

Dental program honors grads

Dental assisting can lead to rewarding career in a demanding industry

Luna 2021 dental assisting student Angela Solano may have said it best during a speech she gave during a recent dental pinning ceremony.

“This past year has been a tough one for many people because of the pandemic,” said Solano. “New academic struggles have given us what I would describe as an identity crisis, causing all of us to question whether we are worthy of our ambitions in becoming dental assistants. Even on long days and sometimes sleepless nights of studying, I knew that we would all make it out together. We never ceased to bring out the best in each other. As we light our candles this evening, take your candle and light the world. Be the light that helps others see.”

Solano joined Jasmine Barela, Daylyn Chavez, Alyssa Grego, Analysse Lucero and Kaitlin Torrez as not only the latest of quality dental assistant graduates produced



Congratulations to Luna’s 2021 dental assisting graduates, who were honored in a formal pinning ceremony on July 23 at the Media Arts Auditorium. Pictured from left are program administrator Gloria Pacheco, Kaitlin Torrez, Analysse Lucero, Daylyn Chavez, Jasmine Barela, Alyssa Grego and Angela Solano. For more information on the program, please call Pacheco at 505-454-2528.

at Luna, but perhaps the most special because of what they and the rest of world have been through over the last 12 months with the COVID-

19 crisis.

“I believe in you,” were the first

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words spoken by dental assistant administrator Gloria Pacheco, a 20-year veteran of Luna's teaching ranks. "It's a milestone that will lead to bigger and broader opportunities. It's hard work, and you've been through the challenges. Always remember that anything that life throws at you will make you stronger. The knowledge and skills that you learned here — there is no one that can ever take it away from you. You worked for it."

Dr. Tyler Martinez, a dentist at the Mora Valley Dental Clinic, was the guest speaker.

"What you do will make a

difference," said Dr. Martinez. "It's new every single day. What you do helps someone get out of pain. Dentists would be lost without you. No matter where you go, the first thing you do is make sure you're happy."

In a recent report by Dental Assistant Life, many dental assistants agree they have an extremely rewarding and meaningful career. Surveyed dental assistants reported that the most rewarding aspects of their jobs were making a difference in patients' lives, helping patients improve their oral health, and patient relationships and gratitude.

"As we light our candles this evening, take your candle and light the world. Be the light that helps others see."

Angela Solano

Luna Community College
Dental Assistant Class of '21



2021 dental assistant graduates were all smiles after the dental assisting pinning ceremony that was held on Friday, July 23, at the Media Arts Auditorium. Luna President Dr. Edward Martinez, along with several dozen family members and friends, attended the event. A reception with cake and refreshments was held in honor of the graduates.



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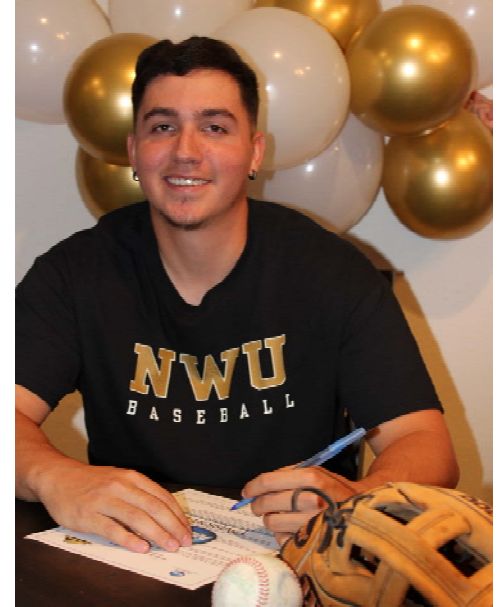
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under "Information for Students"

Luna pitcher to continue in Nebraska

Robertson alumnus Austen King credits Luna for opportunity

Austen King, a graduate of both Robertson and Luna, will be taking his talents to Nebraska Wesleyan this fall.



Austen King was hardly older than a toddler the first time he threw a baseball.

Now the Las Vegas, N.M., native is preparing to do so as part of an NCAA Division III college baseball program at Nebraska Wesleyan.

King graduated this past spring from Luna Community College with an associate of applied science in Allied Health Sciences, also finishing up a two-year stint pitching for the Rough Riders. He's looking forward to the move to Lincoln, Neb., where he'll continue to pursue a bachelor's degree in exercise science and a possible career in either athletic training or physical therapy. But he's also looking back on a rewarding time at Luna, which he credits with opening doors of opportunity.

"It's probably been the best two years of my life," he said. "Luna's given me a chance to get an education and also play baseball."

King, the son of Eddie King and Katherine Martinez-King, has been playing ball most of his life. He got his start around kindergarten, playing tee-ball on hardscrabble dirt fields in the Meadow City. One of his earlier memories was of practicing with his minors baseball team in a small dirt lot across from Paul D. Henry Elementary.

"Coach (Julian) Rains was one of the first to make me enjoy the game," he recalled. "He would always get mad at us for not paying attention in practice. He'd make us run."

Some Little Leaguers stay together a while, progressing up through the age divisions together.

But little by little, most eventually leave the sport for various reasons. But King's enjoyment of the game only grew while most of his teammates were hanging up their gloves and cleats for other pursuits.

"I was pretty serious about it in my late years of Little League," he said. "But it clicked more in seventh or eighth grade, traveling to tournaments. I knew it was what I wanted to do, playing in high school and things like that."

The dream of playing at the college level somewhere took a while to germinate: "For the longest time I didn't recognize it. I was always told by others. Sophomore and junior year (at Robertson High School), I had good numbers."

Watching former teammate

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Richard Armijo, who also pitched for the Cardinals, continue his education and baseball career at Seward County Community College, helped motivate King to open his eyes to the possibility of reaching that next level.

Luna coaches T.C. Nusser and Harry Estep offered King the chance he was looking for.

“I’m probably most proud of choosing Luna to be my (alma mater) as of now,” he said. “If it wasn’t for coaches Estep and Nusser, going on to play anywhere wouldn’t even be a possibility. My time at Luna has allowed me to be a better ballplayer and a better person. Now I’m going farther than I would have ever expected.”

One of the particular lessons King said he’s learned from the Luna coaches is the importance of attention to detail.

“(It’s about) never being satisfied with what you have. Right now I’m not totally set with my numbers velocity wise. I could always have a better command. I could always develop another pitch to help me make it easier on myself and my team. .. I’m going to keep staying consistent with the little things. Coach Nusser always said if you don’t put in the work on those little things, you won’t see the improvement. The goal at the end of the day is to be the best version of yourself.”

Desire to keep getting better is what continues to drive King.

“Being the best version of yourself -- some people can live with not being that. I don’t think I’d be

“My time at Luna has allowed me to be a better ballplayer and a better person.”

Austen King
Class of '21 graduate



able to. I don’t think I’ve gotten where I want to be. I still have two years (of college baseball) to put in consistent work.”

King admitted that there’s been times he thought of quitting his favorite sport: “I think it enters everyone’s mind. Baseball is a game of failure. If you’re not able to overcome failing half the time, the game is not for you. Only the greats are the ones who are able to persevere through everything.”

Persevering through the shutdowns from COVID-19 was an additional challenge. But as his sophomore year rolled on and graduation day got closer, King continued to look for the next opportunity, inquiring about transfer possibilities to four-year schools in neighboring states so he could keep playing and learning. His Luna coaches, he noted, helped him find suitable schools, and eventually he made contact with Nebraska Wesleyan’s coaching staff.

King said he made a campus visit and was impressed by both his interactions with NWU staff and the small-school-in-a-big-town feel of NWU in Lincoln, also known as home to the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

“That’ll allow me to finish (my bachelor’s program),” he said, “and I want to start a master’s program. Academics has always been something my parents have pushed on me. It’s a D-3 school, so the academics part is a big focus for them. That’s also what helped me make this decision.”

King said he’s grateful to a number of people for helping him along the way. “My family have traveled with me countless miles and hours on the road. Then there’s coaches from the beginning of times. Coaches at Luna, especially. They have allowed me to come to the program. Allowed me to find these other schools and talked about how I would be a good fit, what would be a good fit for me. If you told me two years ago I’d be playing college baseball, I’d be saying you’re lying.”

He does have some guidance to offer young people in particular.

“My advice would probably be to stick to who you are. Don’t be somebody you’re not. As long as you stay true to your roots, you’ll go far in life. ... And have fun. They say time goes by when you’re having fun. So have fun and enjoy the ride.”

Mora celebrates fiestas



Fiesta parade features Team Luna





Transfer rules eased in NM

Process simplified for students wishing to transfer college credits

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Higher Education Department has announced that all general education courses completed by students at state public colleges and universities will now satisfy general education requirements at any other New Mexico public institution to which a student transfers.

The new statewide general education curriculum satisfies the requirements of a 2017 law requiring the department to establish and maintain a comprehensive list of lower-division courses and to create a process for colleges and universities to submit courses to be included in the curriculum.

“This is an exciting step forward for higher education in New Mexico that will enable students to start and finish their college education without having to waste time or money on courses that would not have counted toward a degree at their destination college or university,” Higher Education Secretary Stephanie Rodriguez said. “I thank the faculty and staff who came together to ensure a more seamless experience for students while also maintaining quality of education.”

While the New Mexico Higher Education Department approves the degree programs a higher education institution may offer, required courses for satisfying degree requirements can vary between schools. Ensuring that all colleges could give credit to transfer students for any prior general education coursework required years of

collaboration between the department and the faculty and staff from the state’s 30 public and tribal colleges, research universities, comprehensive colleges, branch campuses, and independent community colleges.

To attain either a two-year or four-year degree, students must complete coursework in six approved general education areas of study, including math, science, social and behavioral science, humanities, communications, and creative and fine arts. The new general education curriculum includes skills considered essential for student success in the workforce and in life, including communication, critical thinking, digital literacy, and personal and social responsibility.

“The challenge really was to review general education in terms of essential and transferable skills,” said David Smith, assistant provost for curriculum and assessment at New Mexico State University. “Improving transfer pathways will also help more students attain higher degrees, and the new state model supports this.”

“Creating a common general education curriculum was essential for establishing a transfer process that is more seamless for students,” said Roberto Vasquez, director for transfer pathways at Central New Mexico Community College. “We have established a curriculum that helps students gain strong foundational skills, while also being successful in their chosen field.”

Smith and Vasquez both served on New Mexico’s Curriculum and

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College Scorecard:

The U.S. Department of Education’s College Scorecard has the most reliable data on college costs, graduation and post-college earnings. Visit collegescorecard.ed.gov

The Luna Light is a publication of the Luna Community College Office of Public Relations. To submit story ideas or items for consideration, please e-mail Jesse Gallegos, jgallegos@luna.edu, and Dave Kavanaugh, dkavanaugh@luna.edu.

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Articulation Committee. Vasquez said that CNM and other colleges are examining transfer patterns to determine how to better serve students, and waiting to see how the pandemic affects student transfer patterns statewide. Smith said that a sizable proportion of NMSU's enrolled population transfer in from its branch campuses, other state community colleges, and out-of-state colleges such as University of Texas-El Paso.

Students transfer between institutions for various reasons, such as completing general education requirements or an associate degree at a community college and continuing toward a bachelor's degree in their desired field at a four-year college or university. Other students begin their journey at an open-admissions college and build credit and skills toward admission to a research institution.

Students pursuing associate of arts and bachelor's degrees must

complete 31 credit hours, or about 10 courses in general education, while students pursuing associate of applied science degrees must complete 15 credits, or around five courses.

The HED continues to work with the New Mexico Curriculum and Articulation Committee on its ongoing Common Course Numbering System, a matrix of first and second-year courses with common numbering designed to ease the transfer process beyond general education requirements.

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Employment opportunities

Positions available at Luna Community College

FULL-TIME

- Faculty/staff for College & Career Readiness Institute ... opened July 21, 2021
- General maintenance I ... opened July 14, 2021
- Technical electrician ... opened July 14, 2021
- Faculty for Nursing ... opened July 13, 2021
- General maintenance II (INTERNAL POSTING ONLY at this time) ... opened April 6, 2021

TEMPORARY PART-TIME

- Preschool substitute teacher/caretaker ... opened June 29, 2021

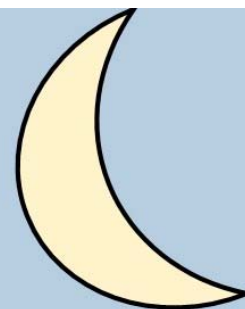
ADJUNCT (per course)

- TBA

Most recent postings listed first. All positions open until filled unless otherwise noted. For more information on each position, please log on to our website at <https://www.luna.edu/jobs>



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Jaydan Herrera
Luna dual credit student

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CDL training under way



Several City of Las Vegas workers recently took a CDL theory class with Luna instructor Larry Moore. For more information on CDL, please call 505-454-2530.

Oasis in the Pecos

This photo of the edition shows several cows enjoying green grass and fresh water running in the Pecos River near El Pueblo.



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