

“No Significant Learning Occurs Without a Significant Relationship” — Dr. James Comer

Highlight of an *Advancing Student Achievement* school.

LACES CALCULUS CAMP LOS ANGELES, CA

“One of the many programs that the Actuarial Foundation supports is the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies (LACES) Calculus Camp. This is a program that is currently in its seventh year of operation, and in its second year as a beneficiary of The Actuarial Foundation funding. When the camp meets in April, at its usual location at the Lion’s Club Camp at Teresita Pines in the San Gabriel Mountains (about 90 miles from Los Angeles), I will be volunteering for the third time. A notable difference, however, will be that this time I am also attending as a LACES teacher; the first two times I was a teacher at a different school in the Los Angeles public school system (incidentally, LACES is also part of the public school system).

It is literally awe-inspiring to see approximately 100 students all working cooperatively in groups getting ready for the Calculus AB or the Calculus BC Advanced Placement exam. Starting



Thursday afternoon they begin working their way through a test preparation guide at the rate of about a chapter every two hours. At this rate they cover the entire guide by Saturday evening, in time for the annual talent show and the Sunday morning practice exam, which is scored on the spot in order to give students a feel for what they might score if they had taken the actual exam that day.

The adults acting as resources to the students at the camp are most of the LACES math department, the Physics teacher, volunteers from other educational institutions (for example, last year we had an emeritus professor of engineering from

UCLA), and (for the first time last year) two actuaries from the Los Angeles area.

I believe that working actuaries who give up some of their time in order to volunteer at Calculus Camp are living up to the highest ideals of what it means to be part of an organization of professionals. A hallmark of professionalism is to be engaged in actions which assure the vibrancy of the profession into the future and which also create positive social capital. It is almost certainly the case that I and the other actuarial mentors at the Camp are the only actuaries these students have ever encountered. To the extent that we can plant the seed that this is a potential field of study in the minds of some of the students at the Camp, we will be providing long term benefits to the actuarial profession.”

— Richard M. Rasiej, ASA, MAAA
Lead Actuary Mentor

“The mathematics teachers and the calculus students at the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies (LACES) are very grateful for the grant from The Actuarial Foundation. It has been very beneficial to us in several ways. Simply being awarded the grant increased our stature in the eyes of parents and students and other departments in our school. For the first time people would say to us in the math department, “You’re doing such a great job!” We recognize the phenomenon to be, that they may not have understood what we were doing in terms of teaching math (Calculus, in this case), but they do understand what it means to win a grant (money, in this case). No matter, we are happy to have the positive publicity that the phenomenon created, especially in the minds of the students.

The grant money came at a time when we were almost victims of our own success. Calculus Camp had grown to the point that we did not have enough teachers to maintain a decent student-teacher ratio. As I had stated in the original grant proposal: The need for help from outside volunteers is desperate. We are a relatively small math department by Los Angeles standards. We are a staff of nine and only four of us have taught Calculus at one time or another. In the first year of the program we would need volunteers for our Calculus Camp. This means that some of the teachers must come from outside of the department.

The grant has certainly provided the funds that were needed to attract a committed staff. Last year we had six teachers from within the department, two retired high school Calculus teachers, three college professors and two volunteers from the Foundation.

In less than a month, we will be having our seventh annual Calculus Camp and with the help from The Actuarial Foundation, we anticipate it to be our best one ever.”

Robert Vriesman
Mathematics Department Chair

Our thanks to last year’s camp mentors:
Alejandro Ortega, FCAS with Farmers Insurance Group; and Frederick Heidorn, EA with AON Consulting.



If you’ve never been to camp as a kid — here is your chance!

The next LACES Calculus Camp is scheduled for Thursday, April 17 through Sunday, April 20.

Volunteer mentors are still needed — contact Richard Rasiej at rmrasiej@verizon.net or at 818.591.6851 for more information. You may also call Debbie at the Foundation Office at 847.706.3600.