

Expertise, talent tapped for Hollywood, online

From UCR & CSULA

There's no doubt that LA's an Industry town and the abundance of talent for media -- old and new -- in the region is huge. Still, it all crops up in odd ways, such as the weed and invasive plant expert who ended up advising on an upcoming, big-budget Hollywood movie and its accompanying video games. Or the online designer who has turned her interest and acquaintance with astronomy into an award-winning web site. In the days ahead, look closely at not only how actress Signourney Weaver dresses but also how she works on screen as she portrays a botanist involved with the lushly vegetated imaginary moon Pandora in director James Cameron's movie, "Avatar." Seems Cameron, who has a physics background, wanted to ensure the accuracy of his film's portrayal of a female botanist and the alien worlds in which she's situated. So, through a series of turns, the Riverside weeds expert got recruited, not only to advise the actress and on the movie but also in preparing materials for some accompanying, upcoming video game releases. Meantime, in East LA, a master's student has won top honors from throughout the Cal State system for her appealing and innovative new media work, [The Desk of One Astronomer](#). The artful site on astronomy was just one of several award-winners from the Los Angeles campus.