

# Administration of Justice Scholarship Awarded

## ELAC Graduate Receives CSULA Award

Melinda Vasquez yearned to go to college. She had a series of dead-end jobs while raising four children. She urged them to do well in school and realized that was the surest way they could improve their lives. Soon, following her own advice, Melinda enrolled in college, choosing East Los Angeles College because tuition was reasonable and it was close to home.

Ms. Vasquez enrolled in Administration of Justice (AJ) 1 and found the history of the justice system and the theory of crime, punishment and rehabilitation fascinating. She took more AJ courses and realized a career working in the criminal justice system was her destiny. Melinda graduated from ELAC with honors and transferred to California State University Los Angeles (CSULA) where she quickly earned her Bachelors degree, again as an honor student, in Criminal Justice. Currently, Melinda works as a staff support person in the CSULA School of Social Work while working on a graduate degree in forensic psychology.

Melinda was recently honored by the Woman's Resource Center and the Cross Cultural Center, earning recognition as one of CSULA's "distinguished women" at their recently held 8th Annual Distinguished Women Award Reception. She was chosen because of her many achievements and contributions to the community and the university, her commitment to students and women's issues, and achievement in her profession.

Ms. Vasquez credits the ELAC Administration of Justice program for focusing her career ambitions and motivating her to use education to better her life. In 2002 and again in 2003, she received scholarships from the Administration of Justice Student Club that eased the financial burden of her final year at ELAC and her first university semester. That in turn motivated her to create a scholarship for Latina single parents majoring in AJ at ELAC who aspire to a career within the criminal justice system.

**Melinda Vasquez is a role model for other hard-working ELAC Administration of Justice students.**

— Patrick Hauser, Chairman, Administration of Justice Program



Melinda Vasquez, far left, donated funds for a scholarship to assist Latinas pursuing careers in the criminal justice system. Hermila Flores receives the award while Patrick Hauser, Chairman of the AJ department at ELAC looks on.

Patrick Hauser, Chairman of East Los Angeles College's AJ Program, praised Ms. Vasquez's commitment to community service. "We hold students who volunteer their time and resources in the highest esteem, because it not only shows an important commitment to their community, but also enhances their qualifications and marketability when seeking employment in law enforcement," he comments. "In addition to all of her other volunteer efforts, Melinda came up with the scholarship idea and contributed \$300 of her personal funds to make it a reality. Her story and drive to succeed makes her an outstanding role model for other hard-working ELAC students."

The very first Melinda Vasquez Scholarship was awarded to Hermila Flores, a current AJ student who hopes to follow in Ms. Vasquez's foot steps and transfer to a university to continue her education. Ms. Flores is an excellent student and single mother. Her achievements were recognized at a recent banquet organized by the Administration of Justice Student Club. In addition to Ms. Flores, six other deserving AJ majors received scholarship awards totaling over \$4,000. The scholarships monies were raised through club fundraising efforts and corporate donations.

## ELAC Graduates the Most Hispanics in California

Community colleges represent the most cost effective entry into higher education for low income and traditionally under-served populations.

The prestigious trade journal *Community College Week* recently published their annual Top 100 listing of Associate Degree Producers and ranked East Los Angeles College (ELAC) as the California community college awarding the greatest number of degree to Hispanics. Nationally, ELAC ranks fourth for granting degrees to Hispanics. The Top 100 listing compares graduation numbers from 2002/2003 with those from 2003/2004 for more than 5000 public and private institutions across the nation. ELAC was ranked 78th in the nation for AA degree earners of all ethnicities awarding 1,264 total Associate Degrees.

East Los Angeles College also ranked 17th nationally in the number of Associate Degrees awarded Asian American graduates. "Graduation numbers generally reflect enrollment," says Richard Moyer, Vice President, Academic Affairs. "Our Hispanic enrollment is about 67% of total enrollment and 70% of our graduates are Latinos. Asians Americans account for 19% of our graduates, slightly more than their enrollment percentage."

Associate degrees play an important role in personal, professional and workforce development. They represent the most cost effective entry into higher education for low income and other traditionally under-served populations. Community colleges also accommodate an increasing number of unemployed and under-employed adults that are looking for more stable, better paying jobs. Increasing numbers of community college graduates demonstrate the critical role public two-year institutions play in promoting career equity.

The Fall 2006 term begins September 5, 2006 and prospective students may enroll now. Free fall schedules may be obtained by calling 323-265-8723. Visit the East Los Angeles College website, [www.elac.edu](http://www.elac.edu) for immediate information.

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