an alumnus who is doing something interesting or who has achieved great levels of success, tell us.

Send your suggestions to Vitae's editor, Carol Traynor, at ctraynor@valenciacollege.edu.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A BRIEFING FOR ALUMNI, RETIREES, FACULTY,
STAFF AND FRIENDS OF VALENCIA

Valencia Seeks Its Share of Surplus for New Campus

By Linda Shrieves Beaty

When the state Legislature convenes in Tallahassee in March, legislators will be breathing easier—because for the second year in a row, the state is expected to have a budget surplus.

With an additional \$850 million for 2014-15, legislators will be fielding requests from many agencies, colleges and universities that experienced cuts during the recession. But Gov. Rick Scott is also proposing about \$500 million in tax cuts, though he hasn't said which taxes he'll recommend cutting or eliminating.

For Valencia and other Florida two-year colleges, the new legislative session presents an opportunity. After shouldering budget cuts during the recession—and being challenged to keep tuition low—the colleges are asking legislators to “re-examine the state commitment to Florida colleges,” says Bill Mullooney, Valencia's general counsel and vice president for policy.

In its budget request, the Florida College System—which represents 28 state colleges—is asking for \$1.16 billion in funding, \$15 million of which the system plans to distribute to colleges based on performance funding. The performance measures haven't been finalized yet, but Mullooney, who also serves as Valencia's lobbyist in Tallahassee,

says that performance funding bodes well for Valencia.

State legislators also may go back to the drawing board to figure out how to fund dual enrollment. During last year's session, the legislature demanded that school districts begin paying Florida College System institutions the standard tuition charges associated with dual enrollment. The new arrangement, however, created acrimony between some of the colleges and their local school districts.

This year, legislators are expected to look again at different ways to fund dual enrollment. Although the Florida College System is asking for \$18 million to distribute to the 28 colleges to pay for dual enrollment, Valencia College officials are asking legislators to consider using lottery dollars to set up a Bright Futures-style fund that would pay for dual enrollment.

“We think this is a solution to the problem,” says Mullooney, calling it a “permanent fix.”

In addition to dual-enrollment funding, expect Valencia officials—with the help of leaders and legislators from Osceola County and others—to lobby for money to build a new campus in Poinciana. The State Board of Education recently approved the expansion, giving

Valencia permission to search for land on which to build a campus and begin the planning process. “It's our highest new-construction priority, and we're going to ask for \$22 million to fund it,” says Mullooney.

Now that the state has more wiggle room in the budget, college officials want state legislators to renew funding for several matching grant programs that were cut during the recession. Two of those programs have traditionally brought in millions of dollars for Valencia, but have not been funded for the past six years. One, the Dr. Philip Benjamin Matching Grant program, which provides matching funds for scholarship donations, would be worth \$7 million in state matching funds for Valencia. The second program, the Capital Facilities Matching program, would provide about \$5.1 million to Valencia annually.

Valencia officials are also asking state legislators to give relief to veterans returning to college. Although legislators have indicated that they do not want to change any residency statutes, Valencia officials are asking for permission to extend fee waivers to veterans so that recently discharged vets no longer have to pay out-of-state tuition.



Photograph by flguardian2

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