

# Paralegal Certificate Program Instructors Honored

Seven UC Irvine instructors receive award for developing online courses.

By Ashley Johnson

Seven instructors from the paralegal certificate program at the University of California, Irvine Extension were honored Dec. 8 with the 2006 Distinguished Instructor Award. Gary Borquez, June Cheng, Renato Izquieta, Kathy Miller, Jonathan Navarro, Guy N. Ormes and Zachary Zaharek were recognized for their dedication to developing 10 American Bar Association-approved online courses and a legal admissions meeting for the 29-year-old paralegal certificate program.

"[The award] recognizes the fact that it was a lot of work and that we had short deadlines to provide the online curriculum," said Miller, a senior litigation paralegal for FedEx Express and a part-time instructor in the UCI program for the past 20 years. "We met those [deadlines], and we also maintained the high quality expected of courses offered by the UCI Extension paralegal certificate program." All of the recipients of the award are legal professionals who work at local law firms, corporations and nonprofit organizations.

UCI Extension annually recognizes instructors who show outstanding performance in multiple dimensions such as teaching ability, creative use of instructor technology, ability to commit to projects and flexibility in meeting student needs.

"Particularly impressive about our instructors is most of them are part-time instructors. They do it because they love to teach or love giving back to the community," said Gary W. Matkin, dean of continuing education at UCI. "They take time out of their personal life to devote time to our courses and students and when they do that to an extraordinary degree, we want to give them an award and to recognize it."

The award is given for outstanding performance on a project, and instructors must meet three criteria. The first is a formal education — typically a master's degree is required. Second, all

instructors must have significant industry experience. The third is a demonstrated teaching ability, usually at the university level.

"[These instructors] did an outstanding job in developing the courses," said Beverly Moss-Jones, assistant director of business and legal programs at UCI Extension. "Most had not taught or created online courses." Moss-Jones initially approached the instructors in January 2006 to ask if they would be

option available to potential students," said Moss-Jones.

The first of the 10 online courses created by the instructors, "Introduction and Fundamentals of Legal Assistantship" and "Legal Writing" began on Jan. 8. Beginning in early April, five more courses will be offered, and three more will be offered for the summer and fall quarters.

Completion of the UCI Extension paralegal certificate program requires



(Left to Right): Guy N. Ormes, Gary W. Matkin, Kathy Miller, Renato Izquieta

willing to turn several classroom courses into online formats. All of the instructors received excellent evaluations by the students for their classroom courses based on course content, their knowledge and enthusiasm about the subject and their ability to convey the subject matter effectively and get students to participate.

"With their own full-time jobs and other responsibilities, these instructors still took on the challenge and time commitment of learning how to create an online course, and actually creating one, so that this would be yet another education

300 hours of study, 150 hours of which must be completed on campus. The remaining hours can be taken on campus or online. All of the required courses and two electives are online to allow students more flexibility with their schedules and their ability to get to campus.

"This team, comprised of industry-respected professionals, made the decision from an academic point of view [regarding] what material was appropriate for online delivery and classroom instruction to offer the most robust and effective learning experience for our students," Matkin said. ■