

**For Immediate Release**

**August 28, 2008**

**El Camino College Compton Center  
Professor Received Prestigious Award**

Dr. August John Hoffman, El Camino College Compton Center professor of psychology, has been selected to receive the coveted 2008 Psi Beta Ann E. Garrett Robinson College Life Award. He is the founder of the Compton College Gardening Program, a voluntary project he began more than nine years ago. Psi Beta, part of the American Psychology Association, is directed toward recognizing community college programs in the area of psychology.

Dr. Hoffman, whose hobby is gardening, began bringing plants to his classroom. It gained popularity with his students, and plants began literally taking root along an entire stretch of buildings. Today, two acres of Compton Center's campus are devoted to gardening. On the northwest side, a stone fruit orchard has approximately 50 peach, plum or apple trees. On the northwest, a vegetable garden is thriving. Another part of the campus is home to 60 citrus trees.

According to Dr. Hoffman, the program's major benefits to students include their great pride in and connection to the campus, the opportunity to develop relationships with other students and academic self-esteem. He quotes his students who say: "the more work you put in, the better you feel."

Dr. Hoffman is a full-time professor and teaches introduction to psychology, sports psychology and statistics courses. As part of class credit, some students choose the option of 10 hours of community service in the garden, which includes preparing, cultivating, weeding, watering and planting activities. Dr. Hoffman is also a part-time instructor at Pepperdine University and California State University, Northridge. On Saturdays in the Fall and Spring, you can find Compton Center students working alongside the university students. During the summer, gardening takes place from Monday through Friday. Funding for the program comes from grants through the participating universities, personal contributions, in-kind donations and from the students themselves who have brought in plants and have even donated a lawnmower.

The gardening program is open to all students, staff, faculty, family members and the community.

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