



NEW HOME – Kimberly Irizarry is the center dean of DeVry University's new Palmdale Campus. DeVry will be offering classes at Palmdale's AERO Institute starting this summer.

JIM SKEEN/Valley Press

DeVry University to offer classes in the AV

*This story appeared in the Antelope Valley Press
Tuesday, March 25, 2008.*

By JIM SKEEN
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PALMDALE - DeVry University is joining the lineup of schools offering college degree programs at Palmdale's AERO Institute.

DeVry University will offer a mix of associate, bachelor's, and post-graduate degree programs at the AERO Institute, 38256 Sierra Highway. DeVry is beginning its enrollment today for its first classes, slated to start in July.

"There is definitely a need for a four-year university here," said Kimberly Irizarry, dean of DeVry's new Palmdale center. "DeVry recognized that need."

DeVry University and its Keller Graduate School of Management will offer bachelor degree programs in Business Administration and Technical Management as well as associate degree programs in Electronics and Computer Technology and Network Systems Administration. DeVry will offer degree programs year-round at the Palmdale location, allowing students to earn a bachelor's degree in three years or less and an associate degree in two years or less.

DeVry University's Keller Graduate School of Management will also offer a number of master's degree programs in business and technology.

"DeVry has a heritage as a technical school, but we are an accredited university," said DeVry spokesman Dan Dement. "DeVry University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association."

The institute evolved out of concerns over the lack of engineering and technical training opportunities in the Antelope Valley. The AERO portion of the name stands for Aerospace Education Research Operations.

The institute provides programs from "K to Gray" - meaning everything from programs to enhance K-12 education to post-graduate degrees to continuing education programs. The institute's partners include Palmdale and NASA's Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base.

"The whole point is to reach out, even to grade school students, and say, 'Yes, it is possible to get your degree,' " said Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford. "It sets the stage for them to further their education."

The institute also is aimed at strengthening the region's leading industry - aerospace. "It's all about economic development and retention," Ledford said. "It makes us more competitive."

DeVry's center dean, Irizarry, has ties to the Antelope Valley, DeVry and the AERO Institute. She graduated from Antelope Valley High School and taught computer technology at Antelope Valley Christian School. She has lived in the region for most of her life.

Irizarry received a master's degree in education/curriculum from the University of Phoenix and a Bachelor of Science degree in computer information systems from DeVry Institute of Technology, now known as DeVry University, in Irving, Texas.

Irizarry worked for Oklahoma State University's NASA Aerospace Education Services Program at the AERO Institute prior to being appointed center dean by DeVry.

"Kimberly did a tremendous job exciting school kids about science and math with the Digital Learning Network while working for NASA Dryden," said Kim Shaw, AERO Institute president. "I am sure she will bring that same level of enthusiasm to help successfully establish the new DeVry campus in Palmdale, and we are very pleased to continue to collaborate with her at the AERO Institute."

The mix of classes to be offered and the number of faculty to be hired will be determined based on the results of recruiting of students, Irizarry said.

DeVry also plans to conduct focus groups with the region's employers to see what skills they are seeking in workers, Irizarry said.

System-wide, 93% of DeVry's October '06 and February and June '07 graduates in the active job market were employed in their fields within six months of graduation, at an average salary of \$43,000.

"We are excited to be located in a complex that is associated with the NASA AERO Institute and puts DeVry among a concentration of industry leading companies and peer academic institutions," said Bill Van Zwol, president of DeVry University Southern California. "DeVry looks forward to developing a long-term relationship as a valued education partner with the cities and surrounding communities of Palmdale and Lancaster."

DeVry's hours of administrative operation will be from 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays; and by appointment on Saturdays.

For details about the bachelor's degree programs to be offered by DeVry University Palmdale, call the admissions department at (661) 224-2920 or visit www.devry.edu.

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