

# The Luna Light



*"Creating Opportunities for You!"*

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## Overcoming struggles not new to Luna nursing student

*Tsao grateful to Luna, New Mexico and America*

Ethan Tsao considers himself an underdog.

And he should. He has never had anything handed to him. He's had to work hard for everything he has. Thanks to his never-give-up attitude and good people around him, he's finally seeing light at the end of what has been a very long tunnel.

Ethan Tsao is a second-year nursing student at Luna Community College. He transferred over the summer from Central New Mexico College, where he began his studies in the field. He is expected to earn his RN degree in May 2019. For most college students, their story would start and end there. Not for Tsao.

A native of Taiwan, Tsao and his sister came to



**Student Ethan Tsao talks with Luna Interim President Ricky Serna.**

America in July 1990. Like many people from other countries, they were simply searching for a better life. Tsao earned his U.S. citizenship this past October.

"My mom wanted my sister and me have a better education, so we came to America," says Tsao.

A 1995 graduate of Albuquerque's La Cueva High School, Tsao enrolled in the engineering program at UNM. However, in the back of his mind, he always had something that concerned him.

"I always knew if I graduated from college, I (still) couldn't work legally," says Tsao. "Depression eventually took a hold of me, and I dropped out of my

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## Attention, students needing winter jackets

The Luna STEM Club has postponed its main coat distribution until Jan. 26. However, Luna students who need a jacket can come by room AD-115 or call Jesse Gallegos at 454-5367 between Monday Dec. 3, and Friday, Dec. 7. Room AD-115 is

located in the Maria H. Paiz Administration Building across from the Human Resource office. If Gallegos is not in his office when you come by, please leave him a message on his office door. Donations for jackets will continue to be accepted until Jan. 25.

# Luna Community College Student Senate

# Food Services Survey

Help us shape the future of food services available on campus. Please complete and submit the following survey. LCC student government has come up with these questions to aid in improvement to the food services at Luna. Your participation will assist us in influencing the services available. A drop box to collect surveys is available at the information desk in the administration building.

1. Which option below best describes you?  
 a. Freshman  
 b. Sophomore  
 c. Dual credit (still enrolled in high school)

2. How many times a week do you purchase food items at the Luna coffee shop?  
 a. None  
 b. 1-3  
 c. 4-6  
 d. 7 or more

3. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the campus dining program at Luna.  
 a. Very dissatisfied  
 b. Somewhat dissatisfied  
 c. No strong opinion  
 d. Somewhat satisfied  
 e. Very satisfied

4. What types of food service menu items would you like to see on campus? **Select all that apply.**  
 a. Sandwiches  
 b. Salads  
 c. Burger/grill  
 d. Mexican  
 e. Smoothie/juice bar  
 f. Asian  
 g. Pizza/pasta  
 h. Delivery/convenience

5. Do you have any dietary needs or restrictions? **Select all that apply.**  
 a. Diabetic  
 b. Gluten intolerance

c. Vegetarian  
 d. Vegan  
 e. Kosher  
 f. Halal  
 g. Low-carb  
 h. None  
 i. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Select the **three** most important factors influencing where you go for lunch. Select three.  
 a. Hospitality  
 b. Food quality  
 c. Types of food  
 d. Price/value  
 e. Healthy options  
 f. Social interaction  
 g. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. What type of financial assistance do you currently receive? **Select all that apply.**  
 a. N.M. Lottery Scholarship  
 b. Federal Pell Grant  
 c. Federal loans  
 d. Workstudy  
 e. Athletic scholarship  
 f. Other scholarship  
 g. None  
 h. Other

8. Would you support paying a student fee that would be applied to increasing food services options?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No  
 c. Undecided

9. Do you currently have a meal plan purchased elsewhere?  
 a. Yes  
 b. No

10. During what times do you attend classes?  
 a. Morning  
 b. Morning and afternoon  
 c. Afternoon  
 d. Afternoon and evening  
 e. Evening

11. Identify your enrollment status.  
 a. Part-time (1-11 hours)  
 b. Full-time (12 hours plus)  
 c. Dual credit (high school)

12. In an average day, how many hours a day are you on campus?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. What are your top **three** preferred methods of communication pertaining to Luna? Select three.  
 a. Personal e-mail  
 b. School e-mail  
 c. Social media  
 d. Telephone  
 e. Printed publications  
 f. Classroom announcements



# Overcoming struggles...

Continued from page 1

junior year.”

Tsao says that the struggles of always being part of living in-the-shadows and feeling that he didn't belong played a role in his depression.

“An aspect of my depression is that I was always afraid to make a mistake,” says Tsao. “I work with a therapist. Part of the reason I suffer depression is going through legal issues of the immigration process. I see the light at the end of the tunnel; I still have the occasional blues, but every day is getting better. It is situational depression. If you go through

hard times, you are going to be sad. Now I can go after the American dream. The American dream does exist; the opportunity is there. You just have to work hard.”

And work hard is what Tsao has done all his life.

“During my 20s, I worked three jobs, they were all labor jobs,” says Tsao. “I did everything on my own; I never asked for help.”

Even if Tsao never asked for help, New Mexico has always been good to him, welcoming him, he says.

“Everywhere you go in New Mexico, there is no discrimination when it comes to opportunity and good-hearted people,” says Tsao. “This is what makes this state great.”

It's obvious Tsao thinks highly of New Mexico. Just wait and see what he has to say about Luna.

“Maxine Hughes (Luna nursing director) and Susan Grohman (Luna nursing instructor) were both very welcoming,” says Tsao. “Students here have always made me feel like I was part of a family. Fellow nursing students Chris Trujillo and Vanetia Gonzales have assisted me with my studies, and Theo Chavez and Chris Tafoya would offer me rides when

my truck had broken down. Nursing students here have each other's back. To keep this tradition here for future nursing students would be great. I recommend this nursing program to other students. It's about student success here.”

After graduation, Tsao wants to be a nurse in an emergency room, a cardiac unit or a medical surgical unit.

“I always knew education was going to take me where I knew I wanted to be,” says Tsao. “My mom always encouraged me to go back to school. I'm extremely happy; I don't have to hide in the shadows anymore. I can just be proud because I'm an American citizen now.”

Tsao, 41, had been working on citizenship since 2012.

“I'm very sympathetic to people that are going through what I went through,” says Tsao. “I am very lucky. I notice when someone is down. I want to work with homeless and the most vulnerable population

**“I'm very sympathetic to people that are going through what I went through. I am very lucky. I notice when someone is down. I want to work with homeless and the most vulnerable population amongst us. I advocate for people that can't speak English.”**

—Ethan Tsao

amongst us. I advocate for people that can't speak English. One day I hope to achieve my dream as a family nurse practitioner. First, I want to go work in a big city and learn and come back to a small town in New Mexico. This is a great state to make a difference. We need to bring up our education and health care. New Mexico has been great to me, and Las Vegas has been exceptional.”

Tsao has simple advice to others who may face a similar path as he has.

“Education is the way out of any situation,” says Tsao. “Finish high school. Even when I was doing labor work, people would encourage me not to stop my education because there is value in education.”

Tsao has embraced being an underdog. It's this role that has shaped him to the person he is today. He knows better than most that underdogs can win.

# Luna active in class, community



**Above: Two classes who participated in a recent mock trial gather for a group photo. Jason Killian's criminal justice class presented legal arguments, while Nathan Baker's English class heard the arguments and rendered judgement in the case. Luna School of Business Director Lita Bernal acted as the judge in the case.**



**At left: Self-taught pastry chef and local home-bakery business owner Amanda Medina of SugarBomb Bakeshoppe shows Luna culinary students William Covelli and Sergio Valdez how to assemble and decorate a layered cake. Also pictured is Luna Culinary Arts Instructor Tiffany Timmer.**



**The Luna Community College STEM Club gave out 60 Thanksgiving baskets to students and community members on Wednesday, Nov. 21. The STEM Club collected food items for over a month. Part of the STEM Club’s mission is to assist fellow students and community members in need. The club would like to thank everyone who donated food, clothing and money to this worthy cause. Pictured (from left) are Robert Sandoval, Santiago Esquibel, Miguel Serna, Jake Taylor, Justin Valdez, Erik Benigno Hidalgo and Andres Martinez.**

**Several Luna Community College students recently earned an American Welding Society Certification. Pictured (front, from left to right) are AWS Senior Certified Welding Inspector Mike Thomas, Gil Martinez, Luna instructor Donnie Adkins, Santana Gomez, Miquela Gallegos, Elauterio Lujan, Jojo Flores, Jared Gallegos and Derek Trujillo. In the back are Gene Hern, Santiago Vigil, Jayson Rings, Joe Maestas, Ernesto Torres and Kevin Archuleta.**



**Luna hosted a Health & Wellness Fair on Saturday, Nov. 17. It was a successful event, drawing dozens of exhibitors and hundreds of participants.**

# Luna's 'La Noche de las Luminarias' rescheduled for Saturday, Dec. 8

"La Noche de las Luminarias," Luna Community College's annual event, is being rescheduled for Saturday, Dec. 8.

The event had been originally slated for the evening of Saturday, Dec. 1, in conjunction with the annual Electric Light Parade coordinated by the City of Las Vegas earlier that evening. City officials have opted to move the parade a week later this year. Robertson High School's football team was to play at Dexter in the Class 3A state

championship game that afternoon, and a number of locals are expected to be out of town for the game. The decision was made to move the parade back a week to allow for more participation in both, and LCC Interim President Ricky Serna followed suit, also rescheduling the Luna event.

"La Noche de las Luminarias" continues a tradition in which Luna students and employees have taken pride over the years. Four thousand luminarias — the commonly used term for farolitos, paper bags illuminated by candles — are set up in a decorative display along the sidewalks of the Luna campus. Many other lights and displays will also be on exhibit. La Noche de las Luminarias"



**Luna Community College "La Noche de las Luminarias" has been rescheduled for Saturday, Dec. 8. The event, which features themed light displays and hundreds of luminarias across campus, is from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It is free and open to the public.**

is designed for motorists to tour the campus with a pre-determined route beginning at the top gates. "Noche" has been coupled with the city's Electric Light Parade for one of the most eagerly anticipated evenings of the year.

This year's weekend of pre-holiday festivities will begin with the lighting of the official tree at 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7, on the corner of Douglas and Seventh.

Santa Claus will be in the Old Town Plaza Park

to meet with area youngsters from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 8.

The Electric Light Parade is scheduled to begin at dusk, approximately 6 p.m., with the route going from Fifth and Friedman south on Fifth to Baca Avenue, then west on Baca to Sixth Street, south on Sixth to Douglas Avenue, west on Douglas to 12<sup>th</sup> Street, north on 12<sup>th</sup> to National/Bridge, then west on Bridge to the Old Town Plaza Park. This year's theme is "A Jolly Rockin' Christmas."

Then it's time for "La Noche de las Luminarias" scheduled from 6 to 9 p.m. on the LCC campus.

All events are free and open to the public.



**Humanities' Rick Baca (left), Sara Vigil and Jason Killian (above) assist students during the LCC Priority Registration Event on Nov. 27. Each department has been active in helping sign students up for the spring 2019 semester.**

## Spring registration push under way

As the winter break approaches, it's an ideal time to register for Luna Community College's spring 2019 semester, which begins Jan. 14.

Early registration began Nov. 12 and continues through Jan. 22, which is the last day to add classes for the spring semester.

Since College Night on Oct. 24 at NMHU, various departments have been amping up efforts to promote Luna and to help students sign up for classes.

On Nov. 27, Luna hosted the LCC Priority Registration Event, serving up an opportunity for both new and returning students to register for classes and set up their schedules for spring.

Representatives from each academic and vocational department were on hand to advise students and assist them with completing registration. The admissions and recruitment

office, registrar's office, student services office and others provided assistance and met individually with students. The event was held at the Media Education Center atrium.

Employees from those departments and offices have been proactive in recent weeks, also appearing in the recent LCC Health & Wellness Fair. That Nov. 17 event, an initiative coordinated by the LCC Allied Health department, drew more than two dozen exhibitors and hundreds of participants to the Rough Rider Grill cafeteria.

Exhibitors, who represented various regional health care providers, hospitals, agencies and non-profit organizations, offered information on their services and resources. Some had free health screenings available, measuring body weights and blood pressures. Tours of the Allied Health building and the dental assisting



lab were also conducted, while members of the college's Student Nurses Association were among those who provided screening services.

In addition to the health and wellness components of the fair, the aforementioned Luna employees were present to talk to community members, including current and prospective students, about the college's offerings.

# Luna gives back to employees through annual leave buyback

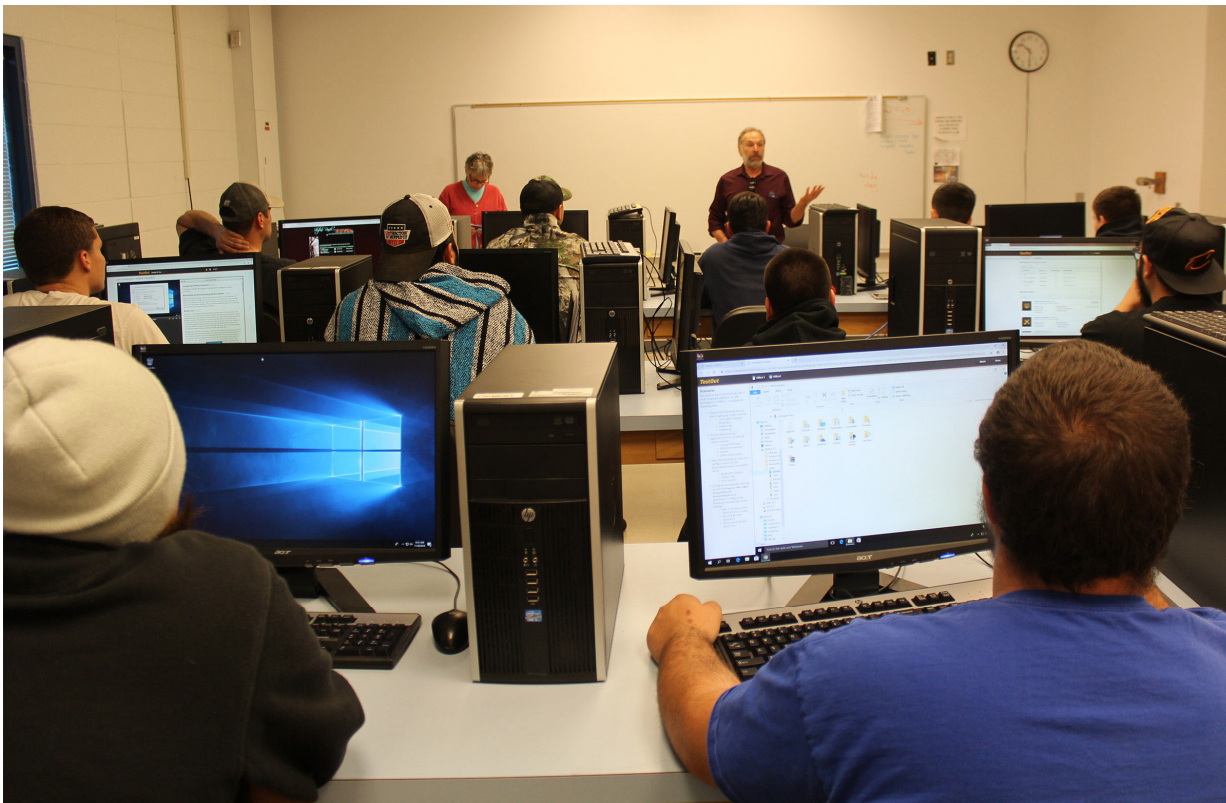
This holiday season, Luna Community College employees will have the option to cash out part of their vacation time.

The LCC Board of Trustees on Nov. 13 approved a measure that allows eligible employees to purchase up to 10 hours of their annual leave. It is a one-time program, and employees were given a deadline of Nov. 28 to apply for the purchase through the college's human resources office. Payment for approved leave purchases would be issued on Dec. 13, either via Direct Deposit or regular check, depending on the employee's existing arrangement with payroll.

"The Board of Trustees made this program happen for our dedicated employees," said LCC Interim President Ricky Serna. "It speaks to the

financial health of our institution that we are able to offer this option to our employees. It's particularly nice to see this happen as we approach the holiday season and winter break. We're hopeful that one outcome of this will be the infusion of additional money into the local economy."

Serna estimates that the maximum cost of the one-time program will be approximately \$24,000. That amount is being covered via cost savings through position vacancies across campus. And because annual leave for eligible employees is a benefit already factored into the budget, any leave amount that is deducted now will help reduce the amount of leave that needs to be taken through the end of the fiscal year.



**Luna Community College STEM students attend a presentation by New Mexico Tech on Nov. 28. The presenters included Dr. Bruce Harrison, Associate Department Chairman of Earth & Environmental Science; and Titia Duns Barham, Transfer and Articulation.**