



ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAM

BY GENOVEVA CORTES

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BSSCA CLASS OF 2012-2016

ANTONIO MARTINEZ

Antonio decided early on in his college education to learn Japanese. Ever since he was in high school at BSSCA, he had been fascinated by anime, animated cartoons, and comics from Japan. He could have taken Spanish classes for his foreign language requirement and gotten easy A's since he's already fluent but he wanted the challenge of learning something new while at CSUN.

Now that he is a proficient Japanese speaker, Antonio plans to apply to the JET Programme, The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme, which is an initiative from the Japanese government that brings college graduates to Japan to teach English to students in grades Kindergarten through high school for 1 to 5 years.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 pandemic put an immediate pause to his plans. Japan has strict health protocols and as of the moment is not allowing foreign visitors into their country in an effort to reduce cases of the virus. However, he is keeping an eye on the situation and hopes to apply in the coming years. His long-term career goal is to come back to the US after teaching in Japan and teach history either at the high school level or become a history professor at the community college.

As a commuter student who lived near mid-city LA, he recommends incoming freshmen to be aware of how they are creating their school schedule. "Pay attention to *when* classes are and know what your limit is. Sometimes the counselors don't take that into account." Antonio preferred driving to CSUN four days a week and having classes from 9-6p, two classes a day, so he'd have plenty of time to study on campus and get involved. However, if you have a job, this schedule might be difficult. Other students might pack all four to six classes into two days, instead of spreading it out across the week like he does. "It's up to the person." Also, if you are not a morning person and know there will be lots of traffic on your commute, it's better to schedule classes to start at around noon but that means you'll probably be taking classes at night.

BSSCA ALUMNUS 2016
CSU NORTHRIDGE ALUMNUS, 2020
MAJOR: HISTORY
MINOR: EDUCATION



BSSCA CLASS OF 2017-2020

BY MIKE CARRERA

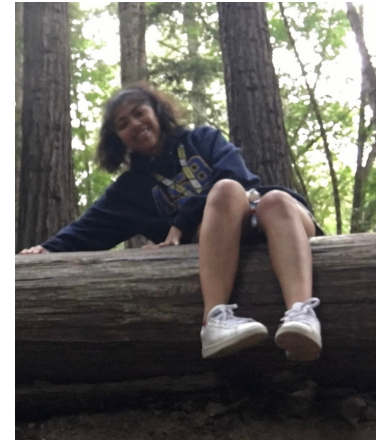
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DIANA JEREZ

BSSCA ALUMNA 2019
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ
EXPECTED GRADUATION: 2023
MAJOR: HUMAN BIOLOGY



Diana Jerez, former ASB President, will be starting her junior year at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She'll finally have the opportunity to move back on campus since the start of the pandemic. A current Human Biology major, she decided to stay home last school year to save some money on housing. Diana mentioned that there were some growing pains in her first year in Santa Cruz. She faced challenges and had to quickly adapt to the college workload and living arrangements. For the first time Diana lived on her own, she had independence but she soon realized that time management was crucial in the success of a college student



Diana earned good grades her first year at UCSC but she wasn't satisfied because she was used to earning excellent grades. She made several changes so she could increase her GPA and distance learning was one factor that made it easier for her. She was able to take her exams in the comfort of her room instead of a huge lecture hall with hundreds of students. She also took advantage of office hours because students were not using them as often and she was able to ask questions during lectures. Instead of asking questions during a huge lecture hall, she was able to ask on a zoom chat-box. Self-advocacy was another factor in her academic success. "To be honest, I've learned how to be more vocal and advocate for myself. In my first year, I was nervous and I didn't have the confidence to seek help. In addition, there were less distractions at home which allowed me to focus on school." In addition, she did a lot of self-reflection during the pandemic that allowed her to focus on her goals.

In a few years, Diana plans to apply and enroll in graduate school to earn become a Physician's Assistant. She's not sure yet where that will be but it might be in the LA area. Earlier this year she got a job as an assistant for a Chiropractor's office to start doing her clinical hours. She also recently got hired as a Stem Peer Advisor at UCSC which she's extremely excited to start. I asked Diana what she's looking forward to when she moves back to Santa Cruz. "I'm looking forward to being back on campus, it's a different vibe. I love being around nature. I'm also looking forward to doing my labs in person. Lastly, my friends and I want to visit San Francisco. That was in our bucket list before the pandemic but we're gonna make it happen this year."

VAHS CLASS OF 2017-2021

BY KYLE PETRIE

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JOSE LAZO**VAHS ALUMNUS 2017
CAL STATE NORTHRIDGE****MAJOR: CINEMA & TELEVISION ARTS, TV PRODUCTION
EXPECTED GRADUATION: DECEMBER 2021****What skills or mindsets did you learn while at Valor that helped you in college?**

During my four years at Valor, I was able to gain and develop skills that served as the building blocks for my field of study. This began as early as my freshman year through individual and collaborative assignments where a creative approach was needed, such as multimedia projects. As a result, I decided to pursue a career in Cinema and Television production.

What do you wish you had known about college going in that could have helped you be even more successful?

The ability to properly pace myself while earning my degree. I was fluctuating the number of units I was taking each semester; I would sometimes take the minimum or max out per semester, depending on my level of comfort. It can be very overwhelming cramming units just to finish early. In other words, I wish I would've developed a solid blueprint of what I needed to have completed by the end of every year instead of going in blind.

What have you enjoyed most about your experience at Cal State Northridge?

My involvement in clubs and organizations on campus. Coming in as a freshman, I was looking for ways to meet new people and expand my connections. I have been involved in Greek life through the Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity at CSUN, as well as extracurriculars such as the CSUN's Speech and Debate Team. Being a part of these clubs and organizations have given me an opportunity to live a college life outside of my academics. The individuals I have met have served as an open door to other opportunities, both in my personal and professional development.

What do you plan on doing with your degree in the future?

In the future I hope to pursue a career in cinema and television production, specializing in film and television audio. I have been involved in several student films and productions throughout the years and realized that I am passionate about working in a film/television set environment. Just this past semester, I along with 7 other peers completed our collaborative final senior thesis project. The project was to fundraise for and shoot a 20 minute narrative pilot episode of a television show, in which I had the opportunity to be the sound supervisor for the short film. This role ranged from recording live audio to editing in post production. This served as a huge learning experience in every aspect.

Is there anything else you'd like to share, or advice you would like to give to current students/staff at Valor?

A piece of advice that I would give is to learn to adapt to every circumstance presented to you, as well as to enjoy every little moment you have in college. Especially when there is a global pandemic affecting your college experience and overall success under a new learning environment. Acknowledge the factors that you have control over, as well as those that you don't. Make the most out of what you can to guide yourself in the right direction.

RKHS CLASS OF 2020

BY STEPHANIE CALDERON

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ALLYSON ANASTACIO

RKHS ALUMNA 2020
CSU, LOS ANGELES
MAJOR: PUBLIC HEALTH

Allyson recently started her first year of school at CSULA! She is a recent graduate of RKHS and is so excited about embarking on her journey as a college student. She is studying Public Health and aspires to work in the health care field once she finishes her degree. She also hopes to attend graduate school in the future to obtain a Master's degree. After her first week of school she learned a lot about her campus and how to adjust to her new schedule as a full time college student. She says that her first week of classes were NO JOKE! She was extremely busy throughout the weeks and even had 3 quizzes to turn in during week one, definitely a big change from high school, but she is ready to take on the challenge. She's also really excited to be surrounded by some of her friends from high school, and is making some new friends in class as well.



ALE'YA LEE

RKHS ALUMNA 2021
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
MAJOR: BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



Ale'ya is also a recent graduate of RKHS and was really excited to move away for college. During her senior year she only applied to out of state colleges. Although she had some tough decisions to make, she ultimately decided to attend Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Moving across the country and starting a new chapter in her life was frightening, but she was prepared to undertake the experience. Now, she is fully moved into her dorm and getting to know her campus as well as her new city where she will spend the next four years. She has enjoyed attending campus welcome events, meeting new people and bonding with her roommates. During her free time, Ale'ya spends time exploring Philly, trying new food, and seeing what the city has to offer. She is a Business Administration major and has big plans for her future. Keep up the amazing work Ale'ya!

BRIGHT STAR SCHOOLS ALUMNI SUPPORT & COLLEGE SUCCESS TEAM

All Bright Star Schools Alums, high school graduates, will be supported in graduating from college for up to 6 years. Our goal is for our Alumni to earn a Bachelor's, Associate's, Career Technical Education degree, or workforce development certificate from an accredited college or program. If you are a BSS Alumni from the class of 2015-2020, we will be there to help you navigate, thrive, and succeed in graduating from higher education.

KYLE PETRIE

BA, BOWDOIN COLLEGE

**VAHS ASCS COORDINATOR
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2017 - 2020
KPETRIE@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG**

Kyle Petrie has worked in urban public education for over 13 years. He initially entered the field as a high school history teacher in the Bronx, NY, as part of Teach For America. After his time in New York, Kyle spent seven years as an AP teacher, advisor, coach, and Director of Alumni Support at Gary Comer College Prep on Chicago's south side.



As the ASCS Coordinator at Valor Academy High School, Kyle's primary responsibilities revolve around ensuring that all Valor alumni receive adequate support with the financial, academic, and social-emotional concerns that they face while pursuing higher education. Kyle is primarily motivated by the belief that higher education is the foundation that will allow our students to be successful and happy in both their careers and personal lives.

STEPHANIE CALDERON

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
M.ED. CSU, LONG BEACH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

**RKHS ASCS COORDINATOR
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2020
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Stephanie Calderon has over 6 years of experience supporting students and their families in college access and success programs. She currently serves as the Alumni Support and College Success Coordinator for Rise Kohyang High School. Her goal is to support all RKHS Alumni with their post-secondary plans to ensure they accomplish their goals and aspirations for the future.



Stephanie is a first-generation college graduate. She obtained her bachelors in 2014 from UCLA in Women Studies. Upon graduating college she decided she wanted to help facilitate the process for applying and earning a degree for youth in her community of Los Angeles.

MIKE CARRERA

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE
M.ED. AND PPS, UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

**BSSCA ASCS COORDINATOR
SUPPORTING CLASS OF 2017 - 2020
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Mike Carrera has worked in education for over seven years, five of which have been at Bright Star Schools. Mike is a first-generation college graduate and earned his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of California, Riverside in Latin American Studies and History. He also earned his Pupil Personnel Services credential and Master's in Education degree in 2019 in Education Counseling from the University of La Verne.



Throughout the years, Mike has held various roles at BSSCA and has assisted students and families on multiple levels. He is passionate about supporting the student body at BSSCA and is a firm believer that higher education can positively shift a student's life and career choices. As the new ASCS Coordinator, Mike is determined to assist all BSSCA Alums in navigating higher education and in contributing to students' success in college and career.

GENOVEVA CORTES

BA, UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
M.ED. HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

**ASCS DIRECTOR
SUPPORTING BSSCA CLASS OF 2015 - 2016
GCORTES@BRIGHTSTARSCHOOLS.ORG**

Genoveva Garibay Cortes has over two decades of experience working as an elementary and middle school teacher, K-12 and college administrator, and program coordinator. She was Bright Star Schools' founding math teacher for Stella Middle Charter Academy in 2003, and currently serves as the Director of the Alumni Support and College Success (ASCS) Program for the organization.



Geno developed and launched Bright Star's ASCS Program to support the organization's alumni to persist in and graduate from higher education. ASCS tracks, supports, and coaches Bright Star Schools' alumni to get to and through higher education, with a goal of 60% of Bright Star Schools alumni graduating with a bachelor's or associate's degree, vocational certificate, or from a workplace development program within six years of high school graduation.