



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY  
FULLERTON

# TITAN REPORT

OCTOBER 2018 | [news.fullerton.edu](http://news.fullerton.edu)



## Students, Alumni Shine at Concert Under the Stars

About 5,000 friends and supporters of Cal State Fullerton gathered Sept. 29 for the university's annual signature event, Concert Under the Stars, raising more than \$1 million for student scholarships and programs.

Guests enjoyed an evening of spirited music and dance presented by CSUF students and alumni, including Cindy Shea, the trumpet player who founded the two-time Grammy Award-winning Mariachi Divas; Denean Dyson '11 (B.A. music) and the Long Beach-based Soul Foundation; Erin McNally '02 (B.A. theatre arts), who welcomed CSUF President Fram Virjee to his first Concert Under the Stars; and Brooke Aston '02 (B.F.A. theatre arts-musical theatre), who paid tribute to the late Aretha Franklin with her own rendition of "Respect."

As in previous years, College of the Arts students played a major role in the production from start to finish. The evening culminated in a dazzling show of fireworks sponsored by the Anaheim Ducks.

## CSUF AMONG TOP 12 PERCENT OF 'BEST COLLEGES FOR YOUR MONEY'

Quality of education, affordability and outcomes have earned Cal State Fullerton a spot among the top 12 percent of universities in *Money* magazine's "Best Colleges for Your Money 2018."

CSUF was ranked 84th out of 727 institutions across the nation in the Aug. 13 publication. Last year, the institution was ranked 106th.

Noted in *Money* was the university's "low average student debt load" of \$15,000, graduation rate of 62 percent, average time to a degree of 4.9 years and average alumni salary within three years of \$47,400.

The publication also noted the diversity of the campus, which has earned top marks for enrollment and graduation of underrepresented students.

## \$1.5 MILLION GRANT TO SUPPORT SUCCESS IN ENGINEERING, COMPUTER SCIENCE

To increase the retention and graduation rates of primarily Hispanic and other underrepresented students majoring in engineering and computer science, a new effort is being launched this fall at Cal State Fullerton supported by a nearly \$1.5 million award from the National Science Foundation.

The project, "Building Capacity: Advancing Student Success in Undergraduate Engineering and Computer Science," also aims to reduce the high repeat rate in lower-division gateway courses for engineering and computer science students, and to lower the achievement gap.

Each year, 200 students will be selected to participate in the project, with 50 of the students participating in a first-year research experience.



## LIBRARY UNVEILS REIMAGINED SPACES

There's a whole new look and feel in Cal State Fullerton's newly renovated Pollak Library, with sliding glass doors that open onto colorful open spaces and honors and cultural centers on the south side of the building, and flow to writing, learning and supplemental instruction centers at the north end.

On the second floor is an Innovation/ Makerspace Center, where students can test out ideas in virtual and augmented reality, print out designs in 3-D, and collaborate on projects with digital whiteboards and tablets.

"Today, our library is home to more than one million books and has nearly two million visitors annually," said President Fram Virjee at the grand reopening of the library. "And this is only the beginning."



## ALUMNA ANIMATOR SHINES IN DEADLINE-DRIVEN INDUSTRY

Farnaz Esnaashari-Charmatz long imagined herself in the world of animated characters and animals she first crafted in the classrooms of Cal State Fullerton's College of the Arts.

Determined and talented, she honed her skills in sculpture. She took extra courses and spent hours at the computer, designing. The coursework and the deadlines were exhausting, she says. But the challenges of CSUF's innovative curriculum trained her well for the deadline-driven reality at Nickelodeon's colorful Burbank animation studios, says the 2004 bachelor of fine arts graduate.

Today, she serves as the creator and executive producer of "Shimmer and Shine." The popular show is in its third season of the adventures of twin genies-in-training, Shimmer and Shine, and their best friend Leah.

"Cal State Fullerton has a very demanding art program and I had to work really hard to excel," she says. "I learned all facets of animation, design, sculpting and storytelling, and all of those things gave me the basics — the structure, the bones — to do what I do here, on a daily basis now.

"It's been a huge part of my life. If I didn't have everything I learned at Cal State Fullerton, I wouldn't be able to do this."



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## Did You Know?

### *CSUF Is a Leader in Bachelor's Degrees to Underrepresented Students*

Cal State Fullerton is fourth in the nation and second in California for awarding bachelor's degrees to underrepresented students in all disciplines and fifth nationally/third in state for bachelor's degrees to Hispanics, according to the Aug. 23 issue of *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*.

The latest rankings moved the university up one place for total number of bachelor's degrees awarded to underrepresented students and up to No. 40 from last year's 48th place for total number of master's degrees awarded to underrepresented students.