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LINK program hopes to help transfer and continuing students

By ShaiAnne Cross | Fact Checker|

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Staying fit while staying inside

By Elisabeth Martinez | Staff Writer

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LINK program hopes to help transfer and continuing students

MAY 6, 2020 BY SHAIANNE CROSS — LEAVE A COMMENT

CSUSB’s Second Year Mentoring Program was renamed to Lead, Innovate, Network, and Know (LINK) Program at the end of Fall 2019. The program continues to serve with a new focus on becoming more inclusive and providing extensive help and guidance to the student body.
“This program first started as a second year mentoring, but we felt that everyone can benefit from what LINK has to offer,” CSUSB Alumna and University of Redlands graduate student, Carolina Meza, said. “Therefore, we extended our services to more than just the second year. The student mentoring program on campus does a great job in serving freshman, so we increased our population to serve transfer and continuing CSUSB students, which is everyone but freshmen.”

LINK began with six leaders, which has increased to nine, who work for the program, including Meza as the lead coordinator.

The LINK leaders are the mentors who are assigned with students, known as LINK members, based on what the students’ majors are. LINK leaders provide their members with resources to help with career readiness, career exploration, and gaining a sense of belonging and purpose on campus.

The leaders are to help their members find internships, clubs, workshops, and study abroad programs that are tailored to each member’s career goals and interests.
LINK leaders also provide their members with academic and personal guidance. One example is if a member is nervous about going to an event, a LINK leader can go with them.

Maryann Gallegos is currently a third-year student at CSUSB who works as a LINK leader. Her volunteer experience working with an organization that supported youth made her want to work for the program.

“Being part of LINK means being able to connect with others and being able to support our members. I am able to support my members by having an open space for them to meet with me and discuss anything that they would like, specifically academics or career-based topics, as well as their overall wellness, during this time,” stated Gallegos.

In this program, there is an emphasis on guiding students with not only identifying their major, but identifying, too, what they want to do with that major, as well as making post-graduation plans.

“LINK hopes for all members to have an e-portfolio to showcase their transferable skills and accomplishments, so they can become better prepared for the job market or graduate school,” said Meza.

Meza believes there is always room for improvement. She has graduate students who attend the University of Redlands work with the LINK leaders to help them learn and improve their mentoring skills.
Graduate student Evan Tellez has been helping LINK leaders since the beginning of the program.

Tellez is working towards receiving his M.A. in Higher Education for Student Affairs from the University of Redlands. Before attending graduate school, he had work experience within higher education such as peer-advising, orientation experience, and some administrative work.

“As a graduate student, I have learned to validate and accept the student body by learning different student models, allowing me to have an understanding that every student has their own unique experience. It has been easy for me to connect and build rapport with the Leaders. Once I had the connection establish, helping them complete the job task, getting to know them and helping learn and improve themselves has become an enjoyable task,” expressed Tellez.

Meza also encourages the LINK leaders to design projects, specialties, and tasks that would enhance their overall growth.
One of the projects promoted creating a one-hour workshop, to be hosted by a LINK leader, on a topic of their choice and inviting all LINK members to join.

“In the previous quarters, LINK gave about five workshops per quarter. Now they are presenting nine presentations this quarter,” stated Meza.

The various workshop topics include essential study habits, intersectionality, time management, culture shock, test anxiety, and more.

As CSUSB has transitioned its services to an online setting, the LINK Leaders are meeting with their members via Zoom.

All those who are part of the program have weekly one-hour meetings via Zoom to discuss ways to let students know about the program and discuss any resources that have the potential to help the members with their academic journey.

Additionally, Meza meets with each LINK leader one-on-one to check in with them to reflect and talk about how their meetings with their members are going, if they have any questions or suggestions for her to improve their overall work experience, and review their list of weekly tasks to see if completed.

“We hope to increase our LINK program by informing all students about the support that LINK leaders provide. We are in the process of updating our website and social media platforms to make LINK more accessible to all students,” said Meza.

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Students drop out amidst changes to learning environment

MAY 6, 2020 BY ZULEIMA DE LA CRUZ — LEAVE A COMMENT

By Zuleima De La Cruz and Tanya Jansen

As the impacts of COVID-19 increase, students in Southern California are dropping their classes due to various issues, including financial struggles and lack of effective tutoring and resources.
Students are struggling to adapt to virtual classes due to lack of support. Many students rely on different types of resources that schools provide, such as the library, school computers, tutoring, and WiFi.

“I had to drop the class because I couldn’t get help from the math lab,” said Josh Lockman, a student who previously attended Santa Ana Community college said. “I was supposed to graduate at the end of the semester again. This is the second time where this is happening to me where I am going to have to reapply to Cal state.”

Due to financial needs, many students are not able to afford to have these essentials to continue their education.

Gisela Maldonado, a single mom, was a full-time student at Mt. San Jacinto College (MSJC) who dropped out due to financial circumstances.

“I was not able to afford a laptop where I could continue to do my courses online. While I was in school, I had a babysitter. However, since the pandemic, I’ve been taking care of him and going to work,” said Maldonado.
Some students struggle through these virtual classes as it is difficult for them to learn in an online setting due to not being able to understand lectures without face-to-face interactions.

“I wasn’t too fond of my school resuming our courses online. I’m a hands-on learner and I have to be face-to-face with the professor in a class setting to ask questions and better understand the course work,” said Maldonado.

Other students find online learning difficult due to a lack of self-discipline. When students are in class, they tend to find the interactions useful and appreciate the occasional reminders professors give them about upcoming due dates, the accessibility to raise their hand to ask questions, and small group interactions.

Professor Roberto Hernandez, who teaches Statistics at Mt. San Jacinto College, discusses that it’s hard for faculty, as well as students, to make drastic changes and still find ways that will be beneficial to students’ learning experience, especially those who have labs.

“Directors and faculty are constantly having meetings to find different methods for students to succeed in their education and make their online experience meaningful and interactive, just as it would be in class,” stated Hernandez.

Edgar Blanco, a full-time student at Riverside Community College, looks forward to taking classes on campus because of the interactions he can have during a class period.

“I love going to in-class sessions! I work full-time and coming to class helps me ask questions on the spot without having to wait for an instructor to email me within 48 hours. Online classes are difficult to keep track of and get a hold of the teacher at the time I am stuck,” stated Blanco.

Raymond Nguyen, a student at MSJC, comments that his teachers were not understanding of the situation and everything was going fast-paced. Due dates were not being extended and, instead, more assignments were given.

“I just couldn’t keep up with everything going on at home and school. I just want to be able to join my face-to-face classroom and gain my learning experience with school resources,” stated Nguyen.
Q & A with Dr. Sirotnik on COVID-19's impact on the local economy

MAY 6, 2020 BY RENE ALVAREZ — LEAVE A COMMENT

Following the effects of the pandemic on the local economy, Dr. Barbara Sirotnik, the director of the Institute of Applied Research and Policy Analysis and a statistics professor for the College of Business and Public Administration, discusses the background and solutions for local businesses affected by the quarantine protocols from COVID-19.
Q: How do you see this pandemic affecting our local economy?
A: Through the Institute of Applied Research, we do a lot of different research and one of them is a monthly economic forecast. More recently, I have been working closely with the Inland Empire Economic Partnership (I.E.E.P). They are trying to help businesses in the region. After the shut down, we did surveys of businesses asking them if they have had layoffs due to COVID-19. Most of the organizations in the county are small businesses and the median is four weeks that they all they would be able to survive without getting any government assistance.

Q: Do you feel like this virus could have the same implications we had during the recession in 2008?

A: Short run, definitely worse, and part of it right now is that we have absolutely no idea when this is going to end. It all depends on whether they can find a vaccine and whether we can make get more tests to see who is infected and who is not. Until those happen, things have to stay shut down. The question is how will we help businesses get back on their feet once things start easing.

Q: Being that San Bernardino is not one of the wealthiest economies, has there been any word from our leaders about some kind of help to these small businesses in need of assistance?

A: Absolutely! There is no question. I.E.E.P is a two-county region working hard on that. They work with Chambers of Commerce and mayors of all major cities. Everyone is pulling together to try and make sure everything stays afloat.

Q: What can local businesses do right now in order to receive help?

A: There are a lot of resources to help find out how to apply for business loan and for paycheck protection and all that. I think cities and other organizations are reaching out to small businesses to let them know what is available. The problem with that is that there is only a certain amount of money which is allocated and very often, it is the larger businesses that know how to do the applications quickly. It is very important that small businesses are aware of what they can access in terms of assistance. If they were to go to ieep.com, there is a whole list of resources they can go to for help. It’s really important to keep track of the SPA website, the I.E.E.P website, and the Economic Development Association website for each city and county for those small businesses to take advantage of any help whenever it comes up.
Q: Do you believe that our economy will follow a positive trend after this is all over?

A: My crystal ball says that when we went into the recession in late 2007, it was about getting in trouble slowly and all of a sudden, we took a big hit. Then we also came out relatively slowly. In this case, we crashed fast due to COVID-19. I’m hoping that once there is a spike and we start going down in terms of cases, that we start coming out faster. There are certain industries that won’t. Entertainment, for example, follows the surveys that I’m doing in which people are saying “I don’t plan on going to a theater for another year or so” because people don’t trust being in large groups. Restaurants will take a while to get back to normal as well as gyms due to large groups of people in one area.

Q: What do you think we can learn from this as a community and as individuals to our everyday?

A: For businesses, I think it will let people know how much we can do without traveling all over the place. People have been hesitant to allow telecommuting in many organizations they run all over the place for a ten-minute meeting with people. I think people are now realizing that business, or some business, can be done without having to be on the road, so hopefully that will help quality of life between air pollution and traffic on the streets. On a more personal level, I think on the short term, it is reminding people what really counts in life, the community, the family, the human touch (with family being so important), the caring for other people’s needs. I think that’s really changing and it’s waking people up, and personally I feel that they need to stay awake because that is definitely important.

Q: Being a person of research, do you feel that the media is portraying the numbers correctly as far as cases and how long this pandemic will last?

A: From what I can see the data is being released properly. The problem is that the tests take so long to process that it is unclear whether those numbers, in terms of percentages, are accurate. The media is doing the best they can. I wish there was better collaboration between the federal government and the state governments, and a better way of getting everybody what they need, in reference to the testing and what not, then I would be able to trust the data a little bit more.
CSUSB retains prestigious business accreditation

Local Wells Fargo experiences change amid COVID-19 pandemic

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COVID-19 pandemic experiences change amid local Wells Fargo

CSUSB retains prestigious business accreditation
Staying fit while staying inside

MAY 6, 2020 BY ELISABETH MARTINEZ — LEAVE A COMMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken over everyone’s routines, as people are only allowed to go out for essentials. Staying physically active, while always being indoors, continues to become more difficult due to social distancing practices. Some people are finding ways, however, to staying physically fit while being safe indoors.
Gyms have temporarily closed down, and wearing a mask has become mandatory when going outside. Now that there is no access to personal trainers, motivators, and gyms, people have sought creative outlets to exercise. In the past month, two sisters from the Riverside county, Anna Gonzalez and Yazmine Martinez, have decided to share with the world their own personal experience of the effects of staying home.

"After the first week of binge watching so many shows, we immediately felt lazy and unmotivated. We then decided we would find a way to stay active, while staying inside," says Gonzalez.

With many people being affected by this pandemic, many have turned to Youtube to learn and pass the time including Irene Ramirez, a CSUSB student who is friends with the sisters.

"I started feeling out of shape and found myself eating a lot more than usual, so I began to look up work out ideas online," says Ramirez.
This is how Gonzalez and Martinez found POPSUGAR Fitness, a Youtube channel with almost five million subscribers. The channel itself offers free fitness tutorials, workouts and live “do it along with us in real time” workouts.

“There are a lot of people who are not allowed back to work and cannot afford more expenses, so naturally, we found this channel helpful because it does not require you to buy any equipment,” Martinez shares.

Physical exercise can serve as a stress reliever and hobby to pass these dull days. These 30 to 90 minute workouts will help you break a sweat and feel motivated.

“The only recommendation I have would be to make sure you have your favorite playlist ready because it goes by pretty quick,” says Gonzalez.

Not only does working out at home benefit you and your wallet, it practices CDC’s social distancing recommendations. As stated in the CDC webpage: “Avoid large and small gatherings in private places and public spaces, such a friend’s house, parks, restaurants, shops or any other place.”

“Since we are not allowed in large groups we decided to Facetime when we exercise to feel more united,” says Ramirez.

During this pandemic people are advised to stay at home as much as possible and find new ways to accomplish tasks.

Martinez says, “I recommend anyone who is feeling anxiety or loss of motivation to give these videos a try because for me, it has made me get through my days just a little bit easier.”

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When California Governor Gavin Newsom issued statewide restrictions on going outside, the only services permitted to continue had to be deemed essential such as those related to food, prescriptions, healthcare, and commuting to essential jobs. Access to food is a concern many people have in this period of pandemic.
Nonessential services such as gyms, restaurants, and bars are being shut down. For restaurants, however, take-out services are still being offered and encouraged.

Now that saying home has become mandatory, here are some food essentials to have during this quarantine. According to the Homeland Security government website Ready.gov, it is suggested to purchase the following non-perishable foods:

- Canned food- vegetable, meats, fruit
- Dry cereal or granola
- Dried fruit
- Pasteurized milk
- Comfort/ stress food

Stater Brother Markets employee, Jonathan Ruiz, shared his experience of managing a store during this pandemic.

“A lot of canned goods such as vegetables, meats, tuna, and fruit have been selling at higher rates than normal, even top ramen has been sold out for a couple of weeks,” says
Due to the high numbers of panic buying, some essential items are becoming harder to find, so it is recommended to find food alternatives such as frozen foods that have a long shelf life.

The Guillen family has found it hard during this quarantine to keep their refrigerator stocked. The matriarch of the family, Emma Guillen, has not returned to work for weeks and has yet to receive a paycheck. Her family went from a two income household to a one income household. “Food shopping has been limited, it’s hard to get the fridge stocked, I have to limit my family of 6 to eat less a day and I can’t even go out and buy in bulk,” says Guillen.

Food that isn’t necessary to stock up on are the high calorie snacks for example chips and sugary juices, soda and alcoholic beverages. Although it’s not bad to have these items in your homes, there is no need to stock up on these items as there is no shortage. “It’s advice that nobody hoards food, there would be no shortages if people would shop on a once a week basis, we need to work together in this time of hardship,” says Ruiz.

Making food last can be a challenge when you are spending more time at home than eating out, especially for low income families whose kids only meals were hot school lunches and breakfast items. A resource families can use is going to their children’s school and see if they offer free lunches. Families can go to the Helping Hands Pantry, a food pantry in the San Bernardino area.

“I have even gone to my local food bank InterFaith community support to grab food for my family. I’m really grateful for services like these during this pandemic,” says Guillen.

Food banks rely on volunteers to assist aiding those in need of access to food. Anthony Sanchez, a volunteer at Helping Hands Pantry has been using this extra time to help people in need. “When California was forced to quarantine, I knew food banks would be hit hard so i decided to help out and put my free time into good use,” Sanchez says.

Helping Hands Pantry is located in San Bernardino on 1455 E 3rd Street and feeds more than 1000 people everyday. People can help by volunteering at their warehouse, garden, or their various assist programs. For more information, visit their website at helpinghandspantry.org/.
Q & A with Raymundo Guerrero on photography business during pandemic

MAY 6, 2020 BY MICHAEL AGREDA NO — LEAVE A COMMENT

Photographer Raymundo Guerrero, owner and founder of Creative Precision Photography, reflects on how COVID-19 has damaged his business operations and artistic endeavors.
Guerrero explains that since mandatory stay at home orders were placed on the state of California in mid-March, his scheduled shoots have been cancelled, clientele has shrunk significantly, and his overall approach to photography has drastically changed due to social distancing restrictions. He gives us his thoughts on the situation and believes there is still positives that can come out of this pandemic despite all the losses his business has endured over the last month.

Q: How did you get into the photography business? What is your specialty?

A: My specialty is centered around portrait photography, entertainment, and event photography. When I started out, I worked on my craft for a few years before taking the
leap to do it professionally. I started off doing small events then moved on to doing large events, working with entertainers, fashion models, artists etc.

**Q: How long have you been in the business professionally?**

**A:** For 4 years.

**Q: How has that transition into full time professional photography been for you?**

**A:** Fantastic! It’s a whole different ball game because you are being commissioned to do these jobs but also have the chance to implement your own style. It gives me the opportunity to show what I have to offer, as far as what I’ve practiced and worked on since I began doing photography. The best thing about it is being able to center my work around what I enjoy shooting. Business wise, it’s brought a lot of revenue for me, but the thing I’m most thankful for is how it has allowed me to meet a lot more people, expand my network of connections, and create more opportunity.

**Q: Speaking of opportunity and connections, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your ability to network and expand your business?**

**A:** I mean, it’s affected it drastically. There’s been a ton of changes to my lifestyle and the lifestyle of my clients. Communication is still doable over the phone but it’s not as effective as meeting them face to face or having those firsthand experiences and meetings with them. Human interaction has always been a big part of my operations and social distancing has killed that. I’m not allowed to do the things that I normally would because of these restrictions. I can’t just pick up and go to LA for a shoot or exchange info with people at an event so yeah, I’m feeling the hit.

**Q: Have you felt the hit financially?**

**A:** Yes, most definitely. A lot of the work that I had right before this pandemic happened got cancelled. Immediately canceled. People didn’t want to show up to their shoots, locations were closed, events were postponed, and now I have to wait and see when all of this passes to see what my next move will be. The frustrating part is that photography is considered non-essential so there is nothing we can do except count the days until this is all over.
Q: So, at this point, is acquiring more clientele completely off the table?

A: Not completely, but it’s a lot harder. I respect everyone’s opinions and reasons for being cautious. I’m not judging anyone for choosing not to do their shoots or choosing not to book shoots during this time, but there are some people who are still willing to do projects. With that being said, locations are limited and yeah, clientele has dropped drastically. It’s very hard.

Q: Are any of your peers, partners, or colleagues experiencing a similar decline in business as well due to COVID-19?

A: Most definitely. They’re feeling it. A few of my friends that work on the corporate side of the photography businesses were hit really hard. They were some of the first to be laid off from their companies, and a few people that are just starting out in the business have had to put everything on halt. I feel bad for them too because I’ve been there, and I know how crucial it is to get yourself out there in the early stages of building your career. How can they get themselves “out there” if they aren’t even allowed to be out there to begin with? But all we can do is adapt to this for now and be optimistic about it. This isn’t the end of the world. COVID-19 has suffocated the photography business, but not forever. We’ll be back.

Q: You mention being optimistic about this situation, what positives do you see coming out of this once this COVID-19 pandemic is over?

A: I think there are many awesome things that can come out of this. People are going to miss going out, taking pictures, interacting, traveling. Entertainers, artists, and models are going to have a lot of content that needs to be produced and sort of play “catch up” so I’m hoping this will help me get my workload back to where it once was. Clients will be excited to have their photos taken and photographers will be excited to do what they love again, so it’s a win-win scenario. Another positive I see is that I noticed that over the course of this quarantine, I was forced to become more creative and resourceful with what I have. Because I wasn’t able to travel or interact with many people, I was forced to approach my work differently and explore different techniques I was not fond of before. I’d imagine I’m not the only photographer to experience this.

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Festival season cancelled

MAY 6, 2020 BY JACOB DIAZ-JACKSON — LEAVE A COMMENT

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, countless mass gatherings across the state have been cancelled, if not postponed, and this includes concerts and music festivals.

Due to the nature of how COVID-19 spreads, mass gatherings that typically occur in political rallies, shopping at malls, watching in movie theaters, and attending music festivals have been placed on pause with events being postponed.
California counties, including San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Riverside have seen their share of COVID-19 cases, which has prompted venue owners and festival promoters to reschedule or cancel their upcoming musical events.

Festivals such as Coachella, Beyond Wonderland, and numerous smaller shows and concerts across the state have issued official statements providing their reasons driving their decision to cancel or hold off on hosting their events – with most referring to COVID-19 as the main factor.

This comes after much deliberation resulting from California State Governor Gavin Newsom’s recommendation on March 11 that gatherings should be kept to under 250 people. Soon after, Disneyland closed its gates indefinitely and major sports leagues, such as baseball, cancelled their seasons.

With the prospect of the suspension of mass gatherings coming to fruition, Los Angeles venues such as the Exchange and Hollywood Palladium began to cancel their upcoming concerts and shows. Insomniac, one of the largest festival promoting companies in America, saw the need to rearrange their plans for their numerous fast approaching festivals.
In the meantime, Insomniac has teamed up with the popular streaming service, Twitch, in order to bring virtual festivals to music lovers across the states and the world. On March 20-21, Rotella hosted the Beyond Wonderland Virtual Rave-A-Thon from 8:00 pm to 12:00 am PT.

CSUSB student and festival-goer John Roberge, 21, expressed his appreciation of the live-streams hosted by Insomniac and other music channels.

“One main thing I appreciate out of all of this are the live-streams that Insomniac, Proximity, and even other companies are doing. It is definitely a way for our rave community to come together for the love of music during this pandemic,” Roberge said.

Artists local to the Los Angeles area, such as Schade, Kill the Noise, Loud Luxury and several other acts, came out to put on a show to later have a recorded viewership of over one million people.

The overall message that the music community has broadcasted to all fans of live music is that while we may not know what the future holds, what’s more important than anything is the health of our friends, family and fellow festival lovers. As long as we all do our part, we’ll be back on the dance floor soon enough.
On March 12, the Beyond Wonderland festival, held annually at the National Orange Show in San Bernardino, was officially rescheduled from its original dates in March to June 19-20 at the same venue.

Former student and avid music lover Leslie Flores, 22, shared her thoughts on promoters taking the advice from health professionals.

“I think it’s great that companies are talking to health professionals about the best options, which have all been to cancel events. It sucks, but people’s health is more important right now,” said Flores.

In a statement posted onto his social media, Insomniac founder and CEO Pasquale Rotella stated, “We received word from the State and the County that we can no longer proceed with Beyond Wonderland. All tickets purchased will be valid for this new date, and if you are unable to attend, all refund requests will be honored.”

While the future of festivals is currently uncertain, Rotella remains adamant about keeping hopes high that we will all be reunited together by music again someday.