

BEAT THE RUSH! SCHEDULE YOUR APPT. ONLINE!

Click on www.canyons.edu/offices/Counseling
Advantages to online scheduling:

- 24 hour access
- Schedule 2-10 days in advance
- Schedule with Spanish-speaking Counselors

Appointments are also available by phone (661)-362-3287 or in the Counseling Office (A 101).

DON'T FORGET:
You can apply for more than 90 **scholarships** with a single application. Deadline: April 15. Apply online at <http://www.canyons.edu/offices/finaid/scholarships.asp>

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College of the Canyons
26455 Rockwell Cyn Rd
Santa Clarita, CA 91355
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(661) 362-3287

Greetings from the Counseling Faculty!

In this Spring's edition, we wish to highlight the success stories of an adult re-entry student as well as one of our own counselors, Sami Salvatori, who is a former COC re-entry student. We also wish to invite you to visit us at our new, updated Counseling Department website at www.canyons.edu/offices/Counseling, where you will find a wealth of information students need to successfully pursue their goals.

~ Edel (Dept.Chair), Julie, Carolyn, Kerry, Bob, Joan, Garrett,
Michelle, Sami, Liz, and Christy.

Did you know?

So far this academic year from July 2006 to February 2007, counselors have had a total of **10,731** contacts with students! Counselors see students at the drop-in desk, in individual private appointments, and in workshops. In addition, we teach approximately 52 Counseling classes each year. But, when counselors are NOT seeing students in their offices, **DID YOU KNOW THAT** counselors:

- Evaluate multiple transcripts from students who have attended other colleges all over the country and the world and determine recommended courses to match student goals (Note: student transfer goals can include virtually ANY major and ANY transfer school in the US!) This includes:
 - Researching course descriptions
 - Researching general education and major requirements
 - Researching transferability of courses
- Do degree customizations so that courses from other institutions qualify for COC requirements
- Initiate the paperwork for major course substitutions
- Review and sign-off on Petitions for Graduation
- Enter completion of pre-requisites into DATATEL for appropriate class level placement
- Review academic histories to determine whether to approve student semester course loads over 18 units
- Review and approve student requests to take courses for credit/no credit
- Review student appeals not to be dismissed
- Conduct online and phone follow-up with students
- Program the electronic degree audit to mirror the continuous changes in the COC curriculum. (Note: The degree audit gives students "instant" course advisement information, thereby freeing up counselors to assist students with more in-depth career and transfer counseling issues)
- Write letters of recommendation on behalf of our students
- Update student requirement sheets on a regular basis to reflect COC curriculum changes and changing articulation agreements with other colleges
- Maintain currency on transfer and COC requirements and policies by attending CSU, UC and private university counselor conferences and meeting with COC department representatives to stay updated on COC's new and revised programs
- Develop marketing materials so that students are more aware of our services
- Attend staff development workshops relative to changes in technology to facilitate the conversion of our services to an online format

Important

Dates:

April 2 – 8th
Spring Break

April 9th – Last day
to drop with “W” for
semester - length
classes

April 16 – Deadline
to apply for Summer
2007 Graduation

June 1 - Graduation

June 1 - *Application
filing begins for
Winter Qtr 2008 CSU
Transfer

June 4 – Deadline to
apply for Fall 2007
Graduation

June 11 - Summer
Session I begins

June 18 - Summer
Session II begins

July 1 - *Application
filing begins for
Winter Qtr 2008 UC
Transfer

July 16 - Summer
Session III begins

August 1 -
*Application filing
begins for Spring
Semester 2008 CSU
Transfer

*Check with the
Counseling office
for more detailed
information

Problems with Math?

WE HAVE THE SOLUTION!

Many students experience anxiety about math at some point during their academic careers. If you are one of those students, come join Mojdeh Mahn, Math instructor and Counselors Christy Richter and Sami Salvatori for our COUNSELING 075-Developing Math Confidence class which is designed to build math confidence by exploring the reasons for math anxiety and the strategies for success.

We offered the class for the first time in Fall 2006 and it was a great experience. Just last week, one of the students came to see us to share the good news that she had earned a “B” in her math class after several unsuccessful attempts. She credits the class and the help of fellow classmates for her positive change in attitude and success. We look forward to another rewarding semester. Counseling 075 is a short-term, 4- wk course that will be offered every semester

STUDENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT SECTION!!!

PLEASE MEET OUR FORMER C.O.C. STUDENT : LESLEY MORGAN



My first graduation was from a University in Britain, and when I enrolled at COC to begin my journey towards an Associates Degree in Nursing, it had been many years since I had seen the inside of any college campus. Let’s put it this way: at my previous college everyone wore bellbottoms, and we had discos every weekend.

I considered my decision to shift from business to nursing as the fulfillment of a long-time dream, after many years in the business world and then as a stay-at-home mom. I was a bit shocked at first. I thought – I need to study what? Molecular and Cellular Biology, Psychology, and the mother of all terrors, (public) Speech! I won’t lie – like many people I did find it intimidating at times – but the messages I often drummed into my teenage son came back to haunt me: take it one step at a time, stay on top of your work, etc. And it *will* be worth it.

Some people ask me how I (and *many* other returning students like me) made it. Well, in addition to supportive families and a genuine motivation, numerous people at College of the Canyons guided us through our life changing journey. Take for example people like Prof. Howe who made me laugh before every Psych exam (a “relaxation” technique, I’m sure), and Prof. Wallace who really *did* improve my writing style, and those instructors and staff in the Nursing Department who contributed to the fulfillment of each student’s goal and who are just too numerous to single-out any individual in particular (it wouldn’t be fair!).

And then, of course, there are the non-teaching COC staff members who augment the infrastructure of college life – like Julie Visner and other members of the counseling office staff. These are the people we call on when we feel a little lost and need some guidance and advice, and who can give us a clear map with the most direct route to our ultimate goal.

Having reached my ultimate goal at College of the Canyons, this year holds the promise of more changes for me. This year, my son turns 18 and he’ll be leaving home for college – shaving one year off his general education requirements by supplementing high school classes with COC classes – and I will be starting a new phase of my life, as a Registered Nurse.

So, when I was asked for the “take home message” I’d like to pass on to incoming and current students, I’d have to say that with family support, a clear goal, and by utilizing everything this college has to offer, *all* kinds of people can be successful at College of the Canyons - whether they’re single or married, working or not, young – or even old enough to

remember the original bellbottoms!

Doing the Right Thing By Edel Alonso

We are all faced with difficult decisions every day. Sometimes the decisions involve issues of moral judgment such as honesty, trust, and justice. You may ask yourself questions about whether you should cheat on a test, copy someone else's paper, lie to your instructor, or take what doesn't belong to you. So how do you know what to do in such circumstances? What are high ethical standards of behavior? How does a person make moral decisions?

The discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation is called ethics. Ethics refers to standards of right and wrong that govern human behavior. The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University suggests that we ask ourselves the following questions when making decisions:

1. Which option produces the most good and do the least harm?
2. Which option respects the rights and dignity of the persons involved?
3. Which option would promote the common good - for the whole family, community, company, etc?
4. Which option would help develop the virtues and traits that our society values?
5. Which option treats everyone involved the same without favoritism or discrimination?

At the 2000 Ethics Conference, Sandra Foy from Seattle Prep School spoke about another way to determine the right thing to do. She suggested that you check if your action passes the following tests:

1. The **legal** test:
Will I be breaking a law?
2. The **gut-feeling** test:
What is my conscience or intuition telling me about the rightness or wrongness of this action?
3. The **front-page** test:
Would I want my decision to be made public?
4. The **role-model** test:
What would someone I admire do in a similar situation?

Remember that your actions are not just experienced by you alone. Your behavior affects others and may have consequences that last a lifetime. How will others feel about you if you are seen as dishonest, untrustworthy, or insensitive? How will you feel about yourself?

To test your moral point of view, see a survey at <http://ethics.acusd.edu/ActiveWebSurvey/General/MoralOrientations.html>

Program Advisors

From open to close, there is a Program Advisor available in the Counseling Office to help answer questions regarding graduation, degree audits, petitions to the Academic Standards Committee, counseling appointments, as well as Associate Degree, certificate and transfer requirements. No appointment is necessary and they can assist you with your questions!

Counselor Spotlight

Sami Salvatori

College of the Canyons is where Sami Salvatori got her academic start 12 years ago in 1995. Her fears were the same as most re-entry students: she was afraid she would be the oldest one in class and wouldn't be able to handle school and raising her children. Her fears turned out to be unfounded, as she thrived as a student at COC and even had the opportunity at age 40 to run track and field and cross country for COC. This was the fulfillment of a lifetime dream: to be able to compete on a college team. She loved being a Lady Cougar. Sami graduated from COC in Spring of 1997 with a degree in Social Science and then graduated from CSUN with a degree in Psychology in Fall, 1998. Since Sami enjoyed her experience as a student at COC so much, she wanted to return here to work after completing her degree. She was able to secure a part time job in the Public Information office during the summer of 1999. Sami soon became the liaison person between COC, CSUB and the University of La Verne as the University Center started up. Later, she worked on a grant called "College: Making it Happen" and then she was hired as the full-time Outreach coordinator for COC. Sami earned her Master's degree in Counseling from the University of La Verne in 2003. She worked briefly as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid but she had always wanted to be a COC counselor. Sami became discouraged many times as a student because the process seemed to take so long! For her, there was always a counselor to encourage her and assure her that she **WOULD** complete her academic goals. Even though she enjoyed her position in Financial Aid, when a position opened as a counselor she applied and got the job! Sami is especially sensitive to the needs of re-entry students. She knows the process is long and can be overwhelming. However, one of the things Sami is the most proud of is the academic excellence of her three children. She believes they value education so much, in part, because she was a student during their formative years. Her oldest daughter, Whitney (23), will complete her Masters of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in May; her middle daughter, Hilary (21), has another year and then she will complete her Bachelors Degree in Criminal Justice; and her son David, a high school senior, has been accepted to all the colleges to which he has applied and will make his decision about where he will attend in March. Sami knows there is no "right" or "wrong" time to begin the educational process. She is very satisfied with her experience as an adult learner. However, she is glad her children have taken a more traditional route so that they can start their careers earlier in life and hopefully have more opportunities along the way.

THE YOGA OF MEDITATION FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Carolyn Powell, MS, MFT
Counselor

Just as physical exercise, combined with other things like healthy diet and lifestyle can keep us physically fit, so meditation, combined with other things like keeping a positive attitude, living an ethical life, and having a support system can keep us mentally fit.

At the Mind-Life Institute, neuroscientists are studying how the mind affects the body and more specifically, how meditation affects the brain.

Meditation can be seen primarily as a way of developing calmness and a sense of centered awareness by learning not to get caught up in your thoughts and emotions. Once you begin to understand this meditative attitude as you sit quietly, you can extend this feeling to your outward activities.

SITTING MEDITATION EXERCISE

Begin by taking a proper sitting posture. You should be able to sit comfortably with a straight back, without becoming tense. By straight back, what is meant is that the spine should curve naturally just below the middle back.

You may sit in a chair or on the floor. In a chair make sure that the seat is as flat as possible. A small, flat cushion is optional. Sit forward on the front third of the chair, with your feet flat on the floor. The lower legs should be more or less at right angles to the floor.

If you sit on the floor, use a small, firm cushion to raise the buttocks. It is better to sit on a rug or blanket than on the bare floor. Sit on the edge of the cushion only, with just the tip of the bottom of the spine resting on the cushion. For most Westerners, it is more comfortable to sit with your left foot tucked into the juncture of the right thigh and pelvis and your right leg placed immediately in front of your left leg and parallel to it (you may have seen pictures of Native American Indians sitting this way). Both legs are flat on the ground, the knees resting on the ground. Knees and tailbone form a triangle.

The head should be straight, bent neither forward nor backward. The chin is tucked in. Your head should feel comfortable and almost weightless when it is positioned properly. Place your hands comfortably on the middle of your thighs, palms down. Eyes can be closed or half way open gently looking at the tip of your nose in a soft gaze rather than an intense focus. Sway gently from side to

side, backward and forward until you find the most comfortable erect posture... Lift up your rib cage slightly to take the pressure off your lower back and to allow your spine to curve naturally. Take two or three slow, deep breaths before beginning to meditate.

Now comes the part that is easiest to describe and hardest to do. Just sit with a positive attitude. Don't try to do anything - but don't try not to do anything either. Let thoughts and emotions happen but don't get "hijacked" by them. In other words, pretend that they are just passing through and don't get attached to them or try to push them away. Watch how they just come and go on their own and you are just the observer. If you get caught in a thought, and in the beginning it is likely, then ok, you got caught in a thought. Now just gently bring your awareness back to your "observer stance". It's as though you're sitting on the side of a road just watching the traffic go by. It is useless to say 'Oh, great now I'm caught in a thought' because you will get caught in the annoyance at that thought and now you have another thought. And so it builds up and you never get back to the quiet within. Eventually, if you are persistent, the thoughts may actually stop for awhile or at least slow down and you may feel a calmness coming over you - or maybe it will make you anxious. Don't get caught by the emotions either - just let them pass and bring your awareness back to the "observer stance". Watch thoughts and emotions but don't react to them. Maintain all the points of posture mentioned above and just keep sitting.

Try this exercise for 5 or 10 minutes twice a day for one week and write a few notes in a journal about what your experience is like at the end of this time. If it works for you and you find that you feel calmer during your non-meditation times then by all means continue the practice because the effect is cumulative. If you feel it doesn't work for you, then it either doesn't or perhaps you need some more training in how to do the practice properly. I am happy to give pointers and receive feedback on your meditation practice. You can find me in the Counseling Office in the A-Bldg or visit www.coc.canyons.edu and follow the link to the Counseling page to make an appointment with me to discuss how a sound meditation practice can help you to become a more balanced, happy person.

For more information on the Mind/Life Institute's work with the Dalai Lama on meditation and the brain go to <http://www.mindandlife.org/>

