

STEM professor leads by example



PHOTO COURTESY OF SOPHIA LEE

BY MEKHELA GHEBREHIWET
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Citrus College Mathematics Professor Sophia Lee teaches multiple courses, speaks at conferences throughout various college campuses and recently completed her doctoral degree at California State University Fullerton, all while raising two children.

“As I look back on all the sleepless nights while writing my dissertation and holding my newborn at the same time,” Lee said. “My number one motivating factor will always be my family. Giving my family a better life will always be my reason for going back to school to get my degree.”

Balancing motherhood, family and a full-time career comes naturally to her. Lee said being a 21st century woman is exhilarating as opposed to outdated standards, today nothing is limiting: not motherhood and not family.

“Sophia became a super human after she had kids,” husband Tommy Lau said. “She does it all, and does it all so well. Sophia is definitely a lot more stressed after having kids, especially while working full-time and getting her

doctorate, but I know she wouldn’t have it any other way.”

With young children and a hectic schedule, her husband and mother hold down the fort at home so she is able to juggle multiple things like her career and educational goals.

“Balancing a life with a full-time job, full-time school and being a full-time mom was absolutely the hardest thing I have ever had to do,” Lee said. “Women carry an incredible amount of strength and have the potential to achieve anything they put their mind to.”

Lee said being a female professor comes with a level of difficulty she had to overcome when she first began teaching. The lack of respect she initially received from her male students on her position of authority made her a stronger professor.

“I remember teaching calculus, and calculus is a male dominated subject,” Lee said. “My male students would talk over me or expect me to take on that ‘woman’s role’ and let them take over. It didn’t help that I looked like a student and not the professor. But over time, it’s that building of confidence that helped me to own my title as a professor and own my classroom.”

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Where is the \$5 million in emergency aid going?

BY BROOKE REYNOLDS
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Citrus College continues to distribute 16,307 grants in the form of emergency aid money to eligible students enrolled in spring 2021.

Over the past year, Citrus College has paid out a total of \$5,705,250 in Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act money as emergency financial aid grants, Vice President of Student Services Richard Rams said in an email interview.

Citrus College has issued three CARES Emergency Grants since spring 2020. Rams said the college will continue to disburse emergency aid grants within the following months.

Director of Financial Aid Stephen Fahey said in an email interview that \$2,165,000 worth of CARES emergency financial aid grants have

been disbursed to students in spring 2021.

A total of 16,307 grants have been awarded, Rams said, to help eligible students with expenses such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus.

Rams said eligibility for these awards is based on current enrollment at Citrus College and demonstrated need.

The Citrus College Financial Aid webpage said that to be eligible for an emergency aid grant, students must have a valid 2020-2021 Free Application for Federal Student Aid or California Dream Act application on file with the college as of March 17. In order to deposit their grants into their personal checking or savings account, students must make a refund selection via BankMobile.

CARES emergency grants are funded by Higher Education

Emergency Relief Fund, Rams said.

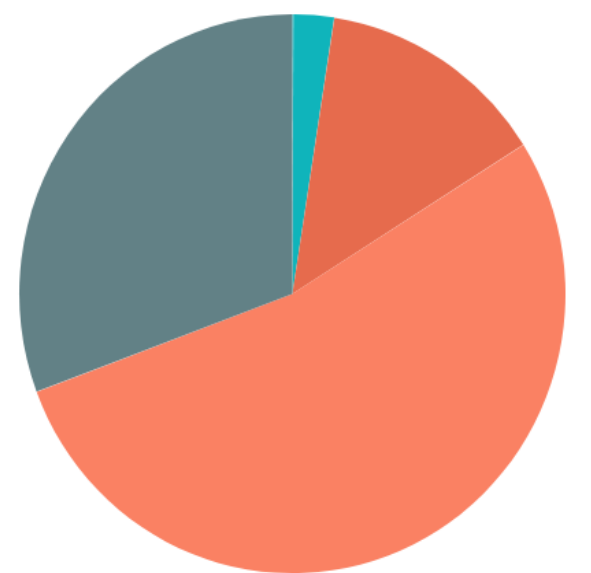
The Citrus College Financial Aid webpage said the college plans to pay out at least 50% of CARES funds directly to students.

Some funds remain in the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund II allocations, Rams said, and he anticipates “an additional allocation from HEERF III funds in the next several months, allowing Citrus College to award additional emergency grants in the upcoming academic year.”

In addition, the district received \$3,714,707 from the Department of Education to support the shift to remote instruction, said Fahey. They received \$477,000 in minority-serving institution funds as well.

For the period of January, The CARES Act has awarded Citrus College \$291,273 in institutional funds.

CARES Act institutional Portion: \$291,273



- High-speed internet for students and faculty. (0.06%)
- Adding instructors and increasing hours to support social distancing (2.4%)
- Campus safety and operations. (13.59%)
- Faculty and staff training. (53.26%)
- Purchasing, leasing, or renting equipment. (30.69%)

GRAPHIC BY BROOKE REYNOLDS

Los Angeles County



GRAPHIC BY ISHIKA MUCHHAL

Entering ‘Yellow Tier’

BY ISHIKA MUCHHAL
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Los Angeles County announced it is entering the yellow tier for COVID-19 restrictions on May 6, which includes the least restrictive guidelines the county has seen since the pandemic started.

The county of more than 10 million people is one of seven counties in the state to be designated a minimal risk level by the tier system. Citrus

College’s opening plan is also tiered to match the county.

In accordance with the Blueprint for a Safer Economy, most indoor businesses will see increased capacity allowances with slight modifications.

Anders Corey, health deputy for Los Angeles’ 5th Supervisorial District, said he is optimistic about the vaccination program’s progress since over 60% of the population has received one dose.

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Opinion

Asynchronous class types matter

Immersive lectures are more effective than textbook-only classes

BY CESAR ACUNA
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As classes at Citrus College continue to be conducted remotely, asynchronous classes that offer video and audio lectures have been much more effective for me than asynchronous classes that don't offer a lecture of any kind.

Asynchronous classes are online courses that offer the learning material at any time, so that students can access the course material whenever they want to.

This allows for a more flexible class than synchronous classes, which are remote courses that meet at a specific time.

I have experienced two main ways that professors like to teach their asynchronous classes.

The first form of an asynchronous class offers a way

to listen to the professor speak. This is often accompanied by some form of visual presentation, usually a PowerPoint.

The second form of asynchronous class focuses primarily on the textbook, and doesn't include video or audio pre-recorded lectures.

Over the several online courses that I have taken, I found that the inclusion of video and audio lectures offer a much better learning experience than simply assigning textbook readings.

Textbooks aren't for everyone. In my case, that couldn't be more true. I struggle quite a bit when it comes to reading a textbook. My focus gets diverted often; I will often read a page without really focusing on the content, and I will have remembered nothing of what I had just read.

On the other hand, pre-recorded video and audio lectures

recreate the in-class experience as closely as possible while still offering flexibility.

Most online classes that I have taken in this fashion included weekly video lectures and I've managed to do well.

The couple of times that I had come across the textbook-oriented kind of asynchronous class has not offered the same positive experience, however. It doesn't feel like I'm being taught by a professor, and I tend to perform worse in the class than I would have in a class with video lectures.

The biggest issue regarding the differences between asynchronous classes is that Wingspan doesn't distinguish the differences within asynchronous classes. When I'm signing up for a class, it only displays information about whether the class is synchronous or asynchronous.

I would like to see a feature



PHOTO BY CHRISTIN HUME, COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

added to Wingspan one day that allows teachers to leave a small message to students about how the class is conducted. Students could then know more about the class that they are signing up for.

Until a feature like that is added, I usually email the teacher and ask about how they structure their class. This way, I'm certain that I will get a class that is both effective and enjoyable.

Opinion



CLARION FILE

Textbooks: to buy or not to buy?

BY SKYLAR SCOTT
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Imagine a student needs three books for a specific class that, in total, cost about \$175. Sometimes as the class progresses, it gets a little behind, therefore two of the books aren't used.

Now multiply this situation three or four times to represent the plight of a full-time student.

This raises the question if buying textbooks is worth it. Short answer, no; long answer, depends on the situation.

For some, the issue of textbooks isn't a problem because they have sufficient amounts of money

to where it's upsetting, but not detrimental. This, unfortunately, is not the reality for most students.

Now, imagine the student wasn't in the best spot financially, is struggling to find another student buyer or just doesn't have enough space for all these unused books they've collected from dropped or canceled classes. This imagined story is absolutely the truth for many Citrus College students.

Although emails and announcements are sent to encourage us to buy from the Owl Bookshop, their books are overpriced compared to websites like Chegg and Amazon— which still have their own issues like strange rental dates and late

shipping.

School is complicated enough, and the struggle of buying textbooks is an added weight of uncertainty.

With no set answer on how to buy textbooks, the majority of us have been maneuvering between a few options.

"I typically buy my books through Amazon, but if I cannot buy them there, I end up buying them at the bookstore," dance major Jaqueline Orozco said in the CitrusMobile app.

From my experience and observation, I've noticed that the first place students look for textbooks is through a quick Google search including the term

"free pdf."

Mother, full-time worker and child development major Brenda Morales said in the CitrusMobile app that sometimes she "has to buy due to codes needed from books."

These codes force students to buy textbooks because they are a one-time use per person.

Students regularly pirate their books online, send photos of their textbooks among a class group chat or use any other cheaper method whenever available to avoid additional costs to their education.

Buying textbooks is not only a waste of money, but almost completely unnecessary.

Letter

Parent concern over grad plans

I am writing this to express my frustration in the graduation process at Citrus College. I've read the article about this year's graduation being virtual for the protection of student, employees and families and am in complete agreement with that.

Where I'm frustrated is the disappointment in my daughter's eyes when she told me the college is planning on hosting several graduations for high schools. She was hoping for an in-person graduation for one last look at several classmates/friends as well as favorite teachers, etc, but was so upset to find out the college will host outsiders but not their own. Where I appreciate the safety concern for my daughter and the rest of my family, apparently the safety of their employees and the students/families of these high schools is not a concern.

I just wish they were consistent with their safety thoughts for their employees and those of the outside community.

I made several attempts to call to express my thoughts, but was unable to reach anyone and emails to administration have gone unanswered. Since I was reading the articles I figured the power of the press could help shed some light on the reasoning.

Thanks very much for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,
Theresa Davenport

Deaf culture adjusts during pandemic

Panel by deaf women of color illuminates intersectional struggles for ASL students

BY MEKHELA GHEBREHIWET
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“Classroom learning is only one part of learning about American Sign Language (ASL),” Citrus College Professor Irene Robles said. “In the course, we learn about all aspects of ASL as receiving and exchanging messages with an emphasis on applying appropriate facial and body grammar. By sending students out to events to interact in the deaf community students are able to engage and apply components of ASL in genuine experiences.”

Robles is deaf and teaches American Sign Language I and II. Every semester she requires her students to attend a deaf/ASL awareness event to become more immersed in the deaf community.

One of the events Robles announced this semester was the Deaf Women’s Herstory Month panel to bring more awareness to deaf culture and Deaf History month, which is March 13-April 15.

“This hands-on experience captures what cannot be conveyed in an ASL book or research article,” Robles said. “Diversity within the deaf community and authentic ASL in action helps students to really grasp the deaf culture.”

Deaf Women of Color and Deaf Women United celebrated Deaf Women’s Herstory Month with a Q&A panel focusing on the trials of being deaf and how they were impacted during the pandemic.

“By attending events like this, students get to see and meet professionals, individuals, and families who are deaf, deaf blind and hard-of-hearing,” Robles said. “Diversity within the deaf culture is revealed as these community events transpire.”

ASL student Mandy Perea said the obstacles the deaf community has to face should be an unexpectedly enlightening experience to



ART BY MEG TRAVIS

everyone who is not hearing impaired.

“It was extremely eye-opening to realize how much of the world is dependent on hearing,” Perea said. “At the end of the day, the more people who are exposed to the challenges of certain communities, the more we can be allies to those who need to create a more accessible world for themselves.”

This panel of women discussed how their identities as deaf women, and with deaf culture, was equivalent to their other identities.

Rosavetta Jackson is from Georgia and is an eighth-generation multiracial deaf woman, and she is the first black deaf woman to be appointed as director of the outreach department of Deaf Women United.

“I am Black, Latino Mexican, and also Native American,” Jack-

son signed. “I have so many different cultural connections that are a part of me. I often bordered the fence of who I was as a person. It took me a few years. Growing up I wasn’t Black enough, Mexican enough, Native American enough. As I got older, I decided it was up to me to reclaim my identity.”

Jackson said growing up as a deaf multiracial woman was difficult. Her struggles with her identity defined who she was in her upbringing.

“I tried so hard to fit in and I really didn’t fit in with any culture except deaf,” Jackson signed. “Currently with my leadership roles, I am able to expose and explain to all of these multi-racial children that they are enough.”

Many of the other panelists had similar experiences growing up. Alicia Wooten was a student

at Gallaudet University, the first university in America for the deaf. She studied immunology, biology, pneumonia, HIV and many other clinical diseases.

“With everything happening this year and last year I really had to unpack,” Wooten signed. “What are my boundaries? What are my experiences as a person of color but also as a white woman? My mother moved here from Japan in her 20s. Her culture is a very big part of me. I am Japanese American, and I am a woman who is deaf.”

Britny Bensman also felt a disconnection growing up and discovering her identity. She said she still feels it now as an adult, especially since she works in the healthcare industry as a registered nurse.

“When I mention to my patients

that I am deaf, they don’t know what to do and say to me,” Bensman signed. “When I say I am hard of hearing, they relate to that better because they think I am losing my hearing. The reaction I get when I say ‘I am deaf’ or ‘I am hard of hearing’ is so different. I identify as a deaf woman, but it is a very sticky situation being in healthcare.”

Bensman said people see deafness as a disability, but it’s not. It may be hard to get necessary resources, but those are barriers not disabilities.

“The more personal anecdotes I hear from deaf people, the more charged I am to be an ally for the deaf community,” Perea said.

The panelists all said COVID-19 directly affected the deaf community because initially resources were limited. The lack of information readily available to the deaf community made word of mouth from neighbors and family their main source of information.

Ivy Velez is from Puerto Rico and works for the State of California Department of Developmental Services. She dealt with the barriers COVID-19 put onto the deaf community head on.

“I realized I had access to things because of my contacts, but as a deaf community there was a lack of information,” Velez signed. “We were starting all over again.”

The deaf community was not prepared for the lack of communication when the pandemic hit.

“I just graduated nursing school December 2019,” Bensman signed. “I passed my boards and got a job in February 2020, then in March everything shut down. I could no longer read patients’ lips with masks on. It was really tough. I was struggling and very frustrated, and my coworkers had to take over.”

Velez said she saw deaf workers and the deaf community heavily impacted due to their lack of resources.

Read **ASL**, Page 4

New ASCC Executive Board of five takes office

BY JUSTIN GEORGE
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All five students who ran for student government for the 2021-2022 term were elected, Student Life Supervisor Rosario Garcia said in an email interview. A total of 44 votes were cast in the election, which closed on April 22.

The small 2021-2022 ASCC Executive Board is made up of Student Trustee Taylor E. McNeal, Legislative Liaison Arvin Shahid, and senators Daniel Caldera, Hala Fakhoury and Jessie San. A president and vice president were not elected.

Taylor E. McNeal, Arvin Shahid and Hala Fakhoury were contacted for interviews, but have not responded to confirm their availability.

Daniel Caldera, Senator

Daniel Caldera is in his first year at Citrus College and recently changed his major to political science. He joined as a history major, and describes himself as a “huge history buff,” but after seeing the country’s political climate, Caldera said, he decided he wanted to find a way to make a

positive impact.

Shortly after graduating high school at 19, Caldera joined the Marine Corps, where he worked for four years as a Work Center Supervisor and Collateral Duty Inspector. He said he will bring the discipline and leadership he picked up there into the student government.

Caldera said he is working to overcome generalized anxiety disorder and the stigma of isolation that comes with it.

“Sometimes you just have to build up that courage and get out there,” he said.

Caldera acknowledged that being in a leadership position during the campus closure will be challenging and impersonal.

“You don’t have that face-to-face interaction with your fellow classmates,” Caldera said, calling traditional campaigning “a lot more relatable and respectable.”

Although it’s hard to gauge what change will look like on campus, Caldera said he wants to represent the students of Citrus College and “be that voice for the voiceless.”

Jessie San, Senator

Jessie San started at Citrus College in 2018, when she was

ASCC Election Votes Cast per Semester

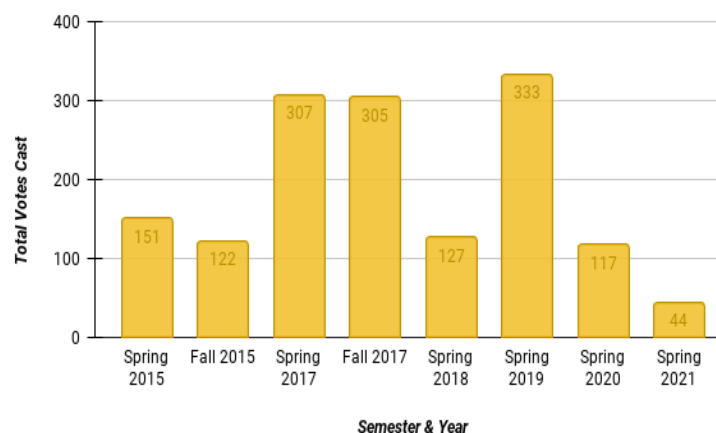


CHART BY NERISSA CHEE

ASCC election data from the past six years provided by Clarion Archives and Rosario Garcia, the Citrus Student Life Supervisor. Any semesters that have no record have been left out.

13 years old. She is now 17, and currently attends high school alongside her third year of college. San said she credits her professors, classmates and friends for introducing her to clubs and organizations in her time at Citrus.

Before being elected, San said she talked with the current members of ASCC to get a better idea of what they do and what position she wanted to run for.

She eventually decided to run for senator.

“I actually have a lot of connections with the people who are currently in student government and the year before me, and the people there are just so amazing that I was so inspired by what they do,” San said.

Campaigning was a challenge for San. Instead of standing up in front of a class to make a first

impression, San said she’s had to appeal to strangers in zoom classes.

“When I went to my classes, I was like ‘hey, I’m not that familiar with you, you don’t know me that well, but, like, I would really appreciate if you vote for me so I can serve our campus!’” San said.

In addition to ASCC, San serves as president of Model United Nations club at Citrus, vice president of technology for the Phi Theta Kappa Nevada/California region, and recently joined Alpha Gamma Sigma. San said she developed different skills from each group, which she will put to use during her time in student government.

San said that because community college students don’t stick around very long, she’d like to encourage students to connect by participating in clubs, organizations and student government. She said she wants students to experience the same sense of “fellowship” she found at Citrus.

“It’s been a long journey, but I’m glad that I can contribute more now that I’m elected senator,” San said.

ASL from Page 3

"Some don't have internet," Velez signed. "They needed to get their information through grassroots, or people needed to stop by and check on them to update them."

All of the panelists said the extra strain the deaf community has had to endure throughout the pandemic has greatly affected mental health.

ASL students attending events such as this one makes for an important experience, Perea said.

"Hearing people can never truly understand what it is like to experience the world as a deaf or hard of hearing person," Perea said. "It greatly helps to understand sign language when you learn about the people who have had to advocate for its existence. Viewing the ways in which deaf people have had to innovate, advocate, and problem-solve within a world that was made for hearing people is inspiring and humbling."

YELLOW from Page 1

"Our countywide seven-day-average positivity rate is 0.6%," said Corey. "You can argue we have a level of herd immunity already."

Positivity rates in the poorest communities have now matched the countywide positivity rate, a proportionality that Corey calls "a testament to our ability of protecting the most vulnerable parts of our community."

Corey said the county hopes people will continue to get vaccinated, even though there is no plan to mandate vaccines since it only has emergency use authorization.

Under the new tier, Corey said the county's objectives for education are to allow proper graduation ceremonies by spring, more normal operations by summer and confidence for a safe, in-person return by fall.

"Whatever we can do to invest in local colleges and universities is critical to helping those that most need access to higher education," Corey said.

L.A. County Department of Public Health's "Reopening Protocol for

Despite all the trials and advocating deaf people have had to endure during the pandemic, the panelists all agreed that remembering to practice self-care was a crucial factor. They provided one another with tips on how to care for themselves.

Wooten is a science teacher, and she said the science behind mental health and a lack of rest can greatly impact a person.

"If we don't pay attention to our bodies, we can become physically ill," Wooten signed. "It's important to be aware of that. We're on technology so much and that glare on the eyes can impact our sleep. ... Everybody needs to find that one thing where they can really just let go."

Most of the panelists said they are tending to plants, getting outside and prioritizing themselves. They also all provided tips on how deaf women can empower each other.

Mayra Castrejon is from Mexico,

Institutes of Higher Education," published May 11, has outlined new ways of safely reopening higher education. The revised plan relaxes restrictions on the number of students living in campus housing and gives permission to hold activities on campus as long as health and safety requirements are met.

In an email interview, L.A. Public Health's Robert Gilchick, child and adolescent health section chief, emphasized the role of vaccination.

"The pathway to end this pandemic and return to what we all remember as 'normal' lies in achieving a high percentage of community immunity against COVID-19 from the very safe and very effective vaccines currently authorized for use," Gilchick said.

Even for young, lower-risk college students, Gilchick said vaccination is still important—particularly for those with underlying or chronic health conditions. Many students who were infected have suffered long-term health effects.

"Given these facts, it is foolish to 'roll the dice' and avoid getting vaccinated," he said.

Both Corey and Gilchick said guidelines are difficult to enforce for

students who live in congregate living spaces like dorms and apartments.

Citrus College's return plan has tiers similar to the county. Robert Sammis, director of human resources, said the college's summer and fall plan will be updated to reflect the county's changes.

"At the yellow tier, we can start bringing back some lecture classes and science labs," Sammis said.

Citrus plans to incrementally reopen the Hayden Memorial Library and Student Services buildings, also bringing back some classified staff in August.

More visual and performing arts classes, cosmetology and esthetician program classes, and athletic programs like football, men's and women's basketball, golf and water polo will be allowed in person as well.

For the fall, Sammis said "around 30% of our instruction would be on campus in some form."

Sammis said on-campus classes will have a concurrent broadcast component and can "go back remote either asynchronously or synchronously" should they need to.

Although Citrus does not plan to mandate vaccines, some faculty

members are concerned about how to differentiate between vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals.

"Do people wear a wristband that says vaccinated or unvaccinated?" Sammis asked.

Citrus plans to keep its commencement ceremony virtual, prioritizing summer and fall changes. Sammis guessed that winter and spring will start to look a little more normal.

Testing, isolation and contact tracing will be key to containment.

"As community transmission continues to fall, cases and outbreaks will become less frequent," Gilchick said. "Gov. Newsom has stated if there is enough vaccine supply for every Californian 16 years and older who wishes to be inoculated and hospitalization rates are stable and low, then he expects California to fully open its economy on June 15."

Along with getting vaccinated, Gilchick recommended safety measures including:

■ masking

■ distancing

■ limiting capacities

■ washing or sanitizing hands

■ not sharing objects

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All correspondence must include your student ID#, major and signature. Letters may be edited for consent.



- moving activities outdoors
- ventilating indoor spaces

For more information about what is open and how to stay safe, L.A. Public Health suggests going to <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/> and [vaccinatelacounty.com](https://www.clccollege.edu/vaccinatelacounty.com).

STEM from Page 1

Lee said the struggles she has had to face as a woman in a male-dominated field should have made her educational journey daunting, but it encouraged her to push on.

"If there is anyone who can handle the pressure, it would be her," Lau said.

Lee's husband said she is the strongest woman he knows and well-respected because of her determination.

Lee said her determination is what has kept her persevering on this journey.

"You know, there's a stigma with women in programs like mine when they see them pregnant," Lee said. "A lot of people seen me pregnant and expected me to drop out. But for me, it made me want to keep going. It's even more worth it to me when I'm with my kids."

It took Lee six years to transfer to UC Berkeley from East Los Angeles College with an associates degree, so teaching at an institution similar to one she spent most of her time at while figuring out what she wanted to do was a goal of hers.

"I never thought I would be here," Lee said. "I graduated high school with a 1.0 in math. I didn't even walk with my graduating class. To go from that to where I am today, it's just incredible."

Lee's husband said she turned things around during her six years spent in community college.

"Sophia's turning point was in community college," Lau said. "At first, she didn't take it too seriously, but after seeing other students struggling, she realized she could help them learn in a better way because she wasn't a perfect student and could relate to them more. Once she found her passion in wanting to become a community college teacher, she was unstoppable after that."

Lee's husband has supported her journey since her community college days, and now her students say the help and support she gives them has helped them to accomplish their educational goals.

Former student Reginald Ortiz took Math 150 with Professor Sophia Lee in the fall of 2018.

"The world needs more teachers like her," Ortiz said. "She really does take a personal interest in the well being of her students. To this day, if I have any questions about my current math classes or transfer questions, I can email Professor Lee and she will always respond with positivity and insight."

Ortiz said she made the classroom a comfortable place to learn in, and he would 100% recommend Lee because she is a teacher who inspires students to be great.

"She encouraged students to share their stories about life and what they hoped to accomplish in school," Ortiz said. "She really made the classroom feel like a family environment."

Lee emphasized how important getting to know her students was, as

well as getting them to learn.

Current and previous student Alicia Aquino said Lee made her going back to school transition easier.

"I was really shy and would never talk or ask questions in class," Aquino said. "She made me believe in myself. I am 42 years old and I went back to school after 20 years. Having her as one of my teachers at the beginning of me going back to school was the greatest."

Lee said she wants all of her students to believe in themselves and be successful. She tells them the secret to doing it all is to just do it: Don't make excuses about why you can't do things, and just do them.

"Finding time is key to everything," Lee said. "You just have to make time to do the work. I don't plan anything. With kids you just have to take time when you can get it. When I wake up in the middle of the night to feed my baby, if I can't go back to sleep, I get up and study. If I wake up at 4 a.m., I'll just get up and go study."

Taking the time to actively teach her students, and implementing a growth mindset in her classroom by teaching her students to believe that their talents can be developed through hard work, strategies, planning and input from others is why her students say she is an unforgettable professor.

Lee's mother Betty Tsang said that although Lee has a hectic schedule, she respects her daughter for coming so far and accomplishing so much.

"Sophia knows how to make good decisions in critical times for her

school, marriage, raising kids, and career," Tsang said. "She is smart for trying to squeeze in time to enjoy life with the kids from her crazy busy schedule."

Lee has juggled her family life with her educational goals and full-time job for more than eight years, and she said she can finally take a step back to enjoy the little things.

Lau said he can't wait to be able to spend more quality time with the family.

"Sophia and I first met in high school with no stress, no worries, and no goals," Lau said. "We loved going fishing together. Over the years, fishing trips with friends have turned into her work conferences with our kids."

Lee said she appreciates her husband for being there for her throughout it all. He made things easier for her by sticking by her side especially on her hardest days.

Lau said he remembers being there on those days and driving her to school when she felt like giving up.

"If I could just have one photo on my vision board, it would be of my family," Lee said. "They are my vision board. Everything I do is for them."

Lee said her kids keep her grounded and remind her to enjoy life by making her slow down and be present in those moments.

"The hugs are the best moments," Lee said. "They teach me everything. I wouldn't do half of the things that I do if it wasn't for them. Most people are tired of doing ordinary things,

"A lot of people (saw) me pregnant and expected me to drop out. But for me, it made me want to keep going. It's even more worth it to me when I'm with my kids."

Sophia Lee
Mathematics Professor

they want to go on vacation or go out of town; I'm happy just going to the park with my family."

Her short-term goal is to visit Walt Disney World with her family, and she will soon take her family there as her last semester of school has come to its end.

During the interview, Lee said the message she wants to leave everyone with is a book. She then held up the book "It Always Seems Impossible Until It's Done" by Kathryn and Ross Petras.

"I just want people to know not to give up," Lee said. "If I can do it, they can do it. I would've never thought I'd be sitting where I am today, but now that I'm here I'm so happy I decided to stick with my vision board and do the work because it was all worth it! I want everyone to know that they can do it, whatever their it is."

Superintendent finalists discuss leadership and equity

The three final candidates answer questions from the community on June 1 at their public forums

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The three finalists in the running to be the next superintendent/president introduced themselves to the public and answered questions in a May 25 forum over Zoom. Their final interviews will take place on campus in a closed session with the board of trustees between May 27-28.

The forums were moderated by Lisa Sugimoto, vice president of PPL Inc. Each candidate spoke at their own forum, where they answered pre-submitted questions read by the moderator. Board of Trustees Clerk/Secretary Laura Bollinger said she expects the position to be appointed at the June 15 meeting.

The forum questions and finalists' responses and statements have been edited for brevity. The forum recordings are available at the public forums website.

Santanu Bandyopadhyay is a first-generation Indian immigrant

from Bombay. He traveled to the U.S. 21 years ago to pursue his master's degree in business administration and later his doctorate degree in higher education at Ohio University. He previously served as the president of Columbia College and is the current president of Modesto College.

He said he is a good fit for Citrus College because of his experience with bond-funded construction, success with faculty negotiations, proven track record in fundraising and advocacy at the federal, state and local level.

Bandyopadhyay said he is the man he is today because of two things: public education and the support of the folks around him on his campus, who helped guide him in his career.

Bandyopadhyay said Citrus College is in an excellent position to make a difference because of Measure Y, the support of the community, the school's dedicated staff and initiatives that will contribute to the regional economy, and it is a dream come true to lead in this position.

"If we can change those lives,

we can make these people feel that they belong here — that they grow here, they settle their roots, and then go anywhere that they can to take on the challenges of the world," Bandyopadhyay said in his closing statement. "That would be a dream."

Brian Sanders is the child of community college graduates from Northern California. After earning his master's degree in mathematics at the University of Oregon, he attended the University of California, Davis for his doctorate in educational leadership. A math professor, he served as dean of science, mathematics and engineering at Modesto College before becoming the vice president of instruction and accreditation liaison officer for Columbia College in 2016.

Sanders highlighted his experience at a large Hispanic-serving institution and comfort in a similar demographic to that of Modesto as reasons for applying for the position at Citrus College. He said he appreciates that Citrus is at the forefront of many initiatives in the community college system such as the diversity, equity and

inclusion efforts, guided pathways and strong workforce programs that support the community.

Sanders also recognized the "fantastic opportunity" that Citrus has with the \$298 million bond fund from Measure Y. He said his current district has been working with a similar bond that has been transformational to its college, noting his work on a three-story, \$70 million STEM center. He said he would love to be the next superintendent/president to lead the next phase of implementation at Citrus.

"Every dollar needs to be spent to help more students earn their degrees and certificates in the state of the art training and facilities," Sanders said.

Greg Schulz grew up in the city of Orange, is a graduate of Fullerton College and the current president of Fullerton College. After graduating with his associate's degree in business administration, Schultz transferred to California State University, Fullerton to pursue his bachelor's in business administration/accounting and entered the workforce. Later, he pursued a master's degree in public

administration from California State University, Long Beach and a doctorate in educational leadership from University of Southern California.

Schulz said he became an educator in 2000 after accepting a position to assist with accounting and budgeting at North Orange Continuing Education, a "vibrant community of non-credit and community education," where he later became the dean of instruction and student services and eventually provost.

Schulz moved to Long Beach City College, where said he enjoyed implementing dual enrollment programs and academic pathways to guide students on their academic journeys. His success in various leadership roles afterward led him back to Fullerton College as the president of his alma mater.

"I love the work that we do," he said. "It brings me joy to serve in the community colleges and to lead an institution of higher education, and I'm very enthusiastic about the opportunity here at Citrus College to serve as the next superintendent/president."

Highlights of the superintendent/president forums

What makes you a good leader?



SANTANU BANDYOPADHYAY

Bandyopadhyay said that collaborative decision-making is at the forefront of his leadership style.

"I honor the input of all of the people who are going to be impacted by the decision," he said.

Bandyopadhyay said in the fourth month of his presidency at the Yosemite Community College District, faculty contract negotiations had reached impasse and a strike was initiated.

Although it was a situation he "inherited" early on in his presidency, Bandyopadhyay said it was dealt with by getting perspectives from all constituency groups on campus.

He said another important part of his leadership is admitting when he is wrong.

What strategies have you employed at other colleges to address equity gaps between students, and diversity among faculty and staff?

Closing equity gaps needs to happen inside and outside of classrooms, Bandyopadhyay said, and starts by not hiding processes. He said Modesto Junior College has had success implementing culturally responsive pedagogies.

"Changing the pedagogy to a culturally responsive pedagogy has tremendous power to change our equity gaps or reduce our equity gaps," Bandyopadhyay said. "But I particularly appreciate the Academic Senate's resolution where the Citrus College Academic Senate has decided that they will also incorporate the culturally responsive pedagogy in the classroom."

Bandyopadhyay also started Columbia College's diversity, equity and inclusion initiative as a program under the president's leadership, which he said focused on professional development, such as exposure to different cultures and implicit bias training.

At Fullerton College, Schulz said he has expanded the Puente Program, a program for underserved learners that provides them with a mentor and a designated counselor.

He credits Fullerton College for supporting an emerging community of Black and BIPOC students as part of a partnership with African American Male Education Network and Development.

"We're able to interact with community leaders to make even stronger connections with regional partners, and to share about all the wonderful opportunities that exist in our college," Schulz said.

When hiring new faculty and staff, Schulz said they are continuing to reevaluate and reexamining their hiring practices.

"When we're interviewing our candidates, we get together both committees and examine the strengths of each of our candidates and also are really intentional about diversity," he said.

A good leader, Schulz said, is someone who has passion for their work, empathy and integrity. In his current role, he prioritizes honesty about successes and failures.

As superintendent/president, he said it will be his job to "facilitate and cultivate a healthy institutional culture."

He said making the campus culture "one that students enjoy learning and know that we are there to support them," and "where they compare the experience of their current college and say 'What is this place? I've never been in a place like this one'" is fun and rewarding.



GREG SCHULZ

"I think a good leader is someone who people are willing to follow, and to follow somebody you need to have trust in their person, their knowledge, their integrity," Sanders said.

Sanders said he is a planner by nature, but has to be adaptable.

"If you chart the course and you realize it's not going to work because of the effective input from other people, I'm going to change my mind, and I think that's the kind of humility that people are striving to find in an effective leader," Sanders said.



BRIAN SANDERS

Sanders said he focuses on actual, versus perceived, results and adjusting curriculum for student success.

After he became dean of science, mathematics and engineering at Modesto Junior College, he said he was able to "dive into my own grade reports amongst others, and found that I wasn't nearly as successful as I thought I was, and to this day that's one of the things that's most frustrating for me," Sanders said, wishing he could go back in time to "do some experimentation in my own teaching styles."

He said he will use his experience as a mathematician, researcher, dean and vice president to "help design and build these kinds of interfaces and dashboards that allows individual people to see the results that they're having."