

Program Highlights

April/May 2016

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Future Looks Bright for LACCD Part 2



President Scott Svonkin

From the President, Scott J. Svonkin

One of the issues I am most proud of tackling since I was elected is the reformation of our bond and

BuildLACCD program, which is one of the largest publicly-funded building and campus improvement projects in the country. Students across all nine campuses have noticed a variety of new, visually stunning, environmentally friendly new buildings, plazas, and student and faculty facilities getting ready to make their debuts. It has been no small effort to ensure that this large and complex process to bring our campuses into the 21st Century is performing well, and I am pleased that the public's tax dollars are being applied and utilized as intended by the bond.

As a result, I am happy to report that our efforts, along with support from a Blue Ribbon Committee appointed by then-State Controller John Chiang, have resulted in five years of positive outcomes. We have created modern, state-of-the-art-facilities on our campuses, and have generated on-time and on-budget audit results that demonstrate our accountability in ensuring public funds are being spent as intended. We have addressed concerns and fixed issues routinely

with more transparency, involvement, and competition from local contractors and businesses. We have moved forward with positive results and audit reports of which we can all be proud.

Our students and faculty continue to deserve the best buildings and facilities possible with these bond funds. We have already accomplished and built much of this vision, but when the original \$6 billion in bond funds finally come to an end in 2018, this effort will not end. Our board needs to plan and discuss what's needed over the next 25 years. I want students now and in the future to know our campuses can compete with any four-year institution in terms of curriculum and facilities, not to mention the highest affordability.

Our success to date is also due, in no small part, to the Trustees' efforts to generate cost efficiencies and savings within the current bond program. By generating a ten percent savings reserve, we've received one of the highest bond ratings in the state. Through fiscal responsibility in our budgeting and spending, we have delivered some of the most modern and eco-friendly facilities to communities from the San Fernando Valley across to East Los Angeles and south to Harbor. I look forward to building on this legacy and continuously improving, building, and providing our communities with the best possible higher education experience.

PMO Intern Ilene Calderon

Ilene has been interning on the BuildLACCD program since February of this year. She is ethnically from Honduras where her mother immigrated from. It's just her and her mother currently in California. Ilene lives with roommates from high school in Paramount, south of DTLA, and takes the Metro BlueLine to AECOM's offices in downtown LA.

Ilene is now enrolled in her third year at Los Angeles Community College where her emphasis is in engineering. She plans to transfer to UC Berkeley where she'd like to study material science and engineering and eventually become a materials engineer herself.

Ilene is an only child. Her mother is one of six children who immigrated to the U.S. from Honduras. Ilene was born in Florida and came to California with her mother at about age one. Because she and her mother traveled frequently around the U.S., English was her first language, but she is fluent in Spanish as well. Her mother worked in merchandising and warehousing positions managing receivables and often put in very long hours. Her hard work resulted in disabilities that required Ilene to help take care of her for the past few years. Despite being accepted to UC Berkeley out of high school, this challenge resulted in a delay of her college plans, compounded by financial challenges in paying for college. This is why LA Community College became an attractive and affordable option for her.

Ilene grew up in Compton, where she remembers the acrid smell of odd odors when she opened her door at night that would emanate from the surrounding businesses including a recycling center, auto body shops and junk yard. This childhood experience, along with a lecture she heard at UC Berkeley during a high school weekend visit to the campus, combined to inspire her path. At that lecture she recalls the professor talking about better materials for circuits and described how she invented a material that could be imprinted on a large scale with circuit patterns, and then shrunk

down for efficiency and use in products – Ilene was hooked. Based on her own experiences, she saw the potential difference she could make by designing safer and better materials. Her goal is to develop materials that improve the safety, health and environmental quality of lower income communities, like the ones she grew up in, so that future generations don't have to open their doors and smell foul odors.

Ilene's career path has taken a slightly slower and varied path, but she is confident of her goals. Because of financial and her mother's health challenges, she had to defer her enrollment at UC Berkeley. That's when LA Community College presented her with an affordable and flexible path to achieve her education goals. Even though it may take a little longer, that's OK with her.

She was encouraged to apply for the BuildLACCD internship program by a professor during her second year at LACC, even though she didn't feel qualified. After several months of waiting, she almost missed the call from AECOM offering her the internship because she was dead asleep when it came in, but promptly woke up when she realized what it was. Ilene will spend a total of 400 hours as an intern in the BuildLACCD program.

She has the following advice for her peers and fellow struggling students:

- Do your best in middle school, that's when your future education takes shape and your performance matters.
- Don't push yourself beyond what you are capable of doing or accomplishing. Lots of instructors or counselors try push you harder than you feel comfortable to take on courses or graduate in four years.
- Blue collar jobs are nothing to sneeze at. They are valid opportunities during and after

school.

- Ask questions and use counselors – a lot. They can help find opportunities and provide advice.
- Not being on schedule to get a degree is OK, either in high school or college. It's OK not to get everything done in four years as long as you get there.
- Ilene believes in taking care oneself. She feels that students need to be more aware and take better care of their mental health and not be afraid to deal with personal issues like stress, emotional or mental abuse, depression and financial pressures. She's seen firsthand how it can create a downward spiral and encourages students to be aware and get or ask for help.



Ilene Calderon, LACC/PMO Intern

AECOM

Incredible Couple of Weeks



PMO Director Tom Donovan

The past 60 days have been truly transformative for the program management team.

It is remarkable how in just three days the entire Build LACCD

offices relocated all personnel and equipment from downtown Los Angeles to our new home at 1055 Corporate Center Drive in the city of Monterey Park.

The move team, lead by Desiree Shier and Phil Koss, relocated every computer, monitor and the desk contents of 107+ people, a large number of shared files and copy/storage room materials, and an additional 417 chairs, tables and ancillary pieces of furniture for re-use.

Also, from the beginning of the year, we have averaged two DSA certifications a month, provided beneficial occupancy for an additional 6 projects and have issued \$6,674,230.17 in new task orders to 192 separate companies.

The PMO has also been very active in pursuing and exceeding the Board of Trustees goals for local hire and contracting with Local, Small, Emerging, Disabled Veterans (LSEdV) businesses. Out of the 297 companies currently working on the program, 60% are LSEdV. More than a dozen studies (e.g. Civic Economics and New Economics Foundation) have shown that every dollar spent at a locally owned business generates two-to-four times the local economic impact of a dollar spent

on an equivalent non-local business. By increasing the number of LSEdV businesses participating in the program, we are keeping local tax payers' money in these communities.

Over the next couple of weeks and months, we will continue to see a plethora of activity around new building construction, ground breakings and openings. As we look toward 2017 and beyond, it is vitally important to work together in a transparent and expedited manner to ensure the successful completion of our program for the benefit of LACCD students and the communities each campus serves.

Safety Moment

"Safety for Life" is AECOM's comprehensive internal program that drives our employees toward the company's commitment to achieving zero work-related injuries and/or illnesses; preventing damage to property and the environment; and maintaining an environmentally friendly and sustainable workplace.

At AECOM, we not only understand the immediate benefits of operating with safety as the cornerstone of our company culture. This is why



maintaining a healthy, vibrant workplace is of primary importance to us as we

uphold our commitment to acting as good corporate citizens

Deep-rooted in this program, our "Culture of Caring" sets an expectation for each employee,

contractor and business partner to take personal responsibility for keeping his or her colleagues, and others associated with our work, safe.

Whether located on a project site, in the office or at home, we embrace safety as a lifestyle choice by maintaining essential safety procedures and behaviors everywhere we go.



PMO Intern Alex Esquer

Alex was born on the 4th of July in Salem, OR and moved to Paso Robles, CA when he was two, where he grew up and graduated from high school. After trying his luck at various odd jobs that didn't work out, he decided to enlist in the Marine Corps, he specifically wanted to join the infantry. He succeeded and excelled at his role as a leader in multiple combat deployments in what would turn out to be just over 10 years of service in the Marines.

Following enlistment and training, he deployed three times to the Middle East. Twice directly to the town of Fallujah, a hot bed of military operations and nightly news reports at the time. His third deployment was to Marjah, Afghanistan in 2011. In his role as an anti-armor assault man, he used his training and experience to develop his leadership skills, with his first and foremost concern being the safety of his brothers-in-arms. Alex became an enthusiastic Marine and as a result of his second deployment experience he decided to re-enlist in 2007 following four years of active duty. By this time he had developed a healthy respect for the military system and he pursued even more training with the Marines. It was also at the time of his second deployment that he met his wife, whom he married after dating for one month, and was deployed to Fallujah, Iraq, just two weeks after their wedding. During his enlistment Alex became both a martial arts trainer and combat marksman trainer and he used his skills to continue keeping his comrades safe.

In 2008 his first daughter was born, followed by her sister in 2012. Alex was honorably discharged from the Marines in 2014, but not before, ironically on his birthday, and his very last mission assignment of his deployment, his team was hit by a roadside bomb which destroyed their transport. Fortunately



Alex Esquer ELAC/PMO Intern

everyone survived the blast without major injuries and Alex came home safely. After two years and many combat experiences in the Middle East, he is still learning to adjust to civilian life. Returning to more civilian endeavors he enrolled in East LA College and learned about his AECOM internship from the school's STEM program where he is currently a math major. As he supports and raises a family in their humble apartment in Montebello, he's entertaining the idea of becoming a high school math teacher. But he admits that his internship experience has opened his eyes to a number of different possibilities for his future. He's found supervisors in the AECOM internship program to be completely supportive of his efforts and especially sensitive and accommodating to his school schedule and lessons, reassuring him to that his education comes first. Alex feels he has a gift for teaching, so he appreciates the fact his AECOM supervisors take the time to answer his questions, no matter what they may be. He finds the same helpful attitude with his ELAC teachers and counselors. In addition, he has found the resources at the Veteran Resource Center at ELAC to be very valuable to him.

His next goal is to work with his wife to find and buy a house in the L.A. area so they can begin their next phase of life with their newest child expected to arrive later this year. Alex's advice for other struggling students and those trying to make their life better?

Everything in life can always be worse, you have to fight through it. It's all about making a better future for yourself and hard work pays off.

Alex often doesn't get to see his children during the week as they are asleep when he leaves and also by the time he gets home. But they are his inspiration and he knows the long hours of work and school he's putting in now will pay off and provide them a better future.

