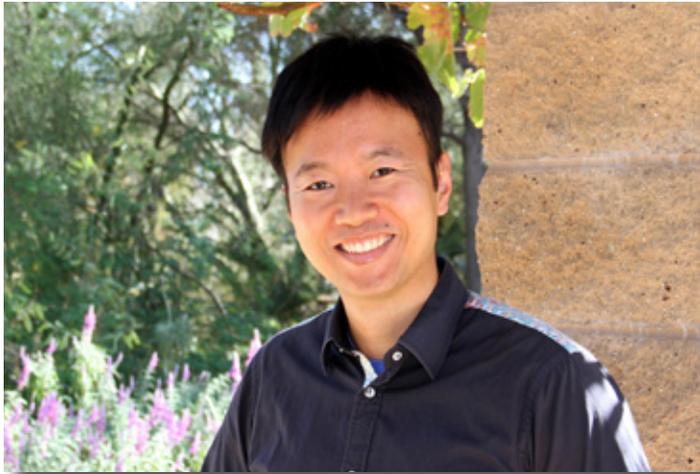


Faculty Profile:

Benny Ng, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Chemistry



Benny Ng starts every class with games he creates on Kahoot!, a social learning app. Students answer questions taken from his lectures. The faster they respond, the more points they get.

"It doesn't count for their grades, but it gives me feedback on where they stand and whether they need to review," he explains. "Plus, they have fun."

Hired in the fall of 2016, Benny has a history of showing a bit of wizardry when it comes to thinking up and implementing creative techniques for learning. The only child of parents who worked as laborers, he is the first in his family to graduate from high school, let alone college.

Benny was born and raised in Hong Kong by parents who had grown up during mainland China's Cultural Revolution, from 1966 to 1976, a time when children were not allowed to attend school.

By contrast, Benny had a "pretty normal" childhood. He liked to find out how things worked. Even as a kid, he would catch a butterfly and dissect it. When he was 15, Benny and his family moved to Arcadia, where his mother's sister resided and his parents still live.

"In high school, I continued doing experiments," he said, "for the joy and excitement of how it's going to come out."

Staff Profile:

Lattice Gustavis
Student Services Assistant/EOPS



There are those people who are born knowing what they want to do, and make a beeline for it. The rest of us are more like Lattice Gustavis, winding our way along a dimly lit path as we figure out where we belong.

Lattice was determined to figure it out. She just kept asking questions.

"I'm a first-generation college student, so I fumbled through everything: college and career," she smiles.

Lattice joined the staff of Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) in fall of 2016 in a new position created by Dean Kalynda McLean. Her job is half administrative support and half student engagement.

"I like encouraging and motivating students because of what I went through," Lattice said. "I joke that I've made all the mistakes, so I can help you avoid the pitfalls."

Lattice grew up in West L.A. with her mom and older brother who has dyslexia. In 2000 she graduated from Cal State University Long Beach with a Bachelor of Arts in Art, emphasis in graphic design.

She interviewed for an art teaching position at Compton Unified School District, but didn't get the job. She asked them what else she could do—and

His love of experimenting has driven his career.

After graduating from Arcadia High School, he entered UCLA, where he earned his Bachelor of Science in chemistry with a math minor, and then his master's. He taught at CSU Channel Islands the year he wrote his dissertation, then earning his Ph.D. in chemistry from UCLA in 2010.

"Spell chemistry. It's Chem-Is-Try. You don't need to be smart; you just have to keep trying. Curiosity and commitment is the key. Attitude is greater than aptitude."

Chem-Is-Try

Then he returned to Hong Kong.

"I spent the first half of my life in Hong Kong, and I thought I could give back."

Benny spent the next five years teaching general science classes such as forensic science, hidden mathematics in daily life (game theory, voting power in election, and fair division), and kitchen chemistry at the University of Hong Kong.

In kitchen chemistry, he asked students to perfect their favorite recipe.

"Investigate it using a scientific approach. There is a lot of chemistry involved in cooking. You are experimenting—sometimes it tastes good, sometimes not."

As an example, his students figured out the best way to make the highest soufflé. How many eggs would it take, at what temperature, for how long?

"The only difference between cooking and chemistry is that you cannot lick the spoon," he laughs.

While in Hong Kong, he built Dr. Benny's Forensic Science app to gamify the learning process.

"Given a murder mystery, students need to answer questions correctly for hints to determine who the murderer is. It is challenging, but fun, and students are more engaged with the materials." The game is available in both Android and Apple stores.

One of Benny's overarching philosophies is to foster scientific literacy in the community, nurturing the younger generation's interest in science by visualizing science in an artistic and interactive manner.

"Science and art are intertwined in the cultural development of any civilization," he explains. "However, people often merely only consider their polarity, which leads to the partitioning of curiosity, inquiry, and knowledge into specialized compartments."

found out she could teach K-8 with her B.A. degree. Starting with an emergency teaching credential, she spent the next two years teaching general education for sixth grade.

"I think I've always known that teaching wasn't my end goal, so I stopped and I did missionary work for about two years with Campus Crusade for Christ."

Uncertain of the best path for career change, Latice returned to teaching but this time went on to obtain her credential as an Education Specialist.

Having a firsthand knowledge about what life is like for those with special needs, she found her work rewarding.

About four years later, she became a Resource Specialist Program (RSP) Teacher for LAUSD at L.A. High School. RSP teachers help special needs students transition into mainstream education.

But just shy of becoming tenured, she got laid off due to the economic downturn of 2008-11.

Latice moved to Arizona, living with a friend and working again as an RSP teacher until she realized this was not what she wanted to do. She quit. That was her last teaching job.

"Art will always be my first love," she said. "But here I was with an art degree and no experience. I had experience teaching special needs. I had to do some soul-searching."

She turned to Google—and community college.

"I googled education background, careers, and helping people. What came up was academic advising."

She went to her local community college, Chandler Gilbert in Arizona. She just kept going there until someone would answer her questions.

"This is why I love community college. I happened to meet a lady who was a career counselor, not even in the counseling department. She sat with me and helped me fix my resume and told me how to apply for a job."

Latice took a leap of faith and worked for \$10 an hour in Financial Aid just to gain experience. Then she landed in her favorite job of all: New Student Advisor.

Student Advisor

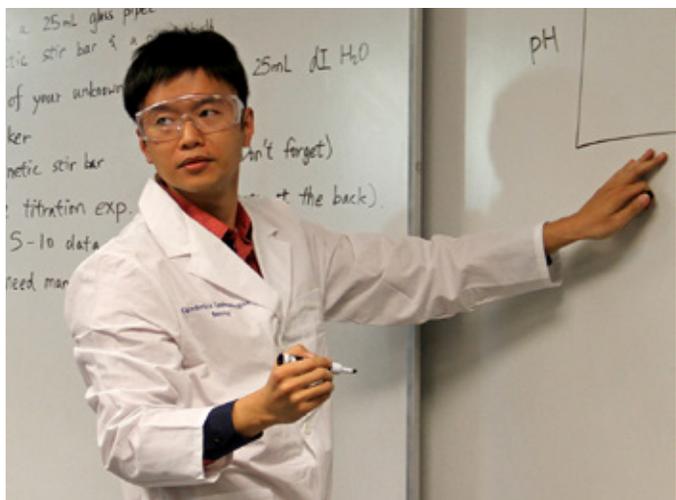
"It was the experience I wanted, a pay increase, and in advising, which I loved."

Benny initiated SMArt, which stands for Science, Math and Art, for junior high students.

"They learn the science and create their artworks all in one day. We showcased their work in high foot-traffic areas in Hong Kong, including the international airport, cultural center and subway stations, with more than 10 million people passing by."

The work included sugar art (food science), photographs using a DIY pinhole camera (physics), ceramics (chemistry), and a 23-foot-tall balloon pyramid (math).

He also joined forces with renowned British chef Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution Day to devise The SciChef Cooking Challenge to promote food science and science-based cooking. Given one hour, the Challengers, junior high students, were judged based on their recipe execution, sensory attributes, accuracy of scientific content, and innovativeness.



"I get all these ideas just playing," says Benny Ng, shown teaching in the Center for Sciences.

Benny is still a science journalist for a web site in Hong Kong. Many of his ideas from that time live on on his website, <https://www.drbenyng.net/>.

On the personal side, the West Hills resident got married in December, 2016. He met Rachel, whose background is in math education, at the University of Hong Kong. She still works there for now, while the couple makes plans to live together in the U.S.

"My latest interest is gardening, making my own compost—chemistry-related, of course. Chemistry is everywhere!

"If you can understand chemistry, you can do just about everything." ☞

Now it clicked.

"I loved it because I could actively work one-on-one with people and help them.

People let me know how much I helped them.

"I recognized people's struggles and I could offer guidance to them—there was nothing like it."

Then her hours were cut. With student loans to pay, she ended up moving home to L.A. and eventually attended an LACCD job fair that led her to Pierce.

"I like that I have the liberty to use my skill set. I use my experience working with students, plus I can incorporate art and graphic design."

One of Lattice's contributions is putting out the new EOPS newsletter, now its sixth issue.

Meanwhile, she is getting her master's in counseling as part of a small cohort at Cal Lutheran University's Woodland Hills location.

"So far, I love it!"

When she has spare time, she likes to paint still life or abstract, write poetry, and go to the theater. She also loves to hear live orchestra music.

She self-published a book of poetry called, "A Breath of Friendship," and plans to write another.

"I'm still navigating my career at Pierce. I know the barriers to education can be daunting: financial struggle, unclear destination, and lack of confidence. However, there are many people here who want to help students to succeed.

"I definitely appreciate where I am today." ☞



Helping students navigate college is a passion of Lattice Gustavis, at left, with EOP&S student Brittney Waters.



Hats off to You

Refuge from the Fire Storm

Between Dec. 4 and 12, 2017, our Equestrian Center gave sanctuary to 123 horses, 17 ponies, five donkeys, five sheep, five goats, four llamas and four chickens escaping the Creek Fire in Sylmar.

According to Senior Agriculture Technician Marcie Sakadjian, our facilities were at maximum capacity, with every barn, stall, mare motel, indoor and outdoor pen full. Farm staff put together an additional 30-plus pens in the parking lot.

Pierce, an official large animal emergency evacuation center, works with County Animal Control to care for displaced animals. County staff checked in animals, performed health checks with onsite veterinarians tending to injured horses, provided feed, fed animals, filled water buckets, and cleaned the facility after the animals left.

Pierce staff opened the facility and made sure everything was in working order. Farm staff provided hoses, wheelbarrows, rakes, shovels, water buckets they filled and manure wagons they dumped many times. County staff used our equine event trailer, and our restroom facilities were open 24/7, cleaned and maintained by our custodians, who also delivered and regularly emptied dumpsters.

Many Pierce student volunteers from the Veterinary Sciences, Registered Vet Tech Program, and Boots and Saddles Club pitched in, lending their valuable experience and training with animals as they helped check in, water animals, and clean their stalls.

"In the midst of all the chaos, it was excellent to see Pierce College students and staff working so hard with County staff to come together for those animals in need," said Sakadjian.

"We could see the relief in the animals owners' faces, knowing their animals were safe and would be well taken care of during a time of uncertainty and stress. I, personally, see this as a learning experience, and have definitely taken away a lot from it."

Pierce is the App Pilot

When another LACCD college decided not to pilot a new student app for the district's Student Information System (SIS), L.A. Pierce College took it on. Debuting November 13, 2017, MyCollege.laccd.edu app allows students to do just about everything they can do on the SIS Portal, except pay fees. They can add and drop classes, join waiting lists, search for classes, and view class schedules,

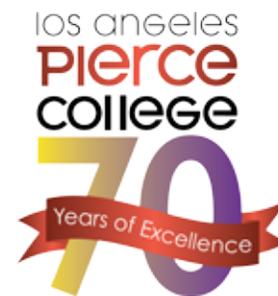


Leading horses to shelter at L.A. Pierce College Equestrian Center are County Animal Control officers, college staff and volunteers during the Sylmar Creek Fire evacuations. **Photo by Shae Hammond, Roundup Staff Photographer**

grades, GPA, account summary and financial information. MyCollege.laccd.edu app is available for free download at both Apple and Google Play stores.

Celebrating 70 years

In September of 1947, the Clarence W. Pierce School of Agriculture opened its Quonset hut doors to a class of 70 soldiers returning from World War II—all men, and all agriculture majors.



Los Angeles Pierce College celebrates this milestone, along with how far we've come, with a new 70th logo for use until fall 2018. Watch for it in your inbox.

