

CSUN Part of National ‘Test Run’ for Accountability System

Voluntary System of Accountability Provides One-Stop Comparison Shopping as Students Search for Right College

Cal State Northridge is among a half-dozen colleges in the nation participating in a test-run of a new Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) that will provide plenty of one-stop-shopping information students and parents can use for comparisons to other universities as they select a place to begin or continue an education.

Presented as a College Portrait, the VSA is an initiative of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), higher education advocacy organizations representing hundreds of colleges and universities.

President Jolene Koester, newly named chair-elect of the AASCU board, leads the campus Voluntary System of Accountability effort.

The project, available for viewing via a link on CSUN’s home page—www.csun.edu—will chart the intellectual progress of students and produce the evidence sought by state and federal policy-makers who set the public budgets, including critics who question the accountability and

President Koester to Lead American Association of State Colleges and Universities

CSUN President Jolene Koester in late November was named chair-elect of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) at the association’s annual meeting in San Francisco.

AASCU, one of higher education’s most prestigious advocacy organizations, represents more than 430 public colleges, universities and higher education systems in the United States and its territories.

Koester, who has sat on AASCU’s Board of Directors since 2004, was elected “chair-elect” by the full board.

She is expected to assume the role of chair in fall 2008.



President Jolene Koester leads the campus Voluntary System of Accountability project.

the results of an institution.

The VSA also will answer common questions such as: How much does a college education really cost? Who attends the school? What student activities are available? What other services? How much debt, if any, comes with a diploma? How long does it take to complete a degree?

What is the university’s graduation rate?

While many of these data are reported to the federal government, and are also found in various sections of the CSUN Web site, the new accountability system collects answers in a single place, in a format that is easy to understand and easy to find on the university’s home page. This

breakdown will help students, parents, donors and taxpayers get a better understanding of what they are getting for their money.

The wealth of information also can help a university improve the overall student experience, including learning, regardless of its mission, resources or the composition of its enrollment.

CSUN’s diverse student body includes many who are from traditionally underrepresented groups, the first in their families to attend college, who need financial aid, require remedial help, speak a first language other than English, are raising children, are returning to college after dropping out, and who must work full-time jobs that limit study time.

“No yardstick can measure the individual perseverance of a struggling freshman who beats the odds—overcoming grim poverty, hunger, a difficult family life, a language barrier, discrimination, under-resourced schools, single parenthood and additional obstacles—to be the first in the family to finish college,” President Jolene Koester said. “Yet, many of Voluntary Accountability System *continued on page 2.*

Valley Trauma Center, CSUN—Helping in Times of Crisis

University Students, Grads, Faculty Get Involved as CSUN Walks the Walk with Dedicated Trauma Team

While Rita Baer was studying at Cal State Northridge to become a marriage and family therapist, she volunteered to answer the sexual assault hotlines dedicated to the San Fernando and Santa Clarita Valleys, operated on a 24/7 basis—including holidays—by the Valley Trauma Center.

In the middle of the night, during daylight hours or whenever she got “that” phone call, Baer accompanied women and children—victims in the eyes of the law and survivors in her eyes—to medical exams, police interviews, even to criminal court. She also arranged counseling.

Baer began as a volunteer in 2005 and, like many volunteers, she has stayed. Today, she is executive director of the nonprofit Valley Trauma Center, affiliated with CSUN. Headquartered in a cramped warren of small offices and tiny counseling rooms in Northridge, the center also operates out of two sites in Van Nuys and another in Valencia.

“One out of four women is sexually assaulted before the age of 25,” Baer said. “I know people who have been sexually assaulted. I believe by being

there for a survivor, you are giving them something that is priceless at a time when they are overwhelmed.

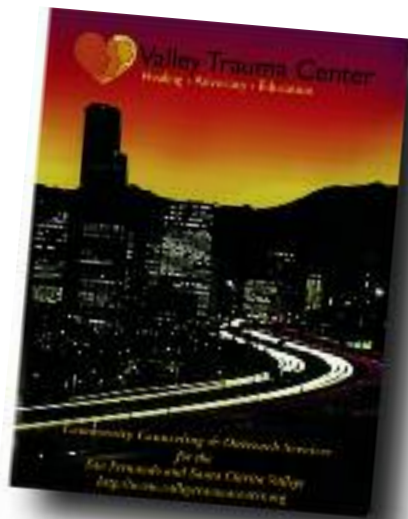
“We provide support, information, and referrals, and many people choose to come to us for subsequent psychotherapy,” she said.

Serving sexual assault survivors, abused children, children at

risk and their families, the center provides a range of services annually to about 2,500 clients, including individual and group counseling for children, adolescents, adults, couples, mothers and daughters; parent education; child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment services; family preservation; and adoption

promotion for foster children with support for their new parents. Another 10,000 people attend presentations aimed at stopping domestic violence, date rape and bullying.

To provide these services, Baer and her small paid staff—largely made up of CSUN graduates—depend on Valley Trauma Center *continued on page 3.*



Community Connection

By Judy Nutter, Director of Government & Community Relations

Here we are in the middle of holiday season again, and Cal State Northridge student clubs and organizations are involved in their annual holiday giving projects.

Because of the recent wildfires that ravaged much of Southern California, some of the much-needed giving is focused outside

our immediate community this year. The San Pasqual Academy is an example. Home to 135 foster teens and orphans in the San Diego area, the residential academy lost 12 of its individual, family-style homes in the fires. CSUN’s Lambda Chi Alpha is stepping up to the plate.

Community Connection *continued on page 3.*

Hispanic Student Success at CSUN Attracts National Spotlight

Students Outperforming National Benchmarks in Academics, Retention and Graduation Rates

Hispanic students are more likely to succeed academically at Cal State Northridge than at most state-supported schools throughout the U.S., according to a report released recently by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

The CSUN students also outperform national benchmarks in retention, and in closing the gap between white and Hispanic graduation rates, according to the "Hispanic Student Success Study." The October 2007 report—which uses the U.S. Census Bureau catchall term "Hispanic" for anyone with ancestry in a Spanish-speaking country—focused on 11 campuses, including Northridge, that were invited to participate in the study because they "retain and graduate Hispanic students at much better rates than their peers."

At Northridge, where the demographic is more commonly referred to as "Latino," the graduation rate for Hispanic students continues to rise, as does their percentage of all graduates. More than 34 percent of Hispanic students graduate within six years from CSUN, while barely 20 percent do so nationally within the same time frame.

The report attributed a 10 percent jump over five years in the Hispanic graduation rate to the leadership of CSUN President Jolene Koester. She has emphasized improving the completion rate for all students since her first university address in 2000, motivating faculty and staff to take independent steps that are resulting in higher



CSUN student Abel Pacheco concentrates on a lecture in assistant Chicana/o Studies professor Denise Sandoval's "Introduction to Chicano Culture" class. Northridge's Hispanic students are outperforming national benchmarks in academics, retention and graduation rates.

graduation rates across the board.

CSUN, long a popular campus for Latino students ranging from affluent, fifth-generation Mexican-Americans to disadvantaged newcomers from Central America, often has been recognized for success with this expanding demographic. When graded on how well universities serve Hispanic students, for example, Northridge ranked fifth in the nation among colleges and universities that award bachelor's degrees in The Hispanic Outlook for Higher Education's 2006 ranking of the top 100 colleges for Hispanics.

Based on data provided by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, the magazine also ranked CSUN second in the nation in awarding degrees to Hispanics in Hispanic studies, third in psychology and in the visual and performing arts, sixth in area studies and in communications, seventh in English literature and ninth in business and marketing.

More Hispanic students who attend Northridge are also succeeding in the sciences, subject areas that traditionally attract fewer minorities, according to the college

association report. Many who excel and go on to graduate school in those fields, the study said, are often participants in one of two programs: Minority Access to Research Careers or Minority Biomedical Research Support, which provide faculty mentoring and, when necessary, supplemental instruction.

Noting the causes of the broad success of Hispanic students at CSUN, the study cited many factors such as "vividly inspiring" Hispanic faculty and staff—including some alumni—who go beyond their official positions to encourage student achievement. The report also described a variety of support services ranging from mandatory advisement to a freshman experience program and, if needed, access to tutoring and financial assistance that have helped Hispanic students.

The successes and the factors that influenced them are especially significant as the nation's Hispanic population continues to increase rapidly, with the fastest growth among children under the age of 18, the pool from which future college students will come.

Despite that demographic surge, Hispanic students remain under-represented on most campuses. Not at CSUN, where they represent 28.1 percent of the undergraduate enrollment, according to the report, reaching a "critical mass" capable of providing support and a feeling of belonging without isolation or stigma. ■

Voluntary Accountability System...

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these students succeed at Cal State University, Northridge, along with thousands of graduates."

The consumer-oriented College Portrait also includes a cost calculator so students or parents can plug in personal information to determine the actual amount they would be expected to pay. For example, the projected cost of an academic year for an undergraduate at CSUN in 2007-08 is about \$6,700, not including housing expenses. But out-of-pocket

expenses are much lower for students who receive some form of financial assistance.

This feature is already available on CSUN's pilot College Portrait. That template and the preliminary efforts of the other participating universities, among them Cal State Long Beach and Cal State San Marcos, will allow public comment and fine-tuning.

The final version of the College Portrait also will document the educational growth of students. President Koester is leading a task force focusing

'Participation in the national VSA for higher education represents a commitment to transparency...'

—President Jolene Koester

on how to measure that progress, exploring the value of a degree not in terms of a grade point average or potential earnings but as measured by improvements in a student's ability to think critically, reason analytically and write well.

Participation in the national VSA for higher education represents a commitment to transparency, to deliver on the promises made across the board and to be held accountable by all, President Koester said. ■

Community Connection...

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Its members are busy collecting clothing, bedding, hygiene products and food for these children.

Another group of CSUN students has been volunteering at Project Angel Food in Hollywood. This organization prepares and delivers nourishing meals to men, women and children who have been affected by HIV/AIDS and other serious illnesses.

CSUN recently hosted the National Society of Collegiate Scholars' 2007 Hunger Banquet, designed to raise awareness of world hunger. CSUN students were invited to a free banquet and when they arrived, they were placed in a "world class." Each guest

in the lower world class was fed a cup of rice, without any utensils, and was seated on the floor. A smaller group, or class, was fed rice and beans. Guests in that class ate with utensils and were allowed to sit on chairs. The last group, the upper class, was fed a full meal and sat at a table. An enlightening discussion on world hunger followed the event.

At a time of the year when not everyone has a share in the season's abundance, it is good to see that the spirit of giving and caring is alive and well in this generation of students.

It hardly seems possible that the semester's end has come so soon, but Cal State Northridge will be closed

from Monday, Dec. 24, through Tuesday, Jan. 1. Winter break will continue for the students until Wednesday, Jan. 16. While it will be a quiet campus during that time, there will be events you might want to attend.

Charles Dickens' beloved "A Christmas Carol," a seasonal favorite here at CSUN, will be performed at the Plaza del Sol Performance Hall on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 15 and 16. Tickets can be purchased by calling the ticket office at (818) 677-2488 or by visiting www.ArtsNorthridge.csun.com. Parking is \$5.

Student artists from 54 San Fernando Valley high schools have been invited to participate in the

11th Annual High School Art Invitational. Art selected by the art teachers at each school will be exhibited in the Main Gallery on North University Drive (Plummer Street) through Saturday, Jan. 12. Gallery hours are noon until 4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and noon until 8 p.m. on Thursdays. The gallery is closed on Sundays and will be closed for the holidays from December 24 through January 1.

The next edition of Community @CSUN will be delivered to you in February, so I will take this opportunity to wish you a very happy holiday season. Until next time... ■

'The Envelope, Please...'—CSUN Wins Big at CSU Festival

Cal State Northridge swept the screenplay categories, landed the top documentary award and earned animation honors at the prestigious annual California State University Media Arts Festival, held November 2–4 at CSU Channel Islands. Northridge student projects were chosen from 230 entries submitted by 15 of the CSU's 23 campuses.

First place Rosebud Awards went to **Mason Eng '07**, producer/director of "Catharsis: The Story of a Survivor's Art," graduate student **Rowan Sutherland** for his short screenplay, "Talitha and The Gnome;" and senior **Brandie Coonis** and **Diana Karna '07**, dual winners in the feature screenplay category, for "Rabbit Girl" and "A Life That Matters," respectively.

CSUN art students brought home a second place recognition in animation for "Rigs," a 3D computer animated comedy by **Richard Hudson '06**; and a fourth place win in the experimental category for "AC401," a futuristic movie trailer directed by senior **Leslie Africa** and produced by **Danny Pesses '07**.

A finalist recognition went to **Justin Hickman '07**, for his short screenplay, "Parker, Matthew."

"I was pleased to see the work of so many CSUN students from cinema and television arts (CTVA) and art



CTVA professor Thelma Vickroy congratulates documentary Rosebud winner Mason Eng.

receive awards," said Karen Kearns, associate dean of the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communication, who attended the event with several CSUN faculty members. "Mason Eng's poignant documentary, 'Catharsis,' deserved the Rosebud Award and will be a model for future CTVA students. The CTVA screenwriting program also deserves kudos when



Rowan Sutherland's "Talitha and the Gnome" screenplay won a first place Rosebud Award.

three screenplay entries received the highest honors in their categories."

Eng worked closely with cinema and television arts assistant professor Thelma Vickroy, whose CTVA 441 documentary class helped give shape to "Catharsis," a moving portrait of Holocaust survivor and artist Irving Belfer, who created extraordinary handcrafted Judaica—miniature

synagogues, houses, concentration camps—using only plywood, a pocket knife, an occasional tweezer and Elmer's glue.

Rowan Sutherland's "Talitha and the Gnome" is about a little girl looking for her dog in an enchanted forest "filled with all kinds of scary creatures." Sutherland worked with CTVA faculty Jon Stahl and Tom McWilliams.

Diana Karna, worked on her screenplay—about best friends "entangled in a complicated crime scheme"—in CTVA professor Alexis Krasilovsky's class, and Brandie Coonis worked with Krasilovsky on "Rabbit Girl," a modern coming-of-age tale derived from a Native American myth.

Art faculty John Clisset, Mark Farquhar, Mary Ann Trujillo, Michael Eggert and technical support staffer Brian Petersen were advisors on the art student projects.

At the highly competitive media festival event, established in 1991 to help CSU students transition from college to "real world" industry work, finalists were judged by a panel of industry experts in nine categories ranging from animation to music video. A \$500 cash prize is awarded for each category. Each winning student's department is awarded a \$250 cash prize. ■

Forecast for Skies Above: Crowded With a Chance of Delays

Partnering on Air Traffic Research, CSUN Seeks to Head Off Gridlock Up There

"Flight delayed" is right up there with "SigAlert" and "Big rig down" on the scale of major modern anxieties for freeway travelers. But as our congested skies grow more congested, delays for air travelers may soon tip the scale.

"It is projected that passenger air traffic will double by 2025," said Cal State Northridge assistant mechanical engineering professor Nhut Ho. "The system will go into gridlock if we don't do anything about it."

To help prevent that scenario, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has awarded \$3 million to a consortium of universities, including Northridge, and the

Boeing Co. The job of the consortium is to figure out how to accommodate the increase in air traffic without building more airports.

Funded through the Federal Aviation Agency's (FAA) Next Generation Air Transportation System initiative, CSUN has received a grant of \$277,500 over four years through 2010.

At CSUN, project lead Ho and part-time psychology professor Barry Berson are working with engineering and human factors students on a project intended to expand the capacity of airports like Los Angeles International Airport, by using technology to manage more aircraft in the same airspace, and to more

efficiently move traffic in and out of airports, allowing planes to land and take off more quickly and closer together—all without sacrificing safety.

Ho and Berson are working on research designed to allow pilots to manage their own tactical separation from other aircraft—instead of relying on air traffic controllers—by using airborne and ground-based automated decision-aid tools to detect and resolve conflicts created when planes share the same air space and runways.

"Automation is going to predict where all these airplanes are going to be in the airspace, and convey the information to the controller and

pilot," said Berson, who also works on cockpit design for Lockheed Martin. "It may give you insight inside the cockpit that shows you the relationship between yourself, the pilot, and all the airplanes in the environment, the weather and other things that can affect flight management."

While pursuing the overall research goal of modernizing the air travel system to enlarge capacity in the sky and on the ground, Ho and Berson share another mission: providing students with real-world experiences.

"We want to use this experience to train students," said Ho, helping them mature as researchers, and putting them to work on real problems. ■

Valley Trauma Center...

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volunteers. The center trains students, most of whom are pursuing master's degrees in marriage and family therapy or social work. Currently, 55 graduate students work as unpaid interns, putting in 15 hours a week, much of it supervised counseling. The 100 rape crisis advocates come from the university, including some undergraduates, and from the community. These volunteers work a six-hour shift every week, and must undergo 60 hours of state-certified training.

"We never have enough students. We never have enough volunteers. We never have enough money," Baer

said, describing \$2.3 million in funding from the county and state, plus about \$73,000 in donations. CSUN also supports the center, a chartered agency for the Michael D. Eisner College of Education under the auspices of the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling.

"We actually train a small group of undergraduate students who then go out and speak in classrooms on rape, sexual assault, date rape and relationship violence," said educational psychology and counseling professor Charles Hanson, a licensed clinical psychologist.

In 1985, Hanson got the university

*"One out of four women
is sexually assaulted
before the age of 25."*

—Rita Baer,
executive director, Valley Trauma Center

involved in what began as a rape crisis center. Since then, and as it has expanded, he has provided training, supervision of student therapists and oversight of the center.

Most clients are children. More than

60 percent of the calls to the sexual assault hotlines concern youngsters under 18, and half of those calls, usually from the police, are about children younger than 12.

"We don't receive any funding to support counseling services for children who have been sexually abused," Hanson said, yet no child is turned away—nor is anyone else in need.

The Valley Trauma Counseling Center sexual assault hotline dedicated to the San Fernando Valley is (818) 886-0453, and the Santa Clarita Valley hotline is (661) 253-0258. Visit the Web site at www.valleytraumacenter.org. ■

Calendar

The A.S. Ticket Office in the University Student Union (USU) sells tickets to many events on campus, except for some held by outside groups. The Ticket Office is open from 10 a.m.–6 p.m. Mon.–Fri. For prices not given, call (818) 677-2488. **To park on campus for performances, athletic events, lectures and other activities, guests must purchase a \$5 parking permit.**

Art and Exhibits

For gallery info, call (818) 677-2156. Main gallery hours: Mon. through Sat. 12-4 p.m. and Thursdays noon–8 p.m. Admission is free unless specified. For library exhibits, call (818) 677-2285.

High School Art Invitational

San Fernando Valley high schools exhibit paintings, sculptures and more. Gallery talk: Mon., Dec. 10, 10 a.m. Exhibit runs through Jan. 12. (Closed Dec. 24–Jan. 1) Main Art Gallery



▲ 'Life and Times of Elizabeth I'

"The Sun that Lights the Rainbow: The Life and Times of Elizabeth I" Runs through Dec. 20. C.K. and Teresa Tseng Gallery, second floor, West Wing, Oviatt Library



▲ Joanne Julian: Counterpoints

Very large ink and acrylic Zen circles on paper, by internationally known artist Joanne Julian. Works exude energy and beauty through simplicity of execution. Exhibit runs from Jan. 22 through Feb. 23. Opening reception: Fri., Jan. 25, 7–9 p.m. Gallery talk: Mon., Jan. 28, 10 a.m. Main Art Gallery

Athletics (home games):



▲ Men's Basketball

12/20	Vanguard	7:05 p.m.
1/10	UC Davis	7:05 p.m.
1/12	Pacific	7:05 p.m.
1/26	Long Beach State	4 p.m.
1/31	UC Irvine	7:05 p.m.
2/2	CSU Fullerton	7:05 p.m.
2/16	UC Riverside	7:05 p.m.



▲ Women's Basketball

12/19	CSU Bakersfield	7 p.m.
12/30	Fresno State	4 p.m.
1/3	Cal Poly	7 p.m.
1/5	UCSB	4 p.m.
1/16	UC Riverside	7 p.m.
2/7	Pacific	7 p.m.
2/9	UC Davis	7 p.m.



▲ Men's Swimming

1/26	Washington	11 a.m.
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▲ Women's Swimming

1/12	Pepperdine	noon
1/26	Washington	11 a.m.



▲ Women's Tennis

2/13	UC San Diego	2 p.m.
2/16	Cal Poly	noon



▲ Men's Track and Field

1/5	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
1/12	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
1/19	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
1/26	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
2/9	All Comers	8:30 a.m.



▲ Women's Track and Field

1/5	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
1/12	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
1/19	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
1/26	All Comers	8:30 a.m.
2/9	All Comers	8:30 a.m.



▲ Men's Volleyball

1/24	Stanford	7 p.m.
1/25	Pacific	7 p.m.



▲ Women's Water Polo

2/16	UCLA	noon
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Music

Admission to all music events (unless otherwise specified): \$10 general, \$7 faculty, staff and seniors, \$5 students.

The Borromeo String Quartet

Haydn, Shostakovich, Beethoven. Wed., Jan. 16, 8 p.m. Plaza del Sol Performance Hall \$5–\$35

Chamber Opera

Fri., Feb. 8, 8 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 9, 8 p.m.
Sun., Feb. 10, 8 p.m.
Dance Studio

Theater/Performance



▲ A Christmas Carol

Glorious staging of Charles Dickens' classic Christmas tale of Ebenezer Scrooge captures spirit and meaning of the season. Sat., Dec. 15, 8 p.m.
Sun., Dec. 16, 2 p.m.
Plaza del Sol Performance Hall \$14–\$26



▲ Hinemi

An American premiere from one of Japan's leading young playwrights, Miyazawa Akio. Place, memory, time, action—seeking the breaks in seamless connections. Edited and translated by John D. Swain. Fri., Feb. 8, 8 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 9, 2 and 8 p.m.
Sun., Feb. 10, 3 p.m.
Tue., Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m.
Wed., Feb. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Thu., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m.
Fri., Feb. 15, 8 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 16, 2 and 8 p.m.
Sun., Feb. 17, 3 p.m.
Studio Theatre Lab \$8–\$16



▲ Ain't Misbehavin'

The Fats Waller Musical Show. One of Broadway's best "jukebox" musicals pays tribute to African American musicians of the Harlem Renaissance. More than two dozen of Waller's compositions enliven the performance, among them "Ain't Misbehavin'" and "The Joint is Jumpin'." Sat., Feb. 9, 8 p.m.
Plaza del Sol Performance Hall \$24–\$48



(SSN 1550-2678) is published monthly except January, June, July & August by California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street., Northridge, CA 91330-8242. Periodicals postage paid at Northridge, CA, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to COMMUNITY@csun, Office of Public Relations and Strategic Communications, California State University, Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, CA 91330-8242

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Happy Holidays

