

The latest news from Luna Community College

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Student senate elections set for Oct. 9 and Oct. 10 in the Humanities Building

Luna Student Senate elections will be held on Monday, Oct. 9 and Tuesday, Oct. 10 at the Humanities Building, according to Student Senate sponsor Kimberly Baca.

Baca says that the following Luna students are running: Nick Estacio, Dominic Lopez, Isiah Baca, Wilmer Enriquez, Richard Baca and Paige Gowen—senators; Victoria Garcia—vice president and Amber Baca—president. As of press time, no one is running for secretary/treasurer.

Baca said that write-in candidates are welcomed, as

there are two more senate seats available aside from the secretary/treasurer position.

“Student senate plays a very important role at Luna,”—Student Senate sponsor Kimberly Baca

“We are encouraging our students to come out and vote,” says Baca. “Student senate plays a very important role at Luna. Student senate sponsors many student activities throughout the year and give

back to the community through volunteer efforts.”

For more information on student senate elections, please contact Baca at 505/454-2540 or via email at kbaca@luna.edu.

Samuel Gabaldon— inspirational ambassador for CCRI Program

Luna College & Career Readiness Institute (CCRI) student Samuel Gabaldon is representing the college as its ambassador. He along with CCRI manager Lisa Bentson and five instructors recently attended the New Mexico Adult Education Conference in Albuquerque. As part of his duties as an ambassador, Gabaldon wrote an inspirational essay that captured the hearts of many. Gabaldon is a childhood cancer survivor and has a goal to help the world be a better place. The following is his essay.

Adult Education: Our New Future

Hello. My name is Samuel Gabaldon from the small town of Las Vegas, New Mexico. I am a math guy who draws inspiration from the world around me. This past summer, I had the opportunity to visit the New Croton dam on the Hudson River in Upstate New York. This dam has been providing drinking water to the inhabitants of New York City for over 100 years.

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Luna College & Career Readiness Institute student Samuel Gabaldon is a childhood cancer survivor and has big dreams to make this world a better place. He is pictured with CCRI manager Lisa Bentson.

Samuel Gabaldon...

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I was awestruck at how this one engineering masterpiece has helped so many people for so long, and I found my calling: I want to help make something that can impact people generationally. Today I stand in front of you as an aspiring civil engineer.

I am also a childhood cancer survivor. In 2013, during my sixth grade year, when I was twelve years old, I was diagnosed with APML Leukemia. Hospitalizations and chemo lasted two and half years. Serious complications kept me essentially bedridden

for the next seven and a half. I could barely move, let alone physically or mentally succeed at school. One of my hardest personal moments was being unable to complete my high school education with my class of 2019.

In late 2022, I gained the health and mobility to begin to take my life back. My family and I started looking into options for adult education, and I am incredibly grateful that the Luna College & Career Readiness Institute was available. After 5 years of being completely out of school, my self con-

fidence was basically non-existent. I doubted my ability to even physically attend the classes, let alone to succeed. The program was flexible, considerate and understanding of my needs, over 8 months I began to gain experience, skills and successes. To date, I have passed two of the five HiSet tests:

As a student of Adult Education, I stand for the people who, despite the odds, come back and fight for a better future for themselves and their communities. My peers around me have demonstrated motivation on a whole other level: from a mother who brings her kid to class while writing a flight path; to future EMT's, nurses, teachers, engineers, electricians, carpenters - you name it. We are determined and resilient, as we inspire each other.

math, which has always been my strongest subject, and reading, which has always been a challenge due to my dyslexia.

A particular highlight for me at Luna's CCRI is their STEM program which features aviation projects. Last semester I participated in a skywriting project using calculations done by the students and culminating in us writing the letters "LCC" in the sky over campus. This project helped challenge my preconceptions about what I can and cannot do and helped me realize that I

can change the world around me for the better.

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other level: from a mother who brings her kid to class while writing a flight path; to future EMT's, nurses, teachers, engineers, electricians, carpenters - you name it. We are determined and resilient, as we inspire each other.

For those who don't have a high school diploma this is what I would say to you, if you doubt yourself, you are not alone. I highly recom-

end visiting your local Adult Education Program where you will find a welcoming and understanding environment. Adult Education is ready to accept you where and how you are, and to prepare you for independence and success in meeting your life goals. All of us are working together to pave our new future. My goal is to enroll as an engineering student at the University of New Mexico in the spring - wish me luck!

For more on Gabaldon, please see page 3

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Lisa Bentson: There are no words to describe Samuel's level of grit

Luna's College & Career Readiness Institute manager Lisa Bentson says she has a nickname for her student Samuel Gabaldon—Dr. Hope.

As many of you read in the previous two pages, Gabaldon is making the most out of his life after overcoming his childhood bout with cancer.

"There are no words to describe Samuel's level of grit," says Bentson. "He has taken something that would have been more than most people could handle. You can't talk to Samuel without feeling his enthusiasm. He wants to help his fellow students."

As far as Gabaldon's feelings on being Luna's CCRI student ambassador.

"I'm incredibly humbled and grateful that everyone trusts me so

much," says Gabaldon. "It's an honor that I do not take lightly."

Gabaldon says Luna's CCRI program is incredible.

"If you doubt yourself, you're not alone. Take the first step to improve your life and great things will happen,"—Samuel Gabaldon

"It's life-changing," says Gabaldon. "When I was first coming out of being sick and didn't know what to expect, it's been amazing. I wholeheartedly believe in this community and this program."

Bentson says she has about 65 students in her program and they are encouraged to continue their educa-

tion at Luna after they obtain their high school equivalency credentials.

"The majority of our students stay at Luna," says Bentson. "School is paramount; you have to keep learning."

Gabaldon plans to keep learning and one day aspires to be an engineer.

"I will make something that will help our communities and help the world around us. Luna is the first step on that pathway," says Gabaldon.

As far as advice not only to his fellow students but for everyone.

"If you doubt yourself, you're not alone," says Gabaldon. "Take the first step to improve your life and great things will happen."



Luna cosmetology students Bea Trujillo shows her manicuring skills.

Luna hosts Third Annual Walk of Hope on Saturday, Sept. 23





Higher Learning Commission visits Luna on Sept. 25 and Sept. 26



As part of their visit, The Higher Learning Commission met with Luna students, faculty, staff, administration and community members.



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Luna students, instructors continue to learn, teach both hands-on and theory

