“Combining computer technology and any other area can open up great opportunities,”

After having lived and worked in America for 20 years, West CSIT Professor Anna Chiang says she feels like she’s won the lottery.

Twenty years ago, faced with a language barrier and financial hardship, Prof. Chiang was an international student from Taiwan, studying computer science. After earning her Master’s in Computer Science and more than 10 Microsoft certifications, she became a full-time instructor at West Los Angeles College. Prof. Chiang enjoys sharing the story of her career with students, offering them IT career consultation during her office hours, even during summer and winter break.

“Computer Information Technology is a high-pay and fascinating career, and anyone can do it. Combining computer technology and any other area can open up great opportunities,” she says. “For example, I encourage West students with science backgrounds to pursue Bio Informatics – the process of digitalizing medical records; students in criminal justice can pursue Computer Forensics; or students with a passion for art can pursue Digital Media.”

Ever since she arrived at West, Prof. Chiang’s mission has been to prepare students for the ever-changing world of technology. After the dot-com bubble burst in the early 2000’s, low enrollment began to plague all computer science classes. Worried about the future of the CS department, Prof. Chiang combined the existing Microsoft network, CISCO network and new Information Security courses, in order to create the first ever “Computer Network and Security Management” vocational degree in 2006. It became the first and only State-approved Computer Science vocational degree program in the Los Angeles Community College District.

“The rapid and widespread use of the Internet and E-Commerce has generated a great need for highly trained IT workers – a demand that West is training students to fill,” said Prof. Chiang.

“In addition to the programs we already have in place, we at West are in the process of creating new degrees. The skill certificate for Web Support and Database Management are already in place, and the new AA/AS degree in Web Support and Database Management was submitted to the State earlier this year.”

“I want to help all students stay on the right track, survive, and thrive,” she concluded.

Learn more about the Computer Science / Information Technology programs at West at www.wlac.edu/csit