

# PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE AWARDED \$2.5 MILLION FOR ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY JOBS CENTER

**U.S. Department of Labor grants \$2M;  
Congresswoman Diane E. Watson (D-33rd District) secures additional federal funds of  
\$526,000 to drive job training program geared to local entertainment industry.**

**College's Goal:**

***"To be the place to start your career in the entertainment industry."***

**Culver City, California...**A college's renaissance continues. The transformation of West Los Angeles College from a little known community college tucked in the hills of Culver City into an educational powerhouse and major player on the Westside just kicked into high gear. Today, Dr. Mark W. Rocha, president of West Los Angeles College, announced that the college will receive two grants totaling \$2.5 million that will help fund the expansion of its entertainment industry job training programs.

"We are thrilled to learn of this major funding," said Dr. Rocha. "This is a giant step forward for us in our strategic plan to position West as *the* place in Los Angeles to start your career in the entertainment industry."

The U.S. Department of Labor awarded grants to only 69 community colleges and community-based institutions throughout the United States under the President's Community-Based Job Training Grants Initiative. "These grants are highly competitive," President Rocha noted. "Of a total of 341 applications nationally, West Los Angeles College was one of only three California Community Colleges to receive a grant."

Introduced by President Bush in his 2004 State of the Union address, Community-Based Job Training Grants improve the ability of community colleges to provide their regions' workers with the skills to enter growing industries. "Community colleges are in a unique position to prepare local workers for careers in high-growth industries," said Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao.

President Rocha stated, "I am very proud of our faculty, staff and administration who worked so hard to prepare our successful application. Under the leadership of our Vice President of Academic Affairs, Robert L. Sprague, our team began with a vision of capitalizing on our proximity to nearby studios."

"We are also deeply grateful for Congresswoman Watson's steadfast support of West Los Angeles College," said President Rocha. "The Congresswoman understands that a sound local economy is built on education and training for the high-wage jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." Congresswoman Watson is Chair of the Congressional Entertainment Industry Caucus.

West Los Angeles College is no stranger to the film business. The 80-acre campus was once MGM Studio's backlot and some accounts say scenes of *Gone With the Wind* were filmed on part of what is now college

property. Today, the college partners with Hollywood Cinema Production Resources to offer an affiliated studio production crafts training program at a satellite property near LAX. The college also enjoys the support of such local studios as Fox and Sony. Recently, Sony was instrumental in establishing a student intern program for the college's students with the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. On April 2, the president of Sony Picture Television, Steve Mosko, will visit the college to recruit students for the Academy.

According to Vice President Sprague, the two grants will aid with curriculum development and the hiring of faculty. "Our plan is to develop a preparation program for students interested in the entertainment industry from which students can move into one of three tracks: studio trades, digital media production or business," he explained.

For more information on West Los Angeles College, visit [www.wlac.edu](http://www.wlac.edu)

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