

# PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DATE:** June 30, 2008

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## West L. A. College Expands Women's Sports - New Coaches Hired -

Athletics are experiencing a renaissance at West Los Angeles College. In the past two years, baseball returned after a 21 year absence. New, highly accomplished head baseball and football coaches were hired as was an athletic director. Continuing the momentum, West is reforming the Women's volleyball team and adding a Women's soccer team. The soccer team will compete on a newly refurbished field made possible by the voter-approved construction bond. New head coaches have been hired for each team.

### NEW HEAD WOMEN'S SOCCER COACH – FRAN GATELL



**Frank Gatell** comes to WLAC from Santa Monica High School where he was a successful head coach overseeing both men's and women's soccer since 2003. His men's team went 29-0-1 on their way to the Southern State Regional Championship – CIF Division I in 2008. Coach Gatell also supervised eight other coaches among six teams, successfully raised funds and served as a guidance counselor.

Gatell is a graduate of Santa Monica College where he played soccer in the early 1990's and then completed his undergraduate degree at Cal Berkeley. He played professionally for one year in Chile before returning to earn his Master's Degree in Counseling from Loyola Marymount University. Coach Gatell is a member of the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and holds a Premier Soccer Diploma and "A" License.

"Coach Gatell brings a wealth of coaching knowledge, ability and organizational skills that will be extremely important as we start our soccer program from scratch. Furthermore, we were very impressed with his caring attitude and student first approach as an educator. He is bilingual in Spanish and English and has an impressive background as a teacher, educator and coach," said Steve Aggers, WLAC Director of Athletics.

### NEW HEAD WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL COACH – BRANDEN HIGA



Back after a six year absence, the WLAC Women's Volleyball program has tapped **Branden Higa** to be its new head coach. Higa served as an assistant coach for the Women's Volleyball team at Lipscomb University and more recently for the very successful women's team at Loyola Marymount University. In addition to his collegiate coaching experience, Branden has been a volleyball club team coach in the South Bay and other Southern California club programs.

Branden is a graduate of Pierce College where he played competitive college volleyball and was named the team's Most Outstanding Player. He received a scholarship to play for Pepperdine University where he also earned a degree in International Studies and Public Relations.

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## **West L. A. College Expands Women's Sports - New Coaches Hired -**

"Branden is a young, highly energetic and eager coach with a bright future. **He has been mentored extremely well his entire career starting with the volleyball coaching legend Ken Stanley at Pierce College. He played for one of the world's best coaches in Dr. Marv Dunphy at Pepperdine and then gained valuable experience for the highly successful head coach Steve Stratos at LMU.** Brandon has been around the best, coached and played under the best and we expect him to become a quality head coach for our newly established program here at West LA," said Athletic Director Steve Aggers.

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