

The latest news from Luna Community College

Second Volume 5, Issue 6

March 25, 2022



Hands-on experience

Luna barbering students Deleno Maestas and Joel Moreno use their mannequins to practice what they are learning. For more information on Luna’s barbering and cosmetology programs, please visit LUNA.edu or contact instructors Germaine Sandoval (505-454-5345, gsandoval@luna.edu) or Clarice Bonney (505-454-2572, cbonney@luna.edu).

Special session April 5

New Mexico lawmakers have more work to do.

The state legislature will convene in a special session beginning Tuesday, April 5, as called for by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham.

The special session is expected to be devoted to potential economic relief for state residents in light of elevated fuel prices and related costs. But it could

also mean another chance for projects that had been included on Senate Bill 48, a \$50 million bill which was vetoed by the governor. Legislators will reportedly consider a revised supplemental spending bill.

Among the projects on that bill were \$170,000 for Luna Community College for purchase of an activity bus and a mentorship initiative.

Critical role played by Luna grad

Jeffrey credits Luna’s nursing program for start to rewarding career

“Helping others gives me purpose and meaning,” Amerette Jeffrey says of her journey in nursing, which has taken a few twists and turns since she attended Luna Community College and graduated (with honors) in 2012.

A native of Las Vegas, Jeffrey works as a

registered nurse at Presbyterian Hospital. As a part of the cardiac critical care unit, she helps provide care for critically ill patients. Some are on ventilators, many are on blood pressure medications. Some have had open heart surgery, lung surgery, procedures on their veins and arteries. Some have had heart attacks.



Amerette Jeffrey and sons David (back) and Christopher

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Critical role

Continued from Page 1

Intensive and critical care requires scrupulous monitoring and intervention, as the slightest changes in a patient's condition could be significant – often to their very survival.

“Critical care is where my heart is,” Jeffrey said. “There is always something to learn – and never a dull moment.”

It was actually while completing her clinical rotations as a student nurse at Luna that Jeffrey discovered her love for providing care in the most difficult of situations. She benefitted from a successful preceptorship at Alta Vista Regional Hospital that led to her first job, working in the inpatient telemetry unit there. In telemetry, nurses monitor patient cardiac rhythms and respond as necessary to adverse changes.

Later, she moved to AVRH's emergency department. “That is when I truly fell in love with being a nurse,” she said.

Growing up, Jeffrey certainly had the pedigree to become a nurse. She followed her grandmother and mother into the profession. “This had a lot of influence on me when I was growing up,” she said. “I am a giver and caretaker by nature, and helping others gives me purpose and meaning.”

“I didn't have plans to leave home for college, and I was able to get my associate degree in nursing from Luna for free with the help of financial aid and scholarships,” she said. “I also took full advantage of

“I really enjoy taking care of people and helping them to either get better or caring for them during their last days or hours.”

Amerette Jeffrey

Critical care nurse and Luna alumnus

being able to take prerequisite courses while I was in high school.”

The Luna experience, she said, gave her “a solid foundation” toward her career in health care.

After her time at AVRH, Jeffrey went on to other bedside nursing positions as well as a three-year stint as an educator for Presbyterian's Heart and Vascular Service Line. “In this role,” she said, “I spent a lot of time working with new hires and supporting them during their orientation to the unit (my favorite part of the job).”

For a few years now, Jeffrey has helped plan a statewide nursing conference presented by Presbyterian; this year's conference will be the 40th annual event.

“In this job I was able to do a lot of networking, and I learned so much about what goes on in a hospital away from the bedside. I got to work with other educators and managers to have the hospital prepared for JCAHO and Department of Health surveys. I've learned how much work is needed to just be able to issue CNE credits for nurses to renew their license, and a lot about compliance and safety. I still also help teach new hire trainings.”

The last two years have been

challenging, Jeffrey said, with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the entire health care system, hospitals in particular.

“Staffing shortages, supply shortages, extra work for everyone, bedside or not,” she said. “We are working so hard and still facing many challenges from the pandemic.”

Through it all, Jeffrey remains motivated: “I really enjoy taking care of people and helping them to either get better or caring for them during their last days or hours.”

And while she has come a long way from her days as a student nurse listening to lectures and practicing skills for check-offs in the Luna Allied Health Sciences building, Jeffrey said she is still learning. She is currently pursuing studies as a family nurse practitioner and plans to graduate in March 2023.

She said she is grateful to her family for supporting her throughout her education and career.

Her advice to today's nursing students: “Don't give up! It's hard and you will always be learning. That part doesn't stop. Find your 'why' and don't let go of it.”

Kelly: Community key to Luna success

Luna Light PROFILE

Name: Daniel C. A. Kelly

Position: Student Success Specialist

What year did you start working for Luna?

In my current position I started this year, but I have worked in various positions for Luna since 2014.

What do you like most about Luna and why?

I like the community aspect of Luna. It really is a part of the communities it serves. The communities Luna serves are what makes Luna Luna, and in turn Luna builds up those communities. I think this is Luna's greatest strength, and it is definitely the part I love the most.

Favorite food and why?

Hard to pick a favorite; all food is pretty good. I like experiencing home-cooked meals, whatever it is. If someone took the time to make it themselves, it will be enjoyable to eat.

Favorite TV show and why?

Currently, "Star Trek Prodigy" and "Bluey," probably because I have children at home and these are kids' shows that are enjoyable for adults too.

Where would you like to see yourself in five years?

As an author and teacher.

What is your greatest strength?

My Catholic Faith.

What would you consider your biggest accomplishment in life and why?

Marrying my beautiful wife and raising our children.

What do you consider a good day in your life?



The best day is the day I am living at each moment. I suppose an ideal day would be going to mass in the morning, spending the day with my family, and finishing with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the evening.

What do you enjoy doing outside of working at Luna?

I volunteer in many charitable organizations. I also enjoy writing, hiking, reading, playing board games, and too many other things to list.

Any final comments?

As bishop of Buenos Aires Pope Francis had a motto for educators that he borrowed from Pope Paul VI: "For all men, for the whole of Man." (It's much more pithy in the original language). And I think that best sums up what higher education should be all about. It's for everyone, and it should develop all the various facets of each unique human person.

“(Higher education) is for everyone, and it should develop all the various facets of each unique human person.”

Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky of the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department recently visited Luna Community College. Groginsky (far right) meets with (from left) Amor Sanchez, Maisie Estep, Brenda Ortega of Luna’s Early Childhood Education Department; Luna President Dr. Edward Martinez and Vice President of Instruction and Student Services Dr. Dani Day.



Early childhood chief visits Luna

College’s preschool a five-star program for eighth year in a row

Luna Community College was one of the featured stops when New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky toured the region recently.

Groginsky held a meet-and-greet and townhall-type meeting with members of the campus community on Monday, March 14, at the Student Services Building.

The cabinet-level department was created by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and the New Mexico Legislature in 2019, officially launching in July 2020. Among the goals of the department are “a more cohesive, equitable and effective early childhood system” as well as oversight of childcare and nutrition

programs.

Groginsky’s background includes various administrative roles in the Head Start program plus service as assistant superintendent of early learning for the District of Columbia.

Luna’s own Early Childhood Education Department programs and offerings include a preschool that recently earned a five-star rating for the eighth consecutive year, according to Brenda Ortega, department director. As part of annual relicensing, the Luna preschool undergoes a state review that takes into account everything from facility safety to staff training in CPR and first aid to record keeping. Additionally, a FOCUS program review looks at lesson plans, curriculum alignment, parent involvement, and measures promoting the social, emotional well-being of the children. Based on the FOCUS review, the program is awarded a star rating. For eight

years running, Luna’s preschool has achieved the maximum, five-star status.

In recent months, Luna’s Early Childhood Education Department has earned funding through the state in the form of several grants and scholarship monies. A stabilization grant of \$187,500 – part of COVID-19 relief federal funding – will be applied toward several key areas of improvement, including security, safety and professional development, Ortega said. Other grants include a \$3,500 Health and Safety Grant for outdoor play areas, a Business Development grant for teacher laptop computers, and a \$1,500 one-time incentive award for stipends.

For more information on the Luna Early Childhood Education programs, which are designed to prepare early childhood teachers and paraprofessionals, please contact Ortega at bortega@luna.edu or at (505) 454-2504.

Join our team and help us serve our communities!

Employment opportunities

Positions available at Luna Community College

FULL-TIME

- Nursing instructor ... opened March 21
- Admissions counselor, communication ... opened March 21
- Admissions counselor, campus life ... opened March 16
- Vice president of finance and administration ... opened March 11
- Procurement specialist ... opened March 2
- Admissions & recruitment manager ... opened Feb. 16
- Custodian I ... opened Feb. 9
- Assistant softball coach ... opened Feb. 9
- Student success specialist (2) ... opened Dec. 13
- Business, lead instructor ... opened Dec. 10
- Executive administrative assistant to the president ... opened Dec. 7

- Allied Health Sciences: Dental assisting instructor ... opened Nov. 16
- Academic and career planning director ... opened Nov. 3

PART-TIME

- Custodian I, Santa Rosa ... opened Jan. 13

TEMPORARY PART-TIME

- Wellness center technician (INTERNAL POSTING) ... opened March 22
- CTE: Welding student lab assistant, hourly ... opened Jan. 21
- Preschool substitute teacher/caretaker ... opened June 29

ADJUNCT (per course)

- Allied Health Sciences: Certified Nursing Assistant instructor ... opened Feb. 9
- Allied Health Sciences: Dental assisting instructor ... opened Dec. 6

- CTE: Furniture & cabinet making instructor ... opened Nov. 15
- CTE: Welding instructor, Springer ... opened Oct. 25
- CTE: Furniture & cabinet making instructor, Santa Rosa ... opened Oct. 25
- CTE: Furniture & cabinet making instructor, Springer ... opened Oct. 25
- CTE: Welding instructor ... opened Oct. 25
- CTE: Auto technology instructor, Springer ... opened Aug. 26
- CTE: Auto technology instructor ... opened Aug. 26
- CTE: Auto collision repair instructor ... opened Aug. 26

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



College Scorecard:

The U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard has the most reliable data on college costs, graduation and post-college

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.

How are you involved in our communities?

The following is the first in an ongoing series showcasing Luna employees who represent the college or otherwise participate in organizations or community service outside the college.

Employees are asked to submit their own community service activities for publication in this series by e-mailing jgallegos@luna.edu.

Irma Joy Shrum

Nursing instructor

Member of the 100% San Miguel/Mora Medical Action Team, helping identify community needs related to COVID-19

Member of the New Mexico Medical Reserve Corps, volunteer group that comes together to help various communities to provide basic health care

Tina Gallegos

Office manager, Springer

Board member of Springer Chamber of Commerce

Member of the Northeastern New Mexico Suicide Awareness Project

Maxine Hughes

Director of Nursing

Board of Directors member for the Rio Grande Alcohol Treatment Program

Kimberly Baca

Criminal justice instructor, student senate advisor

As advisor of the Luna student senate, participant in community cleanup events and the holiday food and clothing drive for the Samaritan House

Jesse Gallegos

Public relations coordinator

Assists with promotion of local CROP Hunger Walks, raising funds to support the global mission of Church World Service, a faith-based organization that responds to hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster around the world.

Assists the Vecinos Juntos organization, an educational partnership group led by Las Vegas Mayor Louie Trujillo and consisting of Luna, NMHU, West Las Vegas and Las Vegas City Schools and the United World College

Linda Salazar

Learning Resource Center manager

Volunteer for CROP Hunger Walks on behalf of Luna.

Member of the New Mexico Consortium of Academic Libraries to assure effective access to information through the collaborative efforts of the academic libraries in New Mexico.

Dave Kavanaugh

Communications specialist

Coached as a volunteer in Las Vegas Youth Soccer League; players initiated annual community service projects

Volunteer photographer for high school soccer in Las Vegas

Volunteer health educator and RN

ONLINE & FREE!

We help you
take on
the
TEAS!

FREE workshops to help prepare you for the Test of Essential Academic Skills (TEAS) are now being offered at Luna Community College. Contact Yvonne Piña, ypina@luna.edu, or 505-454-2525, to sign up or to get more information.

Workshop schedule (Session 1)



**Free TEAS prep
Workshops**

**NOW ONLINE; E-MAIL FOR
DETAILS OR TO SIGN UP**

WORKSHOP TOPIC	DATE
Intro & pre-test	March 22, 6:30 p.m.
Reading & English	March 24, 6:30 p.m.
Math	March 29, 6:30 p.m.
Science	March 31, 6:30 p.m.
Anatomy & physiology	April 5, 6:30 p.m.
Conclusion	April 7, 6:30 p.m.

**Take all six free workshops,
and we will pay your first TEAS fee!***

* All workshops and post-tests must be completed within same sequence in order to be eligible. Limit one free TEAS fee waiver per participant. Contact LCC Nursing Department for details.



Luna softball rallies in home debut

Rallying from an 8-1 deficit, the Luna Community College softball team found a way back and eventually defeated El Paso Community College 12-11 in extra innings Saturday, March 19, at Cowgirl Field.

It was the Rough Riders' first home game of the season after a lengthy 19-game road swing.

Luna went on to win Saturday's second game, 5-1, before El Paso took a pair of competitive contests on Sunday, 8-5 and 7-3.

In the opener, Luna's Sinai Cisneros doubled and scored from third base to tie it at 1-1 in the second inning. But the Tejanas pulled ahead again with a three-run third and hit a three-run home run to grab an 8-1 lead in the top of the fifth.

Lexi Johnson doubled to score Victoria Gonzales to make it 8-2 in the Luna half of the frame. But it may have been a big defensive play that really fired up the Rough Riders. Raegan Shackelford provided it, hitting the dirt for a sliding catch to record an out in the top of the sixth.

In the bottom of the inning, Luna scored six runs to draw even, beginning with a bases-loaded RBI by Nicole Chavez. Johnson belted a three-run triple, unofficially, and Mya Ortega drove in Johnson. Then Ciara Cruz doubled in another run to tie it at 8-8.

El Paso seemed to steal the momentum back in the top of the seventh. A couple of defensive



As her teammates cheer her on, Luna's Jenai Shanta slides home for a run in the weekend series with El Paso Community College.

errors and a walk helped the Tejanas score three to regain control at 11-8. But the Rough Riders answered with three runs of their own, just enough to extend the game into extra innings.

In the top of the eighth, again the Tejanas seemingly gained the upper hand, loading the bases with just one out. But clutch defense by Luna denied any scoring while pitcher recorded the final two outs. Then, in the bottom half, Luna loaded the bases and Ortega showed patience at the plate in drawing a walk to push across the winning run.

In game two, Luna built a 4-1 lead by the third inning and ended a would-be rally when Ortega made a beautiful dive for a flyout in

center field, stranding El Paso runners to end the visitor half of the fourth.

In a replay of the conclusion of game one, Ortega drew a walk with the bases jammed in the fifth, making the final margin 5-1.

Both of Sunday's games were close throughout. In the finale, Bree Maldonado's speed on the basepaths highlighted a 2-0 head start for Luna. Jenai Shanta slid home on a wild pitch to make it 3-0 through two innings. And Cisneros' hustle in right field robbed the Tejanas of a hit. Imani Hall and then Val Manzanares provided steady pitching much of the way for the Riders.

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Rough Riders

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The Tejanas pulled within 3-2 and then took the lead late. An RBI double by Alexis Marquez followed by Sadie Gordillo's three-run homer lifted El Paso to a 6-3 lead in the top of the seventh. An error got it to 7-3.

Luna managed to load the bases but El Paso's defense held for the win and series split.

El Paso (8-8) had previously swept a four-game home series vs. Luna Feb. 19-20.

Luna (5-23) is scheduled to continue the homestand by hosting McCook Community College for a four-game series this weekend at Cowgirl Field. First pitch Saturday is set for 1 p.m.; action resumes at 11 a.m. Sunday.

•••

Likewise, Luna baseball got the sticks going to earn an even split of its home series with Western Nebraska Community College.

The visiting Cougars won game one 7-0 only to have the Rough Riders answer with a 7-0 win in Saturday's game two. Luna took a 4-0 cushion into the sixth inning and got insurance when Keko Ogawa scored on an error and Diego Quinonez's RBI sacrifice fly made it 6-0. Kobe Carpio drew a bases-loaded walk to make it 7-0.

Western Nebraska prevailed 5-1 in game three, but Luna responded by taking the series finale 8-2, getting one of the better team offensive performances in recent days.

Milo Behrens began the Riders'



Above: Luna softball's Mya Ortega bats against El Paso. Ortega shined on both offense and defense in helping the Rough Riders split the series.



Left: Ryan Clark pitches for Luna baseball. Clark started game four, one of two wins the Rough Riders picked up against visiting Western Nebraska.

scoring output with a sacrifice fly to score Dominic Lucero for the tying run, and then Samuel Estrada dashed home on an error for a 2-1 edge in the first inning. Bo Kidd drove in Carpio for 3-1. Ashton Whiteaker roped a two-RBI single to the outfield, and then Quinonez scored Whiteaker with an RBI double to make it 6-1.

In the top of the second, the Cougars had runners at the corners with two out, and Luna pitcher

Chisum Rush struck out the side.

In the bottom of the third, Lucero singled to score Ogawa for an 8-1 advantage, and the Cougars managed just one run after that.

WNCC (8-16) was Region IX tournament champion last season.

The Riders (5-28) play a four-game set at McCook this coming weekend in McCook, Neb. Game time is noon both Saturday and Sunday.

Meet your ACE tutors (Part 2)

Luna Community College Academic Center for Excellence tutors are available to help students with various classes and subjects.

Luna students may contact ACE coordinator Ray Varela at 505-454-5306 or rvarela@luna.edu to set up appointments or ask any questions

about ACE.

Here is a behind-the-scenes look at a few of our ACE team members (second in a series):



Luna Light PROFILE

ACE TUTOR: Amber Gonzales

HOMETOWN: Las Vegas

SUBJECT(S): Criminal justice, English, history, entry-level math

EDUCATION: Robertson High School; Luna (A.A. Criminal Justice); NMHU (B.A. Political Science); currently Pepperdine School of Law



What motivates you to tutor students? Being able to help other students with their goals and to see improvement within their desired field of study. It's such a good feeling to see fellow students who I've tutored excel and move on and continue their success.

Whom do you admire the most and why? My mom has always been my No. 1 supporter for my education and choices that have gotten me where I am today. She alone has taught me so many valuable aspects of life. For one, she's taught me to be strong and independent.

FAVORITE MOVIE: The Great Gatsby

FAVORITE TV SHOW: King of Queens

FAVORITE FOOD: Pizza

FAVORITE SPORT: Football, New England Patriots

FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST: Foster the People

FAVORITE SONG: "Helena Beat"

FAVORITE THING ABOUT LUNA AND/OR

VEGAS: New Mexican food

HOBBY: Watching sports



Luna Light PROFILE

ACE TUTOR: Madison Gould AKA "Maddy"

HOMETOWN: Fairplay, Colo.

SUBJECT(S): English, humanities

OTHER JOBS: Teaching assistant at NMHU

EDUCATION: South Park High School; NMHU (B.A. Criminal Justice, minor Sociology; currently pursuing Master of Public Affairs degree)



What motivates you to tutor students?

Knowing that I can make a difference in their studies and give them a sense of relief, and knowing I am helping in any way possible.

Whom do you admire the most and why? My mom because she is the strongest, wisest and smartest person I know.

What is something about you that would surprise most people? I have a twin brother.

FAVORITE MOVIE: Sweet Home Alabama

FAVORITE TV SHOW: Friends

FAVORITE FOOD: BLT

FAVORITE SPORT: Basketball

FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST: Shinedown

FAVORITE THING ABOUT LUNA AND/OR

VEGAS: The close-knit community and rich history

HOBBY: Working out, reading, hanging out with friends



Luna Light PROFILE

ACE TUTOR: Brittney Marie Mares

HOMETOWN: Las Vegas

SUBJECT(S): Science, math

OTHER JOBS: Being a mom

EDUCATION: Robertson High School; Luna (A.S. General Science); NMHU (B.S. Biology, minor Chemistry)



What motivates you to tutor students?

Witnessing a student grasp a concept that was initially a challenge. Tutors get rewarded by their students' achievements; this motivates me to be there for my students and make my best effort to help them build their confidence and knowledge.

Whom do you admire the most and why? My mom, because she has always pushed onward. Life has not always been fair for her, but the harder it gets the more she fights back.

What is something about you that would surprise most people? I play Fortnite with my daughter.

FAVORITE MOVIE: Black Panther

FAVORITE TV SHOW: Grey's Anatomy

FAVORITE FOOD: Thin-crust veggie pizza, salad

FAVORITE SPORT: Volleyball

FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST: Drake

FAVORITE THING ABOUT LUNA AND/OR

VEGAS: Its tight-knit community . . . While attending Luna, I felt that all faculty and even students were rooting for everyone's success.



Luna Board of Trustees member Dr. Phyllis Martinez has three of her devotional carvings displayed at the 2022 Northern New Mexico Devotional Show in the Ray Drew Gallery at the Thomas C Donnelly Library on the campus of Highlands University. Her art depicted The Holy Family, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and Jesus on the Cross. The Northern New Mexico Devotional Show runs through Monday, April 18.



TEAS

Nursing school entrance exam

March 2022 dates

Scheduling for the following dates is taking place now.

Tuesday, March 8	10 a.m.
Thursday, March 10	1:30 p.m.
Tuesday, March 22	1:30 p.m.
Friday, March 25	10 a.m.
Tuesday, March 29	9 a.m.
Thursday, March 31	10 a.m.

Contact: Yvonne Piña
505-454-2525
ypina@luna.edu

Please provide student ID number, phone number, and exam date in the e-mail.

You have up to three attempts per academic year to pass the exam; the fee for each attempt is \$65.

You're advised to set up an account with ATI prior to the exam date; go to atitesting.com, click on Create Account. Use LCC ADN for institution, with estimated graduation date of 5/11/2024.

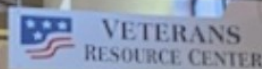


Stop by the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) to get help in your classes!

We have tutors throughout the day to assist you in any subject area you may need. Visit us at Student Services Building 204 (upstairs).

We also offer online tutoring if needed; just e-mail a tutor to set something up.

Contact Ray Varela at 505-454-5306 or rvarela@luna.edu if you have any questions.



Tutor	Subject	Email	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Sergio	English, History, Sociology, Psychology	shartshorne@luna.edu	8am-11am	5pm-8pm	8am-1pm	8am-10am 2pm-4pm	8am-11am
Mary Frances	Math, Science, English	mbibb@luna.edu	5pm-8pm	8am-12pm	8am-10am	9am-11am 3pm-5pm	11am-4pm
Madison	English, Criminal Justice, Sociology, Psychology	mgould@luna.edu	2pm-6pm	11am-6pm	2pm-6pm	5pm-8pm	
Theo	Science, English, History	tcurry@luna.edu	5pm-8pm	4pm-8pm	5pm-8pm	4pm-8pm	
Gabriel	All areas	gamaestas@luna.edu	8am-12pm	9:30am-12:00pm	8am-12pm 1pm-5pm	9:30am-12:00pm	
Brittney	Math, Science, A&P	bmares@luna.edu	8am-12pm	8am-12pm	online	online	online
Keegan	Allied Health, Science, English Comp	klopez@luna.edu	12:30-3pm	11am-4pm	12:30pm-3pm 5pm-8pm	12:30pm-4pm	
Hailee	Math, English Comp	hgallegos@luna.edu	2pm-4pm	8am-9am 1:30pm-3:30pm	2pm-4pm	10am-12pm	8am-12pm 3pm-5pm
Amber	Criminal Justice, Sociology, English,	amgonzales@luna.edu	online	online	online	online	online

All tutors can be reached via email to set online appointment (google meet or zoom)

Ortega highlights Tejano Fan Fair

When Brenda Ortega took the stage for the Tejano Fan Fair in San Antonio, Texas, on Saturday, March 19, her performance not only entertained hundreds of music fans there in person, it was streamed around the globe.

Performing at this event was the latest highlight in a musical career that continues to flourish for Ortega, a Las Vegas, N.M., native whose day job is directing the Luna Community College Early Childhood Education and Business departments.

Ortega sang twice as part of the Tejano Music Awards Association's weekend festival – Thursday, March 17, on the Concho Stage (Hot Tejano) and again on Saturday, March 19, on the Hildago Stage (BNET Radio). The latter was made available internationally online.

"I'm pretty excited," Ortega said as she prepared for the trip to San Antonio. "This is like our Las Vegas Fiestas times 100 in terms of the crowd."

Ortega has performed in venues like the Las Vegas Fiestas, the New Mexico State Fair, Santa Fe's Spanish Market, Albuquerque's KiMo Auditorium and several times at the New Mexico Hispano Music Awards, but with more than 100,000 fans in combined estimated attendance each year, this certainly qualifies as one of the biggest to date. The four-day Tejano Fan Fair, held at the historic Market Square in downtown San Antonio, featured four stages and lineups of many of the premier music artists from across the country, all gathered in the hotbed of Tejano and conjunto music.

"Me Gusta Estar Contigo," Ortega's latest track, has been featured on



playlists of Spanish radio stations across New Mexico and beyond in recent months, and the song has its own connection to San Antonio. It was recorded with the help of Benny Lucero, a San Antonio resident and a friend of Ortega's. "We finished the song in May or June, and it started getting a lot of airplay," she noted. A duet "Amantes y Amigos," is a track recorded in San Antonio earlier this year.

The connections to San Antonio don't stop there.

"Amigas," a planned duet with popular Tejano artist Shelly Lares, who once shared bandmates with the iconic Selena Quintanilla, and like the other songs mentioned above, it will be featured on an upcoming album release.

Lares is a key figure in the upcoming Tejano Vegas Convention, coming to Las Vegas, Nev., in July. An Ortega performance at that event is a possibility as well, thanks to the connections developed. Before then, Ortega will perform as part of Dia De

"Music fills my soul."

Brenda Ortega
Music artist and
Luna Community College Director of
Early Childhood Education and
Business departments

Las Madres: New Mexico Music Festival on Sunday, May 8, at the Old Town Plaza. That show will be free to the public and runs from 1 to 7 p.m.

Ortega's origins as a music artist began when she was 4 or 5 years old. "My dad would pull out a guitar and teach us songs," she recalled, noting that the family was immersed in New Mexico music thanks to her father Juan. "I learned how to sing lead, the melody, and then the harmony or back-up vocals."

Ortega's father Juan is a renowned New Mexico music artist who still performs and also teaches Spanish courses at Luna. He oversaw Brenda's first recording, "Buenos Dias Paloma Blanca," when she was 10, and the song was included on his album "Que Grande El Amor De Dios." She soon followed with her own singles "Si Me Quieres" and "Copa Vacía."

Years later, as she neared retirement from a career teaching in public schools, Ortega again became

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Ortega

Continued from Page 13

active in performing and recording music. “Amor Lindo” and “Canciones de Mi Padre Querido” won awards and acclaim. Another highlight, she said, was “Quien Eres Tu,” a song written by Father George Salazar, which hit music charts in California. She has won several NMHMA awards.

When the COVID shutdown threatened to stop live music altogether,

she began collaborating with Glenn Damian for a series of online jam sessions, making them available via live streaming. Recently she became featured on the Solo Gruperas online list of Latin American female artists. This winter, she was featured as a cover artist on the NMHMA’s show program and was an award nominee. These have allowed her fan base to grow, she said.

“I’ve been very fortunate,” she said. “I’m just having fun. It’s fortunate I’ve made some really cool contacts. And the support I’ve gotten from my community

has been very humbling. I’m aware I represent my community.”

“Music fills my soul,” she said. “Conveying the meaning of songs as I perform them, I would equate to a runner’s high. It’s like when you’re in nature, you’re feeling the presence of God. And seeing people react is a pretty powerful experience ... God will always put someone in my path. I’m very grateful for the gift I have. As long as I have it, I will share it to the best of my ability.”



TEAS Nursing school entrance exam

April 2022 dates

**Scheduling for the following dates
is taking place now.**

Tuesday, April 5	10 a.m.
Friday, April 8	1:30 p.m.
Tuesday, April 19	1:30 p.m.
Friday, April 22	10 a.m.
Thursday, April 28	9 a.m.

Contact: Yvonne Piña

505-454-2525

ypina@luna.edu

Please provide student ID number, phone number, and exam date in the e-mail.

You have up to three attempts per academic year to pass the exam; the fee for each attempt is \$65.

You’re advised to set up an account with ATI prior to the exam date; go to atitesting.com,

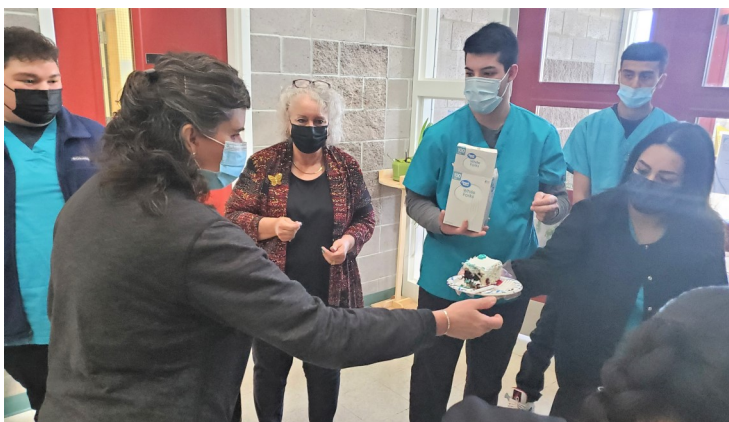
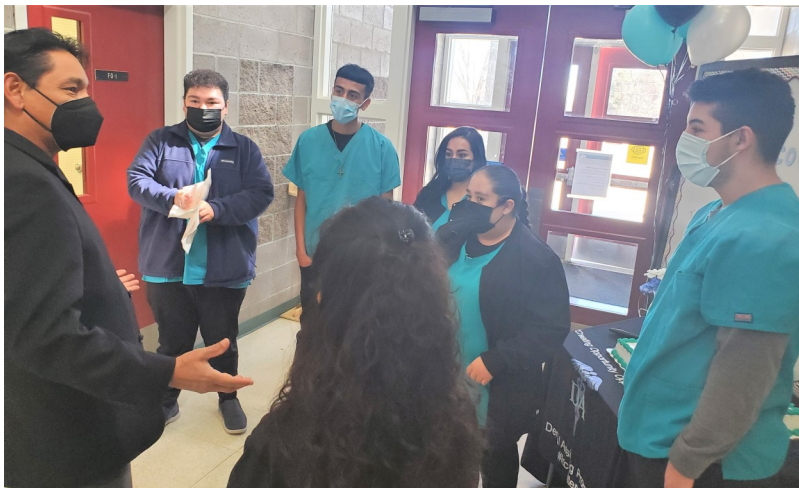
click on Create Account. Use LCC ADN for institution, with estimated graduation date of 5/11/2024.

Honoring dental assistants

Luna celebrated Dental Assistant Recognition Week on March 9 with a reception at the Allied Health building. Pictured from left are students Joseph Rivera, Ryan Trujillo, Diandra Ortega, Izaiah Romero, Jerilyn Martinez and program administrator Gloria Pacheco.

Below left: President Dr. Edward Martinez asks students for their insights on the dental assistant's role.

Below right: Allied Health Director Dr. Carol Linder serves cake to nursing students.



Above, Estelle Garcia accepts a piece of cake served by Diandra Ortega. At right, cosmetology students enjoy the refreshments.



Graduating this year?

ATTENTION, LUNA CLASS OF '22!

We are now accepting Applications for Degree.
Please visit your academic advisor for assistance.
Submit your Application for Degree to the Office of
the Registrar in the Student Services Building.

You have until April 22 to submit application and
clearance form and to make payments as needed.
All requirements must be met prior to graduation.

For more info, please call 505-454-2548.

Also, caps and gowns must be ordered by March 25!
Visit Ron at the Bookstore, or contact him at
rduran@luna.edu or 505-454-2569.

