

# neighbor to neighbor

COMMUNITY NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF ORANGE

## SIMON STEM SCHOLARS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM PROVIDES BRIDGE TO A BETTER FUTURE

Ricardo Hernandez Espinoza, a student at Orange High School, will always remember the moment when he learned that he'd been accepted into a unique full-ride scholarship program that would mentor him through high school and prepare him for entry into Chapman University.

"My mom and dad and two sisters were around me," Espinoza recalls. "When I opened it, the letter said I was accepted. We all just broke down crying."

Those tears of joy were thanks to the Simon Family Foundation. The Simon STEM Scholars Program launched in 2015 as a partnership between Chapman and Orange High School. The program offers select students who plan to major in a STEM discipline – science, technology, engineering or math – unique mentorship to prepare them for admission to Chapman, as well as a full scholarship. Recently the foundation deepened its commitment to the Chapman partnership, endowing it with a \$6 million gift.

Simon Scholar Kevin Jimenez Alvarado '23 credits the scholarship support for setting him on a path to success. As a child, he had visited Chapman with his mother, who worked in the dining hall. He frolicked in Attallah Piazza and told his friends, "I'm going to go to school here."

Later, he realized that the price of any college degree would be beyond his family's financial means. While he considered other options, including enlisting in the military or taking on significant student loan debt, a high school counselor encouraged him to apply to the Simon Scholars program.

Acceptance changed his trajectory. He's majoring in biology and plans to pursue nursing school after graduation.



*"I wouldn't have been able to make it to Chapman on my own," says Simon Scholar Ricardo Hernandez Espinoza, who credits the Simon program of high school mentoring and scholarship support to his success at Chapman.*

"Without the Simon scholarship, I don't think I would be at Chapman today," he said.

Just as important, he adds that he probably wouldn't be the person he is today without Simon support. The program's leadership activities helped him grow into a greater sense of himself, he says.

"It's changed me a lot," says Alvarado, who volunteers at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange. "It's taught me the importance of working on a team and how you can go further as a team. And that it's important to be there for others, too."

## CHAPMAN PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES COURSES FOR THE FORMERLY INCARCERATED

Victoria Carty, Ph.D., associate professor of sociology in the Wilkinson College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, is familiar with the educational obstacles faced by formerly incarcerated teens.

"Once juveniles get released, no one is forcing them to go to school, and on top of that, there's all of these forks in the road to get to college," said Carty, whose research focuses on community engagement and criminal justice reform. "Most of the time, these students really just need an opportunity."

Addressing this need, Carty teamed up with the Orange-based nonprofit, Underground GRIT (UG), to provide formerly incarcerated youths

with courses taught by Chapman University faculty. The Chapman-UG partnership is an extension of Underground GRIT's reentry program, where the organization assists those who have been system-impacted through services like education, mentorship, vocational training and mental health support.

Chapman President Daniele Struppa is one of the faculty members currently participating in the program. "I teach math to the students every Saturday morning, 8:30 to 10:30, they are there, bright-eyed, listening to math. Their commitment, their resilience, their desire to build the foundation for a different life is tremendous," he said.

"Our goal is to break the school-to-prison pipeline, and get the students thinking about new possibilities, college, and a promising future," said Carty. "Most of the focus has been on the crime itself and not on why are people getting in trouble with the law? Or why are people dropping out of school? If you pay attention to them, make them job ready, make them school ready, a big difference can be made."



Formerly incarcerated students from Underground GRIT's reentry program participate in a sociology course taught by Chapman Professor Victoria Carty.

### Did You Know?

Chapman continues to move forward on its Specific Plan Amendment 7. A full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared in the coming months. The report will be available to our community during a designated 45-day public comment period.

#### Need to report a concern?

- Contact Chapman University's Office of Community Relations at **(714) 289-2097** or email [neighbors@chapman.edu](mailto:neighbors@chapman.edu).
- To report a disturbance that needs urgent attention, please call City of Orange PD dispatch at **(714) 744-7444**.

## YOU'RE INVITED!

Join us for these engaging events at Chapman

Most in-person activities and events are on hold until the campus can safely be opened again to the public. Until that time, we invite you to participate in these virtual events. Find more at the University's online events calendar, [chapman.edu/events](https://chapman.edu/events).

### Fighting Climate Change: The Sixth Annual Public Policy Conference

Wednesday, April 7  
8:30 a.m.–4 p.m.

How can California and its communities make more progress in the fight, achieving not just reductions in greenhouse gases but profound improvements in how we live? What sort of governance reforms do we need locally, regionally, or statewide for this fight? These issues and others will be discussed at this free one-day conference.

For more Earth Day events, visit [chapman.edu/earthday](https://chapman.edu/earthday).

### The Theory of Relativity

April 12–25  
Available On Demand

This moving and unconventional song cycle bursts with originality as it examines the interconnectedness of us all through life's shared experiences — from the hilarious to the heartbreaking. Music and Lyrics by Neil Bartram. Book by Brian Hill. Directed by Matthew McCray.

### Fireside Chat about the Development of a COVID-19 Vaccine

Wednesday, April 28  
12 p.m.

Join us for a conversation with Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett, a research fellow and the scientific lead for the Coronavirus Vaccines & Immunopathogenesis Team at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Corbett has been leading the development of a vaccine for COVID-19 that is now produced by industry partner Moderna.



One University Drive  
Orange, California 92866  
1270-12700



Find more news at  
[NeighborsofChapman.com](https://NeighborsofChapman.com)

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Orange, California  
Permit No. 58

## AFTER A YEAR OF QUARANTINE, CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY CONTINUES TO THRIVE

In his recent State of the University address, Chapman President Daniele Struppa praised the campus community for the way they supported one another in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fewer than 400 cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed among the combined student body, faculty and staff population, a less than 1% positivity rate.

“The reason for this success frankly is because all of you have taken it seriously,” said Struppa, thanking the virtual audience for their commitment and cooperation in following the CU Staying Healthy guidelines.

Overall, Struppa presented an optimistic summary of the university's financial and strategic successes. Despite a reduction in revenue because of reduced housing fees due to the Governor's mandated on-campus residency guidelines, the university still made gains in both net assets and

endowments, thanks to careful prioritization by campus administration. The university was even able to continue funding important research, including a number of projects begun in response to the pandemic.

“The university is doing very well,” he said. “We are facing tremendous challenges, but we are coming out of those challenges stronger.”

He added, “My proudest accomplishment is really the fact that we went through this pandemic and we didn't have to fire anybody. We didn't add to the growing number of people who are out of a job. We didn't add to the pain that this country is experiencing.”

To watch the full State of the University address, visit [chapman.edu/sotu](https://chapman.edu/sotu).



President Daniele Struppa presents the 2021 State of the University on stage at the Musco Center in February.

More inside!