RECREATOR FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER

REC ALUMNI _ARE CONNECTING FOR PIZZA AND LBS WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL on FRIDAY, NOV. 13

Let us reconnect, reminisce, and make some new memories with our Recreation and Leisure Studies community!

Join us for a FUN evening of pizza, conversation, and CSULB Women's Volleyball! We'll kick things off at a local pizza spot, where you can catch up with fellow alumni and share stories, meet current students & faculty, and enjoy good food and great company.

Then, we will head over to the LBS Financial Credit Union Pyramid to cheer on the CSULB women's volleyball team! Bring the family and come as you are!

Whether you are a longtime alum, a recent graduate, or a current RLS student, everyone is welcome. It is a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends, build new connections, and celebrate the RLS community across generations.

We hope you will join us for a relaxed and fun-filled evening of connection, community, and Beach pride! 🎗

First stop: Pizza and socializing at District 4 (2123 N. Bellflower Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90815)⏰ Pizza Time: 5PM

🏐 Next up: CSULB Women's Volleyball at the LBS Financial Credit Union Pyramid ⏰ Game Time: 7PM

👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 Who is invited? RLS Alumni, current Students, Faculty and Family members are all welcome!

Please RSVP by November 11 and include the total number of guests in your party.

Purchase Women's Volleyball Game Tickets
RSVP for District 4 Pizza
Right Here: https://partiful.com/e/9uxkHiFJTIVmlqwi9clY?c=exIEcSYF

Come for the pizza, stay for the volleyball, and reconnect with your CSULB RLS family!

NEWS -RLS Department, College of Health and Human Services and University - NEWS

RLS – National ACCREDITATION REPORT 2026 from **COPART Board review will be held on -Oct. 28, 2026** (all ZOOM) – Terry Robertson will represent the department. The Department has two-degree programs under review (Recreation and Recreation Therapy. The RT program met all standards, while Recreation met all but one standard (Fulltime faculty teaching required 60% of all Core classes), and thankfully we hired a new full-time faculty member Mandy Schenkemeyer (See more about her below), and we are currently searching for another full-time faculty member now (see below), so we expect to meet this standard as well. If so, we want to give a BIG- **THANK YOU!!** to our RLS ALUMNI CAB Members for meeting with the Accreditation visitors!!!

CSULB WELCOMES A NEW PRESIDENT – **DR. LOREN BLANCHARD**- Before joining CSULB, Dr. Blanchard served as President of the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD), assuming office in March 2021. Dr. Blanchard previously served for six years as Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs for the California State University (CSU) system. Earlier in his career, Dr. Blanchard was Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Xavier University of Louisiana. He holds a bachelor's degree in speech pathology education from Xavier University of Louisiana, a master's degree in education from McNeese State University in his hometown of Lake Charles, Louisiana, and a Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Georgia.

CSULB WELCOMES A NEW CHHS DEAN- DR. JENNIFER WADE-BERG –Dean Wade-Berg arrives from Kennesaw State University in Georgia, professor in the Wellstar College of Health and Human Services, brings experience in higher education, nonprofit leadership, and equity initiatives. Here is a link to her Dean's Welcome Message to us all. Dean's Welcome | California State University Long Beach

RLS WELCOMES A NEW FULL-TIME LECTURER- Dr. MANDY SCHENKENMEYER – Mandy received her Ph.D. from Univ of Utah, her background is in Outdoor REC, Travel and Tourism, Academic Advising, Student Affairs.

RLS IS RECRUITING A FULL-TIME LECTURER! THE POSITION STARTS SPRING SEMESTER 2027! APPLY NOW--- and/or SHARE this with others ASAP!
https://careers.pageuppeople.com/873/lb/en-us/job/561935/fulltime-lecturer-academic-year-recreation-and-leisure-studies

The position is open until Filled, so could start this Spring (2027) or as late as next Fall (2027). If you have any questions, reach out to Dr. Laurel Richmond (laurel.richomond@csulb.edu), as she is the chair of the search committee.

OUTBAC: Ross Garner, OUTBAC Manager, and Lecturer for the RLS Department has hosted over 100 PROGRAMS since he joined the RLS Faculty. --> See the notes posted from Ross below.

"I am excited to share a major milestone for the OUTBAC Team Building Facility —
We have officially completed our 100th program!
Since reopening in August 2024, the OUTBAC has continued to grow into a valuable resource for experiential learning, team building, and leadership development at CSULB. Over the past two years, we have:

- Completed 100 programs
- Served more than 3,500 participants

- Partnered with 30+ CSULB programs, departments, and campus organizations
- Expanded opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in facilitation and leadership through REC 201 and the OUTBAC Apprentice pathway

Our programs have supported groups across campus and the community, including Beach XP, 5th Grade Promise, Dream Success, EOP, Camp Nugget, Summer Bridge, Housing & Residential Life, Student Life & Development, the Women's & Gender Equity Center, the Japanese Garden, the City of Torrance, Jack and Jill Inc., Blue Shield of California, the South Coast Botanic Gardens and many others.

Reaching 100 programs is especially meaningful when considering how far the facility has come since reopening. What began as an effort to bring the OUTBAC back into operation has grown into a program that has provided thousands of participants with opportunities to connect, challenge themselves, develop leadership skills, and strengthen their teams.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our faculty, staff, student facilitators, campus and community partners, and everyone who has advocated for and participated in OUTBAC programming. Thank you to everyone who has helped us reach this milestone.

As we continue to grow, we would also love to highlight the people and programs that have made the OUTBAC what it is today. If you have photos from your experience at OUTBAC whether from a recent program or one of our earlier events, we would love for you to share them with us. These photos will help us document the OUTBAC's growth, celebrate the experiences of our participants, and showcase the impact of the program with the CSULB community.

We are incredibly proud of what the OUTBAC has accomplished, and we're looking forward to the next 100 programs!"

Ross Garner M.A.
(He/Him/His)
OUTBAC Manager, Lecturer
ross.garner@csulb.edu
CSULB OUTBAC Website

OUTBAC
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & LEISURE STUDIES • CSULB

THE.OUTBAC

JAPANESE GARDEN: ***Mary Sramek Director***

Earl Burns Miller Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden | California State University Long Beach

***Adopt a Koi**

"What's swishing, my friend?!"

My friend who handles the Garden's communications asked me to write a quick statement about Adopt a Koi, and I said, "Of COURSE!" So, here it is: Join There are so many cool koi down here just waiting for

someone like you to adopt them. For just $40, you'll receive four letters featuring updates and photos from life in the Garden, all told from our point of view!

It's a super fun way to get the latest news from EBMJG without reading a standard newsletter. (Oops, sorry to our communications person. No offense!)

Anyway, I should be swimming along, but I hope to be writing to you soon!

Sayonara,

Chagoi

***Chrysanthemum Festival - November 1st**

Our final cultural festival of 2026 is almost here! Join us on November 1st, from 1-3 pm, for a beautiful fall day at the EBM Japanese Garden as we celebrate the season with our annual Chrysanthemum Festival.

This festival is especially magical, taking place just as the Garden begins its seasonal transformation and the vibrant colors of fall start to appear throughout the landscape.

Enjoy a day filled with live music, crafts, activities, and beautiful chrysanthemums available for purchase, so you can bring a little piece of the Garden home with you!

Pricing: $10 per reservation | $5 for Garden Members

Each reservation is valid for up to six guests, so bring your friends and family and enjoy the celebration together.

We hope you will join us for our final Garden celebration of 2026 and a memorable day of fall beauty, culture, and community!

Health & Wellness in the Garden

Did you know the EBM Japanese Garden offers affordable yoga classes twice a week? Our classes meet **Wednesdays from 5–6 p.m. through Oct, and Fridays from 12–1 p.m.** Classes are designed for all skill levels, making Yoga in the Garden a great opportunity for beginners and experienced yogis alike. Classes are $10 per person, with discounts for Garden members and the CSULB community.

We also offer both **Forest Bathing (11/14) and Sound Bathing (11/7)**. These classes are held on select Sundays each month from 1–3 p.m. Classes are $25 or $20 for Members & the CSULB community.

End of Year Donations

Make an online gift to the Garden today and maximize your year-end giving for tax deduction purposes. Mail your check as soon as possible to ensure we have enough time to process your contribution. EBM Japanese Garden 1250 N Bellflower Blvd, LB CA 90815. EIN45-2163910.

***RLS ALUMNI→ WE WANT YOU!!* –TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY ALUMNI NETWORK - C.A.N.!!**

CSULB Recreation and Leisure Studies Alumni (RALSA) are incredible! Register with us TODAY! Show your support, loyalty and spirit to the Department, the Faculty who taught you, the Students, and your fellow Alumni. Be a part of it!

Alumni Awards:
RLS Alumni of the Year Award goes to **Joe Vasquez** class of 2014, who served as CPRS President District 10 for 2025-2026, He is currently the Community Services Manager for the City of Lakewood and has worked for the city since 2016. Dedicated public servant with over 20 years of service in the recreation and community services profession. Energetic and self-motivated, with a successful history in developing programs, managing facilities, planning, and implementing special events, supervising, and training recreation personnel, and completing administrative duties such as budget preparation, grant writing, capital improvement project management, and report writing.

CSULB 49er Under 49 Award: **Ashley Wysocki Theel '07**: Director of Community & Library Services for the City of Huntington Beach. She has served communities in Municipal Parks & Recreation for over 20 years in Signal Hill, Corona, and Rancho Cucamonga. Wysocki has served in multiple leadership roles in the California Parks & Recreation Society and Women in Leisure Services (WILS), including Gamma Chapter President in 2015 and National President in 2020, and was honored in 2025 with WILS Gamma Chapter's highest recognition, the Mary K. Petersen Memorial Award.

FACULTY UPDATE

DR.TERRY ROBERTSON is retiring as **RLS Department Chair** December 2026! Terry has served the University for twelve years in multiple capacities such as three different Association Dean roles, and as the chair of three different departments including Recreation and Leisure Studies, Health Science, and Kinesiology. Sometimes two roles at the same time! Terry also continues to serve on the Board of Directors AAPRA (American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration), also liaison to three of the Academy's Committees – Best Paper, Research for the Profession, and By-Laws.
Terry, thank you for your service and leadership!

PATTI LAPLACE is retiring as **Director of OLLI and RLS Faculty member** in December 2026. She has held a Lecturer position since 2015 at CSULB and has been a significant positive force for RLS Recreation Therapy not only with our students but in the Long Beach Community. She also taught RT at Cal State Domingues Hills. Patti is a regular presenter at CSULB's RT BEACH SYMPOSIUM, and at CPRS and NRPA. **Thank you, Patti!**

DR. MARIDITH JANSSEN: Dr. Maridith Janssen is a Professor Emerita in Recreation and Leisure Studies at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), with a career spanning over 25 years in therapeutic recreation education and leadership. Dr. Maridith Janssen has fully retired from CSULB, and the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, as of July 2026. Over her 27-year career in the department and with the California State University (CSU) system, she served at the department level as the Recreation Therapy Program Coordinator, Full-Professor, and Department Chair. At the CSU Office of the Chancellor, she served 10 years as the Director of the California Pre-Doctoral Program. During her tenure with the Department, she established the BEACH Symposium and provided recognition for the department through state, national, and international service leadership. She continues to represent the department through her service at the national level with her ongoing work with the Council on Accreditation for Parks, Recreation, Tourism, and Related Disciplines.

All alums, here are a few requests from our Department

* Asking Alumni to contact the department if they would like to provide Internships, and/or Fieldwork experience for Students. If your answer is yes, please reach out to Dr. Keith Fulthorp (keith.fulthorp@csulb.edu).

*Are you interested in being a Guest Speakers, a Mentor, or to be interviewed by students for a class assignment? If your answer is yes, please reach out to Dr. Laurel Richmond (laurel.richmond@csulb.edu) for more information.

*FUND DEVELOPMENT

We have two requests

First- We would like to have an Award/Scholarship named after our first Department Chair, "David Gray." We (RLS) do have 10 K for this, but **we need 40K more** to make it a fully endowed Award. If you have interest, please our director of Development, Jen Moore (Jennifer.Moore@csulb.edu) or use this link Recreation & Leisure Studies Scholarship - CSULB Giving and specify scholarship and DAVID GRAY.

Second- We would like to have more funding for VR, AR and Drone equipment and related software for use in the classroom and for students to use out of the classroom (homework, projects, fieldwork, and/or internships). If you are interested in supporting our students, please contact Dr. Keith Fulthorp (Keith.Fulthorp@csulb.edu) and/or Jen Moore (Jennifer.Moore@csulb.edu).

Scholarships winners are announced annually at our David Gray Awards Event David Gray Awards | California State University Long Beach (Note that our DG event is usually held in LB on the 3rd Thursday in April) and ALL of our scholarships are supported by Donors.

1. **CeEtta Crayton Endowed Scholarship**
2. **Edward and Rosalie Ricci Endowed Scholarship**
3. **Jack Minar Scholarship**
4. **Julie Regnier McCoy Endowed Recreation Student Award**
5. **Lee Tussing Scholarship Endowment**
6. **Maridith Curfman-Janssen Endowed Student Award in Recreation Therapy**
7. **Marylin Jensen Scholarship**
8. **Randy Anderson Scholarship**
9. **Wynndi Dahlin Endowed Student Award**

~~2~~ Two other awards that are donor funded to support students

*CPRS District 10: ***CPRS D10 Student Research Fund***
*Joanie Con~~n~~oly: ***The Conley Recreation and Leisure Studies-Student Experiential Learning Fund (SELF)*** (wide range of learn by doing, experience support)