



# NEWS FROM THE CENTER

A publication of the Multicultural & Community Engagement Center

Summer 2020 - Issue 16

## FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

### *A Tribute to Greg Perkins*

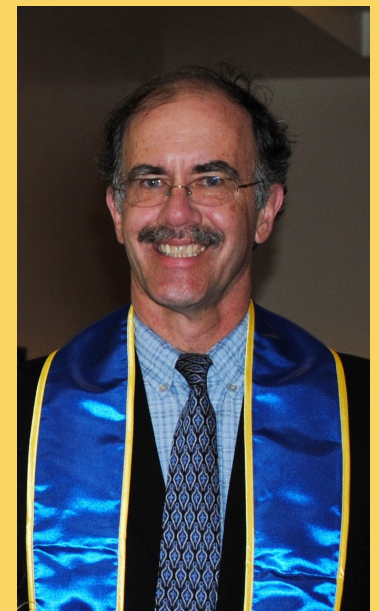
For almost 30 years, Greg Perkins has served as an EOPS counselor at GCC. Over the last 15+ years of his career, he has been a steadfast and unstoppable advocate for AB 540 and undocumented students.

Even before the state of California officially granted AB 540 status to certain California students, Greg was advocating for undocumented students as early as the mid-1980s when the Leticia A. decision was the law of the land.

Since the passage of AB 540, Greg has worked tirelessly to help our undocumented students succeed through his various efforts. One of the great achievements that has continued to this day is Greg's fundraising efforts to provide scholarships to our undocumented students. There were no small opportunities for Greg and his efforts have resulted in distributing tens of thousands of dollars to our students over the years.

In connection to his fundraising efforts, Greg created the AB 540 Committee. While this committee has never been a "formal" governance committee, it has functioned as an informal committee that has been in existence for approximately 15 years. Over that time, the committee has not only raised funds but has also offered educational workshops, teach ins, advocacy campaigns, and Call to Action drives.

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**Before his time at GCC, Greg was an EOP peer counselor at CSULB in 1981 as a graduate student. He was also an EOP full time counselor and EOP Outreach and Admissions Coordinator at CSU Dominguez Hills for 4 years. Before his counseling roles, he was a middle and high school teacher in History, Spanish, English, and ESL. He landed at GCC in 1991 and the rest, as it is said, is history.**



**Dr. Richard Cortes, Chair of the Student Services Division, offers us a glimpse of his dedication and hard work. "Greg Perkins is the epitome of a social justice champion. He has lifted the hopes and spirits of our historically disenfranchised students, especially our Dreamers."**

**Elmira Nazaryan, EOPS Director, says: "He showcased his students and pleaded to everyone for their support. Greg used any platform he was given to speak on behalf of his students and shed light on their plight while educating our college community about the reasons for supporting the Dreamers. And Greg has succeeded in that work!"**



**And one of his coworkers in the EOPS office, Jessica Alvarez shared with us that "Greg is an incredibly special asset to the GCC community. I am forever grateful to have him as a mentor and I look up to him as a powerful advocate for our students, and I hope to one day be such a role model to others. Thank you Greg, for your dedication and support!"**

**Greg offers some words of wisdom to new and future counselors: "I'm not sure if it is fair to expect all counselors to be as politically and socially active as I have been, but I would also encourage all counselors to work to become the most effective advocates for DI students as they can possibly be while not neglecting their basic role as academic advisors."**

**When we asked Greg what he enjoyed the most about his work as a counselor, he said: "I most appreciated being able to encourage students to become activists and develop leadership skills. Also, I always felt great satisfaction in encouraging and enabling disadvantaged youth, especially Dreamers, to pursue their educational and career goals going all the way back to my CSULB days and teaching high school ESL classes."**

**While Greg will stay involved with GCC in several ways, we will miss him and his energy, dedication, and inspiration. Enjoy your well-earned retirement, Greg.**

# Post DACA Decision: What's Next?

On June 18, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled the Trump administration did not provide adequate justification for ending the DACA program. In a 5-4 decision, Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the court's opinion, stating the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) failed to consider "conspicuous issues," including hardship on DACA recipients and their families. The decision was a huge victory for Dreamer students, undocumented advocates, and anyone who is a champion for civil rights. However, there were still many questions surrounding the implications of the Supreme

Court's ruling. As a result, the GCC Dream Resource Center (DRC) collaborated with the Dream Centers of the Los Angeles Community College District to organize an informational webinar to support undocumented communities. The guest speaker for the event was Jessica Viramontes from the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN). CARECEN provides free immigration legal clinics to the GCC community and advocates for immigrant rights.

During the event, Jessica informed the attendees that the Department of Homeland Security would have to start accepting new applications and reviewed the requirements for the DACA program. As a reminder, if you are a CSU or CC student, staff or faculty and have any questions, want to renew your DACA or need some other type of immigration resource we welcome you to book a free appointment through: <https://carecenla.simplybook.me/v2/>



**DACA POST  
DECISION:  
WHAT'S NEXT?**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY JULY, 1ST  
TIME: 3:30PM - 4:30PM  
RSVP LINK:  
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/Y9V2A4QE](https://tinyurl.com/Y9V2A4QE)

Please join us to learn more information regarding the Supreme Court's DACA decision.

- How will the DACA ruling impact undocumented students?
- Will the Department of Homeland Security accept new DACA applications?
- Questions & answers with a Legal Case Worker from CARECEN

If you have any questions please contact: Anthony Garcia  
AnthonyG@glendale.edu or call: 818-240-1000 Ext. 5810

## Multicultural & Community Engagement Center Staff

This newsletter is created with the contributions of all staff at the MCEC. Everyone writes and contributes to the articles you read here. It is also our pleasure to be able to work with some amazing students in our office as well as in our programs.

**Nane Kakosian**  
*Student Services Program Coordinator*

**David Crawford**  
*Student Services Technician*

**Anthony Garcia**  
*DRC/Equity Counselor*

**Arakel Aristakessian**  
*Pride Center Contract Consultant*

**Maria Robelo**  
*DRC Intern*

**Hoover Zariani**  
*Program Manager*

# Meet the Staff & Students at the MCEC

**Tell us a little bit about yourself?** My name is Arakel Aristakessian, and I am a first-generation American of Armenian immigrants. As the first in my family to attend and graduate high school and college, I greatly benefited from the guidance and care of good college counselors. They did more than ask when I was going to declare my major but instead took the time to understand why I had not. I coped with depression and panic disorder, all while coming to terms with my identity as a gay person. My counselors actively listened and empathized. They showed that they genuinely cared with simple questions like, "how are you doing today?" This made me feel that I was not only one of many students but also someone that mattered.

It allowed me to share some of the challenges I was facing as a student, and with their support, I learned strategies to overcome them. In this fashion, I was able to stay on track and meet my academic goals. I transferred from GCC to UC Berkeley. I studied abroad in Spain and attained fluency in Spanish. After five and a half years, I proudly graduated with double majors in Social Welfare and Spanish Language and Literature.

After reflecting upon my academic journey at that point in time, I realized what a profound difference counselors and student affairs professionals could make. I decided to pursue graduate school and earned a Master's of Science in Counseling with specialty areas in Professional Clinical Counseling and College Counseling and Student Services. I am genuinely thankful to the student affairs professionals who



chose to invest in my future. I aspire to make a positive difference in the lives of students the way they have for mine.

**You mentioned studying abroad in Spain. How did your study abroad experience influence you in and outside of the classroom?**

As an educator and collegiate counselor, it is imperative that I immerse myself in the language and culture of my students. Common phrases and expressions can speak to the cultural values of the

people that utter them. Before attaining fluency in the Spanish language, I did not understand some of the cultural implications of certain words.

The Spanish word "confianza" translates to so much more than the word "trust." It represents a relationship in which doing good is a moral duty and in which self-expression is not only done openly and honestly but also with the needs of the other person in mind.

When I worked as a behavioral therapist with children with autism, many Spanish-speaking families described our bond with the word "confianza." After each session, I would patiently address any questions or concerns they had. I tailored my teaching style to my students' individual needs. It was important that I made a positive impact on these families.

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# SPARK Turns 10!



This year marked the 10th anniversary of Students Providing Access Resources and Knowledge (SPARK) peer mentoring program, which is funding with SEA funds. While the format may have shifted over the years, including this year, when SPARK transitioned online due to COVID-19, SPARK's objective remained the same: providing students with academic and emotional support.

As with previous years, we recruited second and third year students to serve as mentors and were delighted to field twenty-three amazing mentors from an impressive pool. Summer Bridge students from previous years also applied and were accepted as mentors this year.

When asked why they chose to return, they both mentioned how much they enjoyed providing guidance and support to incoming students. This summer, we had the privilege and honor of welcoming 150 new students into the Vaquero family via the SPARK Mentoring program. Go Vaqs!

The main concern with the move to remote mentoring was whether the mentors would connect with the new students in the Summer Bridge program. Some activities had to be adjusted to fit the new format as well as adjustments to how the program was delivered online. The SPARK mentoring was paired with the Student Development 101 courses being taught for the Summer Bridge program.

From all reports, the new format was still successful at helping students connect with mentors, each other, and the campus. We asked the counselors teaching in the program about the connections students made with the mentors and received some extremely positive results:

"I received great feedback from my class after their activities with the SPARK mentors. The mentors were so open and willing to share and help; this had a profound effect on the students. After interactions with mentors, I noticed students participating more and being more engaged in my class lectures. The mentors are an essential piece to the success of Summer Bridge!" *Johanna Quintanilla*

"The majority of students who took my Summer Bridge class said the SPARK Mentor program was one of the most beneficial parts of the Student Development 101 course. Thank you SPARK Mentors for all the great work you do." *Anthony Garcia*

"The SPARK mentors helped students connect to one another and provided an opportunity for them to ask questions. Students seemed more comfortable from the first day the mentors joined us. Thank you mentors for your willingness to share your experiences and help other students!" *Jamie Sanchez*

"The SPARK Mentors really provided a space for students to open up and realize that they are not alone. It was a great chance for students to learn from one another and not make the same mistakes. The students loved interacting with the mentors." *Orlando Roybal*

*Mentors not pictured in the album on the next page include Daniel, Kathryn, and Roberta.*



Tati with friends  
Sandy & Puff



Vanessa  
a



Maria Jose



Autumn with  
friend Brandi



Tamar with  
friend Rio



Farah



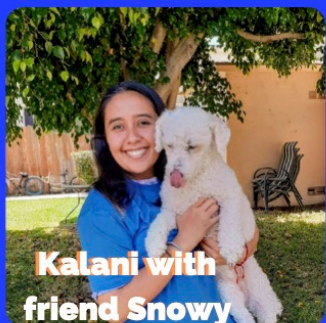
Ani



Katrina



Jessica with



Kalani with  
friend Snowy



Felicia with  
friend Bella



Johanna with  
friend Bella



Melvin with  
friend Yoyo



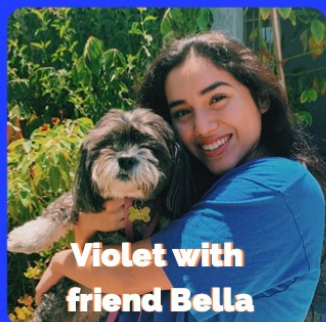
Questa



Steven



Edwin



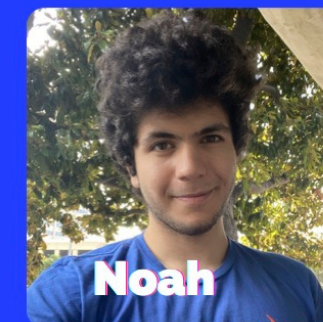
Violet with  
friend Bella



Zain



Linda with  
friend Louie



Noah

# Student Engagement Survey to Support Student Activities

In order to bridge the gap between presentations planned by student services areas and faculty presentation priorities, a survey of faculty was administered by the MCEC in the month of July. There were 99 responses.

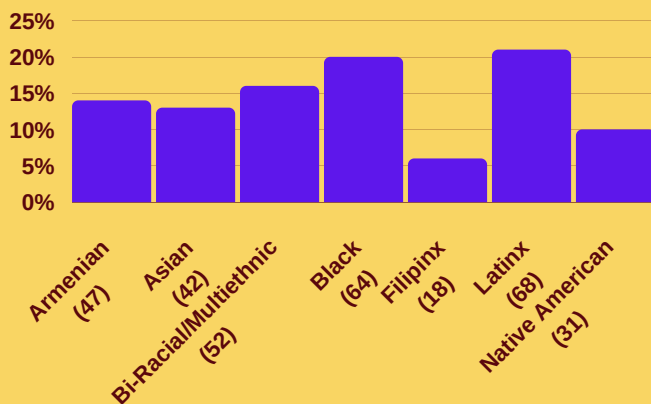
The survey and the planning efforts are a cooperative effort with Student Activities, Cultural Diversity, Student Equity, the Multicultural & Community Engagement Center, Dream Resource Center, and the Pride Center.

The results will be used to plan this academic year's workshops and presentations for students. The actual number of votes are in parenthesis next to the category. We thank all the faculty who participated.

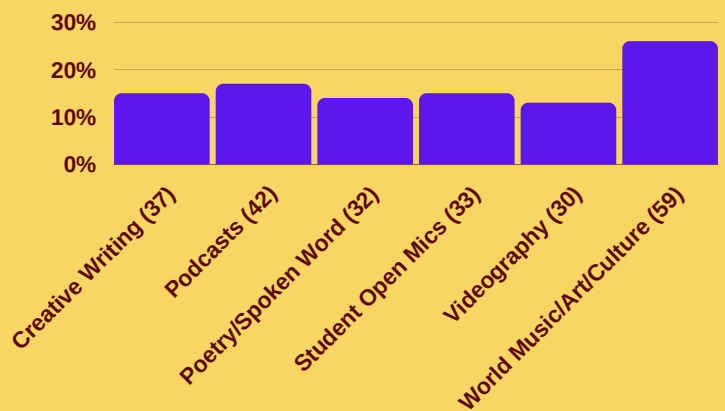
A student survey will be administered by the Student Activities office early in the fall semester.

The full survey results with all comments will be posted at [www.glendale.edu/mcec](http://www.glendale.edu/mcec) (click "Resources")

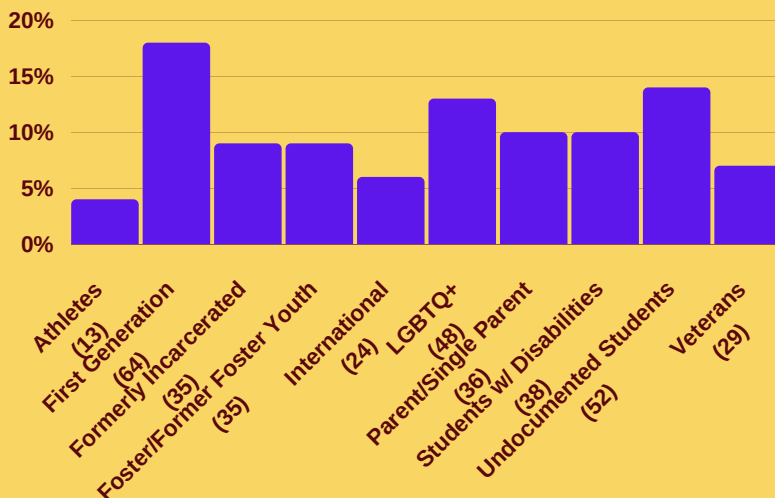
## Ethnic/Cultural Communities



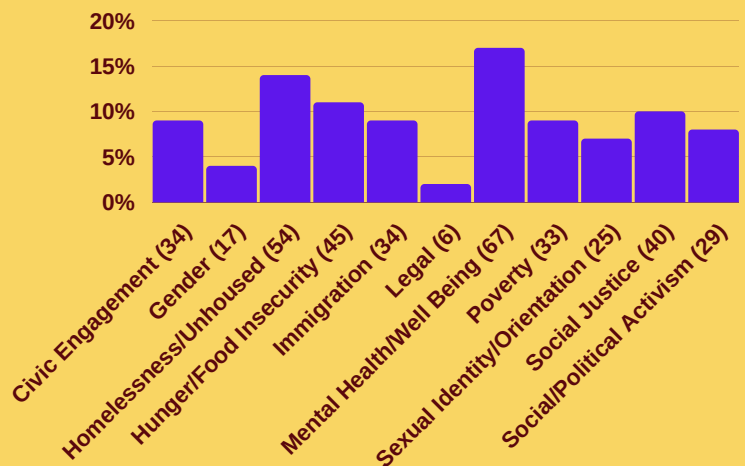
## Artistic Communities



## Student Communities



## Issues Communities



## Meet the Staff and Students at the MCEC

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By further immersing myself in the Spanish language, I can gain a more profound understanding of the culture as well as my Spanish speaking students. I am not done learning! Just like in Armenian, there are many different dialects in Spanish. It is fun learning how the pronunciation and meaning of words can differ across dialects. I believe that it is crucial to bridge the gap between languages and among their dialects with curiosity, humility, and respect. By doing so, we can learn innovative and personal ways of engaging our students.

### Why did you decide to pursue a career in higher education?

I wanted to display the kind of support I needed to be successful as a student. It is vital for counselors not only to be well-informed about specific majors but also their students' needs. Many LGBTQ+ students are often misunderstood and underrepresented. I also believe when students struggle with grades or miss class, it is not necessarily a reflection of poor work ethic but rather certain factors impeding their ability to be the best students they can be.

I can empathize with students who cope with emotional distress or carry the responsibility of making ends meet. I believe that the foundation of any academic or vocational goal is consistent emotional support. Not all students will possess the ability to ask for assistance. Therefore, I see it as my duty to check in with students about how things are going both on and off campus. My hope is to become the kind of counselor that recognizes his students' unique needs, and I am committed to continually learning.

### What motivates you?

My students' success and kind words motivate me. Currently, I'm working as a consultant with limited and fluctuating hours on a month to month basis. However, I continue doing what I do because I love my job, and I care about our students' well-being.

I empathize with students who are LGBTQ+ because I remember when I needed support coming to terms with my identity as a gay person, and there was no such support or a Pride Center on campus. I hope to eventually have the opportunity to work as a counselor at GCC.

## Online Engagement Opportunities

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all colleges and universities have had to adjust to delivering all classes and services remotely.

As a result, we have had to make deep adjustments to the MCEC activities and attempt to engage students in various ways. We've begun to move some services to Zoom but others, such as doing service in the community are not so easy to convert.

As a result, we have created a new database of online opportunities where students can engage in service in a broader way.

The database includes some 20+ opportunities. We are adding to the database on an ongoing basis.

Keep an eye out for new potential online engagement opportunities as well as existing opportunities that have been modified for remote delivery.

*You can find the online  
database at  
[www.glendale.edu/mcec](http://www.glendale.edu/mcec)*