



VALLEY INSIDER
JOEL RUSSELL

Hilton's New Chair



Steve Hilton



McAuliffe



Linda Hilton

Chairman **Steve Hilton** has announced he will retire from the **Conrad N. Hilton Foundation** at the end of the year. He has served the Westlake Village organization founded by his grandfather for 35 years, including a stint as chief executive from 2005 to 2015. **Hawley Hilton McAuliffe**, Steve Hilton's sister, will take over the chair position. The foundation also appointed **Linda Hilton**, a cousin, to the newly created position of vice chair. "It's bitter-sweet for me that my brother Steve will no longer be our chair," Hawley Hilton McAuliffe said in a statement. "It is daunting to

follow not only in Steve's footsteps but also those of my father. ... I am confident that with Linda by my side, we will continue to lead the board in fulfilling the wishes of Conrad and Barron." ... **Signature Payments**, a payment processing service in Burbank, has named **Jeff Fortney** as vice president of partner relations, where he will recruit new salespeople and partners. "Jeff is a seasoned payment professional with a proven track record of building partnerships and driving impressive growth," **Charles Hogan**, president of Signature Payments, said in a statement. ... **Semtech Corp.** has appointed **Paula LuPriore** and **Martin Burvill** to its expanded board with 11 members. LuPriore is chief executive at **Wujitech Inc.**, a cloud-based mobile software business. Burvill formerly served as president of business markets at **Verizon Communications**. Chief Executive **Mohan Maheswaran** said in a statement: "Paula and Martin will bring new and experienced perspectives on successful transformation strategies." ... **Dole Worldwide Packaged Foods** in Westlake Village has appointed **Lara Ramdin** as chief innovation officer with the goal to increase access to nutritious food globally. She previously worked in product development at **Unilever**, **Estee Lauder** and **Molson Coors Beverages Co.** ... **H2Scan** in Valencia has named **Leon White** as vice president of transformer sales and business development. He joins the Valencia manufacturer of hydrogen sensors from **Qualitrol Co.** in Fairport, N.Y., where he served as a senior sales manager in the Midwest region.



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CSUN Students Help JPL Research

Center integrates design and humanities with hard science.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Of all the research projects underway at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, some of the most interesting are from California State University – Northridge students.

A group of graduate students at CSUN's colleges of human and health development, social and behavioral sciences, and engineering and computer science are conducting a joint thesis investigation of "comorbidities," or the presence of multiple diseases at the same time, in diabetics. More specifically, their research seeks to understand how and why comorbidities affect diabetics in underserved geographies, and how to best use autonomous or semi-autonomous systems, like mobile phone applications, to improve treatments and, hopefully, quality of life.

The researchers are fellows of the university's Autonomy Research Center for STEAHM, or ARCS, a multi-disciplinary research center the school stood up late last year in partnership with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in Palmdale.

"The vision is clear – to train the next generation of students who care about social problems," said ARCS Founding Director **Nhut Ho**, who also runs CSUN's Systems Engineering Research Laboratory.

Last year, CSUN received a \$3 million grant under NASA's Minority Institutional Research Opportunity program, designed to encourage participation by minority students



Snip: ARCS opening with Nhut Ho, right, next to CSUN President Dianne Harrison.

in NASA's STEM research.

In founding ARCS, Ho decided to focus on integrating arts, design and humanities into the study of autonomous systems – hence the addition of "Arts" and "Humanities" to the traditional STEM acronym in the center's full name. That's called "convergent research."

By commissioning these projects, ARCS provides a direct pipeline to internship and employment opportunities post-graduation, not just for science and math students, but arts and social sciences scholars too, which Ho said are desperately needed to help realize the autonomous technology of the future, including at NASA.

The student-led comorbidities project even attracted funding from **Medtronic Inc.**, a Dublin-based medical manufacturer with a diabetes division next to the CSUN campus in Northridge.

That funding, plus resources from ARCS, will help their research go further than a written study.

Now that their meta-analysis and papers have been completed, the next step is to work

with senior JPL scientists in the spring semester to create an ethnographic map of how doctors and patients treat diseases. Then, the team will start building real-world solutions.

That's just one of more than a dozen research projects ARCS fellows have taken on this year. Others include studies of how JPL scientists can best collaborate in an all-virtual laboratory and how to use autonomous technology to grow plants on the moon.

Ho said ARCS has ramped up exponentially since launch despite the coronavirus pandemic.

"Like everybody else, we're affected, but we make adjustments. Everything is conducted online," he said.

And motivated students aren't flinching away from the challenge of all-virtual research.

"Before the establishment of this center, we estimated we had maybe 10 or 20 students who happen to be working on NASA-related projects. Within this last year, we have now close to 16 or 17 projects. ... We've got about 150 students."

Palmdale Residents Save Staying Home

In Antelope Valley city, pandemic puts \$3,500 back in pockets.

By **ANDREW FOERCH** Staff Reporter

Some people who began working remotely during the pandemic have enjoyed reduced daily transportation and travel costs – and those small expenses add up to impressive savings.

A study published earlier this month by **Markethink**, **Roos Advisors** and **NYC Network Group** sought to discover where people could save the most money by changing their transportation habits as a result of the crisis. It found Palmdale residents have saved more on commute costs than residents of any other city.

Palmdale workers saved an average of \$3,581 over the six months following the virus' emergence, which, according to the study, translates to 4,500 fewer miles traveled.

Most of the cities in the top 100 are located in Southern California, reflecting the region's urban sprawl, car culture and lack of centralized public transport.

Santa Clarita ranked No. 5, with residents saving an average of \$3,126.

The study illustrated one way the pandemic and resulting economic landscape have changed consumer behavior.

"Apart from cutting transportation costs – from gas money to bus passes and everything in between – most Americans managed to save money by not spending so much on entertainment, food or going out," the study said, while acknowledging that on the other end of the spectrum, "many Americans had to rely on their savings to get through harsh times."

VICA Valley Industry & Commerce Association

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