

CSULB FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

Letter from FCS Chair

Welcome to the FCS newsletter! We are excited to share highlights of our 2024-25 academic year with you! In the past year, we have explored ways to increase sense of belonging in our classrooms and department. We began this work in our fall retreat, followed by a Course Equity Portal training, weekly communications related to equity and belonging, brown bag lunches, a writing group, and a student town hall and student/faculty mixer. Certainly, we have more work to do in the coming academic year we continue to ask ourselves:

*“What are we in higher education doing to make our institutions and systems worth belonging to?... Do I want them to belong to the ideal higher education of my imagination, or am I willing if our ideals differ to give up my fondly held visions to transform into theirs?” -Kristen Renn, in forward to *The Sense of Belonging in College**

In this newsletter, you'll learn more about innovative work of our faculty and students this year. A few highlights include the following:

- The MS in Applied Nutrition and Dietetics welcomed its first cohort in spring 2025. This training program aligns with a new competency-based Graduate Program model and leverages the new Beach (Expedited Degrees in Graduate Education (EDGE) program. EDGE allows undergraduates to apply to double count up to 12 units of courses towards the bachelor's and master's degree, reducing time to degree. Gerontology and Consumer Affairs faculty also developed an EDGE pathway, showcasing the interdisciplinary and collaborative spirit within FCS! In addition, Consumer Affairs faculty developed new courses related to real estate practice, expanding their offerings in this area.
- FCS was pleased to welcome Dr. Alicia Minor as the Director of our Child and Family Center in fall 2024. She is working collaboratively with Child Development and Family Studies (CDFS) faculty to prepare for the return of children and teacher training to the Center. In the new Center, slated to open in spring 2026, we are excited to welcome new audiences for the CFC: children of student parents and infants. Dr. Nancy Dayne also obtained seed funding to establish a Family Resource Center to serve student parents, while creating additional training opportunities for CDFS students.
- Fashion Merchandising and Design faculty proposed a plan to upgrade their fashion design lab using Student Excellence Funds, which was funded for the 25/26 academic year. We look forward to sharing images of the newly designed space next year!
- Hospitality Management students and faculty once again led an outstanding Wine Excellence Event in collaboration with the Queen Mary. This edition marked the beginning of a new series exploring wines native to destinations once visited by the iconic ship. It was a sell-out success!

The rhythms of academic life invite iteration. Yet, in the repetition, we have a chance to do things differently- to reflect, rethink, and try something new. In the coming academic year, I look forward to continuing our exploration of strategies that foster belonging, and to see other priorities and goals emerge as we collaborate.

Thank you for following FCS!

Virginia Gray, PhD, RDN, Professor and Chair

FIRST YEAR REFLECTIONS!

THIS FALL WE WELCOMED SOME AMAZING FOLKS TO THE FCS TEAM!
HERE'S WHAT THEY HAVE TO SHARE ABOUT THEIR FIRST YEAR.



DR. NOHEMA

Dr. Garcia-Castaneda joined our Hospitality Management faculty after completing a PhD in Business Administration and Hospitality Management at Oklahoma State University. She shared, "During my first year at FCS, I truly enjoyed building connections with students and supporting their growth both academically and personally. One area I'm working on is embracing "mistakes" as learning opportunities, something I encourage in my classes but still strive to practice myself. Next year, I'm excited to stay engaged through my new role as the HM Club representative."

GARCIA-CASTANEDA

DR. HOFNER RUSIANA



Dr. Rusiana joined the Consumer Affairs Faculty this year, after completing a PhD at University of Georgia in Financial Planning, Housing, and Consumer Economics. He reflects: "My first year with FCS has been incredibly fulfilling—I'm grateful for supportive colleagues and students who made the transition smooth. I'm looking forward to future collaborations and growth with this great department."

DR. ALICIA MINOR

Dr. Minor joined FCS in fall as the new Child and Family Center Director. As a CSULB/CDFS alum, she brings many years of experience back to the program that trained her. She shares, "As we reach the final phase of the center renovations, I'm inspired by the meaningful work ahead and the opportunity to make a lasting impact on families and students. My first 8 months as the center director have already been fulfilling — laying the important groundwork for the center and now watching it all come together. I'm excited to lead such a beautiful space where novice professionals can learn, children can thrive, and where every detail reflects intention, care, and inclusiveness."



We also welcomed a number of wonderful new lecturer faculty, who bring a wealth of career experience into our classrooms!



ANNA APOIAN reflects on her first class:

"I recently retired after working in school nutrition for 25 years, as a dietitian and food service director. It is such a gift to be able to return to CSULB, where I earned my BS and completed my internship 32 years ago. I also worked as a clinical dietitian and was a certified diabetes educator for several years, in Houston, TX.



We had fun on Fridays in our Foodservice for a Diverse Population course. The first students in this new program are simply wonderful-capable, communicative, focused, and determined. We had several off-site visits to explore varied job opportunities in the food service arena where dietitians may find employment opportunities, including a food manufacturing plant, Don Lee Farms, Long Beach Unified School District, SoCal Gas Resource Center, and Sunrise Produce Distributors.



It was a significant learning curve for me facilitating this class, learning CANVAS and trying to understand the acronyms in the educational arena. The students were respectful and helpful - as we navigated together. My first semester was tiring and a joy!"



Other New Lecturers we welcomed:

Debra Baetz, CDFS

Ruzanna Basmajyan, FMD

Erika Hansen, FMD

Hannah Maloney, CDFS

Nicole Strattman, CDFS

Maria Wendt, CDFS

CHHS CULINARY & WINE EVENT



Hospitality management students executed an amazing wine and culinary event at the Queen Mary. Students collaborated with the culinary team on the Queen Mary to select food pairings, plate the food, and lead attendees through the wine and food tasting.



FCS is pleased to announce Brianna Koster (pictured second from left above) as the new director of our Hospitality Management program! Brianna is an alumna of our hospitality program and CSULB's MBA program, and has a background in restaurant operations. She is excited to build upon the solid foundation for the program laid by its founder, Dr. Lee Blecher. Dr. Blecher will remain involved in teaching in the department and supporting the program's needs.



Campus Couture Fashion Show

BY: JACQUELYN MORELL

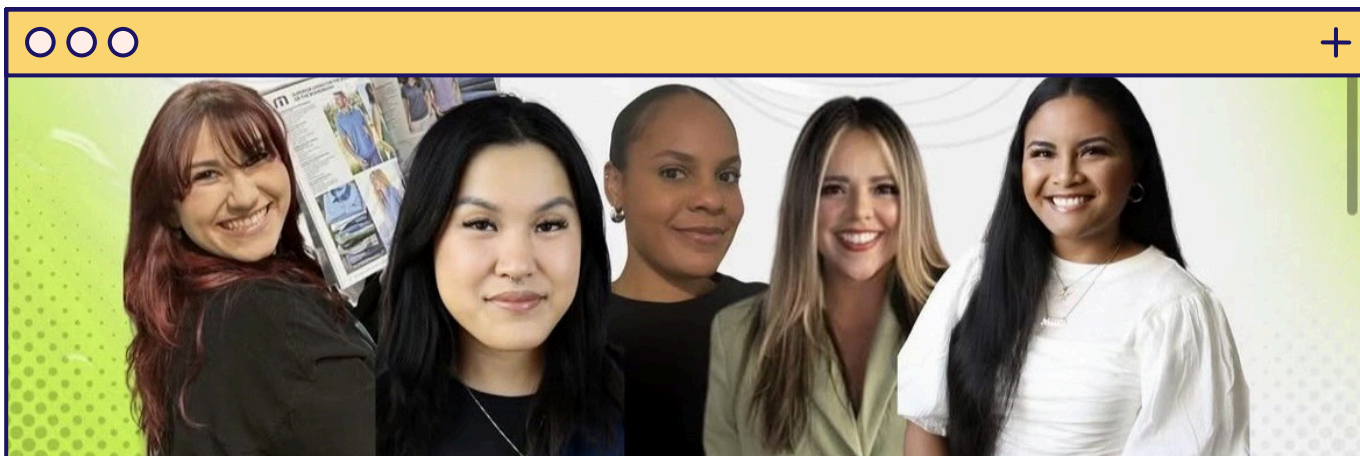
PHOTO CREDITS: JEROME THOMAS MEDIA

This past semester was really inspiring as I had the privilege of planning and hosting our annual Fashion Symposium, as well as serving as the faculty advisor for Campus Couture. Both events highlighted the dedication and passion our students bring to learning and growing within the fashion industry. From the impressive turnout and thoughtful questions at our symposium to the remarkable talent showcased at the fashion show, I was amazed with our students' creativity and commitment. I'm so proud to be a part of the program and to support our students on their journey into the world of fashion!

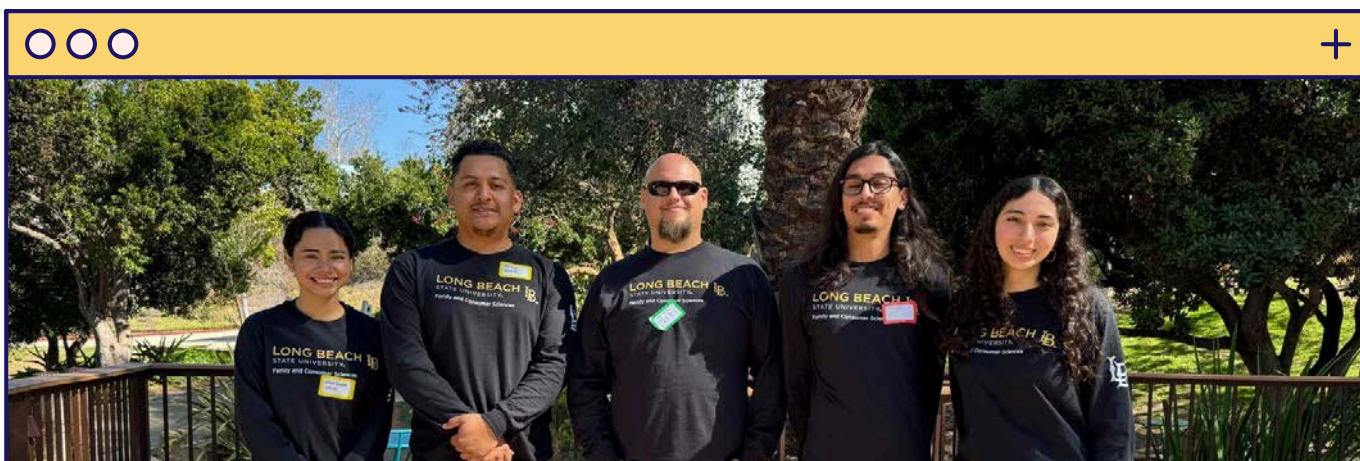




Consumer Affairs Symposium



Fashion Industry Symposium



*FSCI 2025 College Bowl Competition,
Institute of Food Technologists*

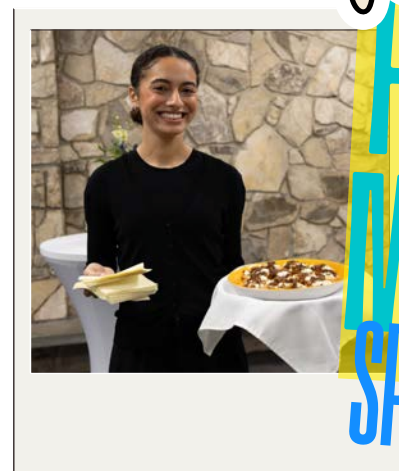
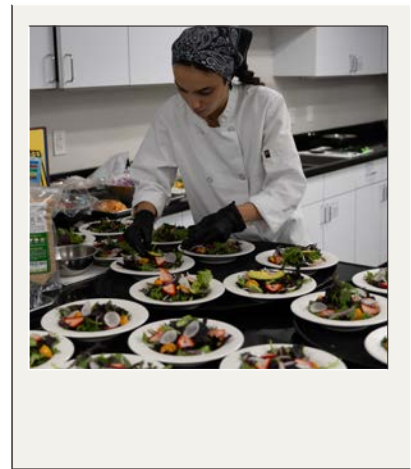
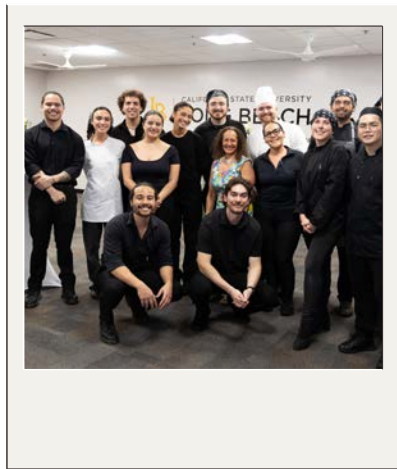
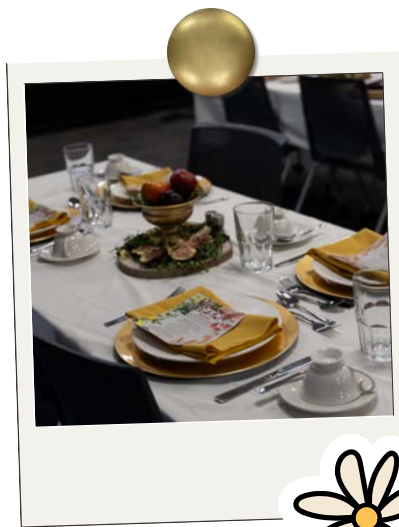
Our students and faculty were busy with symposia and competitions this year! Symposia featured speakers (including former students of our programs) that exposed students to varied careers.



CAFF ACCI 24-25

Our Consumer Affairs and Family Finance (CAFF) program delivered an outstanding performance at the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) annual conference, earning top honors and national recognition across multiple categories. Leading the charge, Professor Soo Cho was elected ACCI President for 2025-26—a tremendous honor that places CSULB at the forefront of consumer research leadership. Dr. Cho also presented three compelling research studies examining financial discrimination, fraud vulnerability, and multidimensional poverty comparisons between the US and South Korea, demonstrating the global impact of our faculty's work.

Our students showcased exceptional research excellence as well: Consumer Affairs student Hoang Tran and University Research Opportunity Program (UROP) student Hannah Ouang earned a 2nd place award in the Undergraduate Research Poster competition for their innovative study on financial factors affecting health outcomes among immigrant and native-born populations. Dr. Hofner Rusiana contributed sophisticated economic analysis through his poster exploring the dynamic relationship between consumer confidence and federal interest rates. The week concluded with a double victory for incoming faculty member Dr. Xiangchen Liu, who claimed both the prestigious Richard Morse Consumer Economics Paper Award and the coveted Dissertation Award for her impactful research on health insurance and alternative lending markets. These achievements reflect the caliber of scholarship and innovation that defines our CAFF program's commitment to addressing real-world consumer challenges.



HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT SPRING LUNCHEON



Hospitality management (HM) students in Dr. Libby Gustin's course, Food Production and Service in HM, delivered a luncheon themed "Garden of Eat-in." The garden-inspired menu featured sustainably-sourced organic ingredients.

FCS EXCELLENCE

Dr. Michelle Taylor was awarded a grant by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services /Administration for Children and Families. Her project is titled, "Exploring Teacher Thriving in Head Start and Associations with Child Outcomes: Implications for Supporting the Workforce."

MICHELLE TAYLOR



Dr. Cheryl Rock was inducted into the Universal Martial Arts Hall of Fame!

CHERYL ROCK

Dr. Elena Ionescu completed her PhD in Social Work at University of Houston this spring!

ELENA IONESCU

Dr. Cheryl Rock and Dr. Libby Gustin were recognized for their sustainability-related leadership!

CHERYL ROCK & LIBBY GUSTIN

Bonnie received a CHHS Best of the Beach Award at the CHHS Convocation in the fall!

BONNIE RICE

Dr. Tiffany Brown participated in a team that delivered a workshop on cultural taxation.

TIFFANY BROWN

Dr. Zoe Engstrom published an article on budgeting! WalletHub. (2025, March 5). What is zero-based budgeting? Definition & example budget.

https://wallethub.com/credit-cards/student/#expert=Zoe_Bryan_Engstrom

ZOE ENGSTROM

Brianna Koster delivered a 49er Industry Chat to share how our Hospitality Management program is preparing students for today's workforce. The Industry Chat was presented in collaboration with CSULB Alumni.

BRIANNA KOSTER

Dr. Kelly Anthony shared her work at the Western States Communications Conference in Albuquerque, NM, in February 2025, with two of her papers receiving Top Debut Paper honors. Dr. Anthony also completed her PhD in Communication at Chapman University this spring!

KELLY ANTHONY



Dr. Rachel Blaine traveled to Sacramento with Nutrition graduate students for the CA Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' Public Policy Day. They advocated for bills related to farm-to-school programming and ending child hunger.

RACHEL BLAINE

President's Award

2024-2025



Two FCS faculty members earned the prestigious 2024-25 President's Awards for Outstanding Faculty Achievement: Drs. Roudi Roy and Peter Kreysa. These coveted awards recognize faculty who demonstrate sustained excellence across teaching, service, research, scholarly and creative activities, administration, and Beach 2030 initiatives—essentially, the best of the best at CSULB. The recognition reflects not only individual achievement but also the caliber of dedication and innovation that defines our FCS community. Join us in celebrating these outstanding educators and researchers who continue to elevate our college and department and make lasting impacts on student success and community wellbeing!

STUDY ABROAD



ITALY

In summer 2025, a group of CDFS students embarked on a study abroad experience in Italy to explore the Reggio Emilia approach and inquiry-based learning in early childhood education, led by Dr. Youngok Jung. Through lectures, school visits, and hands-on experiences, students deepened their understanding of children's rights, the power of thoughtfully designed learning environments, and the significance of nurturing children's natural curiosity. Alongside academic learning, the group visited iconic landmarks like the Colosseum and Vatican City and built friendships that made the journey even more exciting and meaningful.



BARBADOS

In summer 2025, the 8th cohort of students will experience Distilling and Brewing Technology in Barbados (FSCI 490) a unique opportunity to explore the beautiful Caribbean Island of Barbados, the birth place of Rum. Additionally, through four distillery visits, students will learn about Rum Science and its intersection with ancestral African and modern Barbadian culture and spiritual traditions. Students will also get to engage in cultural activities (i.e., the Foreday Morning Festival) and eat delicious Barbadian food, led on this study abroad experience by Dr. Cheryl Rock.



STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

STUDENTS IN FASHION

Students in Fashion (SIF) is a social and professional student organization that builds relationships and explores the world of fashion through creative projects. Pictured on the left is a color-coding meeting the students had this semester.



Hospitality Management Association General Meeting #4: Sustainability in Hospitality
Discover unique opportunities at! Find and attend events, browse and join organizations, and showcase your involvement.
campuslabs.com

HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

The Hospitality Management Association (HMA) provides students with opportunities for interaction with faculty, alumni, and local leaders in the hospitality industry. HMA hosts various events throughout the year, including a professional panel discussion, guest speakers, and visits to event venues.

STUDENT ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY HEALTH

Students Active in Community Health (SACH) aims to foster communication and collaboration among students of diverse backgrounds by exploring the role of food in community health and encouraging cultural exchange through campus, community, and professional activities.



SACH x HSSA Open Mic Night at Cyclop's Cafe!
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campuslabs.com

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

GERONTOLOGY CLUB

The Gerontology Club promotes scholarship, research, professionalism, friendship, and service to older persons, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic excellence and professionalism in gerontology.



Career Vision Board Event w/ Gerontology Alumni Panel

Discover unique opportunities at! Find and attend events, browse and join organizations, and showcase your involvement.

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CONSUMER AFFAIRS STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The Consumer Affairs Student Association (CASA) fosters students' understanding of consumer affairs theories and practices, promotes the major, builds connections with professionals, and creates opportunities for engagement with CSULB faculty, administrators, and the broader community.

FOOD SCIENCE CLUB

The Food Science Club (FSC) is a nationally recognized chapter of the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) in the Pacific Southwest region. FSC promotes student engagement in food science through leadership, academic excellence, and access to internships, scholarships, and professional opportunities.



STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

STUDENT DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

The Student Dietetic Association (SDA) promotes student and faculty engagement in nutrition, dietetics, and food administration through campus, community, and professional activities, while providing opportunities to connect with the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and expand knowledge and experience.



SDA General Meeting #7

Discover unique opportunities at! Find and attend events, browse and join organizations, and showcase your involvement.

campuslabs.com



CHILD AND FAMILY ASSOCIATED STUDENTS

The mission of Child and Family Associated Students (CAFAS) is to support children, families, and early childhood professionals by promoting the value of nurturing environments, culture, and community, while providing resources such as job fairs, philanthropic opportunities, permit workshops, and guest speakers in child development.

find more active groups

[CHHS Student Organizations](#)

NEWSFLASH

FCS IS KIND OF A BIG DEAL!

GERN 575 WOMEN & AGING: LESSONS FROM THE GOLDEN GIRLS



Our "Women & Aging: Lessons from the Golden Girls" course uses everyone's favorite Miami roommates to examine the biological, psychological, and social aging processes that women experience—and trust us: Dorothy, Rose, Blanche, and Sophia make the perfect professors! Through iconic episodes and academic discussion, students explore everything from housing challenges and ageist stereotypes to the realities of caregiving, women's health issues, retirement planning, and finding purposeful life after 50. We tackle the tough stuff too—addiction, loss, grief, and yes, even sexuality in later life (Blanche would be so proud!)—because real gerontology education means understanding the full spectrum of women's aging experiences. Whether you're 20 or 70, this course will change how you think about getting older by combining serious academic content with the humor, heart, and wisdom that only the Golden Girls can deliver, showing that learning about aging doesn't have to be depressing when you've got the right teachers leading the way!

KITCHEN

CONFIDENCE

Quest Magazine featured the CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) Program in its Fall 2024 edition, led by Dr. Virginia Gray and Danielle Muñoz (Director of Basic Needs). CFHL is an innovative effort to address the growing challenge of college food insecurity through the cooking-focused nutrition classes. With studies showing that over 40% of college students nationwide—and 55% at CSULB—experience food insecurity, the program provides crucial nutrition education and cooking classes while helping students access food benefits. Since 2018, CSULB has been one of 13 CSU campuses participating in this initiative, receiving \$314,000 in initial funding with an additional \$225,000 expected through 2027. The program has directly served about 600 students in the past year while creating valuable training opportunities for student employees and volunteers. By integrating with campus resources like the Basic Needs center and the Beach Kitchen teaching facility, the program takes a comprehensive approach that goes beyond individual education to create systemic change, helping students develop both cooking confidence and long-term healthy eating habits.



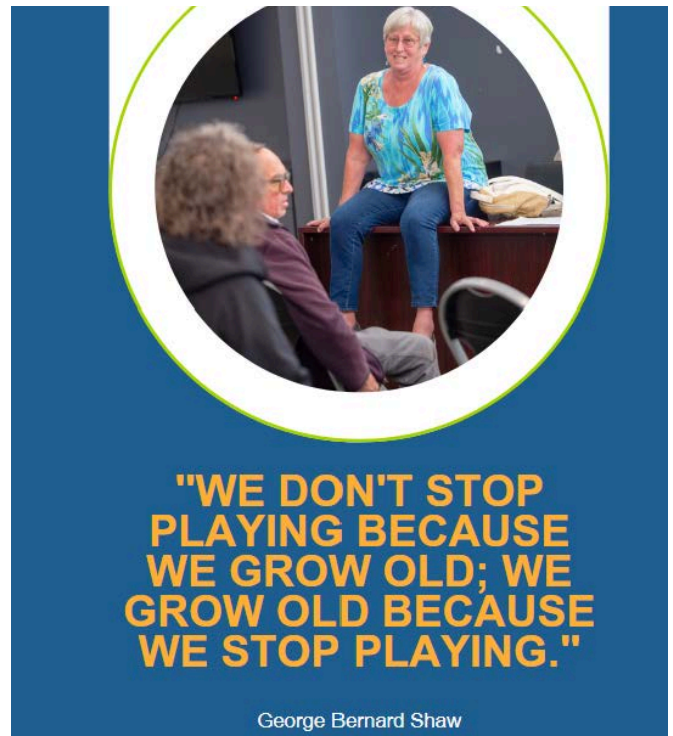
AS FEATURED IN QUEST

The program's success stories are compelling—including a student who transformed from stretching fast food meals to confidently cooking healthy meals for himself and his family—but Dr. Gray emphasizes that individual change requires systemic support. Looking ahead, the program is expanding to serve student parents, recognizing that addressing food insecurity among this population creates positive impacts that extend to the next generation, while ongoing data collection continues to refine and enhance program delivery across all participating campuses.

CSULB GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED FOR ITS INCLUSION OF OLDER ADULTS

Most people picture college students as 18–22-year-olds with backpacks rushing between classes, but Cal State Long Beach is showcasing that higher education should be accessible to everyone, regardless of age. The university has earned recognition as part of the Age-Friendly University Global Network, joining an exclusive group of more than 40 universities worldwide committed to serving older adults. This recognition places CSULB in impressive company, as it is the third university in Southern California to earn this distinction, following UCLA and USC.

The honor highlights programs that many people are unaware of on campus. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute serves nearly 1,800 members aged 50 and older, offering classes tailored to their interests and needs. Meanwhile, the Center for Successful Aging addresses real issues affecting our community, such as depression prevention and fall safety. The designation goes far beyond offering a few extra classes to older students. By joining this global network, CSULB has committed to 10 specific principles that make campuses truly welcoming to older adults, from supporting career transitions to leveraging the wisdom of retired faculty and community members.



The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes.”
_Frank Lloyd Wright (LB Resident)

BEACH ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: FROM CAMPUS TO **DISNEY MAGIC**



AS FEATURED IN CSULB NEWS

CSULB hospitality management graduate Toby Hollis '05 has turned his Beach education into pure Disney magic, now leading iconic restaurants like Tiana's Palace and Hungry Bear Barbecue Jamboree at Disneyland after more than 35 years with the company. Hollis credits The Beach with teaching him not just how to cook, but how to run kitchens and drive sustainability initiatives, indicating that a Cal State Long Beach education can take you to the happiest kitchens on Earth.

Cal State Long Beach Adjunct Professor Miguel Fernandez, featured in Spectrum News, emphasized that community land trusts and similar models fall under the broader umbrella of social housing—publicly supported efforts aimed at creating long-term, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents. He noted that by using Measure ULA funds, Los Angeles is taking a significant step toward implementing social housing as seen in other countries, despite likely pushback from free-market advocates.



CONGRATULATIONS TO **AMANDA SAUCEDA**

Congratulations to Amanda Saucedo, MS, RD, a nutrition lecturer at California State University, Long Beach, who is featured in [this article](#) combatting a trend of eating raw spinach first thing in the morning. She shared that while this practice may help “train” your taste buds and gut to prefer healthier foods, the real key is forming intentional, nutritious habits. Saucedo highlights that taste buds and the gut can adapt over time, but overall food choices are influenced by many factors beyond just what you eat first.

Congratulations FCS STUDENTS

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Jayden Delorme
Jessica Flores
Michelle Guinevere Kramer
Adan Garcia
Albert Roblez
Esma Alkatib
Grace Anderson
Diana Boggs
Taylor Durant
Valerie Martinez
Omar Morgan
Tessa Nguyen
Justin Nicolas
Gianpaolo Trone
Sahiba Anand
Trang Doan
Mary Eng
Izamar Flores
karen Melendez
Leann Namuco
Rania Rawas
Katrina Watson
Grace Yacoubian
Shane Silva
Nancy Castro Fonesca
Thy Dang
Hoang Nam Phuong
Nguyen
Vo Nguyen
Hailey Araiza
Michael Chung
Miona Okaniwa
Alex Ordonez

OUTSTANDING STUDENT

Jacqueline Benitez
Chloe Webb
Nathan Cadena
Bradley Coots
Kylie Enriquez
Stephanie Ho
Christina Ivan
Alexander Mihalakis
Anna Nguyen
Massimo Pino
Ryan X. Ramirez
Grace Gonzalez
Manuel Marroquin
TJ funches
Christopher Garcia
Emily Silva

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

israel Hernandez
Kailey Marie Orellana
Olivia Paine
Angelo Matamoros De
Vincent
Caroline Padian
Issac Emmanuel Portillo
Nancy Vo
Aja Bapp
Israel Hernandez
Kailey Marie Orellana
Olivia Paine
Jeffrey Barrera
Rogelio Dominguez
Rosa Euceda

RESEARCH AWARD

Christian Giron
Alexis Pope

GRADUATE DEAN'S LIST

Premita Pradham

GRADUATE STUDENT HONORS

Vanessa Resendez
Sara Noel Pulciano

FCS OUTSTANDING THESIS

Haleh Hashemi

FCS OUTSTANDING DIRECTED PROJECT

Kyosei Nagai

SPRING 2025

ACTIVE STUDENTS BY ACADEMIC PLAN

AREA	PRE-MAJOR	MAJOR	MINOR	GRADUATE	CERTIFICATE	TOTAL
Consumer Affairs	11	263	38			312
Child Development and Family Studies	117	548	123			788
Family Life Education	15	39				54
Fashion Design	19	172	13			204
Fashion Merchandising	16	242	44			302
Food Science	8	26	5			39
Gerontology			47	26	1	74
Hospitality Management	9	127	9			145
Event Planning (minor)			21			21
Nutrition	45	72	15	49		181
TOTAL						2,120

in loving memory ARLENE NELSON



With heavy hearts, we share the sad news of the passing of our colleague Arlene Nelson on May 21, 2025. Arlene battled cancer valiantly, and will be missed by so many students, colleagues, and friends on our campus. Arlene received her BA in Child Development and Family Studies and her MA in Early Childhood Education, both from CSULB. In 2005, she became the toddler lead teacher at the Child and Family Center. To many she is known as “Teacher Arlene” or “Teacher Lene”. During her time at the Child and Family Center, she became the Assistant Director and also served as the Interim Director. Arlene left the Child and Family Center and transitioned to full time faculty in FCS-Child Development and Family Studies. Her proficiency in classroom management, developmentally appropriate practices, infant/toddler care, and parenting offered students an opportunity to learn from someone who had so much knowledge and expertise to share. She presented at many conferences and was on boards and committees on and off campus. She was often one of the first to volunteer and was always present at student events.



Some of her former students shared:

“I learned so much from her- even just through daily observations. She had so much knowledge to share. Things I learned at the lab school I’ve taught to others. I’m sure her impact was greater than she knew.”

“Anyone who knew her got to experience the compassion, love and care she had for all those in her life. She will be missed greatly.”

She is deeply mourned by her husband Corey, and daughters, Audrey and Kendall, family, and friends. Arlene brought joy to everyone she met and will be greatly missed.

We end by sharing a few messages of belonging that offered reflection this year.

"Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others."

- Christopher Germer

Thankfully, joy and the academe need not be mutually exclusive.

We can never get a recreation of community and heal our society without giving our citizens a sense of belonging.

- Patch Adams

- Allyson Brothers

"Fitting in is one of the greatest barriers to belonging. Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be in order to be accepted. Belonging, on the other hand, doesn't require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are."

- Brené Brown

"The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom."

-bell hooks

"Being a creature of discomfort can unlock hidden potential in many different types of learning. Summoning the nerve to face discomfort is a character skill-an especially important form of determination. It takes three kinds of courage: to abandon your tried-and-true methods, to put yourself in the ring before you feel ready, and to make more mistakes than others make attempts."

-Adam Grant