

FALL 2023

WITH EXCELLENCE

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT



1973 – 2023

Celebrating 50 years of the SDCCD!

Story on page 08

CITY COLLEGE | MESA COLLEGE | MIRAMAR COLLEGE | COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

A SENSE OF BELONGING

This is an exciting time for the San Diego Community College District and our colleges as we approach the District's 50th year and define a new normal in a post-pandemic world. Much has changed in the past half-century — much of that at a seemingly accelerated pace since March 2020. Advancements in artificial intelligence and virtual and augmented reality are influencing teaching and learning. Community demographics are evolving as more adult learners are seeking career growth and advancement opportunities. Economic volatility is exacerbating disparities in access to higher education, employment, housing, healthcare, and many other basic needs. Our work through the SDCCD is vital to the health and prosperity of our communities.



After successive years of declining enrollment, the SDCCD is seeing students returning to complete their education goals. Enrollment is the District's clearest measure of how our communities understand the value of our colleges. With a 12% increase in fall 2023 over the previous year, it is clear that community members see the value of our colleges.

We will serve nearly 100,000 people in our classes and programs this year, which equates to more than 37,000 full-time-equivalent students. This is an outstanding outcome of thousands of hours of hard work by so many people across our District.

The consistent theme across our college convocations this year is belonging. When students feel connected, valued, and appreciated, they persist and succeed. Reflecting that, belonging is also central to our 2023-2030 Strategic Plan. While the plan includes many objectives, the unifying principle is creating spaces where students feel they belong. Our vision is a district where diverse student communities find access, belonging, and success through innovative and culturally responsive teaching, learning, services, and engagement in everything we do.

Our strategic plan implementation will be guided by six fundamental principles:

1. Every student is capable of achieving their educational goals.
2. We must continue to expand – intentionally and systemically – access, inclusion, opportunity, and engagement for students from diverse racial, gender, sexual orientation, ability, social, and economic communities.
3. The individual identity of our students, faculty, employees, and community members encompasses many intersecting characteristics which shape their individual



Students and Outreach staff gather at City College's Welcome Center during the first week of the fall semester.

lived experiences.

4. We are responsible for serving our students, faculty, employees, and community members in a manner that creates belonging and facilitates their success within the context of their lived experiences.

5. We measure institutional success by individual outcomes in individual interactions.

6. We will fail forward, learn, and improve continuously.

In recent years, we have made significant progress in restoring our fiscal health by limiting our expenses. This year, our focus expands to connecting more students with free financial resources to support their basic needs and education-related expenses, which will increase our student-centered funding formula revenues. New revenues will allow us to integrate many of the basic needs programs that have been established through one-time state funds into our ongoing operations and address critical staffing needs. Additionally, we will continue advocacy for equitable funding for our noncredit classes and programs.

I am confident this will be an incredibly rewarding year for our District, colleges, and students, and that our work will set a great foundation for our collective success in years to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gregory Smith'.

Acting Chancellor Gregory Smith

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San Diego Community College District marks 50 years of serving the community and millions of students.



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Mesa College re-launched its study abroad program with two trips over the summer, and City and Miramar colleges will join by offering educational explorations in 2024.



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The Mesa College World Art Collection was started in 1976 and has grown to include more than 1,300 pieces from around the world.



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FROM THE EDITOR

Among the walls of the Communications and Public Relations Department you'll find a treasure trove of logoed paperweights and monogrammed blankets from past holiday receptions, college-branded T-shirts, step-and-repeat backdrops, and office supplies. But, buried deep in drawers rarely opened and in the recesses of packed shelves, we recently discovered some truly fascinating gems.

As noted on the cover, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the SDCCD's establishment as a truly independent district. So, our team has been doing a lot of digging. We uncovered old With Excellence



newsletters from the 1970s and '80s, a folder titled "Oldtimers" — eliciting chuckles around the office — filled with undated black and white event photos. We even discovered a couple of early logos that we didn't know existed before a version of the current logo was adopted in the early 2000s.

Multimedia Specialist David Brooks brought in a lightbox and a loupe, and we looked through hundreds of 35mm, 6x6-square, and medium format negatives and color transparencies. Included among them were negatives of the District Office's current location (pictured on page 8) known then as Stadium Plaza when first purchased in 1973.

I wish we could include all of the great treasures we uncovered over the summer — a small collection of which you'll find among the 5-0 on the cover and throughout these pages — but as a print editor I have finite space afforded to me. Luckily, additional finds are scattered across our social media where we have been promoting #ThrowbackThursdays since August and will continue to do so through the end of the year. I hope you enjoy learning about the District's history, as much as we have.

—Leslie Stump, Publications Editor

New Marketing Campaign Plays on San Diego Icons



Workers install one of four billboards that went up around San Diego to promote enrollment opportunities at City, Mesa, Miramar, and Continuing Education colleges.

Seeking to get the attention of working adults, the San Diego Community College District has launched a new marketing campaign with a light-hearted play on beloved San Diego institutions such as the military, San Diego Zoo, Comic-Con, and tacos.

The \$600,000 campaign has a serious purpose: attracting adult learners who had to put their education plans on hold during the pandemic.

“Students between the ages of 25 and 45 were among the most impacted during the pandemic,” said Jack Beresford, SDCCD’s Director of Communications and Public Relations. “With fewer and fewer 18-year-olds coming out of high school, it is critically important that our colleges attract more adult learners.”

In February, the District selected 25th Hour Communications, a company with expertise in working with community colleges, to implement a one-year districtwide enrollment marketing campaign with a special focus

on adult learners. The firm gained insights on students’ motivations, gaps, barriers, and opportunities through focus groups, interviews and an online survey. Adult learners expressed a preference for light and humorous advertisements and those with a connection to San Diego.

The “Redefining San Diego” marketing campaign, which will include digital ads, billboards and bus wraps, suggests that instead of being known for its world-famous Zoo, the military, Comic-Con, and tacos, San Diego should be equally well-known for its community colleges, affordable education, and career training opportunities.

The SDCCD, which includes San Diego

... San Diego should be equally well-known for its community colleges ...

City, Mesa, Miramar, and Continuing Education colleges, also is looking at ways to make it easier for adult learners to return to the classroom. This includes flexible scheduling, free childcare, tuition-free scholarships and creating more completely online career-training programs. The District also believes adding more bachelor’s degree programs at its colleges will help working adults who are unable to relocate in order to attend a four-year university.

Initial results from the campaign have been positive. A landing page (sdccdstart.com) associated with the campaign had more than 20,000 visits in the first month, and digital creative has been outperforming industry averages including a 67% view rate of YouTube ads (compared to 27% industry average).

The impact of the campaign has, no doubt, helped improve enrollment numbers, which this year are up 13% at the credit colleges and 12% at College of Continuing Education.



FAIR WAGES FOR DISABLED WORKERS THANKS TO \$1.8M GRANT

The San Diego Community College District was awarded a \$1.8 million California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation grant focused on training people with disabilities to be competitive among jobs earning at least minimum wage. The three-year grant will allow the District to serve more than 100 disabled people who currently are working in jobs that pay below the minimum wage.

The grant is the result of state legislation (SB 639) that requires the State Council on Developmental Disabilities to create a plan detailing how workers with disabilities can be paid at least the state's minimum wage, along with support and services, by 2025.

Federal labor law has allowed employers to pay people with disabilities less than the minimum wage, with some being paid as low as 15 cents an hour. This has led to continued poverty for disabled people, who have a poverty rate of 18.4% compared to 11% for Cali-



Students in College of Continuing Education's Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) program will benefit from a \$1.8 million grant to help workers with disabilities enter jobs that pay at least the state's minimum wage.

fornians who have no disabilities, according to the state legislature.

"I take a great deal of pride that the District will be in the center of resolving this longstanding social problem," said Poppy Fitch, dean of Wellness and Disability Support Programs and Services for the SDCCD.

The District's DSPS will work with the disabled services program at San Diego College of Continuing Education to serve participants in the program. The college already offers a vocational skills training program, while the District will provide vocational support services, including vocational counseling, educational coaching, peer men-

toring, employment services, and post-employment support.

"I am thrilled to see our state make this significant change for some of the most overlooked individuals in our society," said Tina M. King, president of the College of Continuing Education. "San Diego College of Continuing Education is ready to work collaboratively with the District to lead this effort in supporting our DSPS students achieve livable wages."

A similar grant was awarded to the North Orange County Community College District, which, together with the Department of Rehabilitation, will be partners in this effort with the SDCCD.

District Chancellor Search Continues

With the help of Academic Search, the application process for the Chancellor Search was concluded in October. The Search Committee, consisting of 28 members led by Trustees Mary Graham and Craig Milgrim, will identify finalists in early November.

All finalists will meet in person with key District groups, participate in open forums, and interview with the Board of Trustees in November and early December. The exact dates, times, and locations of these events will be provided once finalists are confirmed.

Everyone throughout the District and community will be invited to attend the public forums with the final candidates. Feedback forms will be provided to all who attend, and the completed forms will be given to the Board of Trustees and reviewed as part of the Board's deliberation process.

The start date for the new chancellor will be negotiated between the Board and the selected finalist. For more information and a full timeline related to the Chancellor Search process, visit sdccd.edu/chancellorsearch.

WE READER SURVEY PROVIDES INVALUABLE FEEDBACK

The results are in and readers of the With Excellence (WE) magazine gave the publication 4 out of 5 stars for overall satisfaction.

Upon distribution of the spring 2023 edition, the District Communications and Public Relations Department, in partner-

ship with the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, conducted a reader survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from readers to help guide story topic development and collect data regarding engagement with the magazine.

In total, 242 people responded to the survey, which was shared districtwide and to community partners via email and through a QR code in the printed magazine.

Among the findings, the survey results revealed that readers rely on the WE to stay connected

to campus programs and events, and to learn about faculty and student achievements. This theme was evident among both multiple-choice items and open-ended responses, with respondents indicating they were particularly interested in stories about student and faculty groups, art installations at the campuses, and academic departments.

At the same time, only about half of survey respondents agreed that they felt represented by the magazine; survey data

is currently under further analysis to identify areas for improvement in order to help diversify coverage and make it more inclusive.

The CPR Department thanks those who participated in the survey and appreciates your interest in the publication. If you are a first-time reader, we look forward to sharing with you stories from around the District.

If you have story ideas or feedback you'd like to share about WE magazine, please reach out to cpr@sdccd.edu.



BUILDING EMPATHY THROUGH THE HUMANITIES

What started for English Professor Anna Rogers as a fellowship with the San Diego and Imperial County Community Colleges Association (SDICCCA) in 2009 has turned into a nearly 15-year career with San Diego City College.

When Rogers started teaching community college classes she was not new to the system — she graduated from San Diego Mesa College before transferring to UC San Diego where she got a bachelor's degree in art history; she added a master's degree in American literature from San Diego State University.

With humanities programs seeing enrollment declines nationwide— between 16-29% decrease in humanities degrees from 2012-2020 — Rogers and her peers have their work cut out in order to help turn those figures around.

WE asked Professor Rogers about book bans, why studying in the humanities is important, and what role artificial intelligence will play in the future of education.

Why is it important to continue to study and pursue humanities degrees?

Given the state of the world, which is becoming increasingly divisive and combative, the study of the humanities actually gives us a chance to, from lots of different aspects, build our understanding of human beings and the way that we think. As a byproduct, that allows us to build our empathy for one another. That capacity for empathy is the most powerful mechanism for disrupting some of the negative social trends that have been developing over the last few years. It's the failure of empathy that's gotten us where we are: Our inability to actually talk to each other and hear each other. The humanities are essentially a place of empathy building.

What would you say to a student who is on the fence about majoring in English or other humanities programs?

The humanities will give you a foundational skill set that you can apply across almost any area of industry that you could imagine. It will give you the ability to work with diverse people. It will give you the ability to think creatively. It



Anna Rogers has been teaching at City College since 2009, and, earlier this year, she and students explored ChatGPT and its implications on the education system.

will give you the ability to communicate your thoughts and ideas and to help others communicate their thoughts and ideas. So, the set of skills that you get through studying the humanities are the kinds of things that are going to be needed anywhere you go and in anything that you do. The biggest upside is that you will have the time of your life acquiring those skills when you do your education in the humanities.

What conversations about artificial intelligence are you having with students and your peers?

During the spring semester we started with ChatGPT, and I just explored it with my students because it was brand new for all of us. This was a semester where we basically taught ourselves. My students all wrote about their experience of attempting to use it — seeing whether it was valuable for what they were doing — and their responses were

very mixed around how they thought about it in terms of a learning instrument, and also from an ethical perspective. It's still a very mixed bag. It has all kinds of applications for learning that students can take advantage of. But questions exist about where does it tip over into what is ethically problematic, and how do we all help one another understand what becomes ethically problematic in an academic environment? Those are all questions that are still unresolved but have been on everybody's minds — not just instructors, but also students.

Why should people care that books are being banned across the country?

People need to care that books are being banned across the country because it's a major mechanism for the silencing of dissenting voices, and it's important to hear those dissenting voices.



(Clockwise from top) Members of the SDCCD contingent gather in front of the District float before entering the parade route. (From left) Acting Chancellor Gregory Smith, Trustee Geysil Arroyo, San Diego College of Continuing Education President Tina M. King, Trustee Craig Milgrim, and San Diego Miramar College President Wes Lundburg were all smiles during the parade. This year's float had participants and a DJ on top waving to the crowd. (From left) Student Trustees Namod Pollack, Adriana Dos Santos, and Ixchel Valencia Diaz carry the District banner to lead the crowd of SDCCD parade participants.



Pride Thrives at SDCCD

Hundreds of students, faculty, classified employees, and family members from the San Diego Community College District walked in the annual San Diego Pride Parade on Saturday, July 15, 2023. This year's theme, Thrive, was emblazoned on teal T-shirts worn by participants, as well as on the side of the SDCCD parade float featuring photos of LGBTQIA+ students.

"The dedication to LGBTQIA+ community is demonstrated by many acts across the District, such as the raising of the pride flag at all of the colleges, to the opening of several pride centers, and collaborating with local organizations that service the community," said Dean of Outreach and Student Affairs Andrew "Luke" Menchaca. "We wanted the float to make a statement; the rainbow and flags showcase a celebration of the diversity of our students at SDCCD."

Providing spaces where students can thrive is a priority of the SDCCD. That support can be seen in event participation such as San Diego Pride, the inaugural raising of the pride flag in June on all District properties, as well as at the various campus Pride Centers that create safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ students, which received \$1.2 million in funding last year secured by U.S. Representative Sara Jacobs.

The SDCCD has participated in the Pride Parade since 2014.

CELEBRATING FREEDOM

In acknowledgment of the day in 1865 when Union troops arrived in Texas to announce Black enslaved people in the state and the rest of the nation were free by the Emancipation Proclamation, all District locations for the first time raised the Juneteenth flag on June 19. Juneteenth, also known as the United States' second independence day, was officially made a federal holiday in 2021.



Miramar College



GOLDEN

Stadium Plaza was purchased by the San Diego Community College District in 1973 and the District Office was moved from 835 12th Ave., near City College, to 3375 Camino del Rio South in Mission Valley, where it is still headquartered today as the Charles W. Patrick Building.



San Diego Community College District marks 50 years of serving the community and millions of students

A promise to serve students. A focus on diversity and civil rights. Expanding opportunities in education and careers for better futures.

These commitments of the San Diego Community College District date back 50 years ago this November when voters elected a governing board that included Gene French, Daniel Grady, Richard Johnston, Charles Reid, and Lou Ridgeway as the first trustees after splitting from the San Diego Unified School District.

The District's three colleges — San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges — had long been part of the San Diego Unified School District, and discussions about creating a district just for those adult education schools had been brewing for a few years. It finally became possible in 1972 with the passage of Proposition G, which created an independent district and set the stage for the new governing board.

In the years that followed, the SDCCD Board of Trustees would

station.

It was also the year the District's administration moved from downtown, at 835 12th Ave. near City College, to its current headquarters in Mission Valley — eventually renaming the office building from Stadium Plaza to the Charles W. Patrick building after the first leader of the SDCCD.

While the events may seem a lifetime ago, one former student and the District's longest serving employee — 50 years in October — recalls the year vividly and how a City College professor changed her life.

"My chemistry teacher said, 'Hey, I noticed you're kind of helping other people,'" Pamela Kozminska said. "'Why don't you just go to the tutor office and sign up?' So, I did, and that's how it started."

Kozminska, who still remembers the names of professors who inspired her in 1973, took the advice and became a tutor in October of that year, two months before the Board of Trustees would be seated, and where she continued until 1986 when she accepted a position teaching ceramics at College of Continuing Education.

Anniversary

take the lead in expanding the role of community colleges, addressing equity gaps, creating partnerships with K-12 schools and businesses, handling economic challenges, promoting bonds to expand and update campuses, and aggressively working to make it easier for students to transfer to four-year universities, secure a better-paying job, or both.

The new Board of Trustees was seated at the end of a tumultuous year in the nation, as the Watergate scandal erupted and as the United States and Vietnam signed a peace agreement ahead of the culmination of the war two years later. At the same time, Americans were gathering around family television consoles to watch "All in the Family," and Skylab was launched as the world's first space

"I love it," she responds whenever anyone asks if she has plans to retire. "This is what I wanted to do my whole life."

She thinks of her colleagues as family, even tearing up when sharing how they've supported her through the years, and she delights in inspiring and instilling confidence in her students.

Another former student from the era also remembers his life changing because of an influential teacher.

Just a few years before the official creation of the District, and after two previous attempts at attending other colleges proved unsuccessful, Fred Colby decided to give San Diego Mesa College a try — and that's where he enrolled in Fred Horn's political science class.

"Number one, I was ready," he said about why his third attempt

FIRST BOARD OF TRUSTEES



GENE FRENCH



DANIEL GRADY



RICHARD JOHNSTON



CHARLES REID



LOU RIDGEWAY

As the SDCCD's longest-serving employee, College of Continuing Education ceramics instructor Pamela Kozminska (pictured below) says her peers and students at the school are like family, and she has no desire to retire anytime soon. October marks her 50th year with the District.



was different. "Also, I was lucky and got a fantastic professor."

He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in political science that led to a career working on political campaigns and other jobs, including leading the San Diego Performing Arts Foundation.

In 1988, Colby decided to return to the District that had inspired his career and ran for the SDCCD Board of Trustees. He served two terms, which he often calls his "most enjoyable and rewarding role." To this day, Colby continues to support the SDCCD, especially through its San Diego Promise program, which provides two years of tuition, textbook vouchers, and wraparound support services for eligible SDCCD students.

"I always respected community colleges and how much they helped me," he said.

Creating Futures, from Auto Mechanics to Brain Surgeons

While the SDCCD already had three colleges when its first Board was seated in 1973, within a couple of years trustees were discussing a new facility to expand its mission of serving students.

One of the Board's first acts was to hire a chancellor to succeed Charles W. Patrick, who had been appointed by the San Diego Unified School District as acting superintendent. The Board hired Dale Parnell, who served as the District's first official chancellor until 1976.

After about a year on the job, Parnell appeared at the Greater San Diego Industry-Education conference and gave a talk that exemplified the District's respect for students and its mission of meeting their needs. In his talk, Parnell stressed the need to elevate the image of career educa-

tion, which he said had wrongly been associated with so-called "dumb" kids.

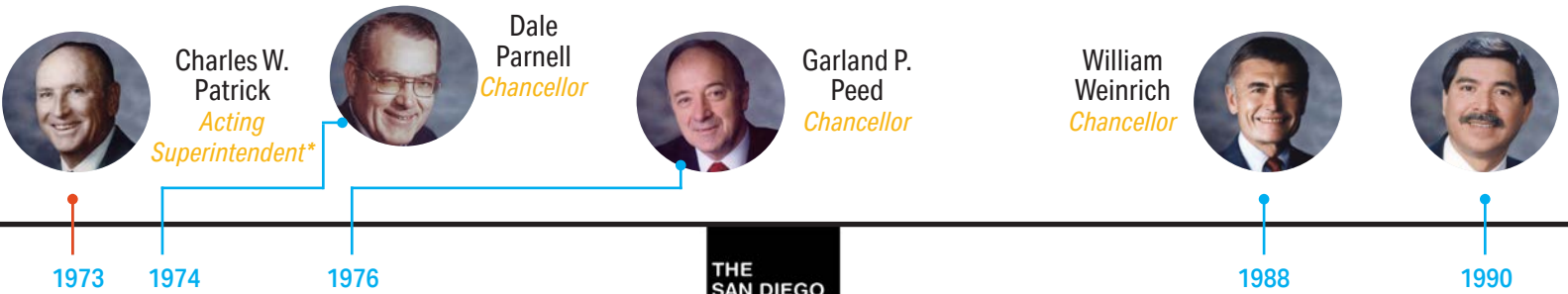
"Public education will not serve most of our students' needs until educators and parents change those unreal images in their minds," he said. "Career education is for all students — slow learners and fast learners — and includes all occupations. A brain surgeon has a career which requires career education; so does an auto mechanic."

Parnell reminded the conference that twice as many jobs required welding skills rather than chemistry knowledge, yet most high schools had chemistry labs while few had welding courses. He asked why.

Plans to expand career education locally already were in the works.

Residents of southeastern San Diego had pushed for a cultural and educational center

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP



*Charles W. Patrick's leadership position started in 1956 and carried over from the San Diego Unified School District when the SDCCD was established.

SDCCD LOGOS



1973-2001



From aviation maintenance technology (left) to manufacturing engineering technology and welding, career education has been a major focus of SDCCD colleges for the past 50 years.



in their neighborhood for years. In 1972, while still a part of San Diego Unified School District, the SDCCD, in partnership with Model Cities, Inc., funded the purchase of about 20 acres at the already-dedicated site of Preble-Sachem Navy housing on Ocean View Boulevard in Mountain View. Construction of the Educational Cultural Complex began on the land in 1974 with funding from the San Diego City Council, County Board of Supervisors, and Model Cities, Inc.

“The ECC was designed and conceived by very important members of the Southeast (San Diego) community,” recalled Augustine “Augie” Gallego, who came to the SDCCD in 1976 to work as an academic counselor at the new facility, and later served as chancellor from 1990-2004. “Members of the Southeast community worked very hard to develop a plan for a one-stop college that offered both



Between funding changes, tuition hikes, and the threat of layoffs, over the years the District has been faced with major challenges to overcome. In 2009, hundreds of students (left) joined faculty, classified professionals, and administrators at City College’s downtown campus to rally against fee increases and class elimination due to state budget cuts.

non-credit and college levels under San Diego State University accreditation.”

The ECC campus opened in 1976 as the District’s fourth major educational site and now is the largest of the College of Continuing Education’s seven campuses.

In the spirit of Parnell’s vision for re-imagining career education, the school offers evolving free courses including auto mechanics, office skills, welding, culinary arts, computer security and programing, clothing and textiles, electronic assembly, among other classes, to help meet growing industry needs. Today, each SDCCD credit college has its own Career Technical Education department, as well.

Overcoming Challenges

While the 1970s saw the District greatly expand its mission to serve students, it also faced unprecedented financial challenges.

With the 1978 passage of Proposition 13, which restricted property taxes in California, schools and colleges throughout the state faced significant budget shortfalls. The District’s funding for the 1978-79 school year was cut by almost 15%.

The SDCCD’s budget was trimmed by \$9.4 million, with most of the cuts involving construction, accommodation for student growth, salary increases, and other expenses. Trustees voted to charge a \$1 fee per instructional hour

for enrichment courses in the Adult and Continuing Education program while keeping all college-credit classes tuition-free (which lasted until fall 1984 when the District began charging \$5 per unit, capped at \$50 per semester).

Garland P. Peed succeeded Parnell as chancellor in 1976 and would serve until 1988. Faced with the loss of property tax revenue, Peed held meetings with District employees to discuss budget cuts, but stressed that educational programs would be kept intact and the SDCCD would retain all regular employees while placing a hiring freeze for new employees.

The meetings resulted in employee suggestions for trimming the budget, including reducing the number of hours of certain courses to the state minimum, combining nursing programs, and standardizing diploma covers, which they estimated would save \$400,000.

At an August meeting in 1978, Peed said the District’s future was not bright and rosy, but also not bleak because it had kept most programs intact and had not lost a single regular employee.

Each new decade brought new challenges.

Among the accomplishments he is most proud of, as a trustee Colby said he worked to get better benefits for adjunct faculty members and talked with Chancellor Gallego about freezing the budget in anticipation of state funding cuts he saw coming in 1992.

Augustine P. Gallego
Chancellor



Constance M. Carroll
Chancellor

Carlos O. Cortez
Chancellor



Gregory A. Smith
Acting Chancellor



2004

2021

2023

2001-2005



SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
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2005-2017



SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
City College • Mesa College • Miramar College
College of Continuing Education

2017-PRESENT

“We saved like \$25 million, and we made a commitment that we weren’t going to be laying off staff, and we honored that,” he said.

At the start of the new millennium, enrollment fee increases — from \$11 per unit in 2003 to \$46 per unit in 2012 — were implemented throughout the California Community Colleges system.

Following the Great Recession, in September 2009, students joined faculty, classified professionals, and administrators to rally against fee increases and class elimination due to state budget cuts. Under the direction of Chancellor Constance M. Carroll, a hiring freeze was implemented and layoffs were avoided.

In 2018, funding for California community colleges was changed from being based on total headcount to incorporate student-centered funding formulas based on certain benchmark criteria of student success. Just as the District was adjusting to this new formula, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic struck, bringing with it a host of new challenges that the District is diligently still working to address.

No matter the challenge, the SDCCD has persisted — putting student success at the forefront of the decision-making process.

Embracing Change

The 1980s, known as the educational reform era, saw the District face new challenges, grow larger, and undergo more transformation, but its mission of serving students and expanding opportunities remained constant.

Gerald Ramsey arrived at the SDCCD in 1984 as director of Student Financial Aid and Extended Opportunity and Programs & Services, and immediately began to have second thoughts.

“My office was on the corner of B and 14th streets,” he said. “I went there, and I had no windows. I went through some of the budget stuff and went home and told my wife, ‘I don’t know if I made a mistake in coming here. These people have no resources. They have no money.’”

“I quickly learned that anybody could be an impact player,” he said. “When you raised your voice, it was acknowledged that your



input was taken seriously. And that got better and better over the years until it became the culture of the District.”

Ramsey worked in a variety of jobs at City College for almost 28 years, spent six years at San Diego Miramar College, and has been chair of the San Diego City College Foundation since 2020.

“I got a chance to see lots of stuff,” he said. “I was there a long time.”

Ramsey said he also saw the District embrace new technology.

“I’m old enough and had been there long enough to see a period of time when computers were a luxury and not something that everyone had,” he said. “The District embraced that technology pretty early on and developed an in-house system for managing services and programs, in particular student records and registration.”

Longtime College of Continuing Education instructor Kozminska, who was a community college student in the 1970s, also recalled the days before computers.

“When I first took City College classes, I had to go to the gym, and they had these punch cards and you’d have to go talk to one of the ladies and tell them what classes you wanted and they’d punch a card,” she said. “It was very caveman.”

Additionally, with the task of serving some 80,000 students, in 1987, the District tran-

sitioned from having a security agency to establishing its own California POST certified College Police Department, which is now the largest community college police department in the state of California with about 75 employees.

The District welcomed its first districtwide interconnected computer system, the Univac 90/70 (above), which had to be installed by crane at the District Office in 1977. Over the years, as computers and advanced machinery evolved, “the District embraced technology” according to Gerald Ramsey, chair of the San Diego City College Foundation who first started working for the District in 1984.

While Ramsey has many positive memories of the decades, he said there were some rough patches in the 1980s.

“Unfortunately, there was a period of time when, between 1984 and 1990, the Board was not very cohesive,” he said. “But at the same time they got stuff done, and they were very supportive of the campus.”

Mesa College alum Colby ran for the Board in 1988 after hearing some professors were upset with the then-current administration.

“When I joined, it had been a very Republican Board,” said Colby, who was elected along with two other Democrats. “We opened things up. It was an interesting time. There were a lot of changes. We became much more aggressive as a Board with the state. We were quite progressive and encouraged re-evalua-



tion of programs and encouraged new ones.”

Colby said he also is proud that he helped prevent cuts to City College’s radio station KSDS by convincing the administration not to look at it as an expense, but rather as free advertising to promote the District. The station continues to operate on the campus as channel 88.3 FM.

Bonds, Campus Growth, and the Role of Community Colleges

Gallego’s tenure in the District from 1990 to 2004 saw the first major expansion of existing facilities with the passage of Proposition S, a \$700 million bond measure passed in 2002.

Besides making renovations and repairs to aging college buildings, the bond also expanded facilities and programs at all campuses to prepare students for emerging jobs in technical fields.

Later, in 2006, under Chancellor Constance M. Carroll, voters passed Proposition N to add another \$900 million in construction bonds, bringing the total to \$1.6 billion to fund 43 new buildings in all.

And, with the physical transformation of campuses like Mesa and Miramar colleges, which were little more than bungalows before the bond construction ramped up, student enrollment also skyrocketed. By 2009, the credit colleges saw their largest student population, serving 76,690 students, with an additional 70,227 enrolled at College of Continuing Education that year.

Besides the enrollment and facilities improvements throughout the District, Gallego said he also has seen the public perception of community colleges evolve over the years.

“Community colleges in general were not well-understood in terms of their function,” he said, adding that the state’s Master Plan for Higher Education clearly states its role.

Under the state plan, the University of California system is expected to select the top one-eighth of students from high school graduating classes, and the California State University system is expected to accept one-third of high school graduates.

Gallego said the role of community colleges in the Master Plan, which is to admit any capable student, has caused some people to assume they are for students who could not get into universities. In reality, he said, many students eligible for CSU or UC schools choose community colleges because of their affordability, location, or other reasons.

“The community colleges have really evolved to become an important member of the higher-education community,” he said.

SDCCD Board of Trustees President Maria Nieto Senour said some students may have a better educational experience at community colleges rather than universities.

“People assume students go to a community

college because they don’t have the right grades, but that’s not necessarily the case at all,” she said. “More people are realizing it is more economical. And at four-year schools you may be taught by graduate students and not faculty. In community colleges, they’re taught by professors, by faculty of that discipline.”



In another transformation that happened during Gallego’s time as chancellor, the District formed partnerships with local industries to lead students into careers.

“We were many times contracted by the ship-building industry to provide training for welders,” he said. “Also, computer-assisted programming for manufacturing. All of those technologies that began to emerge.”

A recent study found the District had a \$4.3 billion economic impact on the county in the 2021-22 fiscal year. Part of that impact came from SDCCD students who earned an associate degree, which increased their annual earnings by \$9,900 more than if they had only a high school degree or GED. The net impact of students in the District generated about \$3.6



billion in added income to the local economy.

Bachelor’s Degrees and Promises

As it celebrates its 50th year, the SDCCD again has proven to be a trailblazer in serving student needs by becoming among the first community colleges in the state to offer bachelor’s degrees.

The opportunity came with the 2014 passage of state Senate Bill 850, which allowed community colleges to provide a pilot program for baccalaureate degrees in certain fields with unmet needs within California.

It was no coincidence that Mesa College was the first of 15 community colleges that would participate in the baccalaureate pilot program with its Health Information Management program. The bill was authored by Senator Marty Block, an SDCCD Trustee from 2000 to 2008 who served seven of those years as Board president. The chair of the statewide coalition that built support for the bill was Carroll, who also had served as president of Mesa College from 1993-2004.



“The California community college baccalaureate programs are all successful,” Carroll said. “Graduation rates are close to 80%, and job placements are excellent, with 90% of students getting jobs within 90 days of graduation.”

Carroll said the program has relieved the burden of college loan debts that can follow graduates for decades. The per-unit cost of the classes is higher than regular community classes and the total cost for earning a degree is \$10,560, but Carroll said it is worth it.

Graduates with a Health Information Management degree earn \$80,000 to \$100,000 annually, or about \$25,000 more than they would have without a bachelor’s degree.

Carroll said 51% of graduates from these programs acknowledged they would not have considered pursuing a bachelor’s degree if one were not available at their community college.

Although retired from the SDCCD after serving from 2004 to 2021 as the longest tenured chancellor, Carroll continues to work to expand the baccalaureate program as the President and CEO of the California Community College Baccalaureate Association. Bachelor’s degrees now are offered in 31 California community colleges, with City College launching a baccalaureate in Cyber Defense and Analysis in fall 2024. Miramar College also has applied for a baccalaureate program in public safety management.

Another successful District program that has helped remove barriers for many students wanting to go to college is the San Diego Promise, which also was created under Chancellor Carroll. The San Diego Promise has supported tens of thousands of students by providing two years of free education along with additional support services and textbook vouchers for qualified students, including those newly graduated from high school, former foster youths, veterans, formerly incarcerated people, undocumented people, and students previously enrolled at the College of Continuing Education.

The San Diego Promise continues to see gains in its enrollment, and this fall nearly 3,000 were admitted to the program, compared to 185 in the inaugural year of the program in 2016.



Civil Rights and a Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)

Besides its increased emphasis on serving students, the newly formed SDCCD in the 1970s also became a trailblazer in supporting civil rights and creating greater diversity in its employees.

The SDCCD implemented an affirmative action plan in 1974, and an annual report the following year from the District Affirmative Action office showed overall employment for underrepresented communities had increased, although improvements still were needed in placing women in management positions.

The 1976 report showed employment of minorities continued to improve with the population increasing from 15% to 22% of the workforce. Of the District’s 1,237 contracted employees at the time, 283 reported being from an underrepresented population. Work on employee diversity continued through the decades and, today, the District has grown to nearly 5,000 employees with 44% identifying with communities of color (12% were unknown or chose not to respond), and 55% female.

Reflecting back, Ramsey said he was impressed with the District’s overall approach to diversity in hiring.

“It was organic,” he said. “It wasn’t something that we were mandated to do. But the District supported that kind of effort.”

Lillian K. Beam, executive assistant to Chancellor Peed, worked with the local Chicano Federation and Black Federation to help create a job and people bank with names and qualifications of potential employees who would be contacted about job openings. Beam also worked with the Urban League, League of Women Voters, County Human Relations Department, National Organization of Women, the Pan Asian League, and other organizations.

Also, in those early years, the Educational Cultural Complex became a local landmark for civil rights and was recognized as a cultural center in southeastern San Diego, especially among the city’s Black population.

The ECC’s Common Ground Theatre is the nation’s third-oldest African-American community theater and has hosted significant cultural events. The theater’s 1979 production of *The Sty of the Blind Pig* starred Caryn Elaine Johnson, who later became better known as Whoopi Goldberg.

Additionally, San Diego’s annual MLK Day Parade was launched by former College of Continuing Education President Robert Matthews and the Zeta Sigma Lambda Chapter, and welding students from the ECC help create a float that each year is a part of the SDCCD’s contingency of participants.

Current Board President Senour was elected in 1990 as the first Latina Board member at the SDCCD, and she soon began to wonder



(Clockwise from top) Those responsible for helping create the District’s first Pilipino-American course, offered in fall 1978 at Evening College, Mesa campus, gather together ahead of the program’s launch. Over the past 50 years, the District has prided itself on its DEIA programs, including Disability Support Programs and Services. San Diego’s annual MLK Day Parade was launched from College of Continuing Education, and the District continues to participate in the event to this day.



how students of color were performing in the District, but couldn't find the data.

"People weren't really keeping track," she said. "I believe when they used to give us statistics about transfer rates, they didn't break it down by ethnicity, and I started asking for it."

Once the data was available, it revealed success rates for Black and Latino students were not as high as White or Asian students. That gap has decreased with the introduction of several initiatives.

Among those is the Puentes Program, launched in the late 1990s to help educationally disadvantaged students by assigning English counselors to help them with their studies.

At City College, the Umoja Community helps Black and other historically under-represented students prepare to transfer to four-year colleges. Students in the program take culturally relevant coursework and participate in activities focused on African-American culture, literature, and experiences.

The District also has introduced Hermanos Unidos Brothers United, a program focused on helping Latino and Black male students.

City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges are designated Hispanic-Serving Institutions, meaning each has an enrollment of at least 25% Hispanic students. The designation earned the schools almost \$1.7 million in U.S. Department of Education grants to support the academic achievement of Latinx students.

Across the District, 44% of students in the honors program are Latinx, and the number of Latinx students who transferred to four-year schools increased 60% from the 2013-14 academic year to the 2017-18 academic year.

Today, the District operates a Campus Diversity Advisory Council with representatives from all colleges and the District Office to develop ways to advance diversity and cultural competency through campus events, training, and workshops.

Resources for DEIA programs are being championed by local political representatives, as well, with \$3.4 million in funding coming from Representatives Sara Jacobs, Scott Peters, and Juan Vargas in 2022 to support and uplift LGBTQIA+, former foster youth, and undocumented students respectively through various centers at the colleges.

School Partnerships, Dual Enrollment, and Transfers

High schools, community colleges, and universities all play a role in education, but too often have operated in silos. Over the past few decades, the SDCCD has introduced multiple programs to bridge those gaps as a way to help students advance toward fulfilling careers.

Gallego said one such effort was created to overcome obstacles that prevented commu-



Dual enrollment, where students such as these at Mira Mesa High School, participate in a college-level class, earning credits for high school and college at the same time, was born out of a partnership between the joint boards of the SDCCD and the San Diego Unified School District.

nity college students from transferring to universities.

"There was never any formal, well-designed, enforceable policy that students could follow to allow them to transfer to CSU or UC with few barriers," Gallego said, adding that universities sometimes would want additional course requirements or deny credit for courses already taken by students.

"There were many students who did transfer, but they had to repeat some courses," he said.

The District found an ally in UC San Diego Chancellor Richard Atkinson, who worked with the SDCCD to create an agreement that spelled out transfer requirements to the university in 1987.

After Atkinson became president of the University of California in 1995, he worked to create a system-wide mechanism to improve the transfer process to all UC campuses following the model created in San Diego.

Additionally, a guaranteed transfer pathway was established with San Diego State University.

The District continued to improve upon existing relations and forge new partnerships with other institutions under Chancellor Carroll.

In 2016, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant of \$2.95 million to establish the PATH (Preparing Accomplished Transfers to the Humanities) partnership between UC San Diego and the SDCCD to build a successful pipeline of successful humanities students into becoming future holders of Ph.Ds.

Within a few years of Carroll becoming chancellor, the SDCCD Board began holding annual joint meetings with the San Diego Unified School District Board of Trustees, a practice that continues today.

"The two boards meet together to assess their process, to assess goals, and to make sure the two organizations work close together," Carroll said. "It's a model for other community colleges in the state. Now, many

more are doing it, but at the time it was fairly unique to our two districts."

That cooperation created a dual enrollment program that allows students to take classes at their high school that count toward college credit, with nearly 4,000 currently participating today. Under the similar concurrent enrollment program, high school students can earn college credit while taking courses at a community college.

"It's an opportunity for students to get a feel of what college is like, to get a feel for the rigor and the curriculum," said Sonny Nguyen, dean of enrollment services at Miramar College. "It builds their confidence, so they will say, 'I can go to college.'"


The Future Looks Bright

The SDCCD's commitment to students, remaining on the cutting edge of technology and with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, maintaining financial health, and promoting institutional resiliency continue to be a pillars of its success. The District recently adopted a new strategic plan, which outlines its goals and objectives through 2030.

Over the past three years, 10 members of the 13-person Chancellor's Cabinet were hired, bringing with them new ideas to drive progress and change across the District. Among the positions were newly created vice chancellor roles overseeing Development and Entrepreneurship and Institutional Innovation and Effectiveness.

The fall semester started with the adoption of the District's first \$1 billion budget, which includes an unrestricted general fund reserve that has grown from 2.2% in 2017-18 to over 16% in the 2023-24 budget.

Additionally, enrollment, which slipped to under 70,000 districtwide during the pandemic, is rebounding, with the credit colleges seeing a 13% increase this year and College of Continuing Education 12%. **WE**

A photograph of four students standing on a balcony, looking out through a large Gothic-style window. The window features a central circular rose window with a floral pattern and two large pointed arch windows on either side. The view outside shows a vast, open landscape under a cloudy sky. The students are silhouetted against the bright light coming from the window. The balcony has a metal railing and a tiled floor. The walls of the building are light-colored with decorative arches.

Thirty students took part in Mesa College's Madrid study abroad program, which included exploration of museums and nearby United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites Toledo and Segovia.

Mesa College re-launched its study abroad program with two trips over the summer, and City and Miramar colleges will join by offering educational explorations in 2024

Jet-Setting

After a break during the COVID-19 pandemic, study abroad programs are resuming at the San Diego Community College District, giving students the opportunity to learn a new language and experience a different culture.

Julliana Samson, a San Diego Miramar College student, was one of 30 students who traveled to Madrid over the summer as part of a study abroad program offered by San Diego Mesa College.

"I managed to meet a lot of people and make connections," she said. "Meeting all those people widened and broadened my perspective. I learned how people do things differently outside the U.S."

Samson wanted to take the month-long trip to Madrid beginning in June because she had a part-time job as a retail clerk and couldn't communicate with her customers who spoke Spanish. "I felt some responsibility to learn the language and culture," she said.

Students on the trip learned about the language, history, and politics of the country, toured museums, took a cooking class, and visited nearby Toledo and Segovia – both United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage sites.

"Students immersed themselves in the Spanish culture and language and learned what it's like to live with a family in Spain," said Dora Schoenbrun-Fernandez, international education coordinator at Mesa College, who also noted that program directors are seeing more student interest than compared to pre-pandemic years. A winter 2023 program in Peru was fully recruited but cancelled just weeks before departure because of political unrest in the country.

In addition to the trip to Spain, Mesa College also offered a summer trip to Florence in which 37 students participated in programming focused on art history and fashion. The experience included visits to the Pitti Uomo Trade Show Fair, an internationally renowned menswear trade show, and a tour of the Polimoda Italian fashion school.



Students who took part in Mesa College's Florence study abroad program got to show off their pasta making skills during a cooking class.

Students also traveled to Milan to visit a fashion trade fair and took a day trip to Prato to tour a sustainable textile factory specializing in recycled wool.

After a hiatus of its study abroad programs, Miramar College is excited to offer its own unique experiences in 2024 to the Philippines and London during intersession and summer respectively. The efforts to revitalize the study abroad programs have been headed by the new Chair of the International Education Committee, Laura González, Vice-President of Instruction Michael Odu, and Dean of the School of Liberal Arts Lou Ascione.

The vision of Miramar College is not only to offer study abroad opportunities, but also broaden the scope of international education at the school through international student support, as well as curriculum, professional development, and programs that help develop global awareness.

"We are aware that many community college students don't feel as if study abroad is a possibility for them and we want to assure them that with a little planning, it absolutely is!" González said.

Other upcoming study abroad programs will include January trips to Buenos Aires, Argentina, organized by Mesa College, while San Diego City College will offer a trip to Barcelona. And, in summer 2024, Mesa College will offer two programs: in Paris with studies focusing on

languages studies, conversations and compositions in French, and Madrid which will include Spanish languages studies.

For her travels to Spain, Samson was able to cover most of the program costs when she was selected to receive \$3,000 through the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship program. The program, operated by the U.S. Department of State, enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad. Both Mesa (in 2021 and 2022) and City (in 2022) colleges were recognized as among the top U.S. colleges and universities to send scholars abroad, which opens up study abroad opportunities to historically underrepresented student groups.

Samson, who plans to graduate from Miramar College next year with an associate degree for transfer in psychology, said the trip to Spain was her first time traveling abroad. She said her ability to understand Spanish has greatly improved, and she now has the itch to explore other countries.

She said she would urge any students interested in traveling abroad to sign up for the program.

"As I experienced new cultures and languages studying abroad, I became a living testament that studying abroad is not a privilege confined to prestigious institutions, but rather an amazing experience that's accessible to any committed student," Samson said. **WE**



Visitors to the Mesa College Art Gallery got to explore various pieces from the college's World Art Collection during the Africa in Context exhibition in February 2023.

The Art of Curation

THE MESA COLLEGE WORLD ART COLLECTION WAS STARTED IN 1976 AND HAS GROWN TO INCLUDE MORE THAN 1,300 PIECES FROM AROUND THE WORLD.



For nearly five decades, students at San Diego Mesa College, along with the surrounding community, have had the opportunity not just to learn about history and culture through art, but to experience it as well. On campus, this authentic experience is offered by way of the World Art Collection, a permanent collection of 1,300 pieces from roughly 60 countries around the world.

The collection — which was gathered over the years through donors such as Dr. Jack Kimbrough, Dr. Richard Ulevitch, Dr. John Ross, and others — was spearheaded in 1976 by Dr. Barbara Blackmun, who wanted to give her students direct access to genuine African art, rather than having to travel to places like the Fowler Museum at University of California, Los Angeles or the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) to see such art and artifacts. The main collection was expanded to include art from India, Mesoamerica, and the Asia-Pacific

Mende Helmet Mask

Late 19th- early 20th century

16 ½ inches tall, darkened wood

Gift of Dr. Richard and Susan Ulevitch, 2016

Created by a Mende artist of Sierra Leone, this mask would have been used in ceremonies and dances of the all-women's secret society called Sande. The women of the Sande commission masks, also known as so-wei, ndoli jowei, and bundu, that embody the ideals of feminine beauty, morality, and proper behavior. The mask is a carved darkened wood helmet mask with elaborate coiffure, thick black patina with features that represent feminine beauty. The leader of the Sande Society, Ndolie Jowei (the one who dances) is responsible for overseeing the construction of the mask and performs the masquerade. The masquerade serves as a form of communication to reassure the parents of the young girls that they are progressing through the initiation process successfully.

Dr. Denise Rogers oversees the 1,300-piece World Art Collection, which is looking to make its current space on the fourth floor of the Learning Resource Center a permanent home.



These pieces were created by communities of people who worked together to tell a story.”

— Dr. Denise Rogers

region when Dr. Denise Rogers, professor of art history at Mesa College, began managing the collection in 2010.

Rogers said the extensive collection, which is owned by the San Diego Mesa College Foundation and housed on campus, is unique to the region as it includes authentic pieces from countries around the world. Items in the collection are mostly from the 19th and 20th centuries, but, according to chemical testing, a statue from the Nok culture of Nigeria dates back to 1,000 BC.

“These are cultural artifacts used in community performances or religious institutions from around the world,” Rogers said. “These pieces were created by communities of people who worked together to tell a story.”

There is much more than the story behind each piece that students and the larger community can admire when viewing the artwork at Mesa College’s Learning Resource Center.

“For me, it’s the skill set of these artists,” Rogers said. “They are incredibly skilled in their craft. The way they shape the materials — they are not just using their hands, they are using the knowledge of cultural symbolism. Visitors will appreciate that as they learn about the culture and history of the art.”

The World Art Collection has other purposes as well. Students can intern with Rogers to



learn how to manage collections, design exhibitions, and preserve artifacts, said Alessandra Moctezuma, the director of the Mesa College Art Gallery, whose students work with the collection. In addition, the collection reflects San Diego’s own diverse community, Moctezuma said.

“San Diego is a city that is home to many cultures and backgrounds,” Moctezuma said. “Having this collection allows people to see similarities among cultures. I think it’s very important for everybody to understand and to appreciate the diversity of the world we live in.”

Pieces from the collection also have made

their way into exhibitions around the community, including at the San Diego Central Library and the former Lyceum Theatre, with plans for a December showing at the San Diego Museum of Art at Balboa Park.

Currently, visitors can view a small exhibition in the Glass Gallery on the first floor of the LRC and by appointment in a larger space on the fourth floor, which this fall is planned to become the permanent space for the full collection. Those efforts will be made possible by donor contributions and major fundraising efforts underway by the World Arts Council, which includes 15 other volunteer art enthusiasts and scholars who manage the collection



with Rogers, and larger support from the Mesa College Foundation.

Since the collection meets specific criteria as laid out by the American Association of Museums, Rogers hopes eventually to declare it a museum.

“I hope one day the collection becomes a part of the college curriculum across the campus — not just in the Art Department,” said Rogers, who noted that the collection already has benefitted students in the Humanities, Black Studies, and Liberal Arts departments, as well. “It’s an amazing resource that people from around the world can experience.”

She also hopes more donors will support the preservation of the collection, and said there is a plan for a large-scale fundraising event in the future. For more information on the World Art Collection, or to volunteer or donate, go to sdmesaworldcultures.com. **we**



For Black History Month in February 2023, Mesa College students, under the guidance of professors Dr. Denise Rogers (shown at left) and Alessandra Moctezuma, curated the Africa in Context exhibition, featuring the college’s World Cultures Art Collection, at the Mesa College Art Gallery.



SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT COMING IN FALL 2025

San Diego City College will offer Native American and Indigenous Studies courses for the first time in its nearly 110-year history. The program is being developed by former historic preservation officer and long-time Indian law professor John Bathke.

“I was drawn to City College because they are willing to advance Native American people. This is a very open positive space,” said Bathke, who came to City College in January 2023 as an assistant professor of Native American and Indigenous Studies.

While City College is a proud Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) focused on Chicana/Indigenous/Latinx curriculum and resources, there has not yet been a Native American and Indigenous Studies department prior to Bathke’s arrival. Fifty-one percent of City College students identify as Latinx/Chicana and only 1% identify as American Indian/Alaskan Native. Bathke, who is of Dine’ (Navajo) descent, is hoping to change the statistics.

“Part of my goal is to increase the number of Native students enrolled here,” he said. “That they can come to City College, feel welcomed, and have a home.”

Intro to Native American and Indigenous Studies, Federal Indian Law, and Indigenous Spirituality are among the courses being developed. Bathke’s long-term vision for City College is to offer the study as a major for an associate degree and associate degree for transfer.

As part of an effort to advance the institution’s collective cultural competency and allyship with local Kumeyaay, repair relationships with Indigenous communities, and to honor the contributions and legacy of native peoples, City College authored a resolution to establish a Kumeyaay Land Acknowledgement in 2021. The resolution respectfully recognizes that the campus rests on ancestral homelands of the Kumeyaay Nation.

“The land acknowledgment is just the beginning, there is a lot to be done stemming from a long-standing recognition that hasn’t been there,” said Bathke. “City College is on the right track; they’re deeply committed to this. I want to share my knowledge and bridge the gap between City and the Indigenous communities.”

He continued, “This is an exciting time. Let’s empower Native students to better know and share their culture and their people.”

City College has plans to launch the Native American and Indigenous Studies department and intro courses in fall 2025, both pending formal approval from the Board of Trustees.

“I feel elated to be a part of such an institution. Every-



one at City College has been welcoming and supportive. Many institutions do not operate like this, it has been a battle to address these issues,” said Bathke about the college’s commitment to social justice. “At City College, it is at the heart of their mission. City is talking about things the nation needs to talk about.”

Before his arrival at City College, Bathke worked as an assistant professor at the University of Arizona Global Campus, a professor of Federal Indian Law and Policy at University of California, Los Angeles Extension, and as an adjunct professor for the University of San Diego’s Department of Ethnic Studies and California State University San Bernardino’s Master of Public Administration Program.

Additionally, he was the historic preservation officer for the Quechan Indian Tribe, where he protected the cultural resources of the Quechan Nation from destruction and development. He also served as the coordinator for Kumeyaay Community College located on the Sycuan Reservation, where he helped create accredited curriculum based upon cultural content from Kumeyaay elders.

Bathke holds a Juris Doctor degree from UCLA School of Law and has since specialized in federal Indian law, and a bachelor’s degree in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations from Yale University.

Kumeyaay Nation Bird Singers and Miss Kumeyaay take part in City College’s Land Celebration event at the start of 2023.



ALUMNI CARRY ON THE PRACTICE OF EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS

From saving lives to making accessible diagnostic tests and making sure basic needs are met in the community, in the past year, three San Diego Mesa College alumni have exhibited excellence and are making a name for themselves in the arena of health and wellness.

Quick thinking, training

Mesa College athletic trainer and alumnus Yuki Matsuzawa helped save the life of a 66-year-old athlete, who collapsed after his event during the annual Senior Games Track Meet held on campus at Merrill Douglas Stadium. When the senior runner collapsed, student-athletes Sidney Garcia and Azucena Hernandez quickly called 911 then ran to get Matsuzawa, the Certified Athletic Trainer for the event.

Matsuzawa immediately applied the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and began cardiopulmonary resuscitation chest compressions and ensured that emergency medical services

personnel were on their way. Upon arrival, the EMS crew took over and the senior athlete was stabilized and survived the incident.

Matsuzawa's actions at the event helped him earn the title of California Community College Athletic Trainers Association 2022-23 Athletic Trainer of the Year. Now, he is putting his skills to use as a San Diego Padres Minor League athletic trainer in Peoria, Arizona.

Fighting infectious diseases

Alumna Mireille Kamariza, a chemical biologist, focuses her research on infectious disease, including developing low-cost, point-of-care diagnostics. As a doctoral student at Stanford University she developed a technology, for which she was awarded a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant, that helps to detect and diagnose tuberculosis at the point-of-care.

A native of the Republic of Burundi, Kamariza immigrated



Mireille Kamariza

to the United States and attended Mesa College before transferring to UC San Diego for her bachelor's degree in biochemistry. She received her master's degree from University of California, Berkeley, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University, both in cell biology. Kamariza was recognized as one of the World's Most Powerful Women by Fortune Magazine in 2017 and was named one of Chemical & Engineering News' Talented 12 in 2020. Kamariza was a Harvard Junior Fellow and recently became an assistant professor of bioengineering at University of California, Los Angeles.

As a co-founder of OliLux Biosciences, Inc., a company dedicated to providing low-cost, portable, and reliable diagnostic devices in low-resource settings, Kamariza pushes her mission of helping underserved and under-

represented populations.

Basic needs accessibility

Geographic Information Systems alumna Carmen Leedham assists the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency to provide support for Aging, Independent, and Public Health Services. Leedham, who completed her GIS certification at Mesa College in 2019 and her B.A. in geography from San Diego State University, performs different tasks using GIS.



Carmen Leedham

Leedham helps create static and web maps and performs geo-spatial analysis to assist with tracking how many Cal Fresh recipients live in each part of the

County of San Diego. She is part of a group of people working to make sure that the basic needs of our community are met, and that resources are available.

"I used to be a customer of the County of San Diego and I used to receive Cal Fresh. I saw how the County of San Diego helped me," Leedham stated. "I see how it helps other people who are in that situation, and I know that some good is being done. That is rewarding to me. The things that I care about are making sure that people are able to live well and thrive, rather than just survive and get by. It's nice to know that there is a group of people working to make sure that the basic needs of our community are met, and that resources are available."



Yuki Matsuzawa, center, helped save the life of a 66-year-old athlete who collapsed during the annual Senior Games Track Meet held at Mesa College's Merrill Douglas Stadium.



SAN DIEGO MIRAMAR COLLEGE

LEGENDARY VOLLEYBALL COACH JOHN LANDICHO RETIRES

San Diego Miramar College men's volleyball Head Coach John Landicho, the only head coach the program has had since its inception in 2015, announced his retirement at the end of the 2023 season.

A veteran of 31 years in the sport, Landicho was hired by Miramar College in 2014 to develop men's and women's volleyball programs. Men's volleyball competed for the first time in 2015, with women's indoor volleyball following in 2018 and the accompanying women's beach program took to the sand in spring 2023. In its first nine years, the Jets men's program produced four Pacific Coast Athletic Conference championships and five state Top 10 rankings, while placing 16 student-athletes into four-year university volleyball programs.

Landicho was honored as the 2017, 2018, 2022, and 2023 PCAC men's volleyball Coach of the Year. He also served as Jets women's indoor volleyball head coach during the 2022 season. Throughout his tenure in the Miramar College athletics program, Landicho was instrumental in the development of all three volleyball programs, as well as the construction of Miramar College's new four-court sand volleyball complex.

"For 30-plus years I've tried to develop dynamic young men and women through championship-level volleyball," said Landicho. "While those seasons didn't all produce championships, it did produce better human beings, and there can be no better outcome from intercollegiate athletics. That I've been able to experience a ridiculous amount of winning is also a byproduct of our program and is a testament to our players understanding, embracing, and flourishing in our process."

Landicho will remain active in the sport as the president of the California Community College Men's Volleyball Coaches Association (CCCMVCA).

Before arriving at Miramar College, Landicho spent five years as head coach of the men's volleyball program at San Diego Mesa College, where he was also an assistant with the women's volleyball program, helping the Lady Olympians to a PCAC championship in 2011.

Landicho is well-known in the San Diego



Head Coach John Landicho was instrumental in the development of all three volleyball programs at San Diego Miramar College.

volleyball community for his time coaching the volleyball program at Francis Parker School, where he was the girls head coach for two seasons (2012 and 2013). In his 25 seasons at Francis Parker, he helped Lancer volleyball teams to 53 championships, including 17 California Interscholastic Federation-SD Championships, seven Southern California regional titles, girls CIF State Championships in 1998, 2004, 2005, 2012, and 2013, and four season-ending No. 1 rankings in San Diego County. Landicho's efforts as girl's head coach resulted in a 64-7 record and the school's seventh and eighth California State Championships, and he earned Coach of the Year honors from both the CIF-San Diego Section and the High School Sports Association of San Diego County.

He is a three-time inductee into the Francis Parker Athletics Hall of Fame.

Continuing his long list of accomplishments, Landicho was also an assistant coach and technical coordinator for the 2007 UC San Diego men's volleyball team. He was also active in the USA Volleyball High Performance program from 2001-2020, with his last assignment being part of the 2020 Men's Junior A1 National Team Training Program.

Additionally, Landicho is a professor in the department of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences at Miramar College, a position he'll continue in through December 2023.

In May it was announced that Miramar College men's volleyball Assistant Coach Gino Gamboa was elevated to the head coach position.



A NEW LOOK

San Diego College of Continuing Education is getting a marketing makeover.

Following an extensive search for a partner to assist with a long-awaited institutional rebrand, SDCCE turned to Carlsbad-based Graduate Communications — aka GradComm — for a new visual identity, the development of a tagline and brand-messaging platform, a strategic marketing plan to guide paid media placement, and videos that can be used to promote the new brand and used as television or social media advertisements.

The rebrand, necessitated by a need for more cohesive messaging across

multiple platforms, is the first project of its kind in years and will ensure even more people in the community are aware of the college and how it is serving the region.

“A well-crafted brand platform is like a superpower, giving your institution the capacity to create unique and lasting emotional connections with your customers,” wrote GradComm in its proposal, which includes extensive research, an audit of Public Information Office collateral, new “brand” colors, social media templates, and more.

GradComm worked under a tight deadline: the contract was awarded in April; initial results — a refreshed wordmark

logo and tagline (Forward Together), along with primary (purple) and secondary colors (yellow, red, and blue) — were revealed at fall Convocation. A strategic marketing and messaging plan, promotional videos, social media templates, Zoom backgrounds, and a brand style guide were on track for delivery by October.

Buy-in was critical; a marketing workgroup met with a GradComm client service specialist every other week for updates and requests. The project was guided by findings contained in a 57-page study based on a community phone survey, a student and staff online survey, and student and

staff focus groups in Spanish and English. More than 2,000 people in all were contacted, including 517 via the community phone survey and 1,575 faculty, classified professional staff, and students who completed an online survey.

Among the findings: three-fourths of respondents who are aware of SDCCE have a very positive impression of the school and no negative impressions were recorded; and 86% agree SDCCE is meeting the needs of all the various audiences examined.

Founded in 1914 on the principles of inclusion and social justice, SDCCE is the largest provider of non-credit, adult education in California and welcomes every immigrant, every refugee and every member of our underserved populations seeking to fulfill their career and educational goals. It has a rich history of contributions to the national and local Civil Rights movements, and its career education programs alone contribute some \$250 million annually to the regional economy.

Although new to SDCCE, GradComm has worked extensively with North Orange Continuing Education, Southwestern College, MiraCosta College, Cerritos College, and the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office, among others.

A refreshed College of Continuing Education wordmark logo and tagline (Forward Together), along with primary (purple) and secondary colors (yellow, red, and blue) — were revealed at fall Convocation.



family ON CAMPUS



They may have been there to celebrate commencement, but as George Buchanan Jr. stepped up to the podium on May 26, the audience of graduates on the field and countless friends and family members in the stands of Merrill Douglas Stadium broke into a revelrous rendition of “Happy Birthday.” The spirited singing was a clear indicator of Buchanan’s commitment to his fellow classmates and his own education, as well as the impact the single father — who turned 35 — had on campus while attending San Diego Mesa College.

Buchanan, who graduated with honors with associate degrees in psychology and Black studies, and an associate degree for transfer in communications, started his Mesa College journey in summer 2019 and was an active participant with Student Veterans and in the Honors and Psychology clubs. As a single father, Buchanan praised staff at the college’s Child Development Center, saying that without their help he never would have enrolled in college due to his need for childcare.

Returning to school as an adult was fraught with obstacles and loss. In November 2022, Buchanan lost his mother, who espoused upon him that school was the place he belonged. But, he said, “Mesa taught me my family was here on campus,” and he persisted.

WE recently talked with Buchanan about his journey, how he hopes to inspire his son, and what the future holds after Mesa College.



Q For those parents and/or adults looking to go back to school, what advice do you have about pursuing a degree or learning new job skills later in life?

A Do it. Going back to school affords a new opportunity for change in your life, especially with what’s going on in the world today. Parents are having to work like two jobs, even in houses with two parents. For a parent to have the opportunity to not only better themselves, but better their careers as in — let’s get serious — higher pay in something they really enjoy. And, it also gives their children firsthand knowledge of what road to get on. It’ll be tough, just like other new things in life, but this is a challenge that’s worth completing.

Q What memory of your time at Mesa College will you continue to carry with you, always?

A The commencement. Being chosen for commencement speaker I was happy about it, but walking out to the football field a couple days before seeing the chairs and stage and imagining the crowd in the stands it really hit me. To sit on the stage with people with doctorates and master’s degrees, I never thought I’d be doing something like this.

Q In what ways do you hope your journey will inspire your son?

A I would like him to know that every door you knock on will not open. Every road that you get on will have a detour, eventually, there’s no straight path in life. It doesn’t matter if you have silver spoon in your mouth there’s still no straight path. So, what I would like for him to understand is to

accept the challenge and to know that no human being on this earth can get through life by themselves. And the biggest thing is don’t give up, especially when it comes to academics and things you’re trying to achieve that are good for you. If you give up and realize how close you were to the finish line, that’ll hurt.

Q What will be written in the next chapter of your story?

A People talk to me a lot about their issues and problems, but I’m not a certified therapist. So, I thought maybe that’s what I want to do. I like helping people get out of an obstacle they can’t shake or get out of. I’ll be getting my bachelor’s degree from San Diego State, then on top of that getting my master’s degree and becoming a pre-marital, marital, and post-marital marriage and family therapist.

George Buchanan (second from left), celebrates commencement with his son, along with Mesa College Professor Thekima Mayasa, President Ashanti T. Hands, and Vice President of Student Services Larry T. Maxey II.



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