



NEWS

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El Camino College Compton Center English Instructor Helps Students Publish Literary Work

El Camino College Compton Center English instructor Hiram Sims' passion for the written word came at an early age after reading his first greeting card.

“When I was eight, my mom sent me to the local drug store to pick out a card for someone who was sick,” said Sims, an adjunct English instructor at ECC Compton Center since 2010. “Reading the cards, I realized they were poems and I was immediately captured by the meaning and the brevity of the words. I would spend hours reading the cards and writing the verses down; then I would adapt them with some of my own words.”

Today, Sims inspires his students by encouraging them to tell stories about their own personal experiences. In his English 25A creative writing class, each class begins with what he calls a “mood check” where the students tell stories about things that have happened in their lives. “I believe other people’s storytelling and written work help provide inspiration for any writer, so we hear a short story from each student at the beginning of every class,” said Sims.

Sims recalls that while working toward his degrees in creative writing at the University of Southern California, one of his professors, an accomplished poet, published his students’ work for them at the end of the semester. “I went to college specifically to teach creative writing and I knew that when I had the opportunity, I wanted to help my students publish their work,” said Sims.

In 2012, he helped the students in his 25A Creative Writing class do exactly that by compiling their work into a book titled “The Invisible Door.” Then in 2013, he published “The Chopping Block” featuring the literary work of the twelve students in his subsequent creative writing class at ECC Compton Center. Sims pays for the publishing of the books himself and receives no profit from the books. Through an outreach program supported by LA Bookshelf Publishing, he gives all of his students a complimentary edition of the book, and copies are also available for purchase online. The books are available at <http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/hiramsims>.

“I believe my job is to not only to teach my students how to write better stories, but also how to be a part of the writing community,” said Sims. “It is important that I encourage students to create valuable work rather than simply securing information to memory.”

ECC Compton Center Students Publish Literary Work 2-2-2-2

His students are grateful for the experience. ECC Compton Center student and budding writer, Linsey Shorters, was so excited to receive her copy of “The Chopping Block.” She said she took Sims creative writing class to fulfill her childhood dream of publishing a book, a dream she has had since she was five years old.

“Professor Sims has a gift for presenting information in a way that is not textbook or boring,” said Shorters, an aspiring lawyer who also has attended Loyola Marymount University. “His class is set up like a workshop with students reading their work, discussing the elements of writing, and giving constructive critiques. He teaches his students to speak up, consider all opinions, and be confident that what you say really matters.”

Shorters said she plans to take another class or workshop taught by Sims. “I would encourage other students to take Professor Sims’ 25A Creative Writing class whether or not they have written anything before. He really helps you improve and develop your craft.”

Sims was honored as the recipient of the Outstanding Adjunct Faculty award at ECC Compton Center in 2012. He founded the Urban Poet’s Society club on campus and also routinely brings notable writers to ECC Compton Center to talk with students about creative writing. He is a published poet and author, and is often invited to guest lecture in the academic community. Sims holds a master’s degree in professional writing and a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Southern California.

About El Camino College Compton Center

El Camino College Compton Center is the community’s education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. El Camino College Compton Center is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.

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