Founder’s Message
By Dr. Jacqueline Elliot, President & CEO, PUC National

Facing unprecedented challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, truly tests the leadership and the foundation of schools and organizations. It has been truly inspiring to see how admirably the leaders and staff from both PUC National and the schools have risen to face this challenge and work through it with unwavering focus on continuing to meet the needs of the students, families, and communities we serve. They have done this quickly and with a sense of urgency while also pivoting to meet the new demands of this critical time. Their flexibility and adaptability have been amazing.

In reflecting on why and how we have been able to respond to the demands of this situation so well, I can say without hesitation that over the course of the past 21 years, since I founded the first PUC school, we have faced and have overcome a myriad of challenges. For over two decades, we have indeed had a lot of experience with curve balls and new territory. One might say, a lot of practice in this regard.

Each time, we faced the challenge head on, weathered the storm, and came through triumphantly when all was said and done. Although we have never experienced a pandemic before, I have no doubt that the outcome this time will be no different.

I have also been inspired by the PUC students and families in the way they too have adjusted to this new reality. We are deeply grateful for the respect, understanding, and unity they have demonstrated as we all try to ensure student success, even during this very difficult time.

Communities that face and overcome adversity together come out stronger, more resilient, and more united. We are already seeing evidence of this. I have no doubt we will get through this tough time and be better for having faced and overcome this challenge together.

I know we will remain committed to our mission throughout this crisis, and I remind all of you to please stay safe, make sensible decisions, and stay strong as we face and overcome yet another challenge in the history of PUC.
When our schools announced closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the main concerns we had to address was how our students, many of whom rely on school meals for nutrition, would be fed during the school closures. As a result of great collaboration between PUC schools leaders & operations staff along with PUC National’s food program manager & operations team members, they created a highly effective meal distribution plan. The plan allowed for the schools to provide free breakfast & lunch options for all PUC students beginning March 18th, just two days after the closures began. The meals were served in a “grab & go” manner at six PUC sites across the Northeast Los Angeles & San Fernando Valley regions.

Initially, meals were served every weekday. In order to help minimize contact with the public & ensure safety of staff members & families, changes were made to the schedule to allow for once-a-week distribution model.

Eventually, the model evolved to include the addition of supper meals for students. Congratulations and thank you to our team members who created and implemented these plans. A special thank you to all of our staff members on the frontlines and behind the scenes who continue to serve students. Even in these difficult times, they remain dedicated to our students & families. We look forward to continue serving our families throughout these closures.
By committing to Columbia University, Teresa Estrada will become the first LCHS student to attend an Ivy League University. Her journey there did not come easy—her parents immigrated to the United States so that she and her family could have the opportunities that they never had. Her family always encouraged her to do well in school, wanting her to go to college and have a career.

Teresa attended PUC Triumph Charter Academy for middle school, and it is there where she first met one of the people that would be instrumental in her educational journey. Teresa had Ms. Capa as her Art teacher both at TCA and later on at LCHS. Teresa credits Ms. Capa with helping her realize that she was a great leader. According to Teresa "Ms. Capa saw potential in me when no one else did. She believed in me and gave me the upmost confidence." Teresa also credits Lakeview for creating a tight knit community where students get along with each other. “Teachers and staff focus on getting students to college by providing a lot of support and resources” says Teresa.

When asked what motivates her, Teresa responded “the fact that my community of Latinos and Chicanos is so underrepresented in the mainstream media...it's a shame that the world knows so little about us, our struggles, our culture.” When asked about any advice she would give other students she says “do the most with what you have, but also realize that you have more than you realize.”

For Teresa, Columbia University has always been her “dream” school. She's wanted to go to school on the east coast and believes that Columbia's quality of education is like no other college. She feels that Columbia not only has prestige, but also brings many opportunities, great classes, and not to mention a fantastic financial aid package that will make it completely free for Teresa. She plans to either study art, humanities, or literature. She hopes to one day be either an art director or a film director.
PUC Community Charter Elementary School -
We Are College & Career Ready!

Written & Submitted by Chantel Villalobos & Patricia Zavala,
Teachers at PUC Community Charter Elementary School

PUC Community Charter Elementary School has held a strong belief in sharing the importance of literacy and data with all stakeholders. On February 27th, PUC CCES continued their tradition by holding a Literacy Night, where they promoted the importance of reading and writing at home to promote academic success. Teachers presented strategies to help support parents with literacy at home and shared data about each student. Parents were able to ask questions and take-home tools to support their students at home. Through these shared actions, CCES scores for ELA have consistently grown and shown improvements.

That same night, classes held a friendly “We Are College and Career Ready Door” Competition, where classrooms decorated their doors to display their college cohorts. Each teacher, along with their students, worked together to showcase their school's motto, logo, location, tuition, and extracurricular activities. Teachers and students used their artistic abilities to showcase their college pride. That evening, all staff, teachers, parents, and students voted for their favorite door.

Through this competition, CCES is continuing to promote PUC Schools’ first commitment. By exposing elementary school students to different colleges, CCES hopes to have five times more college graduates within the communities they serve.

1st place went to the University of Southern California (Room 4, Ms. Swift, Third Grade). USC showcased inspirational articles written by the students and creative art pieces drawn by the students.

2nd place went to Yale University (Room 12, Ms. Lopez, Fifth Grade). Yale University showcased a Yale timeline with essential events in Yale history, along with photos of the future class of 2032.

3rd place went to Loyola Marymount University (Room 9, Mrs. Pareja, Fourth Grade). LMU showcased their college cohort mascot and lion paw prints with student pictures.
PUC Triumph Charter Academy -
Book Choice at the Book Fair

Submitted by Daniela Kim, Literacy Coach, PUC Triumph Charter Academy

In February, PUC Triumph Charter Academy hosted our second Scholastic Book Fair for the 2019-2020 school year. We were hoping our second book fair would be just as successful as our first book fair in the fall. Because there aren’t many bookstores nearby, we want to ensure that students have access to pick new books they are interested in reading. We were so excited to see many students invested in their own learning by purchasing books of their own choice!

In her book, The Book Whisperer, Donalyn Miller, Scholastic’s Ambassador of Independent Reading Advocacy, writes that “providing students with the opportunity to choose their own books to read empowers and encourages them. It strengthens their self-confidence, rewards their interests, and promotes a positive attitude toward reading by valuing the reader and giving him or her a level of control. Readers without power to make their own choices are unmotivated.” At our fairs, we work with Scholastic to curate the best selection possible because we want to provide our students with high interest options to choose from.

TCA Tigers love reading graphic novels, historical fiction, and horror stories. In case you are looking for any recommendations, our top selling books were My Hero Academia, Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Wrecking Ball, the Five Nights at Freddy’s series, and Undrowned.

Lastly, one of our PUC Commitments is to uplift our communities, and 23 staff members volunteered to be book sponsors for our most deserving students. Sponsors purchase a book of up to a $15 value that students get to choose. Mariah Portillo, an 8th grader, said, “I think it’s good because some kids don’t have enough money to afford books and some might not be able to read, but the kids who get sponsored get the chance to read something they enjoy. Kids will be able to read something they like, and it helps them improve their reading skills.”

PUC Triumph Charter Academy is committed to inspiring a love of reading for all students and future generations to come! Please join us at our next fair!
PUC CALS Early College High School
- CIF Spirit of Sport Scholarship Winner

Submitted by Sarai Rodriguez, School & College Counselor Assistant,
PUC CALS Charter Early College High School

Graduating Senior Francisco Santos was distinguished throughout the entire CALS campus for being the only student who applied and received the CIF Spirit of Sport Scholarship. In conversing with him, he expressed the many hurdles he had to jump to overcome to be able to submit.

Francisco first heard about the scholarship through our Athletic Director, Philip Lozano. During this time, he was also in the process of applying for college – of which he has been accepted to 4 out of 8 thus far. The scholarship required that he submit a list of his accomplishments, which included his large involvement in Track and Field through his high school career. He was also asked to submit 2 Letters of Recommendation and a signature from our School Principal – Mr. Ventura. This then prompted him to connect and network with the school staff as well as teachers. He was also constantly working with the Counseling Team and the Athletic Director to assure he would submit correctly and on time.

In fact, the day that the scholarship was due, we were scrambling to make sure he had all he needed in an envelope, and he rushed up Figueroa to submit it at our local post office.

Francisco has always had an immense passion and drive to better himself in any way possible. He is a true example of what we want our CALS ECHS students to be! Thriving, Intelligent, and striving for excellence. We are so proud of you Francisco!
PUC Community Charter Early College High School
- Shirts for Peer College Scholars

Submitted by Josue Reynoso, School & College Counselor, PUC Community Charter Early College High School

We want to highlight a family that recently sponsored a group on our campus. At CCECHS the School and College Counselors have a group named Peer College Scholars in the Titan Center two periods a day that meets with 9th grade students, assist the counselors with tasks such as SAT registration among many other things, and basically help drive the college going culture. Every year the students pay for group shirts that they wear on our college Friday days. This year we have a student in the group named Jason Figueroa, Jason’s parents own a restaurant named Mariscos Cielito Lindo, located in North Hollywood.

Jason reached out to his father to see if they would sponsor our group and pay for our shirts this year. Jason’s family did not hesitate to say yes, and we are proud to have a sponsor for our shirts this year. Jason and his father are pictured holding our ’19-’20 shirts, above.
PUC Triumph Charter High School Celebrates the Class of 2021 Juniors

Submitted by Christina Sanchez, School & College Counselor, PUC Triumph Charter High School

On February 24th, all TCHS juniors began their journey as “Pre-Seniors” at the Class of 2021 Future Senior Assembly. This assembly kicked off the intensive future planning that takes place in the Spring of a student’s junior year. Although students are encouraged to plan for life after high school as early as 9th grade, juniors will create a formal and detailed post-secondary plan this Spring. This planning, along with taking the ACTs, SATs, APs, and SBAC and a heavy college prep course load that is typical in 11th grade, means that the students have their work cut out for them this semester.

Starting March 12th, each junior will meet with their School & College Counselor to discuss their plan and develop additional action steps to achieve their goals. After this appointment, they will have a list of tasks that they must accomplish to prepare for their senior year, including finalizing their career goal and, for most students, major choice, college list and starting their college application essays. Although college is a major focus of these meetings, the meetings support students with alternative plans as well. The key is for each student to come up with THEIR plan for THEIR future with counselor support. Every student’s future is too important to leave up to chance.

Next, TCHS juniors will be taking the ACT on April 4th with high schoolers across the nation. This year’s juniors were given the opportunity to take a virtual ACT prep class through Revolution Prep. Almost half the junior class volunteered! Many of the juniors who signed up for the course are also in AP and college classes and participate in athletics. A good chunk of them are even simultaneously working on their Health Occupations Certificate through LA Mission College. Their calendars are full, but in an effort to do their best on the college admissions test, they are making it work.

The ACT prep course began back in February and consists of 20 class sessions and 4 mock exams. There were some technical issues to iron out in the beginning, but the students persevered. It was an opportunity to learn that virtual learning, which is offered at more and more colleges, takes a degree of patience. We now have four class sessions and two mock exams left and it will be showtime!

The Class of 2021 has already shown that they are up for the challenges ahead and then some. They know how to hustle and, as a result, they will have a very productive spring. Next stop: SENIOR YEAR!
School & College Counselors -
Student Shout Outs!

Submitted by School & College Counselors: Carlos Santiago (PUC eCALS), Naomi Gonzalez (PUC Lakeview Charter High School), & Christina Sanchez (PUC Triumph Charter High School)

PUC eCALS

Mariaelisa Campos: We would like to acknowledge Mariaelisa, because after a rough 3 years of being credit deficient, she has made a complete 180 turnaround. Maria, has grown and is a much different person now than before. She is on track to graduate, is planning to attend a Community College, and is looking forward to majoring in something in the medical field (nurse, delivering babies, etc.) She is enthusiastic about education, plans for the future, and works closely with her teachers in ensuring she is keeping up with her duties. Although, this may be what is expected of high school students, for Mariaelisa it was different. She has matured and now sees the benefit in pursuing her education. Ms. Perez and myself have high expectations of her and we could not be more proud of the work she has put into APEX (Online credit recovery), her classes, and ultimately herself. Mariaelisa exemplifies the true meaning of perseverance and resilience.

PUC LCHS

Omar Palacios: There are many success stories at LCHS however, one student that stands out for us and represent PUC Lakeview Charter HS is Omar Palacios who is currently a senior. Omar has overcome many obstacles and ranks top amongst his graduating class. Omar is the Captain of the cross country team, member of ASB, Peer scholar, and his highly involved in school activities, events and the community. Omar Palacios has aspirations to become a civil engineer and was part of a highly competitive Posse Process in which he was one of the finalist. Omar is an exceptional student that has a bright future ahead of him.

PUC TCHS

Cristal Santaolaya: Cristal is part of the class of 2020. Cristal does not just persevere despite significant personal obstacles, she excels! Cristal was a Posse Finalist, is an incredibly warm hearted and kind person, and is the top of her class!
https://pucschools.org/alumni

Check out our website for support!

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FOR SALE

PUC Polo Shirts - $20

PUC Laptop Bag - $40

Items can be purchased throughout the year.

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Please be sure to indicate your shirt size. Polos are available in both men's and women's sizes.