

# Puente Newsletter

## Spring 2017

### El Camino College

#### Puente 31 Cohort:

Billien Aguilar  
Jessica Aguilar  
Yadira Aguilar  
Paola Becerra  
Sheila Bravo  
Monica Carranza  
Stefany Carranza  
Giselle Castillo  
Gilberto Cervantes  
Omar Chavarria  
Belinda Coronado  
Jesus Corrales  
Pedro Corrales  
Johanna Cruz  
Ricardo Elias  
Elizabeth Evangelista  
Bryanna Fernandez  
Joann Figueroa  
Astrid Garcia  
Gerardo Garcia Zelaya  
Roxanne Gonzalez  
Cody Guzman  
Jessica Herrera  
Michael Jimenez  
Salvador Jimenez  
Nancy Laines  
Lata Lameta  
Berena Lomeli  
Bryan Lopez  
Eve Louis  
Gladis Marquez  
Mirna Mora  
Gerardo Morales  
Roberto Morales  
Isabel Ocampo  
Alma Ordonez  
Angela Orozco  
James Ortega  
Marcos Paniagua  
Vivian Ramirez  
Wendy Renteria  
Arturo Rosales Manriquez  
Gustavo Rosales  
Evelyn Serrato  
Stephanie Simental-Gomez  
Jaelyn Toledo  
Alan Transito  
Prisila Valadez  
Tatiana Vargas  
Jose Zacarias  
Brittanie Zarate  
Justin Zuniga



As we wrap up our 31<sup>st</sup> year serving students through El Camino College's Puente Program, we want to update our campus community on what we've been up to this semester. Please join us in congratulating our 52 Phase 2 students who are finishing up their English 1A requirement, as well as our 29 Phase 3 Puentistas, who are at the end of their El Camino College journey and preparing to transfer to four-year institutions.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support of our program!

#### Noche de Familia



At *Noche de Familia*, our annual December Puente holiday party, students, their families, their mentors, and campus leaders broke bread over a potluck dinner in which each dish represented guests' unique cultural backgrounds. There were delectable choices like Cuban ropa vieja, vegetarian fajitas from Mexico, and American classics like chewy chocolate chip cookies! No matter where the dish was from, everything was delicious and made with love.

As it does every year, Familia night brought everyone closer together. Erica Brenes, one of the Puente English Instructors, explains that, "in higher education, it is a rare and

special privilege to come together with our students' families." She continued, "Familia night is my favorite Puente event because it allows me to meet the people who matter most to my students and I'm able to thank them for supporting my learners."

Noche de Familia gave parents, siblings, and the children of our students a chance to see and hear about the academic world their loved one is embracing, and remains the perfect way to end the Fall semester; a night full of special moments, great speeches and amazing food!





### UCSB Tour

Our Puente 31 students started their Spring Break with a tour of the University of California, Santa Barbara and partook in the Insight Open House, a joint effort by the Puente Program and El Camino College Transfer Center. While visiting the beautiful campus, Puentistas had the opportunity to attend workshops, explore academic and student club booths, take campus tours, and enjoy the beauty of a university campus with a beach in its backyard. Jaclyn Toledo, a student in Griselda's and Erica's cohort, expressed that "going to UC Santa Barbara over spring break was awesome!" She said she "loved the environment, everyone was friendly, and it was so beautiful!" She said the campus visit not only impacted her, but that "this trip had [fellow Puentistas] Evelyn, Paola, and Wendy thinking about UCSB being one of [their] options for transfer" too. We look forward to seeing which four-year universities students in our current cohorts end up transferring to for their degrees!

### Transferring Puentistas:

Eric Alvarado	Daniela Hernandez	Jennifer Medina	Connie Perez	Mirian Saavedra
Claudia Avitia	Ada Hurtarte	Luis Medina	Araceli Rodriguez	Raymundo Sevilla
Andrea Cervantes	Barbara Jimenez	Nirvana Mendez	Kevin Pizarro	Mustafe Warsame
Daniel Diaz	Jaquelin Lopez	Fiorella Messarina	Jeniffer Quintero	Simon Vega
Rocelin Gamez	Kitzia Lopez	Ruby Molina	Laura Cristina	Keeyan Ventura
Amy Garcia	Yisel Munoz Lopez	Areli Navarro	Saavedra	Arturo Villa

### Thank you to our 2016-2017 Mentors:

Lucy Alamillo	Sandra Balbuena	Guillermo Castro	Arnulfo Juarez
Brenda Alvarez	Alexandria Barajas	Mercedes Chavez	Claudia Velazquez
Argelia Andrade	Maria Barrio De Mendoza	Matt Cheung	Carla Velasquez- Lopez
Kayla Arango	Seranda Bray	Odetta Cook	Kristell Villacorta
Martha Arias	David Brown	Vanessa Escobar	Vanessa Watson
Ibeth Arriaga	Viviana Garcia	Jaime Gallegos	Xocoyotzin Herrera
Juan Garcia	Andres Gonzalez	Briita Halonen	Maria Isabel Jimenez
Maria Garcia	Herrera	Deborah Herzik	Daniela Messarina
Erika Knox	Rene Lozano	Jeff McMahon	Carlos Montalvan
Rudi Lopez	Darcie McClelland	Susana Medina	Josephine Moore
Cynthia Lopez	Descalzo	Myrna Mendoza	Mayra Sandoval
Rosean Moreno	Toni Newman	Blanca Prado	DeVon Scott
Veronica Muñoz	Sue Oda-Omori	Veronica Quezada	Richard Serna
Christina Nagao	Julieta Ortiz	Veronica Quiñonez	Stacy Simental
Yury V. Najarro	Blaine Pearce	Thanya Rivas	Erika Solorzano
Salvador Navarro	Christian Perez	Elayne Rodriguez	

## Spotlight on: Our Puentista Graduates



### Jasmine Umanzor: Highly Motivated Puentista

Jasmine Umanzor of El Camino College's Puente 27 cohort always hoped to transfer to a four-year university, but did not know how to make it happen. She grew up in a low-income household and was the first in her family to attend college. Fortunately, Umanzor found the guidance she needed when she joined the Puente Program during her first year at El Camino College.

"Puente helped find my path by exploring careers and myself in the Human Development classes. These classes really made me reflect on who I was as a person and allowed me to identify my strengths and weaknesses," Umanzor said.

Umanzor says that her supportive counselor Maribel Hernandez, dedicated English Instructor Dr. Rachel Ketai and inspiring mentor Nancy Fong all contributed to her success.

"I started El Camino with the wrong mentality, which was 'get in and get out,' but having [Maribel, Dr. Ketai, and Nancy] as part of my support system really helped me successfully get to where I am today," Umanzor said.

Umanzor also acknowledged both transfer counselor Rene Lozano and advisor Blanca Prado as contributors to her victory. "Words cannot describe how much I deeply appreciate all the support that I received from both [Blanca and Rene] during my appeal process for UCLA," she said. "I was initially denied [admission], and both Blanca and Rene helped convince [me] and UCLA that it was a mistake."

Without the El Camino College Puente classes, resources, mentors, and transfer counselors, Umanzor says she would not be where she is today—about to graduate from UCLA. In the future, she hopes to get a Ph.D. in sociology. In the meantime, she is giving back to her community by being on the board of "Latinas Guiding Latinas de UCLA" and mentoring middle school students. In addition, she hopes to come back as a Puente mentor once she obtains her B.A. in sociology to help students ease their way through community college and show them that they too can accomplish their goals. Congratulations, Jasmine!

### Dulce Ramirez Gomez: UCLA Graduate Coming Soon

Dulce Ramirez Gomez remembers feeling "unprepared" when she first began at El Camino College. She explains, "In high school, [...] I was grouped with the academically weak, the ones who wandered, lost and confused not because we lacked promise, but because we simply lacked luck. I mostly felt small and incapable because no one ever told me otherwise."

Fortunately, despite the negative experiences she had in high school, she decided to enroll at El Camino College to "give [herself] a chance."

Coming to El Camino, Gomez decided to join the Puente Program, a decision that she feels made her experience worthwhile. The program helped her find the campus resources she needed to succeed and opened the doors to her field of study. She credits one of the counselors, Maribel Hernandez, for making the transition into the program easy and for introducing her to her English instructor, Dr. Rachel Ketai. Gomez explains that having Maribel around felt like "a safe place to land when [I] needed help with school or just in life in general." She further adds that Dr. Ketai "took the time to acknowledge [my] potential and encouraged [me] to shoot for the stars!" With both of them supporting her, she felt like she could "continue [my] educational pursuits even after [my] first year in the program."

Now, Gomez explains that school has become "an escape" even if it continues to challenge her. "I was absolutely inspired while in the Puente Program," she says, "I take pride in being a first generation college student and I plan to use my education to be of service to others." Gomez will be graduating this spring quarter from UCLA with a degree in Sociology and a minor in Labor and Workplace Studies. Congratulations to Dulce!



# WHAT IS THE PUENTE PROJECT?

The Puente Project is an academic preparation program for educationally disadvantaged students that is co-sponsored by the University of California at Berkeley and the California Community College Chancellors Office. The goals of the Puente Project are for students to transfer to a four-year university, earn a college degree, and return to their communities as mentors and leaders.

Puente students commit to a full-year program, which consists of English instruction (English A/RWA in the fall and 1A in the spring), counseling (Human Development 101 in the fall and 105 in the spring), and mentorship. The English instruction focuses on culturally relevant writing and Latino and multicultural literature. The counseling element guides students into becoming successful college scholars by heightening their awareness of college resources, study skills, and career exploration. Finally, the mentoring component supports and motivates students along their academic journeys, providing inspirational stories of success.

The Puente Project has been helping educationally disadvantaged students in California transfer to four-year universities for more than 30 years. It is currently implemented in 33 high school and 59 community college sites throughout the state.

Puente is open to all students.

## PUENTE HISTORY

In 1981, co-directors Felix Galaviz and Patricia McGrath founded Puente at Chabot College in Hayward. The program mission was to increase the number of Mexican American/Latino students transferring to four-year colleges and universities.

Since then, Puente has expanded to 59 community colleges throughout the state. As an outgrowth of its success as a community college program, Puente high school programs were added throughout the state in 1993. Currently in its 31<sup>st</sup> year, the Puente Program at El Camino College is a model program for other community colleges across the state of California. The El Camino College program was established in 1985, just four years after the Puente Program was founded statewide.

## PUENTE RESULTS IN STUDENT SUCCESS AT ECC

### Strong Persistence Record:

- 93% of Puente's first-time freshmen students from Fall 2009 enrolled in a second year of classes in Fall 2010 compared to 76% of ECC students generally.

### Strong Transfer Rates:

- 46% of Puente students enrolled in 2002-03 transferred by 2007- 2008, compared to 26% of ECC's unaffiliated Hispanic students.
- Between 2000 and 2009 176 Puente students transferred. 22% to UC, 56% to CSU, and 21% to private or out-of-state institutions.

## PUENTE BOASTS STATEWIDE IMPACT

- More than 5,500 students have enrolled in the Puente community college program.
- More than 2,000 professionals donate more than 18,000 hours annually to Puente students.
- An estimated 200,000 non-Puente students have benefited from Puente's staff development programs.
- Community colleges with Puente programs transfer 44 percent more Latino students to the University of California than colleges without a Puente program.
- Note: The Program has now expanded to three community college districts in Texas and also one in Washington.

## NATIONAL RECOGNITION

- In 2004, Puente was chosen as one of six model programs nationwide to help guide policymakers to improve college access and success by the Pathways to College Network.
- In 2008, Hispanic Lifestyle selected Puente as its Non-Profit Organization of the Year Award recognizing its work in the Latino community.

## For More Information, Please Contact:

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