Cal State Northridge’s newly named Walter Lantz Animation Studio houses not only the stuff that dreams are made of—whimsy, fantasy and red-eyed pirate penguins—but the creative students who imagine those dreams.

Named in honor of famed animator Walter Lantz, described as the man “responsible for the creation of the first Technicolor cartoon,” the studio in September was dedicated in a ceremony recognizing the Walter Lantz Foundation for its support. As head of his own animation studio, Lantz introduced Woody Woodpecker, Chilly Willy and other iconic cartoon characters.

President Jolene Koester and Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication Dean Robert Bucker joined Lantz Foundation trustee Ed Landry and executive director Peggy Jackson in celebrating with other dignitaries the naming of the studio.

Following in Lantz’s footsteps, Northridge animation students and graduates are making their mark in a red hot industry with worldwide revenues now measured in the billions of dollars.

Mary Ann Trujillo, coordinator of Northridge’s animation program in CSUN’s Department of Art, is proud of what goes on in the Walter Lantz Animation Studio. “Most of these students have the talent; we’re just giving them proper skills so that they can succeed in the industry,” said Trujillo.

And they do succeed. “Our grads are working in some of the top animation studios in the industry, whether they are working on a movie or television show or in the game industry,” she said.

Animation alumni include Robert Castaneda, director of animation for Technicolor Interactive, whose work includes the games “Gears of War” and “God of War II” as well as computer animation for the film “The Matrix Reloaded”; Artak Avakyan, cinematic animator for Sony Computer Entertainment America, the games “God of War II” and “True Crime”; Chance Raspberry, character layout artist for Film Roman Studio, “The Simpson Movie;” and Tyree Dilhuy, a director and flash animator and development artist currently working on a project for Black Entertainment Television.

“The list could go on and on,” Trujillo said, adding art alumni Vicki Jenson, director of 3D CG features for DreamWorks and also director of “Shark Tale,” and Brian Miller, president of CartoonNetwork Studios.

Animation professors, many of whom hold full-time positions in the animation industry, burn a lot of

Viscom Center’s Approach to Design: Young, Fresh and Green

Center for Visual Communication Students Enter Competition to Design Ford Focus Commercials

Barely two months old, Cal State Northridge’s Center for Visual Communication (Viscom) is moving directly into the fast lane of art design in the San Fernando Valley.

In fall 2007, Viscom had just opened its doors to clients seeking innovative design concepts when it entered a first-of-its-kind student competition—conceived and directed by Dailey and Associates Advertising of West Hollywood—to create commercials for the launch of the Ford Motor Company’s youth-oriented Focus vehicle.

The ad firm had approached CSUN and other regional private and public universities with an intriguing idea: each would create 30-second commercials for the Southern California launch of the Ford Motor Company’s youth-oriented Focus vehicle. Commercials are due in April 2008, and the winning concept will be aired during spring 2008 on local and regional television stations.

The project appealed to Viscom managing director Dave Moon and creative director Joe Bautista—even without the added plum of the $25,000 bright red 2008 Ford Focus CSUN will receive regardless of the Viscom Center’s continuous efforts.
Looking for Answers in Ocean’s Depths, Earth’s Crust
Richfield Scholar Seeks Link Between Old Faults and State’s Active Geology

Elena Miranda, the Jerome Richfield Memorial Scholar for 2007-08, specializes in structural geology, the study of rock deformation through time. An assistant professor in the Geoscience Department, Miranda investigates how the Earth’s continental and oceanic crust deforms in response to stresses.

The Richfield recognition, awarded annually by the university in memory of dean emeritus and philosophy professor Jerome Richfield, salutes an outstanding faculty member conducting research in the arts, sciences or humanities. The scholar receives a fellowship equivalent to three units of release time, funded by a memorial research endowment established in 1992, in tribute to Richfield.

Each year, the Richfield scholar presents a lecture as part of the Provost’s Colloquium Series. Miranda will speak on “The Past as the Key to the Present: What Can Continental and Oceanic Faults Tell Us About Active Faults in California?” at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 7, in the Oviatt Library Presentation Room.

In her presentation, she will link her research from 3,000 meters below the surface of the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Madagascar, to her current work in Arizona.

“I’m going to show how these fault systems that I study in the continent and in the ocean might relate to active geology in California,” she explained. “Are there any structures here in our home state that we can learn anything about by studying these far-flung places?”

Miranda, who also has conducted field work in Switzerland, Italy and Iceland, earned both of her degrees in geology; her doctorate at the University of Wyoming and her bachelor’s at Southern Methodist University.

Currently in her second year at CSUN, she is teaching courses this semester on microtectonics and field geology to future geoscientists.

“The world needs more geologists,” she said, “as science becomes more global in perspective and the public becomes more aware of the geologic processes that shape...lives.”

“Geology is, by nature, interdisciplinary,” said Miranda. “We study rocks because they record the geologic evolution of the Earth, but we also try to understand how these processes are influenced by Earth’s atmosphere, oceans and biosphere. That sort of approach is important because the conditions that Earth’s past are relevant for understanding Earth’s future.”

It also is relevant for a world with a growing population, she said, noting that population growth puts more demands on our resources and requires more people to negotiate living with geologic hazards such as earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides.

“Geologists are the scientists who help find new resources and help assess geologic risk,” Miranda added.

Viscom Center...

continued from page 1.

competition’s outcome. Ford also will contribute a $2,500 scholarship fund to the center, Moon said.

Viscom’s young designers accepted the challenge with gusto, devoting long hours to brainstorming and storyboarding. “Ford is reaching out to us for a reason,” said senior Chris O’Neill of Chatsworth, one of the center’s core student members. “It realizes there’s something going on in schools, a fresh, unretrenched school of thought.”

Meanwhile, nearly a dozen other projects from both on and off-campus clients keep the creative sparks flying in the new studio. In approaching each one, the entire Viscom team applies a “green thought process.”

For the design of a Los Angeles City Fire Department brush clearance program information brochure, students are asking: Can it have a life after mailing, perhaps as a paper trash can? Can it be a self-mailer?

“We want to be known as the creative agency that is San Fernando Valley’s sustainability provider,” said Moon.

Money earned from client projects is plowed back into as many scholarships as possible for current students, and for outreach to community college transfer students and high school students, Moon said.

Viscom also hopes to act as a vehicle to “inform, educate and collaborate” with K-12 educators, eventually offering workshops to explore teaching “the possibilities of art.”

To serve its San Fernando Valley client base, Moon and Bautista are preparing globally competitive graduates by “adding another layer of skin to their repertoires” in the form of communication and presentation skills. Their formula: “nudge and prod and push,” provide creative freedom and set expectations high.

Viscom students delight in exceeding those expectations. For a project commissioned on a Monday morning by The Illusion Factory in Woodland Hills, a gang-fo team came up with nearly 20 expertly formatted concepts by noon the next day. The pleased client’s check is on the way, Moon said.

“It’s not about the money,” said senior Tiffany Olay of Canyon Country, though students receive a small fee as well as college credits for their work.

“It’s about the experience. A year ago, I would have said wow! I’m graduating in December ‘07 and what do I know? But now I feel I have all this experience and I can hit the ground running.”

Like most of the Viscom core members, junior David Mascarina of Canyon Country is a major league multi-tasker. An experienced Web and graphic designer training at Viscom for a career as an art director/manager, he maintains the center’s Web site, leads all of its Web-based projects, holds down a campus job and still finds time to mentor other Viscom students.

“I feel great helping students achieve their educational goals,” Mascarina said, “as well as being part of their career paths.”

For more information, visit www.viscomcenter.com or call (818) 677-3022.

Animation Studio...

continued from page 1.

midnight oil. “We do it for the students,” said Mark Farquhar, besides Trujillo the program’s only other full-time professor and a 17-year animation veteran with credits such as “Surf’s Up,” “Beowulf” and “Toy Story 2.”

Students in the program learn the principles of animation through hand-drawn and 2D digital Flash exercises in timing and motion, then take on 3D computer animation with AutoDesk Maya, character design, 3D CG modeling, lighting and animating. In an advanced-level concept development course, they develop individual animation projects which they produce in their senior year.

Some student projects draw a large following on YouTube and other Internet sites, often leading to job offers. Tyree Dillihay’s “Hippopolis,” attracted such attention as one of the top five hits on Atomfilms.com.

CSUN’s close proximity to the world of entertainment works to the animation program’s advantage, said Trujillo, noting that EA Games, DreamWorks, Walt Disney Feature Animation, Cartoon Network and Nickelodeon all have had CSUN student interns.
For Your Information publishes announcements of events, public meetings, notices, class and deadlines. Submission deadline is noon on Monday, one week before the next issue.

The deadline for the November 15 issue is Monday, November 5. Please include all items and deadlines. Submission deadline is noon on Monday, one week before the next issue. Submit future items by e-mailing them to pubinfo@csun.edu, sending them to maildrop 8242 or faxing them to (818) 677-6959. E-mail is the preferred method of submitting.

Note: fmi-means for more information.

Events

Tuesday, October 30
Spiritual Issues in Hospice Care
Rabbi Sheldon Penmens of Vitas Innovative Hospice Care, a founder of the Jewish Hospice Project, will discuss “Compassionately Coping With the Dying: Spiritual Issues in Hospice Care” in a lecture presented by the Jewish Studies Program, 9:30–10:45 a.m., Sierra Hall 192. fmi-Jewish Studies Program, x3007.

Monday, November 5
Kabbalah and the Spiritual Quest
"Kabbalah and the Spiritual Quest: The Kabbalah Centre in America," by Jewish Studies professor Jody Myers, will discuss issues raised in Myers’ book at a meet the author event, 5:30–6:45 p.m., Whitsett Room, Sierra Hall 451. Author of “Street Meeting: Multiethnic Neighbor in Early Twentieth Century Los Angeles,” Wild will explore eomrahaoc contacts and social networks among immigrants and racial groups in central Los Angeles. The author will sign copies of his book, available for purchase. Limited seating. Reservations required at x3566.

Tuesday, November 15
Geological Sciences Colloquium
The Geological Sciences Department and the Geology Club sponsor Nicole Bonuso of CSU Fullerton’s Geological Sciences Department speaking on “Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Middle Triassic-A Perspective From the Marine Fossil Record,” 4 p.m., Live Oak Hall 1231. fmi-x3541.

Tuesday, November 15
Global Aspects of Childhood Obesity
The Family and Consumer Sciences Department sponsors Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ephraim Mandla Hlophie, speaking on “The Global Aspects of Childhood Obesity,” 4:30–6:30 p.m., Oviatt Library Presentation Room. The ambassador will discuss the childhood obesity epidemic, the International Obesity Task Force and related issues. The event is funded by Graduate Studies’ Distinguished Visiting Speakers Program. fmi-Lydia Chowa, x4086 or lydia.chowa@csun.edu.

Public Meetings

Personnel Planning and Review Committee
Meets 2–5 p.m.
Wed., Oct. 31 and Wed., Nov. 14
University Hall 277

Academic Technology Committee
Meets 1–3 p.m.
Fri., Nov. 2
University Hall 211

Educational Equity Committee
Meets 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Mon., Nov. 5
University Hall 277

University Planning and Budget Group
Meets noon–2 p.m.
Tue., Nov. 13
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Classes

Professional Development Staff Training
Professional Development Programs provides free training workshops for CSUN staff members in the Oviatt Library, room 16, garden level. Enroll by the day preceding the workshop at http://www-admn.csun.edu/hrs/development/index.htm. fmi-Sue Talavera, x3820.

Workshop

"CalPERS Retirement" CalPERS retirement service presenter. Tue., Oct. 30, 10 a.m. to noon and 1–3 p.m.

"Training Adults Successfully" Professional Development Manager Lauren Niles, presenter, enrollment limited to 25. Thu., Nov. 8, 2–5 p.m.

"Understanding Style Differences: A Course for Managers" Lauren Niles, presenter, enrollment limited to 25. Thu., Nov. 15, 2–5 p.m.

Deadlines

Have you Moved?
Faculty and staff who moved during 2007 should make sure they have changed their addresses in SOLAR HR by Fri., Nov. 9, to ensure U.S. postal service delivery of W-2 forms in January, and to avoid delayed delivery as well as state charges of $58.50 per copy for duplicates resulting from undisclosed address changes. Submit an address change by logging onto the portal at www.csun.edu, go to “Employee Information,” or “Changes to Personal Information,” and make the change online. If you changed your address by mail, fax, or phone, call HR at (818) 677-1623 to report the change. fmi-Eliza Metz, x5246.

Human Subjects Research
Faculty and students performing human subjects research must submit their projects to the Standing Advisory Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, using Human Subjects approval forms. Download the form at www.csun.edu/research/human_subjects_research.html. fmi-Marianne Hudz, x5246.

www.csun.edu/pubrels@csun

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Judy Baca (Art, ’69) will visit Cal State Northridge during the last week of October as part of the fall 2007 Executive Speaker Series. Special counsel in the international firm of Kaye Scholer, LLP, Feldman will speak to College of Business and Economics students on Tuesday, Oct. 30. Baca, founder and artistic director of the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC), will address students in the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication and in the College of Humanities on Wednesday, Oct. 31.

Initiated in 2004, the Executive Speaker Series allows CSUN students to hear some of the nation’s top executives share their insights and counsel. Linked in “The Best Lawyers in America,” Feldman has earned Trial Lawyer of the Year recognitions from the Los Angeles Trial Lawyers Association and Loyola Law School. He also has been saluted by the American Civil Liberties Union for his work on behalf of civil rights and civil liberties. Feldman’s courtroom victories include a $156 million verdict on behalf of 700 physicians who alleged fraud against an insurance company.

Widely known for her large-scale public murals, Baca founded the first City of Los Angeles mural program in 1974. Her landmark signature piece, “The Great Wall of Los Angeles: A Site of Public Memory,” is a half-mile long mural representing the history of California’s ethnic peoples up to the 1950s. Located in the San Fernando Valley’s Tujunga Wash drainage canal, the work involved many—including more than 400 inner city youths—in its creation.