

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

May 2024



CHC Proudly Announces Damian G. Garcia as the Recipient of the 2024 Outstanding Alumni Award



Hailing from the Inland Empire, Garcia's upbringing instilled in him a strong work ethic and drive from an early age. Despite encountering challenges and being among the few Hispanic individuals in his community and academic journey, Garcia remained steadfast in his pursuit of higher education and professional success. He was the first in his family to attend college.

"My parents, particularly my father, instilled in me the values of hard work, determination, and perseverance," Garcia remarked. "They inspired me to continually strive for success, regardless of the obstacles in my path."

Garcia embarked on his higher education journey at CHC, where he laid the groundwork for his academic pursuits while balancing personal and professional responsibilities.

"Persistence, dedication, and patience are qualities I honed during my academic journey," Garcia reflected. "Crafton Hills College provided me with the platform to develop my academic skills while navigating the complexities of married life, my career, and my studies."

Following the completion of his bachelor's degree at the University of California, Riverside, Garcia went on to earn a Master of Business Administration from the University of Redlands, followed by a law degree from the University of La Verne.

Driven by his dedication to justice and diversity, Garcia pursued a legal career with a vision to effect positive change in his community, aspiring to become an attorney and eventually serve as a judge. Recognizing the lack of diversity in the judiciary, he sought to make a meaningful impact through his work.

"I am deeply passionate about law and justice. I believe that I bring a unique blend of commitment to service, reverence for the law, and dedication to justice," Garcia asserted. "It is my belief that the diversity of

the judiciary should mirror the diversity of the communities they serve."

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Garcia remains devoted to mentoring and inspiring the next generation.

He has addressed groups of at-risk and underrepresented high school and middle school students in the Redlands Unified School District and Perris Union High School District, sharing insights into success and recounting his journey to becoming an attorney. Furthermore, he has provided guidance to students at the University of Redlands and the University of La Verne College of Law.

"I am committed to continuing to motivate and empower the youth in my community," Garcia affirmed. "In light of recent societal challenges, including the pandemic, our children are facing significant stress and anxiety. It is imperative that we prioritize the mental well-being of our society, particularly our youth, to ensure a resilient and flourishing future."

Garcia was celebrated as the recipient of the Outstanding Alumni Award at the CHC Foundation Fundraiser/Gala on Thursday, April 18.

Photo: Damian Garcia.

Crafton Hills College Paramedic Program Director to Receive Distinguished Service Medal



Amanda Ward, Director of the Paramedic Program at CHC, received the 2023 Distinguished Service Medal from the California Emergency Medical Service Authority (EMSA) for her exceptional contributions.

As a CHC paramedic program alumna, Ward's leadership and dedication were recognized by EMSA for her transformative impact on the field. She actively advocates for accessibility, mentorship, and education, while also opposing proposed increases in paramedic licensure fees.

Ward's commitment to preparing paramedics for the field and addressing staffing shortages has been commendable. She traveled extensively to speak against

proposed fee hikes and has been a loyal advocate for students.

Under her leadership, CHC's paramedic program boasts a 96% pass rate on the National Registry Exam and a 95% employment rate within six months of graduation. Ward acknowledges CHC's support in her advocacy efforts and remains dedicated to advancing equity and training for EMS clinicians.

Despite these achievements, Ward humbly acknowledges that there is more work to be done, expressing her commitment to furthering her efforts in supporting the needs of future first responders.

Photo: Amanda Ward.

Class 102 Paramedic Graduation: A Celebratory Evening for Latest Graduating Class of Paramedics



On March 1, Crafton Hills College celebrated the graduation of Paramedic Class 102. The event, attended by family, friends, faculty, and preceptors, began with a slideshow showcasing the graduates' journey through the program.

Despite juggling jobs, the graduates completed the rigorous hybrid program, encompassing classroom learning, clinical

experience, and field internships. Notably, CHC's paramedic program, the state's first accredited program at a community college, boasts an impressive job placement rate exceeding 95%.

Dean Dan Word and Program Director Amanda Ward encouraged participation from the audience, emphasizing the graduates' reliance on their support.

Medical Director Dr. Phong Nguyen delivered a heartfelt message, underscored by a personalized rendition of "Top of the World," stressing the graduates' preparedness for their vital roles.

Guest Speaker John Marini reminded graduates of their responsibility as patient advocates and ambassadors. Class President Jordan Wilson highlighted the principles of CHC Paramedics: confidence, humility, and class, while also presenting the class plaque.

The class award was presented to Glen Thronson for his everyday example of being an ideal paramedic for the students. Faculty-chosen awards were presented, followed by a surprise announcement of financial assistance from the CHC Foundation to help each graduate with their licensing fees.

The ceremony concluded with the Awarding of Pins, culminating in a standing ovation for Paramedic Class 102.

Photo: CHC Paramedic Graduating Class 102.

Crafton Hills College Celebrates Black Americans' Contribution to Our Nation's History



"We wanted all to embrace the culture by gathering in community storytelling, creating art, and understanding the difference between diversity and anti-racist work," explained Willie Blackmon, dean of student services and student development at Crafton.

Activities began Feb. 1 with an opening ceremony featuring remarks, live music, and giveaways. Events that followed included a Feb. 7 presentation on theater, music, and literature; a trip to see the film "Bob Marley: One Love" at Harkins Theatre in the Redlands Mountain Grove shopping center on Feb. 15; and "Food for the Soul"— a themed closing and reflection ceremony on Feb. 29.

Crafton Hills College celebrated Black History Month with a series of February events highlighting contributions by Black Americans.

"Black Americans in the Arts," with each offering an opportunity for Roadrunners to learn about the impact figures like musician Bob Marley and scientist Lisa Gelobter had and are continuing to have in the fields of science, arts, politics, and social justice.

Blackmon called the month-long celebration a success, adding, "It was a fun-filled month with social components infused with an educational lens."

The College's Black History Committee planned each activity around the theme

Photo: Black History Month committee.

Roadrunners Attend Annual A2MEND Conference

Crafton Hills College sent four African American students to the 2024 A2MEND Conference in Los Angeles, where over 1,000 attendees gathered from March 6-8. The event aimed to connect African American male students with resources and opportunities to overcome barriers in higher education.



Willie Blackmon, Crafton's dean of student services, highlighted the importance of mentorship and networking in navigating systemic challenges. Studies show African American male students often face obstacles such as inequality and difficulty building community on campus. Attendees were able to engage in culturally relevant workshops tailored to their experiences. For Cameron Richey, 34, the conference offered a refreshing portrayal of African American men and an opportunity to delve into the rich history and progress of African American culture.

Hosted by A2MEND, a nonprofit of African American male educators, the conference aimed to affirm and advocate for black male success in community colleges and beyond. The theme, "Affirming Our Own

Actions: Advocacy, Urgency and Liberation," underscored the organization's mission to support black male achievement.

Photo: CHC conference attendees.

Crafton Hills College’s “HAM” brings thrills, drama to Finkelstein Performing Arts Center



CHC’s theater department delivered thrills and drama with its latest production, “HAM”. Written by Chris Coon, the play centered around Sam, whose life takes a dark turn when his HAM radio becomes possessed by a demonic spirit on Father’s Day 1932.

the role’s unique premise. Set in a remote Alaskan cabin, the play unfolds as Sam grapples with the demon’s manipulation, believing it to be his deceased wife and long-lost son. Despite warnings from a minister, Sam succumbs to the illusion of family.

production to a “Twilight Zone episode on stage,” a sentiment echoed by Coon, who cited the series as a childhood influence. The play delved into themes of grief and vulnerability, juxtaposed with the intrusion of a provocative radio personality.

“HAM” captivated audiences with its suspenseful narrative and compelling performances. Clift led the cast, supported by Aaron Lonnstrom, Andromeda Dunlop, Jonathan Black, Naomi Gonzales, Derek Verasteugi, and Debra Brighton.

Coon praised the cast and crew for bringing his vision to life, commending their dedication and talent. With Olivia Jacques’ set design and the cast’s immersive portrayal, “HAM” left a lasting impression on both creator and audience alike.

Tristan Clift, portraying Sam, was drawn to

Director Paul Jacques likened the

Photo: Theatre students.

Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium’s Counselor Conclave 2024



Approximately 250 college and high school counselors gathered on March 7 for the 2024 Annual Counselor Conclave organized by the Inland Empire/Desert Regional Consortium.

Marking the first in-person gathering since 2019, this year’s event witnessed the highest turnout in over a decade. Attendees had the opportunity to select from diverse workshops and sessions, engage in

networking with peers, and were treated to an inspiring keynote presentation on code-switching. Crafton’s own Rejoice Chavira and Christina Sweeting facilitated a presentation and discussion about the career programs offered at Crafton Hills College.

Photo: Rejoice Chavira and Christina Sweeting.

Crafton to Go ‘Pink’ with Staging of Legally Blonde: The Musical



Get ready to see CHC’s Theater Arts Department paint the town pink with their production of “Legally Blonde: The Musical!” Running from April 26 to 28, the musical will feature Olivia Jacques as the iconic Elle Woods. Jacques, a political science major, has eagerly embraced the challenge of portraying Elle, calling it a dream role.

Following the journey of Elle Woods as she navigates Harvard Law School after a heartbreak, “Legally Blonde: The Musical” promises a pop-rock soundtrack filled with high-energy numbers.

Performances will be held at 8 p.m. on April 26 and 27, with a matinee at 2 p.m. on April 29. Tickets are \$10 for general admission and \$5 for students and seniors, available online or at the PAC box office.

Crafton alumni are invited to a special reception before the April 27 performance to meet the cast. RSVP by emailing CHC_alumni@craftonhills.edu.

Photo: Olivia Jacques.