

VITAE

WINTER 2017

THE MAGAZINE OF
VALENCIA COLLEGE



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DELICIOUS

VITAE

THE MAGAZINE OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

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The Valencia Alumni Association provides opportunities for lifelong personal, educational and professional growth for alumni and students of Valencia College.

Valencia College provides equal opportunity for educational opportunities and employment to all. Contact the Office of Human Resources and Diversity for information.

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VALENCIA COLLEGE

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In Pictures

On Nov. 2, students at West Campus came together to reflect on and celebrate the lives of loved ones passed during Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead).

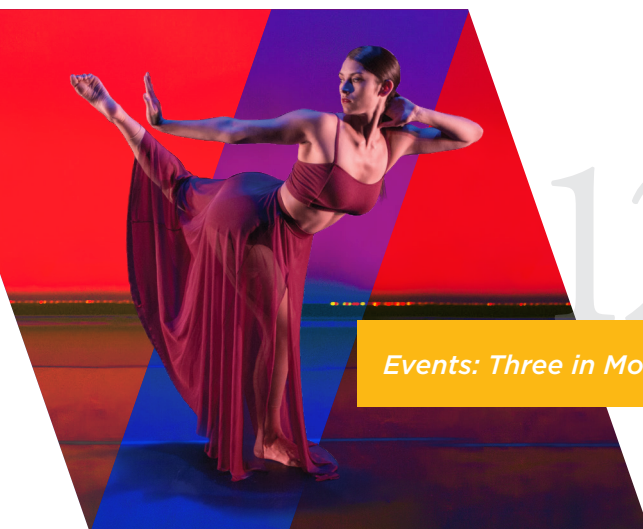
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How To

Make and Keep Your Resolutions

Valencia Students and Employees Now Ride Free on LYNX

At the Board of Trustees meeting in July, Valencia College signed an agreement with the Central Florida Regional Transit Authority allowing all Valencia students and employees to ride the LYNX bus system free of charge. Under the agreement, Valencia will pay for the service without forwarding the cost to students and employees, who may ride all LYNX routes, including NeighborLink services, at any time of day.

The LYNX system serves the six Valencia College campuses across Orange and Osceola counties—including the newly-opened Poinciana Campus. To take advantage of the benefit, students and employees must go to a campus security office to receive a LYNX

decal valid for the current academic year.

The agreement, a first-of-its-kind partnership in the region, incorporates data sharing that will help LYNX and Valencia collaborate on research, planning and user experience. This program launches amidst a technological overhaul by the transit authority, as it introduces numerous advances, including onboard Wi-Fi and a bus tracking app for smartphones.



Out-of-State Fees Waived for U.S. Citizens Displaced by Hurricanes



Puerto Rican student Jeremy Rivera enrolled in Valencia College's Intensive English Program upon arriving to Central Florida in late October, a month after Hurricane Maria.

Following a brutal 2017 hurricane season, Valencia extended in-state tuition rates to Americans displaced in other states and territories ravaged by a spate of natural disaster. On Sept. 5, Valencia enacted the waiver to accommodate any Houston-area residents reeling from the wake of Hurricane Harvey. The second waiver announcement came on Sept. 21, a day after Hurricane Maria delivered a devastating blow to Puerto Rico. The U.S. Virgin Islands were included in the tuition exception following a combination of hits from Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

In addition to offering in-state tuition, Valencia's Continuing Education department reduced rates on its Intensive English courses for Puerto Rican students arriving to Central Florida. To receive new arrivals, a consortium of local government and nonprofit organizations set up multiple reception centers across Central Florida, where Valencia staffers were ready to assist prospective students seeking to transfer or begin their college career at Valencia.

College officials expect an uptick of recent arrivals in the 2018 spring semester.

Valencia College Welcomes Executive Dean for Downtown Campus



In August, Eugene Jones II was named Valencia's executive dean for UCF Downtown and Valencia College Downtown. Jones, a veteran administrator specializing in workforce learning and outreach to underserved communities, comes to Valencia from Lake-Sumter State College, where he served as associate vice president of baccalaureate and workforce programs.

Jones spent the first 20 years of his career at Sante Fe College, where he developed My Brother's Keeper, a mentoring program for African-American men attending the community college in Alachua County. Drawing from his expertise in information technology, he worked with the public and private sector to provide residents of East Gainesville with computer access and education.

As the dean of a campus with an expected 2,300 Valencia students, Jones, who holds a doctorate in higher education administration, will work to open more pathways to higher education for the downtown communities west of I-4. Credit courses for A.S. and A.A. degrees will be taught in the Dr. Phillips Academic Commons building, a shared facility with the University of Central Florida.

Valencia's Culinary School will relocate to the downtown campus, moving into a separate multi-purpose tower which includes ground floor retail and student housing. Valencia will also offer accelerated skills training courses to boost employment rates and entrepreneurship in the area. The campus is slated to open in the Creative Village in fall of 2019.

Doors Open at New Campus in Poinciana

The dream of a Valencia College Campus in Poinciana became a reality on Aug. 28, 2017 when students began taking classes in two newly-constructed buildings off of Pleasant Hill Rd. The main building, which received three green globes for its sustainable design and energy-efficient operations, features 12 classrooms, two computer labs, a science lab, and a test kitchen for the A.S. in culinary management.

Adjacent to the main building, continuing education and accelerated skills training takes place in the campus' Center for Accelerated Training, where students can complete short-term courses in a variety of subjects from warehouse logistics to English-language training.

The new campus provides a more accessible postsecondary option in Osceola County. Interviewed on the first day of class, new student Nathanael Torres who is a working father of four, said the campus location was a determining factor in his enrollment.



"College seemed intimidating to me," said Torres. "But when I saw that this campus was opening up next to my house, I thought, 'This is my chance.'"

The college-going rate in Osceola had been historically low. However, the county has seen an uptick in college enrollment in recent years, in part due to Valencia's 'Got College?' initiative which was recently honored with the Florida College System Chancellor's "Best Practice" Award.

The initiative was spearheaded by Osceola and Lake Nona president Kathleen Plinske, who now presides over the Poinciana Campus. Jennifer Robertson takes on the role of Executive Dean. The dedication for the Poinciana Campus was held on Dec. 11, 2017, after being postponed due to Hurricane Irma.

valenciacollege.edu/vitae-news

A Gift That Keeps Giving

// BY CAROL STINNETT



There is no stronger motivation than knowing someone believes in you.”

In high school, Daniel Salas already had college on his mind. He took advanced placement classes, focused on his studies and thought about potential careers. When senior year came, he attended college tours—asking questions about programs, exploring activities and taking in the campus atmosphere. “My parents always supported my goals and said that college was the path to make my dreams come true,” he says.

Several schools checked off what Daniel was looking for, but they lacked the intimate environment he was in search of. “Coming from a small school, I was overwhelmed,” he recalls. “I enjoyed smaller class sizes in high school—I was close with my teachers, and that was important in choosing a college.”

After attending a presentation by Nelson Sepulveda, assistant director of Student Development at Valencia College, Daniel began looking more into Valencia, realizing it was the right fit for him.

Valencia’s Bridges to Success Achievers Scholarship helped with tuition costs. He explained, “I never had a college fund growing up. I was very fortunate to receive a scholarship... every hour

I didn’t have to work to pay for school was another hour I could devote to studying.” He also became involved in student groups, including Student Government Association and Valencia Volunteers.

In spring semester 2014, Dr. Melissa Pedone, Valencia’s dean of math at Osceola Campus, visited Daniel’s Chemistry II class to talk about the Johnson Scholarship. The scholarship is available for students at Valencia’s Osceola Campus who plan to receive a bachelor’s degree in biomedical sciences from UCF. The award amount progressively increases each semester as students demonstrate academic success.

Since Daniel had plans to transfer to UCF’s Biomedical Sciences program through Valencia’s DirectConnect to UCF, he decided to apply. It was the final binding agent to help him take the next step, Daniel explains, and he later learned that he was named a Johnson Scholarship recipient. “I was in shock. All I could think of was how blessed I was.”

At UCF, the Johnson Scholarship helped Daniel in more ways than just financial assistance. The scholarship program provided him with an advisor to guide him along his college journey. In addition, he had the opportunity to write letters to scholarship donors. “It really hit home to me,” he says. “Writing letters was humbling and allowed me to think about what the Johnson Scholarship provided me. There is no stronger motivation than knowing someone believes in you. My parents are my rock, my main support system. And having donors fund scholarships for recipients like me—those served as my motivation.”

This past spring, Daniel earned his B.S. degree in Biomedical Sciences from UCF and proudly wore his Johnson Scholar medal at graduation. Today, he serves as a program advisor for Student Development at Valencia’s Osceola Campus. He plans to earn a master’s degree in Sports and Exercise Physiology, and then move on to a Doctor of Physical Therapy program. He hopes to become a physical therapist, helping people become not only physically healthy, but also holistically well.

He sees every day as an opportunity to impact on someone’s life. “Personally, I believe that scholarships are more than giving away money,” he explains. “They impact the lives of students by allowing them to focus more on studies so that one day, they can give back to those who believed in them.”

Daniel with Valencia student leaders during a summer team builder at Tree Trek Adventure Park.



50 YEARS

***Celebrating fifty years
of better tomorrows.***

For milestone birthdays, most people like to extend the celebration and enjoy their big day for a week or a month. But at Valencia College, we've celebrated our 50th anniversary for an entire year!

And what a year it has been.

We've reflected on our early days, as the college's founders struggled to create a college that was open to everyone from any race or religion. We've celebrated by lifting our voices in song. We've planted trees on every campus to ensure that our campuses remain beautiful and healthy for years to come.

Here are some more highlights from the past year.

- 1 Osceola Campus students were pumped up about the 50th-themed Spirit Day, which included bungee jumping, a zip-line and the chance to spin on a human-powered gyroscope.
- 2 Rula Khalaf, Valencia's Distinguished Graduate for 2016-17, gives the commencement address on May 7, 2017—50 years from the college's inception.
- 3 Longtime Valencia benefactor Barbara Roper raises a glass to Valencia's 50th birthday at the Foundation's annual Taste for Learning fundraiser.
- 4 Winter Park Campus honors the college's 50th birthday with horticultural flair.
- 5 Students and alumni joined Valencia president Sandy Shugart onstage at the 50th Anniversary Concert in April for the grand finale, a medley of "All You Need is Love" by the Beatles and "Gimme Some Lovin'" by the Spencer Davis Group.
- 6 The West Campus grounds crew chips in to help plant trees during the "50 Years, 50 Trees" kickoff event on Earth Day 2017.
- 7 The Lake Nona Campus team held a joint birthday celebration, honoring the campus's 5th birthday and the college's 50th.
- 8 Minniejean Brown-Trickey, one of the Little Rock Nine who integrated Little Rock's public schools, speaks to a crowd at West Campus.



HOMEGROWN TALENT

A trio of Valencia grads are spicing up Orlando's dining scene

//BY LINDA SHRIEVES BEATY

Once known as the chain restaurant capital of the United States, Orlando's profile is rising among serious foodies. Part of that attention comes from the growing number of Central Florida chefs nominated for James Beard Awards, the Oscars of the culinary world. And part of the hoopla stems from the growing number of celebrity chefs—from Emeril Lagasse to former Oprah chef Art Smith to Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto—who have set up outposts in Orlando.

But save some of the attention for Valencia College's culinary team, which has quietly been producing its own home-grown superstars.

Among the students who learned their craft at Valencia are Chef Trina Gregory-Propst of Se7en Bites, Chef Camilo Velasco of Norman Van Aken's 1921 restaurant in Mount Dora, and Chef Bruno Zacchini of the hot and trendy Pizza Bruno.

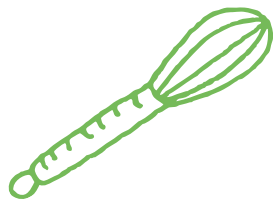
Meet these up-and-coming chefs here and brace yourself for more because Valencia's culinary program will expand when Valencia's Walt Disney World School of Culinary and Hospitality Arts moves to the new UCF-Valencia Downtown Campus in 2019.

valenciacollege.edu/homegrown-talent



Se7en Bites

Trina Gregory-Propst



Se7en Bites famous salted caramel dark chocolate pecan pie

Se7en Bites owner Trina Gregory-Propst may be the toast of the town today, but seven years ago she was a beginning culinary student trying to jump-start a new career.

Once a nail technician, she was ready for a career move. So she thought about two fields: nursing and culinary.

“The practical person inside me said, ‘People will always get sick and they will always eat. What would you rather do?’ Well, I don’t want to wipe people’s butts, but I could feed people,” she says. And, with a list of well-heeled clientele from the spa industry, she figured she could become a personal chef or cater holiday parties.

So Trina checked out culinary schools in Central Florida thoroughly, interviewing students and faculty. Determined to succeed, she immediately jumped into every class and every opportunity at Valencia.

“I knew I needed to immerse myself in it, so I joined the Culinary Arts Student

Association on my first day, and became the secretary!” She later became the treasurer and then president of the organization. In classes, she asked professors to taste her food and give her recommendations. She picked their brains for tips and advice. She even joined the culinary competition team.

“I went to every class I could, volunteered for every single thing I could,” she adds. “I think that’s what kids miss today. They don’t immerse themselves in the experience of school. Gregory-Propst also felt she was racing the clock. “I was 40 and I would graduate at 44—so I needed to cram as much experience as I could.”

At one point, she took a part-time job as Chef Pierre Pilloud’s kitchen assistant—and discovered he was a great storyteller and an incredible taskmaster. But she learned volumes, including how to inventory and clean the stockrooms, rotating items in the walk-in fridge so that the oldest items are used first, and what to order and why. In the summer, she had the unenviable task of taking every oven apart, replacing the worn parts and rebuilding them.

Over the course of three years, Gregory-Propst earned three degrees and had an incredible 3.95 GPA. After nearly completing her culinary degree, she took a mandatory baking and pastry class—and fell madly in love with baking.

“I realized that was what I loved doing with my grandmother. It was the pies and cakes and cookies that I enjoyed the most,” she says. So she signed on for another seven classes.

As she wrapped up her baking and pastry classes, she discovered that she was only five classes shy of a degree in restaurant management, so she hit the books again.

“Those classes taught me about contracts, how to read a lease, how to know what kind of insurance coverage I’d need,” she says. “I don’t think people realize the kind of knowledge and instructors that Valencia offers. But I’ll tell you this: I fully attribute my success to the education I received at Valencia.”



“

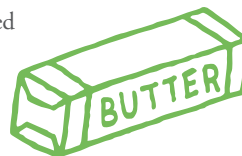
I realized that was what I loved doing with my grandmother. It was the pies and cakes and cookies that I enjoyed the most.”

At that point, she’d already begun thinking about opening a bakery and café—thanks to a remark that Chef Pierre made one day in class. “He said one of the best jobs he ever had was working in a breakfast and lunch place because he was out by 2 p.m.,” recalls Gregory-Propst. “And I thought, ‘I have a little boy and that’s great advice.’ Bakeries keep day hours. They open early in the morning and close early. You can serve breakfast and lunch—and you don’t have the same kind of food costs that an evening restaurant has.”

Her plans in place, Gregory-Propst hit the restaurant scene at full sprint. She graduated from Valencia on May 2, 2013 and signed the lease on her first building, the first home to Se7en Bites, the next day.

And she has never looked back with regret. Not once did she wish she’d taken off for another city in one of the culinary capitals of the world.

“I never considered going anywhere else,” says Gregory-Propst. “I have lived here since I was seven. I am an O-town girl. I love this city and the customer loyalty in this city. They have embraced me as Orlando’s girl and I could not ask for a better place to grow my brand. The warmth and the love has been really amazing. What I make is Southern food with a nostalgic twist—and they get it.”



Chef Trina Gregory-Propst

See what's baking at se7enbites.com

1921

Camilo Velasco

When Camilo Velasco was 14, his world turned upside down. Violence in his native Colombia escalated and his family, desperate to escape, moved to Miami—and then Kissimmee.

In Florida, the teenage Camilo discovered an international culture—with neighbors and friends from all over Latin America, Europe and Asia. “I had grown up in a small town in Colombia. When I came here, I met people from everywhere,” he says. “I thought that was so exciting.”

Working at Publix in high school, he earned spending money and begged his mom to drive him around Kissimmee, so he could sample foods from bodegas and take-out joints. “That’s where my interest started in food—as a diner,” he says.

The real turning point came, however, when he returned to Colombia at age 18 to visit childhood friends. There, they gathered in restaurants and reconnected over food and wine. And that magical feeling of communing together sealed Camilo’s passion for food. “I love the way I feel around food,” he says with a smile.

When he came home to Kissimmee, he enrolled in culinary classes at Valencia College. He’d already been reading books about chefs, and at Valencia, he found a mentor in Chef Ken Bourgoïn.

“Chef Ken’s passion is very contagious,” says Camilo. “He gets the students really pumped.”

Excited to try something different, Camilo made eggs and Hollandaise sauce for one of his first assignments—and garnished the dish with little pearls he’d carved from strawberries. “It didn’t really work, but I think Chef Ken saw that I was captivated by cooking and wanted to experiment,” he says.

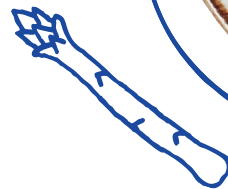
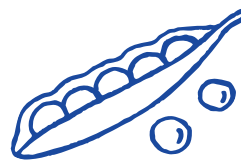
So Bourgoïn helped the young culinary student land a job at one of Orlando’s most exclusive restaurants—the five-diamond Victoria & Albert’s.

“

I had grown up in a small town in Colombia. When I came here, I met people from everywhere.”

The job wasn’t glamorous: Camilo started out peeling carrots and tomatoes, chopping garlic and shallots. Each time he mastered one skill, he was given another challenge—carving quenelles from gelato, carving cheese and handling caviar. After a while, he was handed another duty: Peeling flats and flats of eggs so that the chef could create a custard inside the egg shell. Many broken eggs later, he learned the technique.

“It was all just super exciting for me,” recalls Camilo, who was taking culinary classes by day and working at the restaurant at night. “I got yelled at every day for the first three months, but you realize that the way you continue to be



a five-diamond restaurant is to understand the urgency and the fact that there’s a certain standard that has to be maintained.”

For a year, Velasco worked at Victoria & Albert’s—and spent his money eating out at Orlando’s other fine restaurants, including Luma, Ravenous Pig and Norman’s, the restaurant that famed Miami chef Norman Van Aken opened in the Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes.

Velasco was intrigued by Norman’s and, when a sous chef position opened up, he applied.


“I was just learning how to cook and I was given this crazy opportunity—but he really believed in me,” he says. For five months, he served as the sous chef at Norman’s. Soon, Van Aken asked Velasco to join him at Tuyo, a restaurant that he created at Miami Dade College’s culinary institute. The experience was invaluable, says Velasco. “I got to work with him every day.”

But after a year away from his family, Velasco was ready to return to Central Florida. So in 2013, he took a job with Bernie’s Coffee Kitchen in Winter Park and there he helped create a café that served more than just bagels and coffee. “We were making oxtail terrines in a coffee shop. Rabbit roulades with madeira,” he says. “You’d never expect that kind of food from a Starbucks.”

But in 2015, Norman Van Aken called again with plans to open a Mount Dora restaurant that would celebrate Florida cuisine. Today, Velasco is executive chef at 1921 in Mount Dora. He is also grateful to Chef Ken, who opened doors for a kid who shared his passion for cooking.

“He,” says Velasco, “started it all for me.”



 Fresh from Florida takes on new meaning at 1921nva.com

Chef Camilo Velasco

Pizza Bruno

Bruno Zacchini



As a kid, Bruno Zacchini grew up in Sarasota, eating Italian food (not the kind served at Olive Garden) and feasting on life as a descendant of the Flying Zacchinis, a family of human cannonballs who performed for circuses around the world.

By the time he was 10, his parents began sending him to the New Jersey shore for the summers, where he whiled away the time with his cousins. At 13, he went to work at one of his cousin's husband's restaurant, where the menu included cheesesteak subs, fries, and pizza by the slice.

"My first job was selling pizza slices on the counter," says Bruno. "There was not much cooking, but I really liked it. I had a blast. I think I worked a 70-hr week during Fourth of July that summer. And they were family: They had no shame in putting me to work."

Thus began Bruno Zacchini's introduction to the world of restaurants: an annual stint on the Jersey Shore, where he learned how to operate a French fry machine, shuck oysters and handle throngs of people with aplomb.



I happened to grow up in a very food-centric family. My grandparents were born in Italy and came over here with the circus in the '30s."

After high school, Bruno spent a year at a small college in West Virginia, playing Division II football, before transferring to Santa Fe College in Gainesville. He was still searching for a foothold when several New Jersey friends said they were planning to go to Full Sail University in Orlando—and mentioned that Valencia offered a culinary program.

So Bruno packed his bags.

"It was totally different for me," he recalls. "I'd worked in this mom and pop restaurant. I knew how to

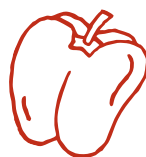
handle customers, I knew how to handle volume; that was no sweat. But the Valencia thing was cool because it showed me all these different aspects, chef stuff... for instance, I didn't hold a knife correctly."

Still, Bruno brought with him a collection of food memories that would serve him well—and serve as inspiration for his future.

"I happened to grow up in a very food-centric family. My grandparents were born in Italy and came over here with the circus in the '30s. What I knew as Italian food had nothing to do with that chicken parm, Americanized thing," he says. "Fresh pasta was really normal. For me, growing up eating octopus and cow's tongue and tripe was just normal stuff... I have all these flavor memories, all this food my grandparents would cook for me. These things are now so on-trend and, for me, that's hilarious. For me, that was Tuesday-night food."

At Valencia, he learned the techniques and the basic fundamentals of cooking. "And once you understand those basic techniques, cooking's a breeze," he says.

After he left Valencia, Zacchini started a food cart—a souped-up hot-dog cart where he cooked street food.



"We had a standard list of menu items—like cheesesteaks—and specials, which were essentially just what I felt like cooking."

Before long, with a family on the way, he began searching for a more permanent home—so he worked stints at Cask & Larder and Oblivion Tap Room. When a friend offered the chance to create a restaurant from scratch in New Smyrna Beach, he leaped at the opportunity and created the very successful Third Wave Café.

But the daily commute from Orlando to New Smyrna was grueling, so Zacchini began looking for a spot to call his own. He finally found one (ironically, on Craigslist), but the property owners seemed suspicious of the tattooed guy who claimed he wanted to open an amazing pizzeria in their space.


One night, while working in the kitchen at Third Wave Café, someone came back to the kitchen and said, "Your new landlords are here."

"I had no idea what he was talking about. I hadn't signed a lease with anyone. But it turns out they wanted to see what I meant, what I was talking about. So they came out and they sat down and had dinner. And after dinner, they told me, come sign the lease whenever you want."

Now one year after opening, Pizza Bruno is making a name for Bruno Zacchini—and Orlando foodies are taking notice.

"We build new regulars every day," he says. "People come in for the first time and they're just blown away," he says. "Yeah, we're a neighborhood pizzeria, but I always want to take something that's really good and improve and take it to the next level. And word is getting out."

As for Bruno, "I just want to make some great pizzas, play some music and have people have fun."

 It's all about the pies at pizzabrunoff.com



Chef Bruno Zacchini



Cooking Up a New Campus



Just as Valencia's culinary grads are attracting attention, the new downtown campus will shine a spotlight on the college's culinary program.

We're moving on up—to bigger quarters and newer facilities—and that's cause for celebration.

Valencia College's culinary and hospitality program will expand and move into spacious, new kitchens in 2019 when the program relocates from Valencia's West Campus to UCF Downtown and Valencia College Downtown.

"This is an extraordinary opportunity," says Valencia College President Sandy Shugart. "The quality of our culinary program is already outstanding, largely because of the chefs and professors on our staff and largely because we draw on the best hospitality community in the world. But we now have an opportunity to build a facility that's world-class and put a program that's almost world class and put it in there and watch it grow."

When Valencia's Walt Disney World School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts moves into this new 15-story building, it will house a ground-floor restaurant, plus several floors devoted to culinary teaching kitchens and classrooms. Features will include state-of-the-art equipment, the chance for students and instructors to produce videos, and a pastry lab with a "chocolate room," complete with an area to air-brush chocolate. Valencia is also considering adding a four-week certificate program in bread baking.

Enrollment in Valencia's culinary program has grown more than 16 percent over the past five years and demand for the college's graduates also continues to grow. "Right now, classes fill up very fast and students get frustrated," says Chef Ken Bourgoïn, program chair. "The new facility will make it easier for us to meet demand for these classes."

But best of all, the new facility will put a spotlight on Valencia's culinary program. "Orlando, from a culinary standpoint, is becoming so much more than just Disney," says Trina Gregory-Propst, owner/chef at Se7en Bites. "I think that by bringing the culinary program downtown and increasing the visibility, we have this world stage to put Valencia in the forefront. Not only do we have James Beard-nominated chefs in Orlando, but students can start at an array of amazing restaurants opened up here by chefs from around the world—and start there and go to work for them in another city. The world is just opening up for them." ❖



I think that by bringing the culinary program downtown and increasing the visibility, we have this world stage to put Valencia in the forefront."

*— Trina Gregory-Propst,
owner/chef at Se7en Bites*



Learn the latest at
valenciacollege.edu/downtown



Rendering of the proposed downtown campus building that will house the Valencia culinary program.





JANUARY

3 in Motion

Jan. 26, 2018 at 8 p.m.
Performing Arts Center, East Campus

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for students, alumni, faculty, staff and seniors; \$6 for children 12 and under. For more info, contact 407-582-2900

Rob Reedy: Mixed Media

Jan. 18 – March 1, 2018
Reception: Thursday, Jan. 18, 2018 from 5 – 7 p.m.
Anita S. Wooten Gallery, East Campus

Admission is free. For more info, contact: 407-582-2298

Students from the dance program practice for the annual Valencia Dance Summer Repertory Concert.



"Three Pot," 2014, acrylic on canvas by Rob Reedy

FEBRUARY

The Miracle Worker

By William Gibson
Directed by Julia Allardice Gagne

Feb. 16, 17, 19, 23 and 24, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 18 and 25, 2018 at 2 p.m.
Black Box Theater, East Campus

Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for students, alumni, faculty, staff and seniors. For more info, contact 407-582-2900

Master Guitar Series

Feb. 26, 28 and March 2, 2018 at 7:30 p.m. (tentative)
Performing Arts Center, East Campus

Admission is free. For more info, contact 407-582-2332

Spring Symphonic and Jazz Band Concert

Feb. 27, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.
Performing Arts Center, East Campus
Admission is free. For more info, contact 407-582-2332

Humanities Speaker Series 2017 – 2018: John Moran

Water and Florida's Future

Feb. 7, 2018 at 1 p.m.
Performing Arts Center, East Campus
Admission is free.

23rd Annual Film Celebration

Feb. 9 and 10, 2018 (times and films TBA)
Film Screening Theater, East Campus
Tickets: \$7 general admission for all. For more info, contact 407-582-2413

MARCH

Valencia Spring Dance Concert

March 23 and 24, 2018 at 8 p.m.
Performing Arts Center, East Campus
Tickets: \$12 general admission; \$10 for students, alumni, faculty, staff and seniors; \$6 for children 12 and under. For more info, contact 407-582-2900

APRIL

Transition

An original docudrama by John DiDonna

Directed by John DiDonna

April 6, 7, 9, 13 and 14, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

April 8 and 15, 2018 at 2 p.m.

Black Box Theater, East Campus

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

For more info, contact 407-582-2900

Student-Directed One Act Festival

April 20 and 21, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Lowndes Shakespeare Center, Loch Haven Park, Orlando

Admission is free.

For more info, contact 407-582-2900

Spring Symphonic Art and Music Concert

April 3, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Performing Arts Center, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact 407-582-2332

Spring Jazz Concert

April 5, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Performing Arts Center, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact 407-582-2332

Spring Choral Concert

April 10, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Performing Arts Center, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact 407-582-2332

House Band Concert

April 12, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Performing Arts Center, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact 407-582-2332

Spring Opera Theater Workshop

April 20 and 21, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

April 21, 2018 at 2 p.m.

Black Box Theater, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact 407-582-2332

Annual Juried Student Exhibition: Digital, Graphic and Fine Arts

April 12 - May 18, 2018

Reception: Thursday, April 12, 2018 from 6 - 8 p.m.

Anita S. Wooten Gallery, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact: 407-582-2298

Humanities Speaker Series 2017 - 2018: Jason Dittmer

Captain America and Donald Trump

April 16, 2018

East Campus, TBD

Admission is free.



JUNE

My Dear Watson: A Sherlock Holmes Musical

Book, Music and Lyrics by

Jami-Leigh Bartschi

Directed by John DiDonna

June 8, 9, 11, 15 and 16, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

June 10 and 17, 2018 at 2 p.m.

Black Box Theater, East Campus

Tickets: \$15 general admission; \$12 for students, alumni, faculty, staff and seniors.

For more info, contact 407-582-2900

Richard Currier: Paintings

June 14 - Aug. 3, 2018

Reception: Thursday, June 14, 2018 from 5 - 7 p.m.

Anita S. Wooten Gallery, East Campus

Admission is free.

For more info, contact: 407-582-2298

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TESTING...

IN A CUTTING
EDGE FILM
AND SOUND
BUILDING

//BY JIMMY SHERFEY

Valencia College expands its legacy of affordable education with a premium quality Film and Sound Technology building that modernizes East Campus' arts and entertainment education while doubling program capacity.

When Lyndon Johnson signed the National Endowment for the Arts into law in 1965, he remarked that “art is a nation’s most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and to others the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish.”

With the spirit of that law in mind and the arts and entertainment industry representing a major piece of the regional economy, a deficit of accessible arts education at the postsecondary level could be detrimental to both Central Florida’s soul and its economy.

That is precisely why Valencia College leadership sought to expand the burgeoning arts technology programs in a substantial way, by opening the door for more students to enter the talent pipeline for Central Florida’s arts, entertainment and media

industries. Valencia’s East Campus President Dr. Stacey Johnson notes that this will generate 34,711 registered jobs and approximately \$264 million in direct economic impact to the community.

“Eighty-seven percent of Americans believe that arts are important for a better quality of life,” says Johnson, citing a recent Americans for the Arts study. “But only 45 percent of Americans stated that all Americans have equal opportunity to the arts.”

On August 28, 2017, the dreams for affordable arts education became a reality when film and sound students entered an arts and media technology learning facility rivaling any in the nation. But long before the School of Arts and Entertainment’s new sign graced the \$13.5 million building, the film and sound project would undergo an evolution in the planning stages.

Photograph by
Chad Baumer



By 2013, the existing film and sound facilities, located in building 1, had been described in varying terms—from cozy to dungeon-like—but the humble size did not deter an increasing number of students from enrolling in the program. Meetings began that year, says East Campus operations manager Roger Corriveau, to renovate the facilities in response to the need for skilled labor in the arts and entertainment industries, which were growing fast on both a local and global scale.

“It was long overdue,” says Corriveau. Film production and sound technology “were two successful programs living in relative squalor. So we began the process to get students into spaces that would prepare them for the jobs they were ultimately seeking.”

Outfitting classrooms with the appropriate equipment and space to prepare them for the real world industry would not be a cheap and easy solution, so Valencia faculty and staff began workshoping the expansion, measuring needs and industry standards against financial reality.

With help from Valencia’s foundation and a \$922,000 Perkins grant (federal dollars earmarked for the development of career and technical education), the college went above and beyond the initial aspirations. The plans evolved from adding a wing to an existing building, to a shared building, to a much bigger project: A new building in which students could create and showcase original work.

Longtime film program chair Ralph Clemente had long championed the expansion of the film program. Clemente was a key to the punchy film program’s success. A widely-revered filmmaker—who had collaborated with early film legends such as George Romero and mentored a new school of artists, including Game of Thrones director David Nutter—he was poised to usher the film program to a new era. Sadly, Clemente passed away very suddenly in the spring of 2015, just weeks after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. When his

successor, Eric Fleming, joined Valencia in August 2015, the plans had been set and construction on the building would start in less than a year. But the resulting learning space, Fleming says, would be one that Clemente would have been proud of—and one the students had long deserved.

“I look back on what the film program had, and I’m amazed what Ralph [Clemente] and the students were able to achieve,” says Fleming, “It was just a couple of trucks with grip and lighting gear and that was the program.”

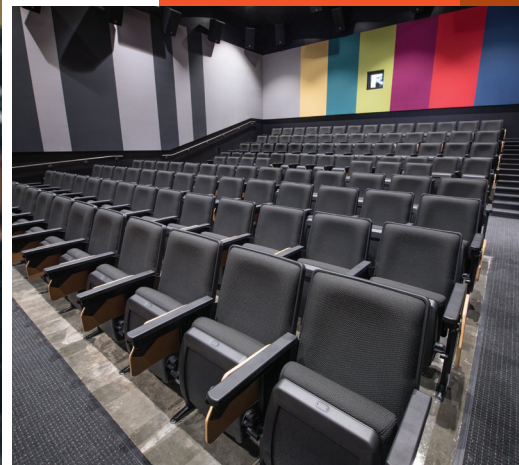
When the new building opened for fall classes, students entered a 30,705 square foot building featuring a 125-seat screening theater, a high resolution digital projector, an immersive dub and foley room, a professional soundstage, and a green screen room—and that’s just on the first floor, which is dominated by film production labs and classrooms.



Left: Film students learn how to build a dolly track for “on location” scenarios. Right: The 125-seat screening theater on the southern flank of the School of Arts and Entertainment’s new building.

“

I look back on what the film program had, and I’m amazed what Ralph Clemente and the students were able to achieve.”





Lab instructor and Valencia sound technology grad John Q. Pearce hosts his weekly radio show, *John Q. and Friends*, in Valencia College Radio's studio located on the first floor of the new film and sound building.

Fleming says that in the new building, the film department can complete a film from start to finish putting students on equipment they're more likely to encounter in the film industry. The new building also brings added post-production capabilities, which will prepare students for an expanding market in the arts and entertainment world.

"There's been an explosion of original content with streaming services like Netflix and Amazon, so there is plenty demand for post-production skills," Fleming says, adding that there are plans to introduce a post-production certificate, that will integrate course work across the film and sound programs.

Both the screening theater and the immersive mixing and dubbing room come equipped with Dolby Atmos®-certified technology, boasting a total of 79 loudspeakers capable of producing 128 sounds simultaneously. The result is a living lab where students can create projects designed for a premium cinematic experience.

As far as colleges and trade schools go, there are fewer equipped with chest-rattling Dolby Atmos®-certified sound systems than there are movie houses boasting the same technology in the metro Orlando area.

"When I tell people back in L.A., they're floored that our students are

going to be working on Dolby Atmos equipment," says Fleming. A virtually unheard of feature for educational institutions in 2017, Valencia chose, in the planning stages, to become early adopters of technology that is now gaining prevalence in the industry.

"Raul [Valery, head of the sound program] really put all his chips in on Dolby-Atmos for the sound portion of the film program, and it paid off," says Fleming.

On the second floor, the sound program enjoys an upgrade of its own: two audio recording studios, each with comprehensive sound isolation construction, separate booths for vocal recording, and control rooms with mixing consoles and monitors. More than 4,600 analog audio patches connect the studio's mixing controls to pre-amps and recording rooms. Perhaps the most prized piece of equipment now available to sound technology students is the Neve Console. Audiophiles will recognize the console's namesake—It was Rupert Neve that first installed the mixing equipment used in London's Abbey Road studios, which captured the signature golden-toned sound of the Beatles' beloved 1969 farewell album.

So with Valencia College's 50th anniversary set to coincide with the opening of the new building, Sound chair, Valery began making plans to

record a throwback album, covering songs that were popular in Valencia's inaugural academic year, 1967-68. The resulting album—which will be adorned with the 60s-inspired work of graphic design chair Kristy Pennino—will be released on vinyl in the spring of 2018.

While the new Film and Sound Building comes outfitted with all of the best equipment to revive the sounds of the late '60s, there was no guarantee that the songs of 50 years ago would resonate with the students. Drawing from his own experience, Valery recalls being enamored by the culture that blossomed in the "Summer of Love," but not exactly with poring through the sounds of the jazz age of the 1920s.

To record hit songs like "Soul Man," "Happy Together," and "I'm a Believer," Valery enlisted Valencia students and faculty from inside the sound technology program and elsewhere in the School of Arts and Entertainment.

"The funny thing is that our students knew every single one of these songs, 50 years later—I'm amazed," says Valery. "They know these songs, they sing them! Sometimes they know the song, even if they have never heard of the artist."



“

Now, the studio is the classroom, and we're interacting with the controls constantly.”

Left: Sound II students learning the controls of the new Neve console. Right: Student vocalist records a track for the 50th Anniversary album in one of the two isolation booths of the new recording studios.

To further capture the mellow sound that typified the late '60s, students recorded the anniversary album on tape, just as the iconic songs were first recorded 50 years ago. The decision to record to tape might not be as ambitious as it sounds, though, given that it's already a standard part of Valery's curriculum.

“Learning to record to tape gives you a better foundation for audio than going straight to digital, because in tape you have to make decisions,” Valery says. “You really need to be able to route the signal. With digital, it's all virtual. So when our graduates go get jobs in the real world, they will need to route signals physically and interconnect the equipment. Learning on analog gets them up and running a lot faster.”

Once the tracks have been recorded to tape, the Neve console really shines, delivering a richer composition, says Valery. “Consoles aren't really powerful during recording. They become powerful during the mixing phase.”

Standing in front of the Neve console after assisting students

with the board, John Q. Pearce (known as “Q” to his peers) notes the transformation the program has undergone with the opening of the new building. Pearce, who earned his A.S. in Sound and Music Technology in the fall of 2016, was hired as a lab assistant last year.

“Before, we didn't have the opportunity to work on a Neve console, and we had to wait until our scheduled sessions to really get our hands on the mixer board,” Pearce says. “Now, the studio is the classroom, and we're interacting with the controls constantly.”

In addition to helping students become better acquainted with complex sound equipment, Pearce manages Valencia's radio station, which he re-launched the day the new building opened.

Now using the live broadcast app, Mixlr, Valencia College Radio produces regularly scheduled programming, currently collaborating with 20 students and faculty including the college newspaper, the Valencia Voice, to stream music and news via internet around the clock.

Pearce encourages listeners to download the streaming application in order to listen in and interact with the college's station on social media. He also invites students to participate in Valencia's radio club, where they can assist with production and programming, which includes interviews with successful grads speaking on their experiences in the real world.

In advance of the Film and Sound Building's Oct. 28 grand opening celebration, rising star and sound tech grad Palmer Reed joined Pearce's show, John Q and Friends, to talk about his work with a producer who collaborates regularly with Lady Gaga.

After graduating from Valencia, Reed spent several years paying his musical dues in the clubs and venues of Orlando before moving to Los Angeles in early 2017. It turned out to be a serendipitous move; by October, Reed had an original song on the motion picture soundtrack for “My Little Pony.”

During his interview on Valencia College Radio, Reed's mother, Diane, who is a nursing professor

at West campus, waves at her son mid-interview from the other side of the studio window. Palmer waves back to his mom; just steps behind her is the outdoor stage where he would perform at the opening celebration a few days later. Like so many things about the new Film and Sound Building, it's a setting and circumstance that the students may not have expected just five years ago. But it's a building that ultimately proves the value we place on the “heritage” and “inner vision” President Johnson first spoke of more than 50 years ago. With Valencia's film and sound programs expected to double, the legacy of affordable education lives on in a growing body of arts and entertainment students, all of whom carry their own unique vision of what tomorrow holds for Central Florida. ▀

valenciacollege.edu/film-sound

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Ryan Kane
An Advocate for
Acceptance Helps Pave
the Way Toward Inclusion

// BY CAROL STINNETT

Ryan Kane discusses Title IX and highlights various inclusion topics during a workshop on Valencia's West campus.

What keeps you on your toes? For Ryan Kane, balancing work projects, family life and a new puppy are just some of the things that keep him busy. Kane, the assistant vice president of Organizational Development and Inclusion at Valencia College, wears many different hats on any given day. When he's not playing the role of husband, dad, leader or supervisor, he's tapping into his artistic side—playing the piano, clarinet and saxophone.

With an extensive background in higher education, he's had first-hand experience in working with very diverse groups of students. One of his favorite aspects of his position is seeing the impact that his team's work has on students' professional and personal lives. "The work we're doing is creating a positive experience for students as a whole, which is extremely rewarding," he says.

A northeast native, Kane grew up in a suburb outside of Philadelphia. Originally interested in pursuing a career in prelaw, he earned a political science degree with a minor in psychology at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. While there, he worked as a resident assistant, and later, transitioned to a residence director. It was during this time that he developed a greater passion for psychology and its connection with people.

After Franklin & Marshall College, he took a position as residence director at Siena College, before moving into a similar role at Towson University. At Towson, Kane supervised a number of residences, which included 15-floor towers and 150 townhome units. His quick-wittedness and easy-going personality were everyday essentials in this position. "Each townhome housed eight students who had to share two bathrooms," recalls Kane, laughing. "You can imagine what that was like."

Through his 12 years at Towson, he would take on additional roles, earn a master's degree, chair the student affairs and staff development committee, and move into a director position with the Office of Student Conduct. While the position was serious in nature, he enjoyed the one-on-one interaction with students, saying, "I would ask them about their values and whether or not their



“

I want individuals to value the diversity that the college has to offer. Take initiative to learn, reach out and get to know people that may not be similar to you.”

behaviors aligned with those values. It was a great way to help guide them in making better choices to lead a successful life.” It was also in this position where he began working more closely with Title IX, a federal law that mandates sexual harassment and sexual violence requirements for educational institutions.

Although Kane and his family lived in the northeast their entire lives, they always dreamed of becoming residents of the Sunshine State. “We spent a lot of time in Florida with family and friends in the area, visiting theme parks and the beach. It always felt like this area was home.”

So in 2015 when a Title IX position opened at Valencia College, he jumped at the opportunity.

After an hour-long interview, Kane knew that Valencia was exactly what he was looking for. Within weeks, Kane, his wife and two daughters headed south to start their new life in Central Florida. “We’ve seen more family and friends since moving down here. They can come visit any time and go to the parks, catch up over dinner... even take the dog on a walk,” he jokes.

Within his first few months at Valencia, Kane was eager to jump right in and start collaborating with teams from around the college. During this time, he and his supervisor talked about ways to integrate pieces of Title IX into a big-picture discussion, saying, “We wanted a way to show what Valencia is all about—how our college provides an

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ONE TO
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A few examples of Valencia's Community Inclusion campaign visuals.

environment where all people feel welcome and where we embrace their unique traits.”

Students at Valencia come from all backgrounds and walks of life—more than 100 countries are represented on the college's six campuses. Keeping that in mind, Kane and his team worked with other departments on a Community Inclusion campaign that aligns our college's culture with the important message behind Title IX: Be the one to make a difference.

The campaign motivates people to think about their own identity and the identity of others, Kane explains. “I want individuals to value the diversity that the college has to offer. Take initiative to learn, reach out and get to know people that may not be similar to you. Don't wait for someone else to do it first.”

At Valencia, students, alumni, faculty and staff all play a role in creating and maintaining an inclusive college community. From showing support for others around campus to just knowing when something's not right and reporting it, everyone can help in maintaining a safe learning environment.

“You are what makes us Valencia College. You are part of our community,” he says. “We accept you and appreciate the things that make you unique. Be the one to know that you are welcomed, just as you are.”

For more information about Title IX, visit valenciacollege.edu/betheone

valenciacollege.edu/ryan-kane



JULIE AVERY, '97

Julie's passion is biological research.

She's now a research assistant professor and runs laboratories in Alaska and Florida.

Julie is living her dream.

“I've been fortunate to do work on three continents and explore some amazing places.”

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VALENCIA COLLEGE

17MSC045

A Printmaker Who Creates Lasting Impressions

// BY LORAIN O'CONNELL

When Andrew Downey was attending Valencia College in the early 1990s, he didn't know what to do with himself. "I thought I'd be an architect, but I barely passed college algebra," he recalls.

After his dad passed away, the college freshman started questioning his own life. What did he want to do? What did he want to be? Nothing seemed to spark Downey's interest enough to pursue a career.

"Then I took a drawing class and realized this was it," he grins. "I couldn't believe I was getting college credit. That was sort of my awakening."



Downey followed his artistic awakening to an Associate in Arts degree from Valencia, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Central Florida, a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Florida and right into a studio on Valencia's East Campus—where he has taught drawing and the ancient art of printmaking since 2001.

Having a studio concentration in printmaking from UF, it's an art form Downey enjoys because it's kind of a mystery, he explains. Unlike drawing, which offers immediate gratification, printmaking is a process, similar to ceramics. "You don't know what that pot or mug will look like until it comes out of the kiln," he tells students.

Printmaking originated in China after the invention of paper, according to the Washington Printmakers Gallery in D.C. The Chinese developed woodcuts, the oldest method of printmaking, in the ninth century. In its simplest terms, printmaking involves an artist creating an original work by transferring an inked image from wood, metal, stone or screen—such as silk—onto a sheet of paper, or sometimes another material, by means of a press.

Printmaking encompasses numerous techniques, including relief, intaglio, woodcut, lithography and monotype. Downey prefers intaglio because

it allows for experimentation. "There are so many things you can do," he says. "Some you can control and some you can't—and that's what I like about it."

“

Unlike drawing, which offers immediate gratification, printmaking is a process, similar to ceramics.”

Each semester he teaches three variants of intaglio: collagraph, drypoint and etching. Every print begins with a drawing; then the real work commences. The drawing must be inked, wiped and pressed between two rollers to emboss the image onto paper before the end result is visible.

For a collagraph, students create a collage of materials glued onto a cardboard "plate." In drypoint, which Downey describes as a process that hasn't changed in half a millennium, students use a steel-pointed pen to draw an image on a zinc plate. He adds, "I have them work, just like Rembrandt, on a self-portrait."

Etching requires students to cover their zinc plates with a protectant, create a new or modified image on the plates, and then dip the plates in acid to etch the image. He explains that the length of time that you leave the plate in the acid determines how deeply the self-portraits get etched.

The final steps start with rubbing the printing ink into the crevices on the plate that were formed by the artist's drawing. Excess ink is wiped away, and the plate is placed on the bed of the press, overlaid by a sheet of moist printing paper. A blanket is placed over the plate and the paper so that pressure is applied equally as the image is printed.

Downey loves printmaking and typically uses his own work to illustrate different techniques. His favorite part of teaching is demonstration. "There's a benefit to students seeing my process," he expresses. "I enjoy introducing them to a different way of thinking and learning."

Andrew reveals a print from the press to students in his printmaking class.



A student uses an etching needle on a zinc plate as part of the printmaking process.



There are so many things you can do. Some you can control and some you can't—and that's what I like about printmaking."



A piece of Andrew's work from this year, "On Deck," which was produced by etching and monotype on Rives BFK printmaking paper.



Printmaking students Cheyenne and Tyler working on a class project.

Tyler Jacob, a student of Downey's, says, "He's very passionate about what he does and goes into a lot of detail when showing us new printing methods." Jacob, who's majoring in computer science at UCF, talks about how he collects prints and took the class to better understand the work that goes into each print.

During class, Downey roams around the studio, pausing to answer questions or to just sit down and chat as the students work. His cheerful personality and enthusiasm for his subject are contagious. "He

likes to have conversations with students," says Rea Khan, an art major who has taken a couple of Downey's classes. "He's helpful and always in a good mood."

His reverence for the elaborate printmaking process underpins Downey's main goal for students: appreciation. Students who previously might have walked by a print in a museum are likely to stop and admire it, he explains.

"Now they know how it's done and can appreciate it on that level." ▮

valenciacollege.edu/andrew-downey

IN PICTURES

Valencia students and employees stand in front of the West Campus library, awestruck by the Aug. 21 solar eclipse, a rare coast-to-coast event for the U.S.



A year after 49 people lost their lives in the Pulse nightclub massacre, remembrance events took place college wide. Attendees at the Osceola Campus dedicate a new peace pollinator garden.





#WeAreWest: Members of West Campus SGA pass out leis at the first-year student bash in the HSB.

The Osceola Campus lights the clock tower blue to honor Kissimmee Police officers Sam Howard and Matthew Baxter, who were killed in the line of duty on Aug. 18.



Renaissance festival goers hold court in the portico of Winter Park Campus on Sept. 29.



The East Campus Dance Troupe jumpstarts the Peace and Justice Institute's Global Peace Week (Sept. 25 - 29) with a grand jeté.



A ghoulish tip of the cap from a member of the Symphony Band's horn section following the Halloween concert at East Campus, Oct. 31.



Valencia launches partnership with LYNX, allowing students and employees to ride any LYNX bus route for free.

Members of Lake Nona SGA raise a toast (of sparkling grape juice) in celebration of the campus' 5th anniversary, Sept. 20.



Poinciana Academy of Fine Arts students from the steel drum and dance department performs at the inaugural PoincianaFest held at Valencia's newly-opened campus, Oct. 28.



#FuerzaPuertoRico: Following the aerial peace sign photoshoot, a member of the East Campus grounds crew member raises the Puerto Rican flag in support of the U.S. territory left reeling by Hurricane Maria.



Student Development program specialist and 2016 Distinguished Graduate Emmy Torres goes up top for a high five with the stiltwalker at the West Campus Veterans Day event, Nov. 9, 2017.



Palmer Reed, '12

From playing nightly shows in downtown Orlando to sets at Disney Springs, Valencia sound technology grad Palmer Reed, 26, is no stranger to the stage. So when he picked up a guitar for an impromptu set at a Grammys after-party this year in L.A., he was bound to turn some heads.

After the brief performance at the star-studded party hosted by Interscope Records, Reed was asked by a producer—who works regularly with Lady Gaga—to write an upbeat song about friendship. The resulting track,

“I’ll Be Around,” written and performed by Reed, landed a spot on the motion picture soundtrack for *My Little Pony*.

Reed credits his current success to paying his musical dues. While at Valencia, Reed played in public as much as possible, determined to share the stage with artists from different genres.

Now that Reed is poised to step onto a larger stage, he’s got some advice for students.

“Stay humble and hungry. Keep pushing, because opportunity is around every corner,” says Reed.

Pat Naldrett-Bilodeau, '91, '93

(Not pictured)

Featured on the cover of the Florida Community Association Journal in November 2016, Pat credits her degrees from Valencia—an A.S. in Real Estate Management and an A.S. in Business Administration and Management—with helping her launch a new career in her early forties. Today, she serves on the advisory board of the Florida Community Association Professionals.

1 Donna Culver, '94

Donna is proud to announce that she earned her MBA from Colorado Technical University in 2016. Today, Donna’s Dove/Move Family Mentoring Programs help Orlando high school students and their families prepare for college or the next level of their life.

Jessica Westbrook, '94

(Not pictured)

Since graduating from Valencia, Jessica earned a BFA in photography from UCF, and an MFA in photography at Temple University. Westbrook spent the early phase of her professional life as an interactive designer and developer in the Baltimore–Washington area. Today, she is an associate professor in the School of Design, College of Computing and Digital Media at DePaul University, where she co-directs Divergent Design Lab.

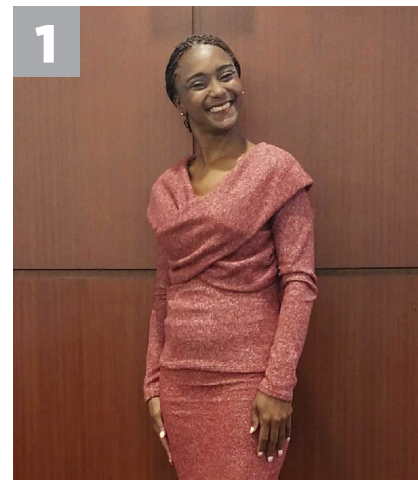
Eddie Ruiz, '99

(Not pictured)

In July 2016, Eddie was selected to serve as the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Equity and Access for the School District of Palm Beach County.

2 Frainelys Cruz, '09

After earning her A.A., Frainelys returned to Valencia to earn a nursing degree and recently earned her master’s degree as a family nurse practitioner. She has worked primarily in the pediatrics field since becoming a registered nurse in 2011, and is now working on her doctorate of nursing practice at the University of South Florida.



3 Matthew C. Hodges, '09

After graduating from Valencia, Matthew earned a civil engineering degree at UCF and has since become a registered Professional Engineer. Working for the Florida Department of Transportation, Matthew's current work focuses on structural inspection and maintenance of Central Florida's more than 1,600 fixed and movable bridges. Matthew is married to another Valencia grad, Danielle (Meyer) Hodges, '10.



Daniel Botero, '10

(Not pictured)

Daniel is currently working as a Regional Key Account Manager for PepsiCo Frito-Lay, responsible for managing over \$60 million in yearly sales for Target, CVS and Walgreens in the southeastern United States. Daniel is also the co-founder of lifestyle clothing brand, Mestre Empire.

4 Roderick Davenport, '10

A former vice president of Valencia's African American Cultural Society, Roderick is an employee for Orange County Public Schools, where he serves as a basketball coach, track coach and ESE paraprofessional for severely handicapped students. He is working on his bachelor's degree from the University of Florida, and a sports management certification from Columbia University.



5 Levon A. Mergian, '10

Levon is currently working as a Supervising Producer on the NBC show "America's Got Talent." Since graduating from the Valencia Film Production Tech program, Mergian has been a producer on "American Idol," "So You Think You Can Dance," "Dancing With The Stars," and more. "The Valencia program and Ralph Clemente provided me everything I needed to stand out and work my way to almost the top of my field," Levon says. "I love Valencia."

6 Hamza Tufail, '10

Upon completing his A.A from Valencia, Hamza earned his paralegal certification and worked for a law firm for three years, working his way from junior paralegal to chief paralegal—while pursuing a bachelor's degree in accounting from UCF. After earning his degree, he passed all four Certified Public Accountant exams and now has started his career in public accounting as an auditor for KPMG, an international accounting firm.

James Cressler, '12

(Not pictured)

Jim may have earned his Valencia degree in accounting technology, but he is making his mark as an author. The Army veteran has published two fantasy fiction books, "Sobriety Island" and "Diary of an Oak Tree," and is currently writing a third, "Demimonde."

Rolanda Brown, '14

(Not pictured)

In May 2017, Rolanda earned a bachelor's degree in health sciences from UCF, where her hard work earned her magna cum laude distinctions. She currently shadows doctors in oncology, hematology and internal medicine in local hospitals—and plans to begin applying for medical school in 2018.

Jessie Sangil, '14

(Not pictured)

After graduating from Valencia, Jessie started a career in real estate. Today, she is not only a "Top Producer" for her current brokerage, but has also received special recognition from the Orlando Regional Realtor Association as a 2016 Top Producer with her team, Jess & Kail: The Listing Ladies.

Stephanie Cornejo, '15

(Not pictured)

After earning her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the UCF in August, Stephanie is working at the Orange County Sheriff's Office in the Crime Analysis Unit. This semester, she began work on a master's degree in criminal justice.

Niles Morrow, '15

(Not pictured)

Niles is currently working toward a bachelor's degree in environmental studies at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in Tallahassee, where he is also a lab assistant, performing research on suspended solids in Tallahassee's rivers. Last summer, he interned at the Savannah River Environmental Science Field Station, completing research on soil pH, river discharge and endangered plant species located on the Savannah River site in Aiken, S.C.



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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



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and Keep How to Make Your Resolutions

// BY CAROL STINNETT

As the new year approaches, many of us will ponder on our resolutions for the coming year. It's one of the most talked about topics in December—what's your resolution?

Valencia College's Tina Tan, professor of speech communication, often helps students with their resolutions and goals, both inside and outside of the classroom. This upcoming year, she has plans of her own, too: Take professional development courses, including the new Active Learning Certification, and help the Communication Division transition to Canvas.

Tina shared some of her tips on how you can make successful resolutions that are sure to stick.



Give yourself choices.

Create a list of things you'd like to work on and categorize them, such as health, personal development, spiritual and professional. You know yourself best, so think about resolutions and timeframes that are realistic for you. Narrow your list down to the top several choices. Remember, less is more.



Think about others.

Resolutions don't always have to center around your personal life. Consider making a resolution that touches the lives of other people in the community. Valencia Volunteers can help you explore local opportunities and refer you to organizations that best fit your interests.

valenciacollege.edu/volunteer



Write it down.

Jotting your resolution down in a spot you see frequently will keep you in check and help track your progress. Use a planner or your phone's calendar to note when you'd like to complete certain milestones and messages to stay motivated.

Partner up.

Get a partner to help hold you accountable for sticking with your resolution. Many times, friends, family members and colleagues feel good when they can help you in some way. Think of it as someone to take your resolution journey with you for the year.



Schedule a check-in date.

Set some time aside to check in with yourself and address your resolution's progress. Are you right on track? Have you fallen behind? Or, maybe you've bit off more than you can chew. From there, determine your path forward.

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Jonni Kimberly '78

Human Resource Director at
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