By Richard Manly

Social Work’s Brian Lam has an interest in the concept of the construction of self and the coping strategies of Vietnamese-American adolescents that go beyond his research as a scholar; he learned to adjust his identity and to cope with major physiological and psychological changes as an adolescent when he came to this country as a refugee from Vietnam in 1985.

“I was one of the boat people,” said Lam, a Long Beach resident and member of the university since 2003. As an immigrant, he experienced many conflicts between his Vietnamese heritage and his American home. As American core values of individualism run counter to traditional Vietnamese core values of interdependence, he struggled to maintain a coherent sense of self as he attempted to integrate his cultural identity and the mainstream cultural identity. “I was torn between these forces,” he said.

In teasing out the significance of both worlds, “Bicultural individuals must be prepared to adjust their identities in different situations,” he said, “so that positive relationships with both cultures can coexist. It enables them to enjoy and thrive.”

His experience helps him relate to his diverse student enrollment. “Depending on its implementation, the acculturation process can disrupt the relationship between students and other support systems which may negatively influence the development of healthy coping strategies,” he said. “They talk to me about their conflicts and I attempt to assist them in identifying their external and internal coping resources.”

Lam received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from CSULB, the latter in 1994. He went on to acquire a doctorate from Columbia University in 2000.

In addition to his interest in biculturalism, Lam also examines the impact of perceived discrimination and cultural identity on psychological distress among Vietnamese-American young adults. In his study, he found that the perceived discrimination weakens individuals’ sense of self efficacy and challenges their sense of belonging and sense of identity which might lessen their ability to perceive their world as comprehensible and meaningful.

Conversely, he found that when these Vietnamese-American young adults perceived positive public attitudes and when they identified with and valued their cultural group membership, they were likely to internalize the perception that others recognized and shared their values and could provide advice and tangible support in the face of adversity. Consequently, their sense of coherence greatly improved. His article on his study is forthcoming in American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.

Lam also provides his perspective on the concept of mentoring with Vietnamese-American adolescents. He emphasized the important role of natural mentors (e.g., extended family members, neighbors and church representatives). He contended “these natural mentors may have a powerful influence on adolescents’ socialization due to their demographic closeness. Thus, they are likely to remain ‘in the picture’ over the course of time.

“As Vietnamese-American adolescents attempt to incorporate elements of American culture (e.g., autonomy) into their identity, they might challenge parental authority and disengage from the family, thus putting them at risk for alienation from their parents. Therefore, the existence of a natural mentor could be important in providing social support not only to the adolescent but also to other family members,” Lam said.

He recently completed a research study on the role of natural mentors on Vietnamese-American adolescents’ cultural and socio-emotional development funded by the William T. Grant Foundation. This research was a collaborative effort with two exemplary professors, Chuansheng Chen and Ellen Greenberger, at the University of California, Irvine’s School of Social Ecology. Based on the findings of this research study, an intervention program was designed and submitted to the National Institute of Mental Health for funding.

Open Enrollment Period Begins Early on Sept. 1

The open enrollment period for health, dental, flexcash, health and dependent care reimbursement account changes will be Sept. 1-29. Changes made during this period will become effective on Jan. 1. Due to CalPERS and other state restrictions, requests received after Sept. 29 cannot be accepted.

It’s important to note that the dependent and health care reimbursement plans require re-enrollment every year, even if an employee wishes to continue the same contribution amount. Current participants must complete a new enrollment form.

The annual Health Fair will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 7, outside Room 335 on the third floor patio area of Brotman Hall. Representatives from CalPERS Health, Delta Dental, PMI Delta Care, Medical Eye Services, California Casualty, Orange County Teachers Credit Union, Long Beach Credit Union, Sanders & Associates, Standard Insurance, and CalPERS Home Loan programs will be present to answer questions during the fair. Health insurance information will also be provided for CSULB Foundation employees.

Please review your plans carefully; premium rates and co-payments are subject to change. Look for CalPERS open enrollment material mailings in late July/early August. If you do not receive information from CalPERS, Open Enrollment packets will be available at the Office of Benefits and Staff Human Resources on Sept. 1.
Network Services’ Banuelos Named Employee of Month

Isabel Banuelos, who joined CSULB’s Office of Network Services in 2001, was chosen recently by her colleagues as employee of the month. A member of CSULB’s class of 2000 with a bachelor of science degree in computer science and currently working on an M.S. in computer science, she was recognized in a special ceremony held on Friendship Walk near the University Student Union which was renamed Isabel Banuelos Lane for the month.

President P. King Alexander applauded Banuelos for her good cheer and positive attitude. “She helps out the whole campus with a smile,” he said.

Banuelos is honored to be named employee of the month and thinks one reason for her recognition is that she is the first voice to speak to CSULB faculty and staff when they have computer problems.

“We deal mostly with computer system support issues for DAF (Division of Administration and Finance) as well as overseeing the university’s e-mail,” she said. “When dealing with upset users, I just let them talk and work out their problems. I don’t say anything until they are done and then I ask questions. By the end of the call, people are calmer because I provide solutions.”

The most common problem she faces is the loss of a password. “Sometimes people cannot access their e-mail or they have problems running some type of application,” she said. “Sometimes they get errors and I tap into their computer to see what they see. Whatever happens, I can fix it and people like that.”

She first chose CSULB in 1986 as a student because it was close to her Downey home. “I came to CSULB from New Mexico State University,” she said. “At NMSU most of the students lived on campus and there were campus activities all the time. Then I came to a commuter campus and missed that activity.”

Banuelos is the mother of two daughters: Xochiquetzal, age 8, and Malinalxochitl, age 1 and a half. “They keep me busy,” she laughed. “Most of my time turns into their time. It is not what I want to do anymore but what my daughters need.”

A good working environment is very important to Banuelos and it is that which drew her back to campus after graduation.

“I started here as a student worker and I loved the people I worked with,” she said. “They were very nice to me as a student and, when I came back, they were even nicer. A good working environment is important to me because I spend most of my days here. Other people may go home mad but I go home happy because I am at peace with my coworkers. If I couldn’t get along with them, how could I get along with an angry caller? Working with nice people makes everything easier.”

The key to success in Network Services is action. “When someone calls, it’s up to me to find a solution to their problem right away,” she said. “Most of my responsibilities involve researching computer problems.”

Banuelos received several gifts with her recognition including a CSULB sweatshirt, dinner for two at Domenico’s Italian Restaurant up to $50, two special event buffet tickets to The Hop in Lakewood, four admissions to Laguna Beach’s Festival of the Arts, a $10 gift certificate for Katella Deli and one free Whopper from Burger King.

Journalism Department Selected as Home Base for News Council

The Department of Journalism at CSULB has been selected as the home base for the Southern California News Council (SCNC), an independent, non-profit organization that will promote trusted journalism by investigating accuracy and fairness complaints against news outlets. The SCNC at CSULB will receive a $75,000 startup grant, with funds provided by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

“I’m hard pressed to think of a more fertile media environment than Southern California for a news council,” said William Babcock, professor and chair of CSULB’s Department of Journalism, who will be executive director of SCNC. “We have here a huge population base and a diverse variety of print, broadcast and online media.”

CSULB was one of two campuses chosen in a national competition to create two new local news councils.

In determining the accuracy and fairness of complaints against news outlets, the news councils help determine the facts involved in the disputes and provide open forums where citizens and journalists can discuss media ethics, standards and performance.

“In recent decades Americans have found their news media to have less and less credibility,” said Babcock. “News councils are one media accountability tool that addresses this credibility concern.”

The birth of these news councils coincides with a growing trend toward openness and accountability in the news media driven by the new era of two-way communications marked by the emergence of the Internet.

“A news council or any inquiry that seeks out the real facts behind media complaints is better than a blogger working from opinion alone, and vastly superior to the talking heads on cable TV with their pre-fixed political menus,” said Eric Newton, director of journalism initiatives at the Knight Foundation. “This project is an experiment to see if there is local support for the idea that a good way to perform media criticism is not through kangaroo courts of commentators but through the fair, accurate contextual pursuit of the truth.”
The prize is awarded each year by the Tax Adviser’s Editorial Board.

Darwin Hall, Economics/Environmental Science and Policy, and Richard J. Behl, Geological Sciences, co-authored a peer-reviewed article in *Ecological Economics* titled “Integrating economic analysis and the science of climate instability.”

Irene Howard, Physics and Astronomy, has a poem titled “Tomodachi” published in the *CSULB English Department’s RipRap*, Vol. 28, spring.

Yu Ji, Art, curated “Across the Divide,” an exhibition of works by 18 Chinese artists, held in June at the Reed Whipple Cultural Center in Las Vegas. The idea for an exhibit of a group of Chinese artists teaching in American colleges originated several years ago with Ji. Most of the 18 artists, who teach in 10 states across the country, received their initial studio experience in undergraduate schools in their native lands.

Gene E. Kalbus and Van T. Lieu, Chemistry and Biochemistry, have published a research article titled “Infrared Examination of the Transformation of Barium Sulfate into Barium Carbonate” in the June issue of *Journal of Chemical Education*.

Ingrid M. Martin, Marketing, along with David Stewart and Mike Kamins of USC, chaired the International Conference on Marketing and Public Policy at the Long Beach Westin on June 8-10. The theme of the conference was “Portal to the Pacific – Public Policy in the International Arena.” The conference hosted more than 150 attendees from 15 countries with a final gala event on the Queen Mary. This was the first time that the conference, regularly held in Washington, D.C., was held on the West Coast.

Susan Mathieu, Recreation and Leisure Studies, presented her study, “Aging, Stress and Social Connections” at the International Federation on Aging (IFA) Eighth Global Conference on Aging held in Copenhagen in June. The conference focused on aging issues and included speakers from the United Nations, World Health Organization and AARP. Mathieu also was a guest on Weight Control Radio, part of WSRadio.com in May, speaking on “Therapeutic Recreation, Longevity and the Quality of Life.”

William Moore, Public Policy and Administration, presented a paper titled “Progressive Fiscal Policy and Economic Growth” at the Public Finance and Budgeting section of the Western Social Science Association conference in Phoenix in April.

Jose F. Moreno, Chicano and Latino Studies, co-authored a report for the James Irvine Foundation titled “The Revolving Door of Underrepresented Minority Faculty in Higher Education” in the foundation’s publication *Insight: Lesson Learned from our Grant-making Programs*.

Clifton Snider, English, had a poem, “The Taos Egg Incident,” published in *Riprap*, No. 28, and he participated in the publication reading for *Riprap* at CSULB on May 10. He also had a poem titled “Skunk,” published in *Pearl*, No. 35.

Fran Siegel, Art, one of 10 visual artists to receive a 2005-06 City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship, had her work exhibited at the Barnsdall Municipal Art Gallery in Los Angeles from April through June. Siegel’s installations were titled “Site-line,” “Viewpoint” and “Trackingpoints.”

Paul Tang, Philosophy, presented a paper titled “The Explanatory-Descriptive Model of Scientific Understanding” and a second paper titled “The Complementarity Model of Mind-Brain Revisited” at the 48th annual conference of the Western Social Science Association held April 21-22 in Phoenix. He also chaired a session on “Philosophy and Science,” attended a business meeting and was re-appointed philosophy coordinator for the 49th annual conference in 2007.

Victor C. X. Wang, Professional Studies, published a research article titled “Perceptions of the Teaching Preferences of Online Instructors” in the spring issue of *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 16(3). He also published a research article titled “Implementing Andragogy in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in China: A Dream Yet to be Realized” in the *Journal of International Forum of Teaching and Studies, 2*(2).


Jessica Zacher, Teacher Education and Liberal Studies, was awarded the National Council of Teachers of English “Promising Researcher Award” for her dissertation research (May 2006). The winning paper’s title was “Analyzing children’s social positioning and struggles for recognition in a classroom literacy event.” She will present an invited talk based on the paper at the NCTE conference in November in Nashville, Ky.
2006 Staff Graduates

Among the CSULB staff members who received degrees in May are (seated l-r) Barbara Marshall, Electrical Engineering; Debbie Jay, Enrollment Services; Kimberly Daro, University Ombuds; and Stephanie Valenzuela, Enrollment Services; (standing l-r) Sandra Dana, Physics and Astronomy; Mark McLaughlin, Physics and Astronomy; Marshall Thomas, Tutorial Services Program; and Erika Valdez, Social Work.

Concert Series Continues

Halfway through its 30th season of providing entertainment under the stars, the Saturday evening Concerts in the Grove series at CSULB continues through Aug. 26, featuring a variety of musical performances in the Hollywood Bowl-type atmosphere of the Soroptimist House terrace, located just off Beach Drive.

The gates open at 6 p.m. for concert-goers who wish to bring picnic supplies prior to the 7:30 p.m. program. Admission is $20.

The remainder of this season’s musical lineup is:

• **Saturday, Aug. 19** – Ramfunkshus, a seven-piece group that gets down with dance favorites covering Motown, classic rock and disco. The band displays funky takes on favorites of the ‘50s and today.

• **Saturday, Aug. 26** – Open Wide, a band composed of practicing dentists from Orange and San Diego counties. The band was formed in 1997 and performs classic rock and roll from the ‘50s through the ‘90s, including selections from The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Jefferson Airplane, Brian Setzer, The Doobie Brothers, The Doors and more.

For tickets or information, call the CSULB Alumni Relations Office at 562/985-5252.

Open Wide performs classic rock and roll from the ‘50s through the ‘90s.