

# The Link



FOR HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

SUMMER/FALL 2008



**F**or this issue of The Link, it is a pleasure to offer recognition of the coding specialist program. The program was established in 1987 by Rozella Mattingly, EMBA, RHIA, who was the health information management department chair at that time. She was visionary in her ability

to foresee the increased need for coding specialists in health care. Since that time, the curriculum has expanded to meet the needs of facilities that hire coders and also prepare graduates for the CCS, CCS-P, and CCA credentialing exams.

In 2001, formal approval of the coding specialist certificate program was granted by a joint committee of members of the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) and the American Association of Medical Transcriptionists (AAMT). We're delighted that the program has flourished, graduating 385 students since it began.

The coding students generally work full-time and have families. Some commute an hour to get to their classes at Loma

Linda University — and some have a longer commute. The program is designed for the students' needs, so they take one course each quarter and finish the program in about two years.

These students are very special. They study long hours, most often late at night or on weekends, to master the skills needed to become competent coders. Since the program does not lead to a degree, it is nearly impossible to obtain financial aid, so most students find creative ways to pay for tuition, books, and school supplies. It's a major accomplishment.

How I wish you could join us at a coding graduation. Debbie Hamada, the program coordinator, designs a special program just for the graduates and their families and friends. Many of these wonderful families bring flowers and gifts for their graduate and also shower them with many good wishes. They celebrate each graduate's accomplishments with applause and cheers. Every year I am moved by their dedication and I share in their joy. I am so proud of each one!

Sincerely,

**Marilyn Davidian, Ph.D (c), RHIA**  
**Chair of Health Information Management**

## First SAHP Student Association Developed and Officers Elected

For the first time in SAHP history, a Student Association, called SAHPSA (School of Allied Health Professions Student Association), has been officially developed with the help of Marketing Director, Chuck Dart, and student events coordinator, Karen Westphal. Students have been in deliberation concerning a Constitution and Bylaws since the first week of the 2008 winter quarter. On Thursday, May 22, five students engaged in a lunch-time debate for five positions in the Association. This event was

cleverly named "Pancake and Debate" and lunch was, of course, pancakes. The new SAHPSA officers for the 2009 school year are as follows: President - Jorge Romo (Respiratory Care), Financial Vice-President - Jamie Venegas (Respiratory Care), Community Service Vice-President - Abigail Moss (Clinical Laboratory Science), Spiritual Life Vice-President - Jennifer Brucks (Speech Language Pathology), Social Life Vice-President - Peterson Le (Respiratory Care).

## Alumni Search with AfterCollege.com!

Register for a FREE AfterCollege account to view or contact fellow alumni. This is a great way to reconnect with your friends and classmates. This site also is SAHP's source for businesses to post their job listings. Visit [www.AfterCollege.com](http://www.AfterCollege.com) and sign up today!



## CALENDAR

AUGUST:

CE Cruise to Mexico.....10-17

NOVEMBER:

National Allied Health Week...2-8

National HIM Week.....2-8

## AWARDS

APRIL 19

ALUMNI AWARDS BANQUET

*Alumna of the Year:* Diana Medal '93

*Distinguished Alum:* Felicia Chao '04

*Rising Star:* Susana Reyes '08

MAY 21

AWARDS CHAPEL

*Margaret Jackson Scholarship:*

Jennifer Nicholson and Susana Reyes

*Health Information Administration*

*Scholarship:* Paul Yun

*Sally Jo Davidian Scholarship:*

Megan Church and Martha Onate

*HIA Student Award:* Susana Reyes

*Faculty Award:* Susana Reyes

*Audrey Shaffer Scholarship:* Lori Dao

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## Conferring of Certificates for Coding Specialist Program

January 13, 2008, marked a very special day for SAHP's Coding Specialist Program. Fifteen students, with their family, friends and faculty were celebrated for completing their two year coding program. The Health Information Management (HIM) Department faculty planned an excellent program in the Randall's Visitors Center to highlight the graduates and their accomplishments.

The program consisted of a welcome from the SAHP Dean, Dr. Craig Jackson, JD, MSW, and an address from Diana Medal, MA, RHIA, CCS, CPC, CCS-P, Compliance Manager

for Kaiser Permanente. "Diana's message of hope and determination within the coding profession was inspirational to everyone," said Debbie Hamada, RHIA Coding Program Coordinator. The certificates were presented to the graduates by Marilyn Davidian, PhD(c), RHIA HIM Department Chair, and Debbie Hamada.

Congratulations to Jennifer Adomeit, Christine Bassi, Robi Carillo, Kerith Day, Mayra Flores, Joanne Gomez, Michael Ignacio, Sharon Jurgens, Najat Khoury, Elizabeth Quintero-Amador, Lorraine Sanchez, Bonnie Szumski, Darrin Webb, Carol Williams, and Gwendolyn Wilson-Montgomery.



## Diana Medal ('93) - SAHP Alumna of the Year 2008

Diana Medal, MA, RHIA, CCS, CPC, CCS-P, began her affiliation with Loma Linda University as a student in the Health Information Management Department in 1991. Upon the completion of her program in 1993, it was evident to those who knew her that she possessed a high level of commitment to her profession and superior academic achievement. Because of this she was given the Dean's award that year at her graduation ceremony.

In 1996, Diana became a full-time faculty member in the School of Allied Health Professions. It's easy to see that Diana holds LLU close to her heart as she remains an assistant professor from 1993 to the present, as well as a Coding Supervisor at the LLU Medical Center from 1993 to 1996.

During her ten years at LLU, Diana was responsible for developing the coding specialist certificate program to a level of excellence that received national recognition by the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA). As a result, the coding program is widely recognized in the Southern California area as "the best." At least two hospitals have indicated that they will hire only graduates from the LLU coding program.

Diana is currently the Compliance Manager of the National Compliance, Ethics, & Integrity Office for Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, Calif. She develops and provides educational presentations on documentation and coding based on changes in regulations or results of audit findings, along with many other things. Diana has also been the CMS Project Manager and Data Quality Trainer for Kaiser Permanente.

She is a professional member of the AHIMA, the American Academy of Professional Coders, the California Health Information Association, and the National Society for Clinical Coding of AHIMA. She has also taken part in community service development by conducting and/or coordinating annual community preparation seminars for the Certified Coding Specialist examination and the Certified Coding Associate examination.

In addition to her many certifications, awards and credentials, Diana holds an MA in Education from California State University, San Bernardino.

Diana's contributions to her profession and her quest for excellence in education exemplify the goals and ideals of the School of Allied Health Professions. Her continued efforts bring much prestige and pride to her alma mater.





## Distinguished Alumna Awarded at Homecoming Banquet

Felicia Chao has earned two degrees from Loma Linda University. A BS in Health Information Administration in 2002, and a Master of Health Information Systems (MHIS) in 2004. Extraordinarily, she maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout both programs.

Felicia has received numerous scholarships. The most notable of which was the Bill & Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship, which she received throughout the program. She also received the LLU Chancellor's Award at graduation.



Currently, she serves as Compliance and Privacy Officer for the VA Loma Linda Healthcare System. Her duties include the development and monitoring of facility-wide policies, procedures, monitoring programs, employee education, audits, and corrective action plans for facility compliance and privacy.

In addition, Felicia is an adjunct instructor in the HIM BS program and a clinical practicum instructor for health information management students at the VA Medical Center. It is remarkable that Felicia also finds time to teach medical terminology internationally. She travels to Japan each year to teach in the rehabilitation sciences program for the Humanatec Rehabilitation College in Yokkaichi.

Most recently, Felicia has served as president of the Inland Area Health Information Association and she currently serves on the 2008 Conference Planning Committee for the California Health Information Association.

Felicia has always been willing to be a student mentor for health information management students. One evening, she was found teaching by flashlight when there was a temporary power outage in the School. Her dedication to quality education is legendary.



## LLU CEUs at Sea: Continuing Ed for Health Care Professionals - Aug 8-15, '09

Save the date for the *Loma Linda University Friends & Family 7-day Cruise to the Western Caribbean* with six CEU credits applicable toward radiation technology (radiography, ultrasound, radiation therapy, nuclear medicine, CT, MRI), respiratory therapy, nursing, advanced practice nursing, nurse practitioners, pharmacists, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, dieticians, social workers, and chaplains.

CEU courses will include such topics as, "Law: The License You Lose May Be Your Own" and "Spiritual: I'm Not a Chaplain, But My Patient Wants to Talk."

You don't have to be a health care professional to join the group. All are invited! This fun adventure will take place on the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line and will stop at locations such as Haiti, Cozumel, Grand Caymen, and Jamaica. Beginning in September 2008, you can reserve your cabin for the cruise to the Caribbean. Call Cheryl at University Travel to book your trip today! (909)796-8344 or (800)362-3389



## STUDENT PROFILE: Susana Reyes Awarded as a Rising Star

At the 12th Annual Alumni Recognition Banquet, held Saturday April 19 during the 2008 Homecoming weekend, Susana Reyes was awarded as HIM's Rising Star recipient for her contributions to the School of Allied Health Professions in the areas of leadership, service and research.

Susana Reyes received a BS in Health Information Administration in June 2008. Since her entry into the program last year, Susana has shown that she is a natural for the Health Information Management profession with her great organizational skills and understanding of complex health information systems.

Academically, Susana has consistently achieved status on the Dean's List. Her dedication to academic excellence is also demonstrated in class team projects and in clinical activities. She is known for her willingness to assist classmates with difficult assignments.

Susana's past professional experience is varied, including work as a pharmacy assistant, central technician, anesthesia technician, and as a trainee in health information management. Her anesthesia technology training was completed at the Kaiser Permanente School of Anesthesia, Pasadena, Calif.

Ms. Reyes is a true professional who represents the ideal LLU graduate. In addition to her academic achievements, she is a caring and compassionate advocate for the healthcare community.



## ALUMNI PROFILE: Carrie Termin (Foster)

Carrie Termin (Foster), MHIS class of 1999, and Inaugural Class President, currently lives with her husband, Budd, in Amherst, New York. She works as a Customer Complaint Administrator/Quality Engineer for an International Medical Device manufacturer specializing in Pressure Ulcer Management and Temperature Regulation products. Her Health Information Systems background allows her to use database resources and statistical analysis tools to conduct root cause analysis and continuous improvement activities.

She has been recognized numerous times for "Living the Values" of the company in the areas of Quality, Caring, Integrity, Passion, and Innovation. Carrie has launched several projects that improve the quality of life for patients and care givers while maintaining the highest standards of customer service.

Carrie enjoys an active role as "team mom" for the University at Buffalo Men's Swimming and Diving team. Vegetarian Chili is on the top of their request list when eating at the Termin's (a dish she perfected while exploring the wide choice of vegetarian ingredients available at the Loma Linda Market!). Carrie and Budd are active in the community and enjoy gardening, bird watching, and kayaking in the creek which runs through their backyard.

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Update your personal information online  
by visiting the alumni website and clicking on  
Stay Connected. To get there quickly, here's your link:  
[www.llu.edu/llu/sahp/alumni/stayconnected](http://www.llu.edu/llu/sahp/alumni/stayconnected)

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