



SAN DIEGO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISTRICT

City College • Mesa College
Miramar College • Continuing Education

FEBRUARY 2016

WE

With
Excellence



SERVING THE
MILITARY AND VETS

Story on page 10.

America's College Promise



President Barack Obama speaks at Macomb Community College in Warren, Michigan, where he announced new steps to expand apprenticeships and a push to make community college free for responsible students.

From the time that Joliet Junior College became the first public community college to open its doors more than a century ago, community colleges have played a vital role in training the nation's workforce and building the nation's economy.

Some 7.7 million students attend for-credit courses at a community college in the United States. But far too many future scientists, teachers, and leaders are being denied the opportunity to reach their potential because of rising costs. In fact, California's 58 percent inflation-adjusted increase in average tuition and fees for full-time students at public two-year colleges between 2009-10 and 2014-15 was second only to Louisiana's 62 percent, according to a College Board report, *Trends in College Pricing 2014*. However, costs in the California community colleges remain the lowest in the nation.

By the end of the decade, two of every three job openings will require some form of post-secondary education. That makes President Barack Obama's community college initiative, known as "America's College Promise," critical. America's College Promise encourages states and local colleges to provide students with a free, two-year community college education in exchange for maintaining a GPA of at least 2.5, attending school at least half-time, and making steady progress toward an associate degree or certificate. There will be local variations regarding these criteria.

The California Community Colleges, the largest higher education system in the nation, is already ahead of the curve. More than half of students enrolled in post-secondary education start at the community college level. Roughly two-thirds of the state's community college students and 60 percent of students in the San Diego Community College District currently pay no fees at all under the California Community Colleges Board of Governors (BOG) Fee Waiver program.

Unfortunately, middle-class families are often ineligible for financial assistance, which is why a new investment is so important, and why a state committee, of which I am a member, is helping to shape the direction of the College Promise plan in California. Like other states and institutions, California's community colleges will be exploring funding options.

In my view, it is time for California to renew its commitment to public higher education and further invest in our community college system. Much of this is already in place in California, and needs to be adopted throughout the United States.



Constance M. Carroll, Ph.D.
Chancellor

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WE—With Excellence Magazine

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Burnishing its Reputation as a Science Leader

San Diego Miramar College — home of the Southern California Biotechnology Center and a statewide leader in life sciences and biotechnology education — has dedicated its new, 49,000-square-foot Science Building addition.

The addition is connected to the renovated Science Building by a second-floor bridge. The roof of the new facility houses a greenhouse, observatory stands and ports for 12 telescopes, and a telescope storage warehouse. The first floor has two lecture rooms and 30 private faculty offices with several conference, collaboration, and break areas. The second floor houses laboratories, specialty science rooms, technician offices, and supply storage areas.

The \$34-million renovation and expansion project, which is on track to obtain a LEED Silver certification, also includes a bio-pond and an outdoor demonstration garden containing various specimens of Southern California rocks and geological formations.

This is the third major science building addition built by the San Diego Community College District in the past three years. In 2013, the District dedicated a new science building at San Diego City College; a new science building was dedicated at San Diego Mesa College the following year.

Construction was funded through the District’s \$1.555 billion Propositions S and N construction bond program.



From left: Miramar College student Jocelyn-Marie Felicano; Instructional Support Supervisor Vuong Nguyen; Professor and Academic Senate President Marie McMahon; Interim Dean Fred Garces; Councilman Chris Cate; Trustee Maria Nieto Senour; President Patricia Hsieh; Chancellor Constance M. Carroll; Trustees Rich Grosch and Peter Zschiesche; and Vice Chancellor Christopher Manis.



@dustchick

Lisa Will
Physics and Astronomy Professor
San Diego City College

It can be very soothing to be in a planetarium alone with Saturn before the students come to class.



A Military Friendly College District

San Diego City College, San Diego Mesa College, San Diego Miramar College, and San Diego Continuing Education have all been designated as a Military Friendly School by Victory Media, publisher of *G.I. Jobs*, *STEM JobsSM*, and *Military Spouse*.

Only universities, colleges, and trade schools that are doing the most to embrace military students and dedicate resources to ensure their success earn the Military Friendly designation. Now in its seventh year, the Military Friendly Schools label is based on a survey that captures more than 50 leading practices in supporting military students, thus providing service members and their families with transparent, data-driven ratings about post-military education and career opportunities.

There are 12,697 active military, military veterans, and dependents attending classes in the District — including Continuing Education. Services include a veterans affairs office at every campus, counselors trained to provide for the needs of military veterans, and peer support and mentoring programs (see related story on page 11).



SAN DIEGO
CITY COLLEGE

SAN DIEGO
MESA COLLEGE

SAN DIEGO
MIRAMAR
COLLEGE

SAN DIEGO
CONTINUING
EDUCATION



Going Green

The San Diego Community College District received yet another honor for its ongoing efforts in sustainability during the recent Green California Schools & Community Colleges Summit in Pasadena. The District was recognized with the Green Community College Leadership Award in the category of Energy.

As the second-largest community college district in California, and the sixth-largest in the country, the SDCCD has taken a multifaceted approach that utilizes photovoltaic systems, smart metering, thermal energy storage, rooftop gardens, and controlled irrigation, among other efforts, to lessen its environmental footprint. Green roofs are an increasingly popular strategy for mitigating urban heat islands, and the District has installed or plans to install green roofs at several projects, as well as smart metering systems districtwide.

What's more, the District is on track to obtain a total of 43 LEED certifications, including 25 LEED Silver, 15 Gold, one Platinum, and two LEED Certified buildings since the SDCCD's Board of Trustees implemented its Green Building Policy in 2003.



DECEMBER 3, 2015

\$6,000,000

Pay To: **BACCALAUREATE PILOT PROGRAM**

SIX MILLION DOLLARS AND 00/100

State of California

Mesa College President Pamela Luster looks on as SDCCD Chancellor Constance M. Carroll, SDCCD Board of Trustees President Maria Nieto Senour, and State Senator Marty Block hold up a check representing the \$6 million that has been secured for California's historic Baccalaureate Pilot program.

Water Polo Champs



The Mesa College Women's Water Polo team became the best in the state when it won the 2015 California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) Women's Water Polo Championship on November 21 at Pasadena City College. Mesa defeated Riverside 9-7 in the finals to take the championship for the first time in school history. The result caps off a historic season that included a Pacific Coast Athletic Conference Championship, an 8-0 conference record, and a 22-2 overall record.

Reaching for the Stars



San Diego Mesa College student David Mueller is well on his way toward reaching his dream of crafting a career in the cosmos.

Mueller, a Marine Corps veteran who will be transferring to a University of California campus next fall en route to an advanced degree in aerospace

engineering, recently took part in the ultra-competitive NASA Community College Aerospace Scholars program and spent several days studying at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. He was one

Welcome Chief Fennessy!

San Diego's new fire chief is one of our own. Brian Fennessy, who was sworn into office as the City of San Diego's Fire Chief on November 12, is a graduate of Miramar College's 48th Fire Academy.



Chief Fennessy joined the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department as a firefighter in 1990, and he became the assistant chief of Support Services in 2009. In 2012, he was named assistant chief of Emergency Operations, which includes responsibility for all 48 fire stations, the Emergency Medical Services Division, the Special Operations Division, and the Lifeguard Division.

As chief, he directs a department of more than 1,200 firefighters, lifeguards, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and civilian personnel. Chief Fennessy replaces Chief Javier Mainar, who earned an associate degree in fire science from Miramar College. Chief Mainar retired after a distinguished 35-year career with the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

of just 50 or so community college students in the nation invited to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which included a competition among four ad-hoc teams tasked with designing models of Mars rovers and programming them to engage in various tasks.

Before his Jet Propulsion Laboratory experience, Mueller took part in a five-week, online NASA program that included video chats and various design challenges.

"It's a phenomenal program and I was honored to take part," Mueller said. "Just being exposed to such a high level of scientists and engineers was remarkable."

Mueller is set on a career in the space program. His ultimate dream? "My pie-in-the-sky goal is to become an astronaut."

A SPECIAL KIND OF HOMECOMING

Patrick Caughey was working at a nursery in 1974 when he enrolled at San Diego Mesa College to learn more about landscaping. Today, Caughey is back on campus creating eco-friendly landscapes, most recently at the new Mesa College Math+Science Complex. He also provided landscape design services for the east entrance of campus and for the Allied Health Education and Training facility. Recently, he began working on design renderings with HGA Architects on the remodel and renovation of the Fine Arts building.

“Being able to give back and contribute to the academic institution that set the groundwork for developing a great career has been a wonderful thing.”

— Patrick Caughey

Caughey – president and owner of Wimmer Yamada & Caughey, a leading landscape architectural firm that has designed projects throughout the San Diego Community College District – is among several Mesa College alumni who have returned as professionals during a years-long overhaul of the largest campus in the SDCCD. The overhaul is funded by Propositions S and N, the voter-approved, \$1.555 billion construction bond program that is providing new, state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities, major renovations, and campuswide infrastructure projects at City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and six Continuing Education campuses.

Brian Cahill



Brian Cahill is another Mesa College alumnus who is leaving his mark on the campus. Cahill is the California Division president of Balfour Beatty Construction,



a general contractor that has remade a significant part of the Mesa College campus. The contractor's contributions include the east Mesa College road improvement, SDCCD police substation and parking structure, along with the nearly completed fitness center and Mesa Commons buildings. Balfour Beatty will soon begin construction on the new Center of Business and Technology.

"Mesa College had a huge impact on me and a huge impact on my career, so it's rewarding to be able to contribute in a significant way to the modernization of the college," Cahill said.

Cahill enrolled at Mesa College in 1982 after serving as a U.S. Navy diver for more than five years. "I relocated to San Diego because I had some family members here, and I had a brother who was going to Mesa at the time," he said. "I was living nearby, it was very affordable, I had the education benefits through the G.I. Bill, so it just made sense to come here."

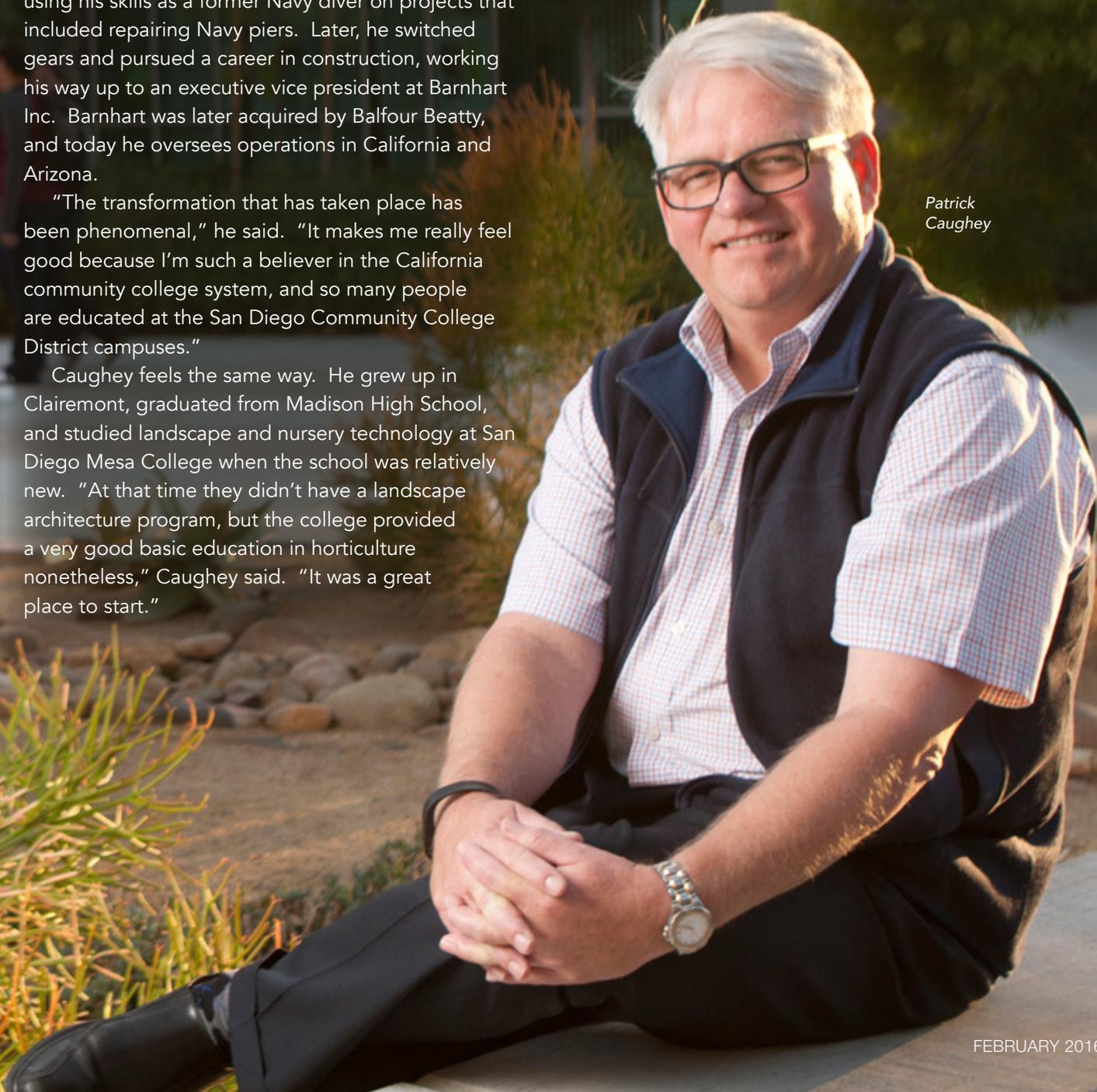
At the time, Cahill was eyeing a career as a commercial airline pilot but he was working full-time with Diamond Construction on federal contracts, using his skills as a former Navy diver on projects that included repairing Navy piers. Later, he switched gears and pursued a career in construction, working his way up to an executive vice president at Barnhart Inc. Barnhart was later acquired by Balfour Beatty, and today he oversees operations in California and Arizona.

"The transformation that has taken place has been phenomenal," he said. "It makes me really feel good because I'm such a believer in the California community college system, and so many people are educated at the San Diego Community College District campuses."

Caughey feels the same way. He grew up in Clairemont, graduated from Madison High School, and studied landscape and nursery technology at San Diego Mesa College when the school was relatively new. "At that time they didn't have a landscape architecture program, but the college provided a very good basic education in horticulture nonetheless," Caughey said. "It was a great place to start."

Caughey went on to become manager of a local Nurseryland garden center before enrolling at Arizona State University. He graduated in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in design with an emphasis in urban planning and landscape architecture. He is a registered landscape architect in four southwest states. Caughey retains close ties to Mesa and served on the Mesa College Architectural Advisory Committee for several years in the 1990s.

"It's been nice to witness the transformation of Mesa College into a beautiful, modern campus," Caughey said. "To be able to take part in that process has been phenomenal."



Patrick
Caughey



From left: Francis Rowe, Randall Dexter with his service dog, Captain, and Karina Miranda.



SERVING THE MILITARY AND VETS

Karina Miranda didn't hesitate to enroll at San Diego Mesa College after nine years in the Army, including a 15-month tour in Iraq.

"Mesa College was my first choice," said Miranda, who worked as a Blackhawk helicopter mechanic. "The facilities are state-of-the-art, the staff is incredibly helpful, and the campus is so veteran-friendly."

Veterans and active-duty military members at every San Diego Community College District campus share Miranda's sentiments.

San Diego City College houses an on-campus veterans center that provides a welcoming environment for all veterans by offering peer support and mentoring, referrals to both on- and off-campus resources, meetings relating to veterans issues, and guest speakers.

San Diego Mesa College opened a new Veterans Resource Center in 2014 and recently hired a full-time counselor to support student veterans. San Diego Miramar College, which features a Veterans Affairs office that staffs a full-time Veterans Affairs Specialist, recently received a sizable grant from San Diego Gas & Electric to develop the "Vets 2 Jets" program, which offers various grants to student veterans to cover books, tuition, and living expenses. San Diego Continuing Education offers several free certificate programs that are available for veterans, in addition to services for veterans with disabilities.

For its part, the District has created a nationally recognized veterans handbook and a Vets GPS phone app, both of which offer an abundance of information and links to community resources for the 12,697 active-duty military personnel, veterans, and dependents attending classes at all three colleges and Continuing Education.

"The San Diego Community College District has a longstanding commitment to our active-duty service members, student veterans, and their families. Each college has developed a strong support system to help them navigate the resources available to them both on and off campus," said Dr. Lynn Neault, the District's vice chancellor of Student Services.

Vice Chancellor Neault notes that San Diego Continuing Education and all three colleges have been designated as a Military Friendly School by Victory Media, publisher of *G.I. Jobs*, *STEM JobsSM*, and *Military Spouse*.

Indeed, active-duty military members praise the District's supportive programs.

"One of the best decisions I've made was coming to San Diego City College," said Francis Rowe, who is serving in the Navy and has been stationed at Naval Air Station North Island since April 2013 as an aviation electrician working on helicopter electrical components. "I've met some amazing teachers at this school, and anytime any issues came up because of my schedule with the Navy, everyone has been understanding and accommodating."

“The San Diego Community College District has a longstanding commitment to our student veterans and their families. Each college has developed a strong support system to help our veterans navigate the resources available to them both on and off campus.”

**— Dr. Lynn Neault
Vice Chancellor,
Student Services**

Rowe, who recently signed up for an additional three years in the Navy and will soon be stationed in Hawaii, was able to earn his associate degree in liberal arts and sciences with an emphasis on mathematics and pre-engineering at the end of the fall semester. He thrived in City College’s Math, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Program, which is an academic support and transfer program for students in math, engineering, and science majors.

“When I came to San Diego, I was looking for a place that could provide a good education at an affordable price and help me transfer,” he said. “I have not been disappointed.”

Plans call for Rowe to enroll in Arizona State University’s online program once he gets settled in Hawaii.

Randall Dexter was a combat medic in the Army for a decade before leaving the service in 2013. During his second tour in Iraq, Dexter served as a combat medic to the Commanding General of the 3rd Infantry Division.

He was quickly sold on San Diego Miramar College.

“I went to go visit the campus and I just fell in love with it,” Dexter said. “There are a lot of other veterans here, the faculty are dedicated, and the services they offer – such as Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS), the Career Center, the Transfer Center – are veteran-friendly. And at the Veterans Center, when it comes time to registering, they have a counselor right there to help you without you even having to think about it. It’s not just one thing; it’s a collection of awesomeness.”

Added Dexter: “In the military, you get used to a lot of bureaucracy. But at Miramar, things get done quickly and efficiently.”



Mesa College student veterans showing their pride at the San Diego Veterans Day Parade.

Dexter plans to transfer in the fall to the University of Nevada Las Vegas, to earn a bachelor's degree in communications with a minor in Spanish. His goal is to return here to study law at the University of San Diego.

Karina Miranda plans to transfer to San Diego State University after earning an associate degree in nutrition from Mesa College. Her favorite spot on campus? The Veterans Resource Center, a center staffed with tutors and equipped with computers, printers, a study area, lounge, and library.

"Everybody is just willing to help each other out," Miranda said. "And they make sure that you're the first in line to get the classes you need, which is very important because you're limited in how long you get your education benefits through the G.I. Bill."

Miranda is happy to be among the thousands of students — military and civilians alike — who are reaping the benefits of Mesa College.

"It's easy to navigate the campus, it's affordable, and it offers a lot of classes that are not available at other community colleges in the area," she said. "It's a great place to be."

"I went to go visit the [Miramar College] campus and I just fell in love with it."

— Randall Dexter



Student veterans Elijah Waiters and Robert Almodovar taking advantage of the Veterans Service Center at City College.



Joseph Hankinson, U.S. Navy veteran and Miramar College Career Services director, speaking at one of the college's Veterans Day events.

Social Justice — A Priority



City College President Anthony E. Beebe speaking at the 2015 Social Justice and Education conference.

The morning after Dr. Anthony Beebe announced in his inaugural convocation as the new president of San Diego City College that social justice would be a priority during his tenure, he arrived at work to find more than a dozen faculty members waiting for him outside his office to discuss the matter.

“They wanted to know how they could get involved, and they were very much interested in incorporating social justice into the curriculum,” President Beebe recalled of that August 2014 greeting.

Not that City College had been lacking in this area. The campus Umoja program, dedicated to enhancing the cultural and educational experiences of African-American and other at-risk students, has long been thriving. The College Cares Volunteer Program regularly engages in bay and canyon cleanups, and it recently earned the President’s Volunteer Service Award for collectively completing more than 1,000 hours of volunteer service in 2014.

But City College has taken it up a notch since President Beebe arrived. Community outreach has expanded. A new campus organization, Pillars of the Community Scholars Society, is providing counseling, tutoring, and more for students who have served time in jail or prison. And, the college organized its first Social Justice and Education Conference. The hugely successful two-day conference, organized by English instructors Anna Rogers and Paul Alexander, included more than two dozen break out sessions covering topics such as “Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools,” “Social Justice 2.0: Nurturing Critical Digital Natives,” and “Acceleration and Engaging Student Voice.” SDCCD Chancellor Constance M. Carroll was among the featured speakers.

The second Annual Social Justice and Education Conference at San Diego City College returns March 23 and 24 at the Corporate Education Center in the MS Building. The featured speaker is Assemblywoman Shirley Weber, 79th District representative, a professor emeritus of Africana Studies at San Diego State University, and the first African-American from south of Los Angeles elected to the state legislature.

MARCH 23 AND 24

Second Annual Social Justice and Education Conference

San Diego City College
Corporate Education Center

Visit www.sdcc.edu for more information.



President Beebe, students, and staff gather in Gorton Quad to honor the shooting victims at Umpqua Community College.

“Social justice is the foundation of education, and any educational institution that ignores social justice is really failing in its mission,” Alexander said.

Even in a calculus class?

“Even in calculus the job of the instructor is to show how calculus is relevant in the lives of the students he or she is teaching,” Alexander said. “Teaching is more than just spewing out numbers or facts. People often talk about how an education is empowerment, but if an education is not relevant to the student, it’s not empowering at all.”

President Beebe agrees. “There are elements of virtually every topic that we teach at City College which, if you are sensitive to it, touch at least to some extent on social justice issues.”

All of which is music to the ears of Maria Morales, a City College student who serves as Pillars of the Community Scholars Society president.

“Dr. Beebe is opening up a lot of doors for students to talk about issues that are so important to so many people,” Morales said. “It’s wonderful to see that kind of commitment from the top.”

President Beebe would have it no other way.

“Community colleges were founded on the principles of social justice,” he said. “This foundation still permeates the mission and core values of community colleges across our country. Certainly one of the most unique and compelling social justice elements of community colleges has been the emphasis on open access to higher education. This open-door philosophy helped the colleges become known as the ‘people’s colleges.’ From the start, community colleges provided educational access to

the masses, democratizing higher education, and breaking the classism of higher education, which had been largely reserved for the wealthy elite. This was an epic social justice change in our nation’s history.”

“Social justice is the foundation of education, and any educational institution that ignores social justice is really failing in its mission.”

— Paul Alexander

Building Civil Discourse

California was facing a budget crisis, classes were being cut, and frustration was building. Top administrators decided it was time to hold a town hall-type meeting at San Diego City College to listen to the growing chorus of concerns.

“Some of the students were really passionate and vocal about what was going on,” recalled Alberto “Beto” Vasquez, who served as president of City College’s Associated Students Government at the time. “But it was a healthy discussion, people were civil and respectful toward each other, and everyone was heard.”

Four years later, the San Diego Community College District wants to build upon that type of civil dialogue, especially with protests over microaggressions and larger injustices popping up from California to New York, prompting it to launch a partnership with the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) to strengthen civil discourse and keep disagreements from becoming disrespectful.

Under the two-year We Are Community program, student leaders at City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and Continuing Education – as well as managers and staff districtwide – will undergo a series of NCRC training workshops to teach skills and strategies for implementing civil behavior, acting with respect, and embracing diversity.



NCRC trainer Kendrick Dial leads the pilot training workshop for student leaders.



NCRC trainer Lisa Maxwell.

The program will be fully implemented this spring, and approximately 600 student leaders and 200 faculty, staff, and administrators will take part in the training through 2017.

“Part of the mission of our District is to prepare well-educated citizens who advance our community’s civil dialogue,” SDCCCD Chancellor Constance M. Carroll said. “These training sessions will not only benefit our campus climate but will also provide students with the skills they need to be more effective in the workplace.”

The hours-long, interactive training sessions incorporate a syllabus entitled “The ART of Inclusive Communication” and are led by NCRC professionals who take participants through a series of exercises and small-group discussions aimed at helping people understand why they act and think the way they do, while coming to the realization that sometimes those thoughts are based on unconscious biases. During one recent pilot exercise at Mesa College, for example, trainer Kendrick Dial asked faculty and staff to reflect on their impressions of Kim Kardashian. Then he asked how many people actually knew Kim Kardashian. The message: We often make judgments about people even though we don’t know them.

A second pilot session, this one at City College and geared for student leaders throughout the District, included lengthy discussions about personal backgrounds and how those backgrounds can sometimes keep us from empathizing with others.

“Faculty, staff, and students can definitely benefit from this kind of training,” said Olivia Light, Miramar College Associated Student Council president.



Students take part in group discussion on inclusive communication.

“Especially in light of what’s happening in the world today.”

District officials are confident that through The ART of Inclusive Communication, students, faculty, and staff will sharpen their skills at communicating in intercultural settings and learn to build bridges with others.

“The goals of the San Diego Community College District are to create an inclusive community,” said Dr. Lynn Neault, the District’s vice chancellor of Student Services. “The ART of Inclusive Communication will help campus members gain the skills to successfully develop an empathetic understanding of others.”

The We Are Community program is the latest District effort aimed at fostering a more civil dialogue. The District helped spearhead Restoring Respect, a community initiative that aims to bring civility to public discourse and which has led to an annual conference, Restoring Civility to Civic Dialogue at the University of San Diego. The next Restoring Respect conference, which is coordinated by San Diego Mesa College Professor Carl Luna, is set for April 18 at the University of San Diego’s Joan Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice.



Anthony E. Beebe, Ed.D.
President
San Diego City College

VOICES: HONORING VETERANS

Serve something bigger than yourself



Opening night reception. Photo by David Eichinger.

Working together, the award-winning San Diego City College Graphic Design and Photography programs brought to life the stories of veterans in a special exhibit, VOICES: HONORING VETERANS.

With more than 1,500 veterans at City College, graphic design professor and show curator Candice Lopez shared that she, photography professor David King, and their students created this project to bring awareness to all veterans.

An Army veteran and an instructor at City College for 16 years, King's large-scale, 20-by-30-inch black and white collection of portraits featured the personal stories of City College students, faculty, and staff, and community members who had served across multiple wars, including World War II, Vietnam, and Iraq.

City College stories included student Richard Baldwin, an Army infantryman who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, and was awarded numerous medals and citations, including an Army commendation with valor; student Frankie Georgianna, a Navy helicopter mechanic; English adjunct professor Christina Galeano, an Army musician; and student April Stoddert, a Navy veteran of Desert Storm, Desert Shield, and the Liberation of Kuwait, and a direct descendant of Benjamin Stoddert, the first secretary of the Navy.

Nearly 250 guests attended the November 10 opening night VOICES reception in the college Luxe Gallery.

While most veterans stood next to their large-scale portraits and talked with visitors about their military experience, World War II veteran James Reily Sr. sat. Now in his 90s, Reily shared his story with college President Anthony Beebe and other visitors.

At the age of 19, Reily enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

After being shot down on April 15, 1944, he and other highly trained airmen were held in a German prison camp. After surviving bitter cold, blinding snow, and starvation, they were liberated by Gen. George S. Patton and the 3rd Army on April 29, 1945. Reily learned to do without in the Great Depression. He wants future generations to know it's important to sacrifice and serve for something bigger than yourself.

The VOICES exhibit also included rare, original hand drawings, paintings, and ephemera from World War II correspondent and acclaimed illustrator Carol Johnson.

"In this special tribute to veterans, the photos and stories are so powerful. It feels as if history has been brought to life right here in the Luxe Gallery," President Beebe said.

San Diego City College is home to the SDCCD's Military Education Program and is the only institution in the country to earn all three Military Friendly designations – Military Friendly Employer, Military Spouse Friendly Employer, and Military Friendly School – in consecutive years from Victory Media, publisher of *G.I. Jobs* and *Military Spouse*.



'HE WAS LIKE A COMET'

Mesa College Dedicates Observatory to Naturalist Jerry Schad

Under a warm fall night sky, San Diego Mesa College honored the memory of local naturalist, author, and professor Gerald "Jerry" Schad by dedicating the observatory atop Mesa's Math+Science Complex in his name.

Schad, who passed away in 2011, was known throughout the state and beyond as Southern California's premier outdoor recreation writer. He wrote monthly columns for the *Los Angeles Times*, and for 20 years penned the popular "Roam-O-Rama" column for the *San Diego Reader*. He is most known for his 16 books, including the immensely popular "Afoot and Afield" series, which explored hiking trails in Orange County, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

He was also a photographer – publishing nearly 1,500 professional photos – and an astronomer. For Schad, the sky was a source of curiosity and inspiration.

"He would talk for hours about the stars, planets, and galaxies," said his widow, Peg Reiter.

But what he loved most was teaching.

Schad frequently took his students camping at the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park so they could see the night sky without the blur of city lights.

"Thanks to Jerry's vision for this observatory, all of our students will have that observing experience right here without the need for travel," said Saeid Eidgahy, dean of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at Mesa College. "It is entirely a fitting tribute that we name this observatory in his honor."

Schad taught at community colleges for 36 years, joining Mesa College as a full-time science faculty member in 1989. He taught astronomy and physical science, and chaired the Physical Sciences department from 1999 to 2011.

His hundred-plus friends and colleagues in attendance shared remembrances, songs, and a letter from Schad's sister. A bronze plaque was unveiled with Jerry's smiling likeness, bearing the inscription: "Educator, astronomer, hiker, author & friend whose vision made this facility possible."

The \$117 million Math+Science Complex, which opened for classes in 2014, is the largest instructional building in the California community college system. Schad was part of "The Away Group" that envisioned



The "Away Group" (from left: Saeid Eidgahy, Sina Sadjadi, Donna Budzynski, and Paul Sykes) in front of the Jerry Schad plaque.

the stunning building that has changed how math and science is being taught. It was also his idea to place an observatory on the roof.

The observatory features state-of-the-art equipment, including 6-inch Maksutov-Cassegrain telescopes, a 12-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope, solar telescopes, high-powered binoculars, camera mounts, and more. Remote viewing capabilities allow the 12-inch telescope to be controlled and viewed from the astronomy lab on the building's first floor.

In addition to instruction, the observatory will be used for student projects, workshops and seminars, public viewings, and star-gazing parties.

"Jerry was like a comet, a rare passage of a bright and shining light through time and space," Laurie Schad wrote of her brother in a letter that was read at the dedication.

"The Jerry Schad Observatory is a symbol of his lingering influence on this campus and in this community. It offers a wonderful opportunity for exploration to all who take the time and make the effort to search and observe, as he did."

For more information, use the search term "observatory" at www.sdmesa.edu. Donations are welcome to help with the upkeep and expansion of the observatory, including new telescopes and equipment for astronomy instruction. Additionally, donations can be made to the Jerry Schad Memorial Scholarship. Contact Anne Zacovic at azacovic@sdccd.edu at the Mesa College Foundation.



Patricia Hsieh, Ed.D.
President
San Diego Miramar College

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

The northwest corner of San Diego Miramar College, near Black Mountain Road and Hillery Drive, is officially “in touch” with its wildlife side. Over the course of the fall 2015 semester, the 12-acre parcel of land has been transformed into a landscape featuring vernal pools and interpretive trails designed to protect one tiny endangered species. This section of land is home to the federally protected San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*), a soft-bodied crustacean that is less than an inch long when fully grown. The endangered San Diego mesa mint plant (*Pogogyne abramsii*) also grows on the land.

Vernal (meaning “spring”) pools are a rare type of seasonal wetland that exists in very few places on Earth. Vernal pools are different from wetlands, ponds, or lakes because they only hold water for a few weeks. Rainwater collects in the pools as a result of hardpan earth that prevents it from draining into the subsoil below. During the rains, a diverse array of flora and fauna that make the temporary pools their home come out of dormancy. Some organisms can remain dormant for up to a hundred years. When the pools fill, these organisms go through their entire life cycle before the water evaporates in the dry summer.

“This is an exciting project for the campus,” said Brett Bell, vice president of Administrative Services at Miramar College. “As our bond projects rapidly wind down, the funds provided for this project, through Proposition N, have improved a part of campus that has been underutilized.”

The project was completed in December. The area now features vernal pools, a boardwalk, low-lighted pathways, a full-perimeter fence with access gates, a decomposed granite path, an ecosystem education area, and biological garden information signage.



The Vernal Pool Interpretive Trails project has been an important component of the work of the Miramar College Environmental Stewardship Committee (ESC). Professor Laura Tubelle de González, who served as Miramar’s faculty sustainability coordinator when the area was first being developed, added that the ESC is “glad to be able to play our part in the local conservation of one of California’s disappearing ecosystems.”

This semester, the area will serve as an outdoor interpretive lab for the Miramar College biology department. The Mira Mesa community is also welcome to enjoy the trails and learn about the importance of conserving the area’s vernal pool habitats.



The vernal pools at Miramar College are home to the endangered San Diego fairy shrimp (pictured left) and San Diego mesa mint plant.



MODERN FACILITY SUPPORTS QUALIFIED, SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS



Jessica Marquez and Abbie Fernandez are graduates of San Diego Continuing Education's Nursing Assistant Training program.

The new César E. Chávez Campus opened for classes in September 2015 and is already seeing a record number of students — especially students in the Healthcare Careers classrooms. The health care industry has experienced strong employment growth over the past four years, which is expected to continue. Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses have projected industry growth of 12.3 percent in San Diego over the next five years, resulting in nearly 300 anticipated job openings.

Two graduates of San Diego Continuing Education's (SDCE) Nursing Assistant Training program have experienced recent success in the job market. Jessica Marquez, 23, and Abbie Fernandez, 36, each completed the certificate program, which prepared them to pass the state Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) exam.

"I passed the state exam the first time," said Marquez, who is now working as a CNA for Sharp HealthCare. "I was hired almost immediately after passing the exam." Although even entry-level jobs can require some level of experience, Jessica was able to describe the clinical experience she received through SDCE's program, which impressed her employer.

"During the interview I was able to talk about the clinical trials." Marquez believes that direct experience with patient care was one of the reasons she got the job.

"The clinical partners are a very important part of the rigorous program we offer," Dean Robin Carvajal said. "Students gain practice with hands-on experience, which many employers find valuable when looking to hire skilled workers."

In addition to providing beginning students with first-time, hands-on experience, SDCE's programs are also beneficial to students who already have a background in health care. For example, Abbie Fernandez was a licensed Physical Therapist (PT) Assistant in the Philippines before moving to San Diego.

"Studying for the same PT license in the U.S. is expensive," Fernandez said. A friend recommended the free training at SDCE and after completing a program, she immediately found work as a caregiver.

The new César E. Chávez Campus, allows for increased classroom space specifically for hands-on health care career training. "Previously we had one classroom designated for the Nursing Assistant training," Dean Carvajal said. "With the expansion at the new campus, we've already grown the space to seven classrooms, including custom lab areas."

Both Marquez and Fernandez work as instructional assistants for SDCE. "When a student takes the state test and passes it, I feel proud because I know I helped them achieve their goal," Fernandez said.

"The big highlight of these programs is the instructors," Marquez said. "They go out of their way to perfect skill performance." Marquez plans to transition into a two- and then four-year program to earn her associate and bachelor's degrees in nursing and become a registered nurse. "The program at Continuing Education helped me confirm this profession is for me," she said.

MAKING A HOME AT MESA

Mesa College psychology major Manuel Gonzales knows about overcoming hardships. The 22-year-old scholar grew up in an impoverished Oxnard neighborhood and spent a couple of years with his financially struggling family of seven, living in a motel before enrolling at San Diego Mesa College for a fresh start. Today, Gonzales is a peer navigator who works with high school students transitioning to college through the Mesa College CRUISE program (an acronym for Creating Rich Unique Intellectual Student Experiences), and he also mentors several participants through their freshman year. Gonzales is planning to transfer to UCLA or SDSU next spring en route to earning a master's degree in psychology and perhaps returning to Mesa College as an academic counselor.

We recently posed a few questions to Manuel about his life and his college experience.



Q. Why did you decide to attend Mesa College?

A. All my friends who live in San Diego recommended Mesa to me. I then did research on Mesa College and was pretty excited to see what they were doing. I read a lot on Mesa College having many efforts to improve student equity and success. The fact that they were concentrated on making every student succeed and that they were a Hispanic-Serving Institution was a big factor in me picking Mesa. Also, I liked the fact that Mesa has a high transfer rate.

Q. How did you become involved in the Peer Navigator program?

A. My counselor knew my career goals, and she is the one who told me about the program and that they were hiring. To be able to help students avoid the problems I had when I first started at Mesa drove me to immediately apply. I want to be a counselor at the community college level so this was a great way of getting my foot in the door.

Q. What challenges have you faced as a first-generation college student?

A. One of the challenges I have faced as a first-generation student is money. Coming from a low-income family, my parents didn't have any money saved for my college education. Needing to buy books and supplies was a big issue for me. Another challenge was not knowing the basics of college. I didn't know what to expect at all. My family and friends really couldn't give me the proper support because no one had been in that type of environment.

Q. What's the best advice you could give to a first-year, Mesa College student?

A. Get involved on campus. Get yourself out there and meet as many faculty, staff, and students as you can. Get into clubs and volunteer as much as you can. All this will prepare you for the demands of life. Also, utilize all the resources that the school provides. It's OK to get help.



36th Annual
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