

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SEPTEMBER 2014

Parrots Take the Lead to College

ELITE Academic coaches Ethan Soyer and Erin Ross present tools for Poly seniors's success

By Miguel Gutierrez
Staff Writer

Poly seniors were welcomed back this school year with the opportunity to attend Poly's first annual Leadership Summit, on Saturday August 16.

The idea of the Summit was presented to Principal Ari Bennett by Ethan Sawyer, an SAT prep instructor. Sawyer began by running summer programs with the Los Angeles Leadership Academy, a charter school system in Lincoln Heights, Los Angeles. He was also joined by workshop leader Erin Ross.

Sawyer said that the goal of the Summit was to "Empower students to recognize the inner resources they already have-resources that can help them be successful in college and beyond."

A particular goal Bennett supported was the summit's aim to help students develop their personal statements in preparation for college applications.

Set for the first Saturday of the new school year, Bennett was determined to make this event a success, going out personally to every senior class on the first day of school to stress the importance of the summit.

Poly counselor Tamika Lewis was also involved, providing students



Seniors Present Speeches

Photo by Jaycelle Tadena

with clarity and tips on the college application process. Lewis said, "We understood we were asking kids to come out on a Saturday, and we wanted to make sure it was exciting for them."

The principal included a myriad of incentives to entice students to attend. Every student attending, who signed both in and out, received five dollars off their Senior Breakfast tickets, as well as choosing between a free attendance day pass or an extra ticket to the class of '15 graduation.

Students who arrived late to the event or who turned in the trip slip late were denied entry into the auditorium. A-life lesson that time and deadlines are important.

It did not stop there. Prizes were raffled, ranging from ELITE backpacks, to Senior Dinner tickets, to even a free ticket to prom.

Lewis said, "We wanted them to feel like it was a lot in store, including these exciting things we were raffling."

Most students seemed to enjoy the program and the activities. Poly senior Anthony Ceballos stated, "I thought the activities were cool because they made us think of who we are."

The summit by all accounts was a success, with approximately 400 students in attendance; 350 being Poly Parrots, with the rest coming from either North Hollywood or Los Angeles Leadership Academy High School.

Lewis stated, "Here at Poly, we care about your future. We kicked off the year with such a great event, and we simply said 'You can do this!'".

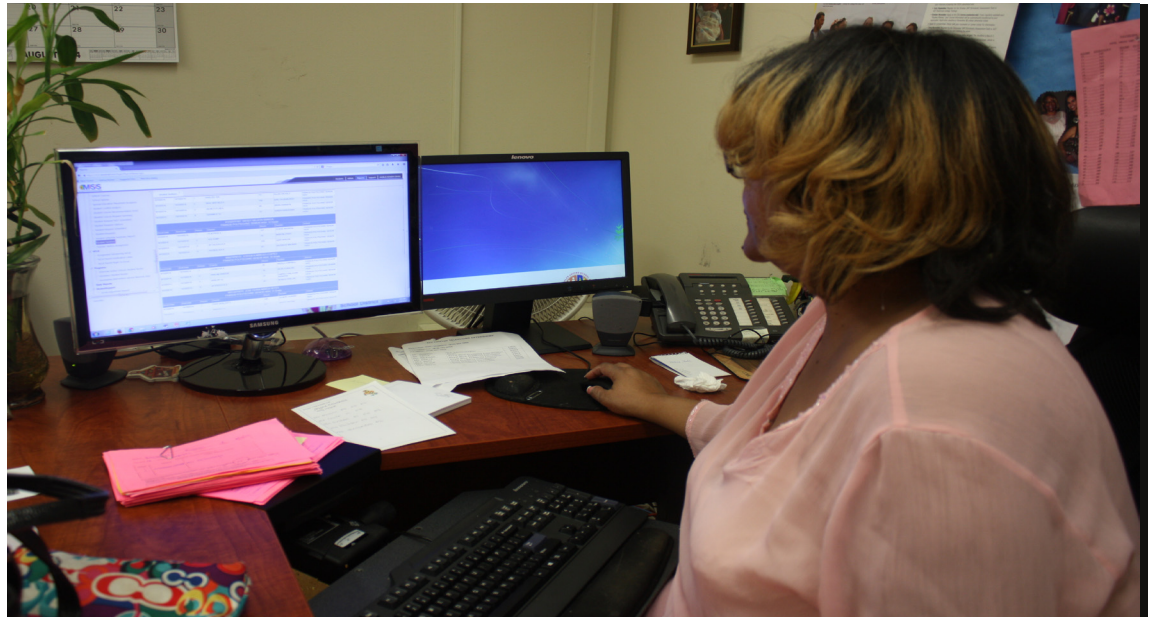


Photo by Jaycelle Tadena

Office Trouble: APSCS Director Jamille Kenion struggles with MISIS system.

Poly Perseveres Through MISIS Crisis

By Kate Martinez & Ashley Tulle
Staff Writers

Poly Parrots entered this new school year 2014-2015 with hundreds of students without any assigned classes, teachers, such as Jim Deschene with no students in his classes, and counselors and administrators unable to access student records or necessary program data, as a result of LAUSD's attempt to launch a new program called MISIS -My Integrated Student Information System. Administrators and counselors refer to this "information system" as the MISIS crisis.

Magnet Coordinator

Jayne Couchois went to all Magnet 9th and 10th classes to have students write out their schedule on paper. Couchois chose to do this, so as to avoid loss of the entire previously required entered student data.

"I'm hoping that when it is finally fully up and running that it is helpful, where it helps us to give better information to students" said Couchois.

Many freshman students found their registrations had been lost and they were not even registered at Poly, never mind having any assigned classes. There

were lines of freshman, who appeared to have registered in June and attended orientation in August, but found that on the first day of school they did not exist in the system.

Freshman Counselors, Michelle Carbone, says "MISIS is a new system and there are growing pains but we are happy that the students have been so patient."

Counselors and administrations are unable to access classes on the master schedule to determine what classes are available, by what

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Students Leave Everything to Live and Learn

By Juan Garcia & Emily Pintor
Staff Writer

This school year is bringing many new refugees into LAUSD

schools, and Poly is one of them.

52,000 unaccompanied children have entered the United States since last October and LAUSD's superintendent John

Deasy says he is "planning for 1,000 this year, but I will know more when our doors open".

Avilene Espinoza is responsible for teaching all the new coming refugee students and she says this year has given her the largest number of students. "This year is the largest class of students I've ever had", said Espinoza. Her class of about 35 students is mainly made up of Hispanic refugees.

About 80% of Espinoza's class is made up of teenagers from El Salvador and the rest come from other countries such as Mexico and Honduras.

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Photo: Refugee students attend class

Photo By Victor Garcia



Jody Nathan in Africa Pg. 6 Photo courtesy of Nathan

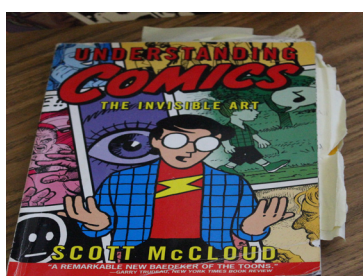


Photo by Victor Garcia

New Magnet Teacher

Munoz brings comic relief to poly.

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Photo by Victor Garcia
Teacher Avilene Espinoza pg. 4

Refugees come to Poly

Students arrive at Poly in search of Education

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Guest Editorial: Michelle Nellon

Life after Poly, College and Beyond

What's Next, You Ask?

Growing up the Labor Day holiday had come to symbolize the end of summer and the beginning of a new school year. It was a time when the season would inevitably change; the days would be shorter, cooler and filled with anticipation of what the next nine months would hold until summer faithfully came around again. Now summers are longer, or at least they seem to be; school dates begin weeks before the heat cools into a warm autumn, and Labor Day has come to symbolize something new. As I grew older and became a high school teacher I find myself nostalgic for the symbolic holiday of my youth. As a teacher, Labor Day has taken on a new meaning as it symbolizes the start of the college season, similar to the start of the football season or the basketball season; it is the beginning of a season for seniors. This is the season where choices are made, grades are calculated and applications are mailed; correction emailed. This is the most important season of their young adult lives.

For many seniors this can be a time of anxious planning as they decide which colleges to apply to, how to write the perfect personal statement, and how will they afford the next four years of their lives. For some it will be a time to find a job or a trade that will lead to a career. The game of high school is coming to an end as the last quarter is played. Whatever the next play will be in their lives, this is a decisive turning point and decisions made now can affect the beginning of their adult years. Whether writing a personal statement or creating a resume and cover letter, this is the time where identities are defined, contemplated and redefined. This is a time of reflection where twelve short years culminate into the unavoidable question of what's next. Sometimes the answer to this question does not come as easy for some as it does for others.

Whatever the answer may be, it is important to slow down and enjoy the process. Looking back years from now the anxiety and anticipation will seemingly feel trivial to all that lies ahead. So what can you do to prepare for this important year? Stop by the college office where you will find a wealth of information on different colleges. Talk to your teachers and ask for advice. If you have older siblings or cousins, ask them about the paths they chose after high school. Whoever you ask or wherever you find information, the time is now.



Error; Less money, more work

"Hmm a billion dollar I-Pad project? Approved, now take our money!"

That's what I imagine went down over at the LAUSD headquarters. Even from the start many were opposed to the whole I-Pad project which promised to give every student an I-Pad for school use. Well, as time went on, what was obvious to the public finally became apparent to the big boys upstairs. What if there exists a student who doesn't follow rules? Should he get an I-Pad? Even the new testing system was a total disaster. Schools were given routers for students to test on while using their I-Pads. Seems simple enough right? Nope, the routers given to schools weren't the industrial power behemoths that schools expected; instead, they were small little things that could barely cover someone's house.

Just when you think the I-Pad fiasco would be the end of it, in rolls the recent MISIS Crisis.

"Hmm a switch from our 120 million dollar system to a 20 million dollar system? Approved, now take our money!"

I think everyone is pretty familiar with MISIS by now but here's an analogy to help those who don't yet understand. LAUSD chose to switch from windows 8, which still had its fair share of problems, to an XP. Any teacher would cringe at the mention of taking roll with MISIS. Once paperwork becomes faster than the districts system, then that should be a red flag to bury it somewhere deep underground. Recently in the LA Times reported, MISIS has completely lost the records of 45,000 students within the district. Sadly, MISIS will still continue to haunt teachers and students alike until the hive of bugs within MISIS is dealt with. Until then we'll just have to be happy about pharmacies recent boom in anti-stress pills.

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From 6 to 18 in this 12 year long movie following the life of one boy from adolescence to adulthood.

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Poly students show their support for Poly's football game against Saint Genevieve.

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By Kate Martinez

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor must be typed or printed in ink and include the writer's signature. The OPTIMIST reserves the right to edit submissions. Send letters to Rm.14 or Ms. Matlen's box.

FRESHMAN CORNER

Freshman Center Welcomes New Parrots

By Juan Garcia
Staff Writer

Poly Freshmen received a special invitation from Poly's spirit squads and athletic teams. Freshmen were treated to an array of practice routines and activities that reflect the clubs and teams at Poly that they are encouraged to become involved in.

Biology teacher Mario Rivera joins the ranks of the Freshman Center this year as the new dean. The Optimist caught up with Rivera to discuss his new duties as an administrator for the freshmen.

Principal Bennett approached Rivera and asked if he would be interested in taking the job. "In reality there was nothing to think about" said Rivera "I wanted to experience the new position." Rivera has many roles such as teacher, assistant coach, and coach.



Photo by Victor Garcia

Currently Rivera coaches the Cross Country Team after school. Rivera says that he will try his best to not let his new position as dean interfere into his coaching responsibilities. He states that he will no longer have a fourth period class like in previous years but that he has an understanding team and together they will do their best to make things work.

Rivera reflects on his transition to the Ninth grade center and states "it was not difficult in the sense that I was supported by my colleagues. I was welcomed, and since I've been working for a long time, I knew everybody it just that I'm on the other side



Drill team perform for Poly Freshmen Photo by Victor Garcia



Wrestling Team shows Freshmen Parrots new moves Photo by Victor Garcia

now." Rivera says he loves the Freshman center. "It's so clean and everyone is respectful especially the students" He states that the students are attentive to instruction and for him that just makes things easier to adjust to.

Rivera would finally like the ninth grade parrots to know that all the staff are there to support

them in their new home at Poly and that he is very excited to work with them. Rivera would also like students to know that he has an open door policy. Anyone is welcome to just walk into his office to talk about anything, not just because they got in trouble. "Hopefully they don't see me as a bad guy and come talk to me"

Fresh Face for Magnet Freshmen

By Juan Garcia & Jaycelle Tadena
Staff Writers

Edgar Munoz joins Poly's Magnet English department, bringing with him a love of language for students.

Before joining Poly, Munoz taught at Youth Opportunities Unlimited Alternative High School, a small LAUSD Options School in South Los Angeles from 2004 until this year. It is a dropout recovery school serving students in need of a good education.

He received his BA and MA in English from California State University, Northridge as well as his Teaching Credential.

Munoz states, "Stories drew me to English. I learn the most about life from good stories. And then there's poetry and rhetoric, which are just amazing for too many reasons."

Munoz also stated that his former English Teacher, Evan Fabricant from San Fernando High School inspired him to become a teacher. He explains, "He made books meaningful and philosophical... his class and his treatment of what others had to say about truth and logic left an indelible impression on my young mind, and I'm thankful that it did."

Munoz has been married to his wife Maritza

for nine years. Together they have a two year son named Darian and a four year old Siberian husky, Logan. Munoz's hobbies include drawing Comics, but besides comics, Munoz writes poetry, essays and fiction. He also plays Basketball on Sundays and practices guitar. Munoz also takes Latin classes at Pasadena City College.

Munoz will also be sponsoring the new Comic Club at Poly. Munoz says "I love comics. I've read and collected comics since I was a child. As I grew up, my love for this art form turned into reading what really smart people had to say about comics such that comics are not simply stories meant for the academically challenged." Munoz states that he hopes to help students develop finer aesthetic understanding of comic books through the Comic Club. The Club will mainly be focused on American Comics but Munoz states that they will also dive into some international comics as well. The Comic Club will be meeting every Wednesdays after school in room thirty-five. Every student is free to join.

Munoz states that he wishes to build up a book or journal of panels that are made by students. "We wish to at least publish every student's best comic strip or page." Munoz says, "We want every student to have at least one of their best strip or page to be published. We might even publish it ourselves."

Munoz encourages students to join the Comic club even if they aren't very good at drawing. "Our main focus is on the story. You don't have to be great at drawing. We wish to create stories through

this from of art."

Munoz says he enjoys being at Poly. "Poly is an outstanding school. It's the complete opposite of where I worked before: it's huge, students are very seriously college-bound, clubs abound, and the teachers and staff seem to work in concert toward a single mission. Hard work seems to be the observable staple of this school, and that kind of drive and effort is contagious."

"What I love most about teaching are the students and the energy they bring to the class" states Munoz, "They are so full of life and creativity. I think I learn more from them than they do from me, and I feel lucky to be in their presence."



Photo by Jaycelle Tadena

CAMPUS

So you think you can dance?



Photo provided by Jocelyn Garcia

Poly's own Jocelyn Garcia answers with a resounding "yes."

The Optimist followed up on Poly Parrot Jocelyn Garcia who attended the Joffrey Ballet School of Dance over her summer break

The Joffrey Dance School is one of the most prestigious dance schools in the country. The Joffrey Ballet Company a well-known Ballet company headquartered in Chicago, Illinois runs it. Joffrey hosts a number of summer dance programs throughout the country but Garcia attended Joffrey West held in Northridge, culminating with a Hollywood style final showcase at California State University, Northridge.

In preparation Garcia said "my regular dance schedule consisted of

By Juan Garcia
Staff Writer

ten hours a week at my studio. I cut out all junk food and made sure to drink plenty of water." Garcia even downloaded an app that tracked the amount of water she drank each day.

Garcia described the program as "Intense." For Garcia, a normal day of Joffrey consisted of waking up at six a.m., commuting to the Valley Performing Arts Center by seven AM, arriving at eight thirty am to start class and finishing with rehearsals at 7 in the evening. She also stated that her classes varied from normal Ballet technique to Hip-Hop and even Jazz and Yoga.

Garcia had the opportunity to work with dancers well known in dance. "I had the opportunity to work with six of the "So You Think You Can Dance" dancers including "tWITCH" who just recently finished filming "Step Up: All in." Garcia also worked with world-

renowned choreographers such as Gigi Torres, John Pennington, Liz Emperio, Josie Walsh, Arturo Fernandez and Shellie Cash."

Garcia's preparation for the final showcase held at CSUN's VPAC. Garcia stated that she was a part of John Pennington's, Gigi Torres', and Alice Alyse's pieces. Garcia explains, "What truly kept me going was A LOT of water, almonds, dark chocolate, and a positive environment."

In addition Garcia stated that she made friends with not only people from out of state but from around the world. "I met people from Canada, Argentina, England, Switzerland and even Turkey."

Garcia states that Joffrey opened many doors for her. "I was asked to study for four years at the Joffrey Ballet School in New York with a full scholarship," states Garcia. "I still don't know if I will take it. I am still going to apply to many other dance schools in the country as well as international, aside from normal academic Universities"

Garcia states she plans on

continuing her dance training at my home studio in North Hollywood... and next January I will be auditioning for my dream dance schools, The Juilliard School, NYU Tisch, The Royal Ballet School, and the School of American Ballet, as well as more summer intensives.

Garcia reflects on what impact this experience has her future as a dancer or outside of dancing. "I genuinely feel that I left Joffrey West a strong dancer." Stated Garcia. "Whether it is a physical improvement or a mental improvement, I can honestly say that I have moved a step forward." After graduation Garcia says she plans on attending a dance school and hopes to be hired by a ballet company like Joffrey or The New York City Ballet Company and do what I love.

Poly Graduate Joins Wellesley Women

By Emily Pintor
Staff Writer

Poly students achieve the pinnacle of success, but still come back to their roots. Last week a few Poly alumni stopped by to start off the new school year and discuss college tips with students.

Kathy Silva graduated class of 2012 from the comprehensive school and is currently attending Wellesley College, a prestigious all girl school to have taught great minds such as Hillary Clinton and Diane Sawyer. Silva found her major in a 'Women in Gender Studies' class, she fell in love with the concept and connected with the material. In addition, she also has an emphasis on pre-med and plans on becoming a doctor.

The fact that Wellesley was an all girls school did not phase Silva at

all. She said "Wellesley being an all girls school was never really a big factor in me deciding if I wanted to go there or not". To Silva one of the perks of an all girls school is seeing women in control. "It's nice to see women in the position of power, you see many more women in high positions", said Silva.

A big factor that did help Silva choose Wellesley was financial aid. The esteemed college offered Silva the best financial package, but in addition to the money was the experience to live in another part of the country. "The financial aid did help my decision, but I also wanted to explore and learn how to be self-independent."

Silva was a part of ACADECA which she said has played a key role for her in college. She also thanks college counselor Leona Warman



Ari Bennett, Joana Reyes, Kathy Silva, and Javier Zamora

Photo by Emily Pintor

and others saying, "It wasn't just me there was others in my community supporting me, like the college counselors and my friends."

One thing Silva would like to see is more Poly alums involved in the

community. Community is extremely important to Silva because she knows it has shaped her, she said "I want to come back and help at clinics and come back to the schools to give back to the community because

they have done a lot for me."

When asked if she had a message for new seniors, Silva stated "Take advantage of what's out there, remember you're representing yourself and working for yourself."

In addition to Silva other alums have also come back to advise college bound parrots.

Javier Zamora graduated from class of 2013 and is studying Communications with a minor in sociology at UC Santa Barbara. He cites the magnet program as one of his biggest supports in getting in to college. Magnet prepared Zamora for the high level and intensity of work.

Joana Reyes, also class of 2013, is majoring in sociology with a minor in Public Policy at UC Riverside. She wants to be a clinical social

worker and hopes to give minorities more representation in research studies. She too, also cites Magnet as one of her major motivators

Zamora and Reyes also highly value the community they come from. "We really want to help our community and show that if we can do it, others just like us at Poly and schools across the Valley can get here too", said Zamora.

Reyes believes the college help at Poly is outstanding, "Its only a matter if you want it or not. Poly has many resources students just have

to be driven and want to get in to college."

For both students financial aid helped decide which college they chose. Though money may have been the biggest factor, they are both more than happy with their choices and feel like they chose the perfect fit for them.

Zamora and Reyes are both extremely passionate about their studies and hope to come back to The Valley to support the community. They also want to see other Poly students succeed. These

seasoned parrots advise freshmen to "not be scared of what's to come in their educational career and to get involved in the school".

When discussing current seniors, Zamora stresses the idea of being independent, "Seniors have to be self driven and show their commitment for school."

Reyes recommends for students not to be too selective in picking a college "Don't underestimate any school, what's important is what you make of the time at your school, not the name of the College"

Poly's New SLC Academies



Photo by Jonathan Femat

Blue



Photo by Victor Garcia

Gold

By Joshua Penado
Editor & Chief

Poly Juniors and seniors begin the new school year with a transition to the new Academy system consisting of the Royal Blue Academy and the Gold Academy. Each Academy now has three counselors, Gold having Chi-Sun Chang, Tamika Lewis, and Maria Reyes and Blue having Kim McEwen, Narmeen Elfarra, and

Wanda Bello.

"When we divided faculty and students between Blue and Gold, we tried to be as equable as possible in dividing the core classes" said Chang "We wanted the same amount of core classes like Math and English in both Academies to keep them balanced to avoid situations like an English academy or a Math academy"

"When it comes to AP classes if a student wants an AP Lit class that their academy doesn't offer then that student can still take that AP class in the other academy, so it's pretty

adjustable" said Chang.

"We wanted to go from three SLC's to the two Academies because that would allow for more student personalization as well as a larger student support group" said McEwen. "Both academies aim to help students become college and career ready"

Ap classes and electives will be offered in both houses.

CAMPUS

[MISIS, from page 1]

teacher, and how many students are actually in the classes.

Students were coming in and out of the counselor office trying to adjust their schedule, but due to the unpredictability of MISIS, many left with no change. 12th grade counselor, Narmeen Elfarra, said of MISIS that the “Biggest challenge is not being able to assist our students in a timely manner.”

Elfarra has high hopes for MISIS as she says “the goal of the district is to come into the 21st century in terms of technology... right now it doesn’t feel that way, but the eventual outcome and goal is for it to be a better user-friendly system.”

Counselors had to resort to manually issuing program changes, with carbon copies, given to teachers to add/drop, with counselors’ desks piled high with program changes they attempted to enter manually.

11th grade student, Mario Deorio, waits at the SLC room to change his classes with hundreds of other students, to change his classes, but to no avail. “I’m kind of mad that they didn’t give me the classes I wanted. I got regular classes when I asked for AP. The teachers even recommended me for AP classes, but I never got them.”

Another student Karen Cabrera, said she came five times to ask the counselor to change her classes. There are students being called in to meet with their counselors, but some are just taking a lot more time. “You wait and you wait.”

English teacher, Cheryl Kehrmeyer, comments on the performance of MISIS saying “It’s just a mess.”

Title One coordinator, Yesenia Pleitez, states that she is having trouble putting in students contact information in the system. “This is such a huge school it would take forever to do it one by one.”

Bilingual Coordinator, Marixa Pleitez, describes how the complications of MISIS was affecting the Bilingual office.

“The Bilingual department has been affected by MISIS because the data that is in MISIS isn’t accurate. We’re finding that we do not know who the English language (EL) students are and we are unable to provide teachers with that information; we’re unable to print the roster of all our EL students and although there is some data in MISIS, that data isn’t updated, so we have had a bit of a struggle to access it.”

Senior Office Administrator, Louie Oliveros, in the attendance office is struggling to enroll students, and some students aren’t even registered into MISIS.

“[The Kids] are in classes but we don’t know which class they are in because they’re still not on the system, there’s a lot of issues with MISIS.” said Oliveros.

The biggest problem for all faculty and staff is as Oliveros says, “We’ve had no training. The district didn’t really set up a lot of training for clerical staff.”

Oliveros insisted there are positive things about MISIS, “With MISIS attendance is easier to take, marking kids absent was a longer process with Isis (the former computer system program) ... The good thing about MISIS is that everything is in one screen, it’s all there so that’s good.”

Assistant Principal of counseling, Jamille Kenion, expounded on the current MISIS situation.

Like others she can agree MISIS is very slow. “It was very slow, so it impacted our ability to get things done efficiently.”

Kenion elaborates on the malfunctions in the MISIS, “sometimes we get errors and

we don’t know why. Sometimes it just says an error but it doesn’t tell us what the error is ... it would just go down and it won’t open up.”

“MISIS was created to keep double enrollment at schools happening ... the unintended consequence was that getting the other school to release them when they actually belong to you.”

“It’s made me work a little harder to work around the differences of this system and our old system.” said Kenion regarding the challenges she faces as the APSCS. Compared to ISIS’S server CL23 that shows the students and their classes in an organized matter, MISIS’s servers fail to meet the standards. “The system doesn’t give me that flexibility” said Kenion.

“Some things have not come alive yet. The potential is there but the buttons haven’t

been activated for us to use them the way they’re intended to be used.”

Kenion adds, “It’s gotten better. It’s not going down as often. It’s moving faster. It’s not just circling, this circle of death we call it.” “It’s a work in progress, believe me.”

In an official email statement LAUSD advised teachers that they would have to resort to pencil and paper and 5 column rosters to take attendance the first 2 weeks of school. The emails stated, “When a teacher submits attendance the page will show the updated attendance but the message ‘attendance has been submitted’ will not appear.”



Wanda Bello against MISIS

Photo by Michael Manzano

“There will be a lag time of one school day for viewing the attendance report in MISIS for middle school and high schools.”

Another email sent was attached with instructions for printing out an emergency roster.

The root of the launch of MISIS was a federal court settlement made against the district. 20 years ago, LAUSD lost records of a special education student resulting in her repeating the 10th grade three times.

“The school district pushed ahead with launching the system. As a result, students were delayed in registering for classes as the system lost their schedules and records, along with other glitches that made MISIS unavailable at times during the first week of school.” reported by Thomas Himes for the Daily News.

Newcomers to America

[Continued from pg 1]

“These are students that are brand new, they have only been here for a few days, at most a few months” said Espinoza.

The new refugee students enter Poly and other schools in LAUSD with no familiarity of American schools. Schools are a whole new world for these students and Espinoza feels like they need a community within the school they can identify with.

At the end of last school year Espinoza started the Newcomers club, a group where new students can come together and feel a sense of community.

“The percentages of newcomers graduating is very very low, a big part of that I feel is due to the fact that they are not as involved in the school. The club gives them a community they can be a part of” said Espinoza.



Rafael Polanco is hopeful

Photo by Victor Garcia

The chances of refugee students graduating are very low. Espinoza believes there needs to be a bit more focus on these students to encourage them

to graduate. “It usually takes more than four years for these students to graduate, if there were more resources for them such as personal counselors I feel like we could decrease the time”.

We interviewed some of Poly’s new students to see how they feel about their new surroundings.

Rafael Polanco is a Salvadorian refugee who has been in the United States for only 3 months. Polanco left El Salvador to seek a better education and life as many other refugees do.

Josue Higuera another newcomer left Mexico to receive a better education and aspires to be a chemist. He left his family in Mexico and came to California to live with his aunt.

These new refugee students face many obstacles when they enter LAUSD: a language barrier, a whole new environment and virtually no one they really know. Espinoza helps them get settled in and get accustomed to the new environment.

To the refugee students this new environment opens the door for endless possibilities their country did not offer them.



Newcomers learn to learn

Photo by Victor Garcia

CAMPUS

Out of Africa

Poly Teacher Bridges Continental divide



Nathan next to typical Rwandan home

By Filiberto Catalan
Staff Writer

It has been a year since Poly's Jody Nathan left for Africa in the summer of 2013. "I went there, because it seemed super amazing and far away and crazy brave." Nathan left for the country of Rwanda after the Rwanda National Cycling Team received a grant from the United States to bring an English teacher to the local village near the cyclists' living quarters. Through her connections with the World Bicycle Relief association, Nathan was asked to come to Rwanda for a whole year and six months after that, was on a plane for Rwanda.

Nathan describes her experience in the Rwandan village. She says, "It was very very rural, first of all, and the thing that's very interesting

about Rwanda is that it's very high altitude, so it's not hot, it's very green with lots and lots of trees and everyday was misty in the morning...like a California morning." Although Rwanda is known to be the "Land of a Thousand Hills", its history is not known to be pretty. The Rwandan Genocide that took place between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in 1994 stained Rwandan history with the blood of over a million people. It went down in history as one of the most savage genocides, as victims were slaughtered with machetes and tortured with rape and beatings.

Now, twenty years later, life has returned to normal, at least in the village where Nathan lived for an entire year. Nathan says, "The Government is very strict with punishments for crime, so the crime rate is very low almost zero violent crime. However, the Genocide was only 20 years ago. It is subtle but you can still sense the tension between the Hutu and Tutsi

people. The Government doesn't acknowledge any differences... unity... only Rwandans". The Rwanda National Cycling Team has been a key factor to the peace in the village and the rest of Rwanda. The Rwanda National Cycling Team, which asked Nathan to teach English for an entire year there, has used bicycling as a method of promoting peace throughout the country. The 2012 documentary/film, "Rising From Ashes" focuses on these cyclists and the change they have brought about after the effects of the genocide that ravaged Rwanda for a hundred days in 1994.

Education in Rwanda is much different than that in the United States. Nathan states, "Most of the students did not progress past the third grade. Public school is free until grade six." Nathan was brought to teach eighteen cyclists between the ages of nineteen though twenty-five. The purpose of teaching these grown cyclists from Team Rwanda was to help facilitate their interactions with other people around the world, since they travel around the world to compete in international cycling tournaments. Nathan was also able to learn a little from the Rwandans as well. "I learned some basics of the language -Kinyarwanda. Amakuru (good day). Murakoze Cyane (thank you). Ndashaka kogura amazi (I want to buy water). All the necessary phrases to buy food in the market and travel about the town." The challenges that Nathan faced in teaching these cyclists were much different from the United States as well. "The biggest challenge was being able to bridge the cultural differences. It is important to connect to a student's prior understanding or experience, but these young men had never eaten in a restaurant, driven a car or gone to a movie theater. Their personal experiences are very limited." This is as a result of the poverty that has dominated not only the village, but throughout Rwanda as well. According to Nathan, most families do not have running water in their homes and most people in the village do not have sinks, toilets, or showers inside their houses. "The average working family will make about \$200 per month. But things are expensive. Gas \$8/gallon \$1.50/loaf of bread. Rent for a one bedroom apartment sharing



Brothers walk home from school

an outhouse is about \$90 per month. It is a daily struggle." Unfortunately for the children there in the village, the lack of money inhibits their ability to receive a higher education. "...several of the local parents communicated the desire for their child to continue with school but because money is tight most children have to help work to support the family."

Although Nathan's goal in Africa was to teach children English, she had some personal goals of her own. She says, "Have you ever looked at somebody and said, 'I wish I was that kind of person'?... One time I met somebody and I said, 'I wish I was that kind of person' and that woman looked at me with this crazy look in her eyes and she said 'Be that person'". "If you want to go to Stanford, you make a goal... so you make a plan and you take the steps to get to the plan. Now, if you say,

I wish I were at Stanford, it's never going to happen... there is this Pinterest picture that says, 'She believed she could, so she did'... and that's what I did". "I wanted to be the person that was brave".

Nathan has enjoyed her experience in Africa. She says, "Now that I'm back, I'm like 'Well, it wasn't all that hard or scary'... I would do it a million times over, I would go anywhere now." To attest to that, Nathan has created her own blog about her adventures in Africa called My "50th trip around the sun" where she documented some of her experiences in Rwanda. She even made a Facebook page called "Ms. Nathan is back from Africa." Nathan states, "I wish I knew, when I was twenty, what this felt like, because I could have been doing this for a long time."



Rwandan cyclists ride past local villagers



Rwanda boys attend school

Photos provided by Jody Nathan

ENTERTAINMENT

Growing Up Is Hard To Do, Just Ask Mason

By Emily Pintor
Staff Writer

Richard Linklater (“Dazed and Confused”, “Before Sunset”) really taps in to the true essence of growing up with his new feature film “Boyhood”. In this odyssey of a film Linklater travels into the depths of a Texan teenage boy. The film, which took over 12 years to make, explores the life of Mason (Ellar Coltrane) from 6 to 18 years old.

Every year for 12 years Linklater and the actors would gather to shoot small clips of the fictional boy and his family. Over the years and over the course of the movie viewers gain a connection with Mason and his family.

Mason struggles with an absent father (Ethan Hawke) trying to weave himself back in to the lives of his children, a series of hot headed stepfathers and a struggling single mom (Patricia Arquette).

Arquette and Hawke deliver as a young divorced parents of Mason, also trying to get their lives in order. Hawke plays the immature musical father with suave and charm that matures over the years. The characters are real, and their performances add to the integrity of the characters.

Mason is loveable and relatable. He bickers with his sister (Lorelei Linklater) and tries to find his place in the world. Who is he really and what does he want to do.

The scenes of the film flow effortlessly and a viewer almost forgets it took 12 years to show the growth of this child. The structure is dire to the film and often times the transitions indicate another year in Mason’s life.

Through the film, the audience sees Mason grow and develop and in turn they also see Coltrane grow, which gives more significance to the film and moves viewer. The audience sees it all, changes of hair, changes of style and subtle changes in personality.

The film seems to have no profound message, except to remind the audience what its like to grow up. Almost every viewer can relate to this movie, growing up, fighting with parents and going through school.

Boyhood is simple and unthreatening, but it carries a lot of weight. It is a visual interpretation of what happens to everyone, growing up. Whether or not viewers can completely relate to Mason, his parents, or his sister they can definitely connect with his quest to find himself.



Mason from 6 to 18 in the 12 year film “Boyhood”
Photo provided by Google search



Poly Patriot at football game
Photo by Victor Garcia

Spirit Squad Cheers Parrots On

By Emily Pintor
Staff Writer

Poly’s Spirit Squad charged in to this sport’s season in full regalia. The club’s focus is to support and cheer on the school’s athletic teams.

The group, consisting mainly of seniors, arrives at every football game sporting face paint with Poly colors representing Poly Pride. Members also paint their bodies with letters that spell “Let’s Go Poly!”.

The Spirit Squad can be seen cheering on their fellow parrots during the long awaited competition between Poly and St. Genevieve’s football teams, kicking off the Football season.

Parrot spirit squad is official this year and meets once a week.

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“Mice” IS AT WORK



By Jezerelle Guevarra

SPORTS

Parrots defeated at Roscoe Rumble



Picture by Victor Garcia

Poly plays against Saint Genevieve

By Juan Garcia
Staff Writer

Parrots kick off football season with a loss to Saint Genevieve 20-58. Saint Genevieve scored first with a 20 yard run by Jesse Camacho. Poly Parrot Chris Carranza followed up, rushing 147 yards on 26 carries tying the score 7-7 for the first quarter. Saint Genevieve takes the lead after scoring another

touchdown. As the game continues Poly gives up a precious twenty yards which sets up a touchdown for Saint Genevieve ending the first quarter 7-13.

In the second quarter Poly does not disappoint. Scott Diaz, quarterback throws a twenty-seven yard pass to right end, Eduardo Tejada and helps poly lead in the first two minutes with a score of 14-13. Saint Genevieve

is quick to respond with a touchdown from their quarterback Jesse Camacho leaving the score 14-19. Saint Genevieve continues to keep up their score intercepting a pass from Poly returning the ball to score a touchdown leaving the score 14-25.

Saint Genevieve continues to dominate the field for the rest of the game scoring five more touchdowns while Poly only

making one more leaving the final score 20-58, a defeat for Poly.

Coach Campos states “the score of the game did not determine how we played.” He explained since this was the first game for the parrots it was a bit nerve wrecking. He also stated that communication among the players also needs some improvement. “With a sharpened execution and both a greater de-

fense and offense the team will be in better shape for the up coming season”.



Coach Jose Campos; determined
Photo By Victor Garcia

Coaches Call

Poly's Girl's tennis team players benefit from experience continuity from Coach Evan Rabins. This year the tennis team has expanded their members. Rabins said “I've never had this many girls in the tennis team. This year – I've lost count actually – somewhere in the low 30's.”

“I don't know what happened this year but a lot of freshman came out and I'm very happy about it” said Rabins about his bigger team. “We also have a large junior class in the tennis team, it's ok I never turn anyone away.”



Photo by Victor Garcia
Coach Rabins: Optimistic

By Michael Manzano &
Kate Martinez
Staff Writer

Reflecting on wins this year he said “Well, I don't think the increase of numbers is going to affect their fortunes this year. Because most of the new girls are very young and inexperienced.”

“I think the increase of number will help us down the road; two years from now, for sure” believes Rabins, with high expectation from his former players. “This year's team I do expect to be better than last years, but that's just because the girls who were on the team last year have been out here playing all year and practicing”

Poly Girls Tennis Victorious over Fairfax

Poly Girls Tennis experience pays off

By Kate Martinez
Staff Writer

Poly girl's tennis team defeats Fairfax 6-1 on September 4, 2014. Number one singles player, Rosette Limbo, won her set with 8-1, beating Fairfax's best player.

Number two singles player, Angela Lawenko, fought hard but lost her set with 8-5. Coach Evan Rabins said in an email statement, “Angela is really, really good, she was just off today. I was proud that she kept battling until the end. She just had too many unforced errors, which often kills you in tennis.”

Number three and four Singles players, Shelly Ocampo and Karen Castillo, former doubles team, accomplished their debut game as singles player. Ocampo won with a clean set of 8-0 and Castillo with 8-3. “They were halves of successful doubles team in the past.” said Rabins.

“It's worth noting that our three doubles teams didn't surrender a single game.” said Rabins. Poly's doubles players: Kristine Aqui(left), Alexia Barrera(right), Maria Dela Rosa, Andrea Tireado, Elaine Rasonable and Honey Cruz, all won a victorious set of 8-0. “Fairfax had a lot of inexperienced girls, their doubles were hopelessly outmatched.” said Rabins on the outcome of his doubles players.

“I'm pleased, but we'll definitely have to play a better to beat Monroe at home next Thursday, that's a huge game for us if we want to win our league.”

Kristine Aqui

Alexia Barrera



Photo by Victor Garcia