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L.A.'s top financial official arrested on suspicion of drunk driving

City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana publicly apologizes and says he will immediately seek counseling. He was driving a city car after leaving a charity event.

By Phil Willon

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The top budget analyst for the city of Los Angeles, City Administrative Officer Miguel Santana, was arrested by the California Highway Patrol early Friday on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol.

Santana, 40, who on Thursday night attended a political roast of Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. Steve Cooley hosted by the American Diabetes Assn., was arrested about 12:15 a.m. in the San Gabriel Valley. Santana lives in Claremont.

A CHP officer made the traffic stop after observing Santana's car traveling at a high rate of speed on a surface street, said Sgt. Mark Garrett, a CHP spokesman.

The officer detected "signs and symptoms of intoxication" and placed Santana under arrest, Garrett said.

Santana was driving a city car at the time of his arrest, a gray Honda Civic, said Officer Edmund Zorrilla, another CHP spokesman.

He said officers made the arrest in Covina, near Citrus Avenue and Navilla Place, after the car was stopped and Santana failed a field sobriety test. Santana was very cooperative, he said.

Santana submitted to a blood-alcohol test, but Garrett said the CHP does not disclose results of such tests.

On Friday, Santana publicly apologized for the incident and said he would immediately seek counseling and "recommit myself to my family and work."

"I regret to say that last night I was involved in a very serious and irresponsible incident," he said. "Driving home from a charity event, I received a DUI.

"It was a mistake that I deeply regret and I apologize to my family and friends, my staff, the

mayor, the City Council and the entire city family for this indiscretion."

Santana was released from custody Friday morning.

"Mr. Santana is deeply sorry about this incident and recognizes the mistake he made," Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said in a written statement.

Since Santana took the job last year, he has been given the difficult task of addressing the city's financial crisis.

The mayor and City Council have authorized the elimination of 4,000 city jobs to help close a \$212-million budget gap.