

# Students see a spark in their teacher



*Photos by Valerie Osier*

## Middle-schoolers see teacher's dissertation defense first-hand

Most doctoral students invite their families and friends to see them defend their dissertation, but Jessika Kim of Cohort 7 invited her entire leadership class from Sparks Middle School to see hers.

"I think this is very cool in that these students, many potentially future first generation college students will come to witness a life affirming event for their teacher whom they obviously care for a great deal," Dr. James Scott said. "In Jessika, we have a dedicated educator and leader who loves her students and wants them not only to visit a college campus but be there at such a pivotal moment in her life."

Dr. Kim presented her research titled: "The effects of [Professional Learning Communities] on Middle School Math Teachers in Developing Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments for Common Core" to her committee members Dr. Charles Slater, Dr. Connie Magee and Dr. Scott, as well as her class of middle school students.

"To see Ms. Kim actually involve herself so much and you can tell she really cares about everything she works

for and focuses on, so that's really inspiring to see," Ariana Ordaz, 8th grade. "It was really cool [to be there to see her defense] because usually you just hear about and don't see it with your own eyes, so to see my own teacher do what she wants with her life, I had never seen that before with my parents or anything, so she's like a role model ... something I aspire to be."

Ariana wants to be a pediatric surgeon when she grows up, despite the hard work it will take and the doubts from others.

"Some people think that that's just what I'm saying now, that I won't really make it, but to see Ms. Kim make it, it's like I can do it too. It motivates me to work harder because I see it happening before my eyes, it's pretty cool."

Dr. Kim's dissertation explored the ways teachers collaborate within PLC structures to develop new material and meet the new demands of Common Core with focus on three areas: curriculum development, instructional practices that facilitates student learning and assessments that will reflect the SBAC at the end of the year.

"I hope we have many more occasions when we can get middle school students onto campus for something so affirming to learning and working hard," Dr. Scott said.

# Gala brings alumni, students, faculty together



The second annual Gala celebrated the 5 year reunion of Cohort 2 and raised over \$6500 that went to the Social Justice Scholarship Fund. In her address to faculty, alumni and current students, Dr. Martha Parham of Cohort 2 shared about her current job as the Vice President of Marketing and Communications of the American Association of Community Colleges and her work with Second Lady Jill Biden on the "College Promise." The Gala featured a silent auction and "wine grab."



# Cohort 7 celebrates graduation



Cohort 7 or 'Super Siete' celebrated their accomplishments on May 17. A reception with their friends and family was held in their honor in the Anatol Center before the ceremony began. Mayor Robert Garcia, Cohort 1 alumnus, was the commencement speaker for the College of Education. Students were hooded by their dissertation chair at the ceremony. Congratulations, Cohort 7!