

We



City College
Mesa College
Miramar College
Continuing Education

A NEW WAY FORWARD

Pandemic leads to creative alternatives for learning

Story on page 08



MEETING CHALLENGES HEAD-ON

Never during my 27 years with the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) have I seen our three colleges and Continuing Education face a crisis as challenging as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and never have the SDCCD's Board of Trustees and I been prouder of how faculty, administrators, classified professionals, and students have responded.

As the region's largest provider of workforce training and education, the SDCCD had to move as expeditiously as possible in transitioning to remote instruction, support services, and operations. The challenge was enormous: the conversion of nearly 5,000 classes to online and distance modalities within one week, counseling sessions delivered on laptops, leadership meetings

that have laboratories, hands-on aspects, or clinical requirements, the SDCCD has been working with state agencies such as the Board of Registered Nursing to secure greater flexibility. Additionally, the precise fiscal impact of the shift to remote operations is uncertain. However, we anticipate that it will be significant.

Amidst the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were the senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others, and the ensuing movements calling for an end to the systemic oppression of African Americans and other marginalized communities everywhere. In response, we saw members of our District, including students, speak out for change and take a stand for justice for those named, and for those whose experiences may never become publicized.

The District and its Board of Trustees remain steadfast in the commitment to equity and equality, including adoption of a resolution during the June 11 Board Meeting affirming that Black Lives Matter and denouncing systemic racism.

There is still much work to be done to ensure our shared values of equity and inclusion are recognized. Additionally, no one can say exactly when this pandemic will end or if it will return with even greater force this fall. We must continue to be vigilant in both areas.

The SDCCD is operating in uncharted territory. In the District's commitment to the safety of our administrators, faculty, classified professionals, and students, we have decided to continue with online learning during the summer session. In the fall semester, the majority of courses will continue in this manner with exceptions for science labs, nursing and Allied Health clinical labs, and career-technical labs, which, while observing health protocols, will be offered as hybrid approaches both on campus and online.

We are grateful for the spirit in which this transition to distance learning has been accepted during the pandemic. Seeing everyone in the District — one of California's largest — working together to serve our students and provide mutual support for one another during these stressful times, has definitely been gratifying.



City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, along with Continuing Education, worked quickly to purchase, collect, or restore thousands of laptops to distribute to students in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

conducted on Zoom, telehealth options for students seeking medical care or mental health guidance, an online transition for more than 5,000 high school students dually-enrolled in SDCCD courses, and the assignment of all work to remote operations.

In addition, City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, along with Continuing Education, rallied to purchase, collect, or restore, and distribute thousands of computers to students on the other side of the digital divide. More than \$700,000 in scholarships and grants were distributed to students within weeks of campus closures. District employees reached out to ensure that homeless students had access to technology and other basic services.

Challenges remain. For example, in addressing classes

Chancellor Constance M. Carroll, Ph.D.

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NO DEBATE:

MESA COLLEGE TEAM AGAIN AT THE TOP OF ITS CLASS



Members of the Mesa College Speech and Debate Team show off a first-place trophy at the Tabor-Venitsky tournament. *File photo provided by Kim Perigo*

“Our wins showcase the academic excellence at Mesa College.”

— Kim Perigo,
Mesa College Speech and Debate Team Coach

Mesa College’s Speech and Debate Team continued its run of dominance in 2019-20, topping Cornell University in a debate finals at Hofstra University in December, taking the top spot in February at the Tabor-Venitsky tournament at Cerritos College outside of Los Angeles, and then ending its season in April with a first-place finish against other two- and four-year California colleges during the Pacific Southwest Collegiate Forensics Association Cool-Off, which for the first time was conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We were happy that our team did well in this new format,” said Speech and Debate Team Coach and Communication Professor Kim Perigo of the Cool-Off win, “but fundamentally our goal is not winning. We tell students that winning is a consequence, not an objective. Our goal is to teach them the art of public speaking and if they do, winning comes as a natural consequence of that learning.”

In addition to competitions, shortly before the state issued its shelter-in-place orders in March, a handful of Speech and

Debate Team members travelled to Sacramento and met with legislators to discuss issues affecting community colleges during the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) Advocacy and Policy Conference.

Accolades for the Mesa College Speech and Debate Team are far reaching with wins in international competitions in London (2008), Berlin (2010 and 2019), and Antwerp, Belgium (2013). National and international tournaments, which usually take place in April and March respectively, were cancelled this year due to the pandemic.

Speech and Debate is a co-curricular communication class that meets for more than three hours each Wednesday. Speech and Debate competitions consist of 11 individual events and two different styles of debate — team and individual. The Mesa College Speech and Debate Team consisted of 76 students with anywhere from 20 to 25 on the core debate squad during the 2019-20 academic year.

“We are Mesa’s team,” Perigo said. “Our wins showcase the academic excellence at Mesa College.”

MOVING TOWARD A NEW ERA

Following San Diego Community College District Chancellor Constance M. Carroll's January announcement that she will be retiring in June 2021, after 17 years of exemplary service as chief executive officer of one of the state's largest community college districts, the near-impossible task of finding a replacement has shifted into high gear.

The District's Board of Trustees recently put together a search committee comprising faculty, classified professionals, community representatives, and others. In addition, it has hired ACCT Searches, a company that focuses

on community and technical colleges and has successfully completed more than 500 CEO searches ranging from campus presidents to state system leaders, and will soon begin accepting applications for the position.

Later this fall, a screening committee will begin the process of reviewing applications. Following a second round of interviews, open forums, and site visits, the Board of Trustees is aiming to make a final selection and announce the new Chancellor in late March 2021. The goal is to have the new Chancellor start July 1, 2021.

The SDCCD Chancellor is responsible for all operations in a District that is the largest provider of workforce training and education in the region with a \$755-million annual operating budget. The Chancellor oversees San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, a baccalaureate program at Mesa College, and San Diego Continuing Education; assures that the District is administered in accordance with policies adopted by the Board of Trustees and state and federal regulations; and maintains a close working relationship with the community, K-12 and local high-

er-education systems, as well as local, state, and federal officials.

Don't count on Chancellor Carroll sitting idle in her retirement. In May, she was appointed to the College Promise National Advisory Board. She also recently led the establishment of the California Community Colleges Baccalaureate Association (CCCBA), a nonprofit organization with the mission of providing assistance and expanding opportunities for the state's 116 community colleges to offer four-year degrees in workforce fields that now require a bachelor's degree.

BUILDING TOGETHER

Yehudi "Gaf" Gaffen moved with his wife to San Diego shortly after graduating from the University of Cape Town, South Africa, with a bachelor of science degree in construction management. In 1987, after several years in San Diego, the Gaffens decided it was time to form their own company, Gafcon.

For the San Diego Community College District, the significance of this decision was profound: Gafcon has been the program manager for the District's \$1.55 billion Propositions S and N construction bond project that has transformed City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, and seven Continuing Education campuses with new state-of-the-art instructional and career training facilities, major renova-



Gafcon was the program manager during the construction of Mesa Commons, which opened as a student hub in September 2016 on the Mesa College campus.

tions, and campus-wide infrastructure.

Along with its work with SDCCD, Gafcon has managed hundreds of other high-profile projects including the \$12 billion Zizhu Hi Tech Development in Shanghai, the \$2.5 billion Seaport San Diego project in downtown, and \$50 billion in education bond programs throughout Southern California. Few companies have had a comparable role in

managing construction projects throughout San Diego.

"Simply stated, we are a program/project construction management company that can assist owners and deliver projects from inception to finish," said Robin Duveen, President and COO of Gafcon and a construction industry veteran with 30 years of experience in program, project, and construction management.

Indeed, as the Propositions S and N program manager, Gafcon has been instrumental in the District receiving the highest ratings possible from two of the nation's benchmark bond-rating services over consecutive years.

"This is a true partnership," said Duveen. "The San Diego Community College District is a leader in higher education environments and workforce development, and it is an honor to work with

such visionaries."

Since 2008, Gafcon has been an active member of the SDCCD's Corporate Council, a partnership that Gafcon finds very rewarding.

"We sit on the Corporate Council as a result of our strong relationship with the District and we want to be part of this partnership for the long haul," Duveen said. "Our goal is to assist the District in every way we can now and into the future."

CONTINUING EDUCATION STUDENT SELECTED AS A TOP FEMALE WELDER IN NATIONWIDE SEARCH

Once a year, a select group of female welders from across the United States and Canada are chosen by the Ironworkers Union to complete a pre-apprenticeship at the Ironworkers Training Center in the Bay Area. San Diego Continuing Education student Sharla Knight was among the 18 women selected for the prestigious program in a nationwide search.

“I came to SDCE to pursue welding. I didn’t expect success this quick at all,” said Knight, 35, who earned a kinesiology degree at San Diego State University in 2009 on her way to becoming a high school teacher before changing paths by enrolling last fall in the welding program at Continuing Education. “There were plenty of deserving women in my class. I felt special that I was one of them.”

This past March, Knight was chosen for the Ironworkers International Union Pre-Apprenticeship, a program designed to prepare more women to enter the rigorous



profession. Students receive training in basic ironworking, welding, rigging, fire watch, traffic flagger, OSHA 10, first aid, and CPR.

She felt ready for the challenge. “The instructors/master welders at SDCE definitely prepared me for this,” she said. “I have the upper hand with my training. They set me up to be successful and to do very well at my career.”

She was right. Knight placed near the top in academics and was the first one in her class during

the pre-apprenticeship to get spot plug certified.

When stay-at-home orders are lifted and worksites are safely operating, Knight will start an apprenticeship with the Ironworker Local 229 in San Diego with plans of advancing to a journeywoman welder.

“The timing is unfortunate though we have a number of graduates working right now in the building and construction trades,” said Brad Dorschel, Master Welder and Continuing Education faculty member.

“The important thing is that Sharla has a spot waiting for her with the local union.”

The welding industry will face a shortage of about 400,000 welders by 2024, according to the American Welding Society. To meet the growing demand for welding personnel, unions around the world are recruiting women into the historically male space. Women like Knight.

“It is a male-dominated field, but to me it’s art. We aren’t scared to get dirty and work hard,” she said.

Free welding classes usually take place at Continuing Education’s Educational Cultural Complex, but when the campus closed in March due to COVID-19, students continued learning remotely with student welders studying blueprint reading, welding symbols, theory, and math — essential skills for graduates pursuing careers with local employer General Dynamics NASSCO, the world leader in shipbuilding and largest full-service shipyard on the West Coast.

Welding provides relatively high average pay. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual wage for Ironworkers was \$52,770 per year in 2018.

“ I came to SDCE to pursue welding. I didn’t expect success this quick at all.”

— Sharla Knight,
San Diego Continuing Education welding student

MESA COLLEGE STUDENT AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS JACK KENT COOKE SCHOLARSHIP

San Diego Mesa College student Hanan Dirirsa is one of 50 recipients of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's prestigious Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. The highly competitive national scholarship will provide Dirirsa with up to \$40,000 a year to complete her bachelor's degree.



Dirirsa is a human biology major with a 4.0 grade point average who serves as a senator with Mesa College's Associated Students and is the student representative on Mesa College Founda-

tion's Board of Directors. "We are extremely proud that Hanan has been awarded this Scholarship," stated President Pamela T. Luster. "Hanan is a dedicated student who is very involved on campus at multiple levels.

She truly exemplifies the Olympian Spirit, and we know she will succeed wherever she goes."

In addition to financial support, new Cooke Transfer Scholars will receive comprehensive educational advising from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation to guide them through the process of transitioning to a four-year college and preparing for their careers. Scholars will also receive opportunities for internships, study abroad, and graduate school funding, as well as connection to a

thriving network of more than 2,700 fellow Cooke Scholars and alumni.

"We know this is a very uncertain time for many students and their families. We remain deeply committed to supporting high-achieving community college students to ensure they have the resources to reach their full academic potential," said Seppy Basili, Executive Director of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. "We are excited to welcome this new class of Cooke Transfer Scholars to our community and looking

forward to seeing the many amazing things they do as they continue on their transfer journey."

Nearly 1,500 students from 311 community colleges applied for the 2020 Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. The foundation evaluated each submission based on students' academic ability and achievement, financial need, persistence, leadership, and service to others. The recipients selected represent 17 states and plan to enroll at the nation's most selective colleges.

NEW PRESIDENT LEADS MIRAMAR COLLEGE

Miramar College has a new president.

P. Wesley Lundburg, who for the past five years has been serving as Executive Dean and CEO of the Ammerman Campus at Suffolk County Community College on Long Island, New York, took the helm at Miramar College on July 1. He will lead a campus that is emerging as a top transfer institution and is cementing its role as key provider of workforce training for the region's thriving industries.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the faculty and staff at San Diego Miramar College in serving the students and community," Lundburg said. "This college has a rich history of offering high-quality academics with a truly comprehensive array of programs. Having grown up in Rancho Peñasquitos, I'm particularly invested in the community and am excited to have the opportunity to return home and contribute to the place I love. The faculty and staff are clearly a dedicated group, and I am honored to have been selected to join them and work alongside them."

A Coast Guard veteran, Lundburg will head a college that was once the site of a Navy airfield and is just up the road from Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. Today, Miramar College is a hub for transferring to a University of California or California State University campus. It is also home to the Southern California Biotechnology Center,



Advanced Transportation Academy, and the Fire Technology & EMT program. Since 1969, it has provided training for nearly all law enforcement officers and firefighters working in San Diego County.

At Suffolk County Community College, Lundburg oversaw the Ammerman Campus's development and continued growth of a new cybersecurity program, an expanding Automotive Technology program, the completion of multiple capital improvement projects, and annual increases in enrollment.

RISING *to the* OCCASION

District converts nearly 5,000 courses to online in an effort to keep students, employees safe during COVID-19 pandemic



Miramar College mathematics professor Becky Stephens would be the first to tell you she is not the most tech-savvy person around. But when the San Diego Community College District transitioned to online and distance-learning in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, she was among the many hundreds of instructors throughout the SDCCD picking up the finer points of teaching from her home computer in a matter of days.

“A lot of this I didn’t know how to do, but we were able to learn pretty quickly,” said Stephens, who has been teaching calculus and other college math courses for nearly 30 years, including more than a decade at Miramar College. “There has been such a community about this. It’s really been amazing.”

Stephens’ experience is common throughout the SDCCD, one of the state’s largest community college districts, where 60,000 students at San Diego City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges, as well as at seven San Diego Continuing Education campuses, moved to online and distance learning classes beginning March 23 and will continue, for the most part, through at least fall 2020. More than 5,000 high school students who were dually enrolled in SDCCD courses were also transitioned to online within a week.

Approximately 19% of SDCCD courses were already offered remotely before the pandemic hit, and the

SDCCD’s Online Learning Pathways Department assisted in the transformation by creating a walkthrough guide with a research-based approach to quickly converting courses into a remote format. Faculty mentors mobilized at all three colleges and San Diego Continuing Education, and the

SDCCD’s Online Faculty Certificate program saw a threefold increase in enrollments over one week.

Low-income students and others from traditionally underrepresented communities were provided with critical services, laptops, and Wi-Fi access. Counseling, tutoring, and health services continue to be provided remotely. Student newspaper staffs met via Zoom. And the SDCCD’s Board of Trustees, which began hosting meetings via Zoom and broadcasting them to YouTube in April, adopted a resolution lauding “the many outstanding contributions of its faculty, classified professionals, and administrators in response to the coronavirus/ COVID-19 crisis.”

Among these contributions, the City College Transfer Center created an online step-by-step tutorial providing students with access to a variety of virtual transfer and career workshops, and its Student Services webpage is being highlighted as a model for others across the state.

It’s the same story at Mesa College. “I have to brag a bit because all of the tutors are totally rocking it to support students!” tweeted Mesa College student Megan Corieri (@mcorieri1). “Just had an amazing virtual tutoring session with one of mesa’s great math tutors for help in my pre-calc class and feel so much more confident in this concept now.”

Tammie Pontsler, who teaches Clothing and Textile Arts at Continuing Education’s West City Campus, was proud of the swift response of her peers. “Our entire department brainstormed over best practices, and the District set up some wonderful trainings,” Pontsler said. “We’re using the latest technology to get as close to in-person instruction as we can.”

When you’re teaching skills courses from Sewing Fundamentals 1 to Contemporary Tailoring, the quick transition has had its challenges. But students haven’t missed a beat. A local group restored donated sewing

machines and distributed them to 20 students. And, Pontsler’s online lessons include embedded PowerPoint presentations and some 212 YouTube video tutorials she created after transitioning to online instruction.

“For me, as stressful as the transition has been at times, this is a wonderful opportu-

nity to expand my skills as an educator and to work in collaboration with my colleagues,” Pontsler said.

Like their colleagues, Continuing Education faculty members Marne Foster and Wanda Katepa spent a week learning and converting their High School Equivalency classes to a new online format. The following week, the pair went online through Canvas and Zoom systems to train students and get them acclimated to what it looked like to meet, teach, and learn online for Math and Language Arts. “Although, some students were stretched with the idea of online classes,” said Foster. “Once they accessed class, saw our faces, and heard our voices, it was ‘Eureka!’ ”

Miramar’s Stephens sums it up well: “We’re in this together,” she said. “We’re doing the best we can. We realized there are going to be some mistakes along the way, but we’re going to get through this. We’re going to come out of this stronger than before.”



Continuing Education Professor Tammie Pontsler stands in her studio, where she has created 212 YouTube tutorials to help teach students taking her Clothing and Textile Arts courses.

RECORD BREAKING

- During July 17 virtual commencement events, 12,117 degrees and certificates were awarded, a new record for the District.



Continuing Education culinary arts student Marcus Smith, Sr. (fourth from right), holds a large serving of chili cooked for staff at Scripps Mercy Hospital Chula Vista by faculty and students of the culinary arts program.

VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

Staff, students help feed emergency room workers, supply masks to community

In the San Diego Community College District's mission statement it says, "We are an institution which responds to the unique needs of local communities." So it's no surprise that students and faculty stepped up and out of the classroom to assist others during the COVID-19 crisis.

When Marcus Smith, Sr. learned of an immediate need for ready-cooked meals at Scripps Mercy Hospital Chula Vista where his wife works, the San Diego Continuing Education culinary arts student knew he had to do something.

"I wanted to support her and show her colleagues that their community supports them as well," Smith said.

For help with his efforts, Smith

turned to his instructors at Continuing Education. The result: various donations of freshly cooked multiple-course lunches to the South Bay hospital.

"Our culinary department (thought) for a long time on how to give back. We are so thankful Marcus brought this opportunity to us," Chef Megan Leppert said. Leppert, along with Continuing Education Chefs Lee Blackmore and Nikki Austria, planned the menu around hospital guidelines.

Along with the rest of SDCCD's classes transitioning to online, so too did the mainly hands-on culinary arts programs at Continuing Education.

"No one knows what our industry will look like moving forward, but we will continue to

prepare our student chefs to be well-rounded for the workforce," said Blackmore.

Additional community support came from Continuing Education's Clothing Construction and Textile students and the Mesa College Fashion Department's students, alumni, and faculty who teamed up to address the issue of mask shortages in the health care industry. Sewists were mobilized, with some putting their own businesses and operations on pause, to make and distribute hundreds of masks to meet the needs of hospital workers and patients.

One of those volunteers is alumna Carmen Flores of Ebb & Flow Beachwear. Flores, who was inspired to launch her beach-

wear line while taking classes in Fashion Design at Mesa College, embarked on the "5,000 Mask Challenge," a homegrown initiative to create and donate masks to healthcare workers on the front line of the pandemic.

When Mesa College Fashion Professors, Meegan Feori and Jordyn Smiley heard of their former student's involvement, they shared the initiative with current students in the Fashion Department. Student volunteers jumped at the opportunity to lend their sewing skills to the cause, and with their help, the 5,000 Mask Challenge team was able to deliver its first donation of 400 masks on May 12, helping VA San Diego and the Health Center Partners of Southern California.

When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the San Diego Community College District to transition to online and distance learning, Mesa College journalism student Lance Nelson saw an opportunity to make a difference. He sold virtually all his possessions, flew to New York — the epicenter of the nation’s coronavirus outbreak — and started volunteering on April 1 with food banks and pantries that feed struggling residents.

“Every person I meet tells me the same thing: ‘You picked a weird time to move to New York,’” Nelson said.

Giving back is nothing new; Nelson has volunteered with the San Diego Food Bank and other nonprofits during the two years he attended Mesa College, where he also worked as Co-Editor in Chief for the Mesa Press student-run newspaper.

“It just seemed like the right thing to do,” he said. Almost as soon as Nelson arrived, he signed up with New York Cares, the largest volunteer network in the city. Nelson’s decision to assist those in need in New York doesn’t surprise those who know him.

“His leadership qualities are amazing and to see the confidence he has gained has been truly remarkable,” Mesa College Journalism Professor Janna Braun said. “He’s just a nice person to be around, the type of student we all want to be in our classrooms. He’s the reason why I went into education.”

Nelson’s actions underscore how Mesa College has impacted his life and helped him heal. Struggling with his sexuality and his identity while growing up in the San Joaquin Valley town of Selma, Nelson describes his high school as “a dark place” where he was bombarded daily with homophobic slurs and occasional locker room threats.

He left the Central Valley after graduating high school and worked a variety of jobs



Taking the Fight to New York

When classes were transitioned to all-online, Mesa College student Lance Nelson, packed up and moved to New York, the epicenter of the COVID-19 crisis, where he did volunteer work ahead of starting at Columbia University.

while dealing with the fallout from years of psychological abuse. When he moved to San Diego, he realized it was time to earn a degree, but even after pulling up to the Mesa College parking lot for the first time, Nelson,

“I’ve never had a 4.0 in my life, but Mesa provided me with the kind of environment where I could succeed.”

— Mesa College journalism student Lance Nelson

then 30, was too anxious to leave his car and considered driving back home.

“I just sat there,” he said. “I finally began walking to class and the first thing I see is this big rainbow banner with the words ‘Mesa Pride.’ I figured I could do this.”

Nelson utilized the free therapy and counseling sessions, he began writing for

the college newspaper, he signed up for the Mesa College Honors Program, he became a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, he was a regular on the Dean’s List, and he graduated in the spring with a 4.0 GPA.

“I’ve never had a 4.0 in my life,” he said, “but Mesa provided me with the kind of environment where I could succeed.”

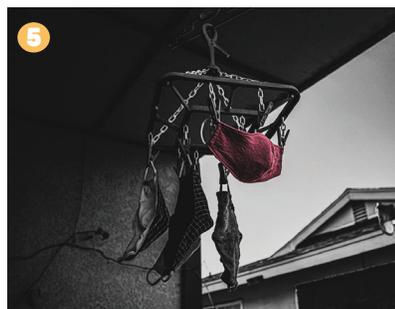
Nelson will be in New York for the foreseeable future. He was accepted to Columbia University’s Institute for the Study of Human Rights as a human rights major and, with his early move to the Manhattan, he decided to enroll in summer classes.

“I don’t know where I’d be had I not gone back to school,” said Nelson, who hopes to work for the United Nations and advocate for the LGBTQ community. “In the two years of attending Mesa, I went from questioning my own self-worth to finding my purpose. I am incredibly grateful for what the faculty and staff have helped me achieve.”

CREATIVITY

during crisis

City College students in Professor Caity Fares' spring Photography 143 class were asked to document life during stay-at-home orders. The resulting photos were as varied as each student's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, but all showed that creativity can thrive, even in times of crisis.



Handwash by Sandra Ramirez (1), Creative by Kimberly La Rue (2), Empty Roll by Jared Harman (3), Root Study 1 by Professor Caity Fares (4), and Quarantine Masks by Nhan Johnny Vu (5).



City College Professor and Registered Nurse Jeana Jones has worked 12- to 14-hour shifts at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla during the COVID-19 pandemic. (File photo provided by Howard Lipin of The San Diego Union-Tribune)

City College Nursing Education Program **STEPS UP ON FRONT LINES**

With classes moved online and clinical opportunities almost non-existent, students and faculty at San Diego City College's Nursing Education program have moved beyond the classroom and devoted themselves to the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic through everything from volunteering at hospitals to mapping out emergency room disaster management plans.

City College Professor Jeana Jones, RN, has worked 12- to 14-hour shifts at Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, where she is a supervising emergency room nurse. It is, she said, a state of controlled chaos unlike anything she has ever seen.

"It's been really different," said Jones, who was made a point person responsible for developing pandemic emergency room protocols. "We've had to change how we do things in preparing for a disaster, we put up a tent for COVID patients outside the ER, and we have a whole COVID unit set up. But this is what we do. We teach our students to be flexible, to prepare yourself for things that can change by the minute, and this is a perfect example of using

problem-solving skills to implement new ideas, using evidence-based criteria to find solutions on the fly, thinking on your feet, all while making sure you and your patients are safe."

Karen Illan Villalobos, a first-year nursing student at City College, worked this spring with Scripps Health through an externship that sent her to different hospitals and medical centers to assist nurses as needed. Her work, however, did not count toward needed clinical hours, which are in short supply because of the pandemic but which are required for students to become licensed registered nurses.

No matter. "Nursing is a career that I'm choosing, and I'm choosing this to help others," Villalobos said. "If I can help, I want to help. If my brothers or my parents or if I were sick, I would want people to help me. I'm not doing this for myself, the clinical hours will come. I'm doing this because this is the profession I'm choosing to enter. And it's also a good experience."

Nursing Professor and Nurse Practitioner Petra Beals said Villalobos exemplifies the

dedication of her students.

"Our students have been amazing," she said. "They want to help. They want to volunteer."

A former emergency room nurse who spent most of her healthcare career at Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla, the nurse practitioner is doing her part, too. She signed up with the California Health Corps COVID-19 response effort, which enlisted medical professionals to fill in wherever they may be needed.

"When you've been on the front lines so many times, you understand the pressure and the physical and emotional toll this situation is taking on your brothers and sisters," Beals said. "You want to make a difference and do what you can to help those who are making a difference."

Helping those who are making a difference included raising funds and dropping off dinners to former co-workers at Scripps, plus volunteering to deliver meals to elderly individuals who can't cook for themselves. "Nurses are really going above and beyond right now," Beals said. "It's the least I could do." **WE**



Robots are used as part of the Bakersfield College Industrial Automation baccalaureate program. File photo provided by Bakersfield College

Community College Bachelor's Degrees: FILLING THE GAPS

Fifteen California community colleges offer bachelor's degrees in workforce fields with high demand, unmet need

A groundbreaking initiative allowing a limited number of California community colleges to offer baccalaureate programs is slashing the student cost of earning a bachelor's degree, better preparing graduates for employment, and putting people to work in hard-to-fill positions.

Those are the conclusions of education and legislative leaders who are committed to expanding the community college baccalaureate program at a time when California is projected soon to see a shortage of up to 1.1 million bachelor's-degree holders needed to sustain the state's economy. Among program advocates is the national Community College Baccalaureate Association, which foresees a bachelor's degree becoming an increasingly important entry requirement for higher-paying jobs and improved social mobility.

"The Community College Baccalaureate Association supports all strategies to help close the gap in bachelor's degree attainment," said the association's President, Angela M. Kersenbrock. "There is no one strategy that fits all

needs; the community college baccalaureate is one more strategy to help close this economic and equity gulf."

The California pilot program put forth as Senate Bill 850, authored by then-Senator Marty Block, was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown in 2014. San Diego Community College District Chancellor Constance Carroll chaired the statewide legislative efforts. Today, bachelor's degrees are offered at 15 California community colleges, including San Diego Mesa College, in workforce fields where there is high demand and unmet need. These programs also do not duplicate programs offered by California's public universities, the University of California and the California State University systems. A recent California Legislative Analyst's Office

report validated the academic quality and rigor of the state's pilot programs, noting that all have been accredited and all are designed to teach concepts and skills that are immediately relevant.

The California community college baccalaureate also is motivating more students to enroll in a four-year program. At Mesa College, for example, 95% of students in the college's Health Information Technology associate degree program are planning to pursue a bachelor's degree through the college's Health Information Management baccalaureate program so they can enter a profession with salaries ranging from nearly \$83,000 to more than \$144,000 annually.

Joe Panetta, president and CEO of Biocom, the Life Science Association of California, praised a biomanufacturing baccalaureate program at MiraCosta College for meeting industry demands. Nearly 90% of program graduates are now employed in the field, and several are seeking advanced degrees.

"The life science industry employs nearly 50,000 people and generates \$34 billion in annual economic activity in San Diego County alone," Panetta said.

"Having a home-grown workforce is essential to the future growth of this high-wage sector, so we look forward to providing our support to the faculty and students in the program."

Other program highlights include:

Affordability. Tuition for a bachelor's degree from a community college costs just \$10,560 for all four years combined, a fraction of what four-year colleges and universities charge, to say nothing of the high cost of programs at a for-profit university.

Meeting workforce needs. Antelope Valley College's Airframe Manufacturing Technology program, Bakersfield College's Industrial Automation program, Mesa College's Health Information Management program, and Shasta College's Health Information program were responsible for filling hard-to-staff industry positions, according to the Legislative Analyst's Office. In addition, Solano College's Biomanufacturing program, Santa Monica College's Interaction Design program, MiraCosta College's Biomanufacturing program, Bakersfield College's Industrial Automation program, and Antelope Valley College's Airframe Manufacturing

Technology program are graduating better-prepared students compared to other baccalaureate programs.

Location. Many community college students are place-bound and these baccalaureate programs offer accessibility for students who can't afford to move to attend a university.

Economics. The Legislative Analyst's Office report shows that students who graduated in 2018 were earning an annual salary \$28,000 higher than their salary prior to enrolling in their

bachelor's degree program.

The Legislative Analyst's Office also found that more than half of students surveyed by the pilot community colleges would not have pursued a bachelor's degree at all if their community college program had not been offered; graduation rates among those in the community college baccalaureate program are higher than graduation rates among those transferring from a California community college to the California State University campus; and 92% of students agreed that community colleges should

“Having a home-grown workforce is essential to the future growth of this high-wage sector, so we look forward to providing our support to the faculty and students in the program.”

— President and CEO of Biocom
Joe Panetta



A chest x-ray is examined during a class relating to Modesto College's Respiratory Care baccalaureate program. File photo provided by Modesto College

California Community College BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS



1. Airframe Manufacturing Technology, Antelope Valley College
2. Automotive Technology, Rio Hondo College
3. Biomanufacturing, MiraCosta College
4. Biomanufacturing, Solano College
5. Dental Hygiene, Foothill College
6. Dental Hygiene, West Los Angeles College
7. Equine and Ranch Management, Feather River College
8. Health Information Management, Mesa College
9. Health Information Management, Shasta College
10. Industrial Automation, Bakersfield College
11. Interaction Design, Santa Monica College
12. Mortuary Science, Cypress College
13. Occupational Studies, Santa Ana College
14. Respiratory Care, Modesto Junior College
15. Respiratory Care, Skyline College



continue to offer a baccalaureate program. The Community College Baccalaureate Association reports that the typical community college baccalaureate student is 28 to 32 years old, looking for economic stability, and striving to be a role model for their children. “Adult students cite many reasons for enrolling in a community college baccalaureate program. Chief among them is the fact that there were no realistic alternatives for them,” Kersenbrock said. “These students are, for the most part, adult, part-time students with multiple priorities. They are not the traditional college-age student who is 18 to 24 years old with the time and the resources to attend full-time.”

Kersenbrock points to Florida, a state where 27 of its 28 community colleges offer bachelor’s degrees, as an example of community college baccalaureate success: The average age of a student is 32, the average salary after completing the baccalaureate program is \$53,000, and the vast majority of graduates stay in their own communities. More than half the students are female, 38% are minority, and more than 50% are the first one in their family to obtain a bachelor’s degree. Approximately 60%



Left: Students get hands-on experience during class as part of MiraCosta's Biomanufacturing program. *File photo provided by MiraCosta*

Below: Students from Mesa College's Health Information Management baccalaureate program proudly pose during their commencement ceremony.

of students in the California baccalaureate programs are minorities and more than two-thirds are women.

California is currently among 25 states where community colleges are authorized to offer a baccalaureate program, and there are continuing efforts to strengthen and expand this opportunity beyond the pilot. A coalition of higher education leaders, led by SDCCD's Chancellor Carroll and Foothill-De Anza CCD Chancellor Judy Miner, has established the California Community College Baccalaureate Association to provide educational assistance and to advocate for the program. The organization's highest priority is securing legislative support to expand and extend the program, which will sunset in July 2026 if new legislation is not passed.

"California's community college baccalaureate evolved after years of collaboration not only with business, industry, and labor, but also after discussions with other leaders in higher education," said Chancellor Carroll, who also co-chairs the statewide legislative advocacy campaign and co-founded the California Community College Baccalaureate Association. "It is hard to argue with success, and the community college baccalaureate program has been a success since its inception." **WE**



BUILDING CHAMPIONS *of* CHARACTER

Sports programs at City, Mesa, and Miramar colleges focus not only on developing outstanding athletes, but exceptional students

Kareemah Hopkins is an All-Pacific Coast Athletic Conference and All-California Community College setter who helped lead the San Diego City College women's volleyball squad to the playoffs during both the 2018-19 and 2019-20 seasons. But what she's most proud of is earning her associate degree at City College followed by a full-ride scholarship to Coppin State University in Baltimore, where she plans on securing a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and psychology before embarking on a career as an FBI forensic psychologist.



Student athlete Kareemah Hopkins (second from right) celebrates a successful City College volleyball season.

“Attending City has allowed me to become not only a better athlete, but a better person and a better student.”

— Kareemah Hopkins,
City College volleyball setter

“Attending City has allowed me to become not only a better athlete, but a better person and a better student,” Hopkins said, “while also teaching me how to have a life outside of sports. Coach (Dede Bodner) has always impressed upon us that we are more than student-athletes. She has always impressed upon us that we have to be preparing ourselves for our careers once we leave City.”

Welcome to intercollegiate sports at the San Diego Community College District, where success is not just measured in championships — and there are many — but in character development.

All eight sophomores on the state championship-winning Mesa College men's cross country team, for example, boast a grade point average of at least 3.0 and three of them received all-state, all-scholar honors with GPAs of 3.75 or above. “This team is a great example of what a community college does,” Coach Manny Bautista said.

Bautista was among the players, coaches, and college officials who were honored for their most recent championship during an SDCCD Board of Trustees meeting earlier this year. Among them was Head Coach Sean Ricketts, who also won a state championship as a student-athlete at Mesa College. While much has changed since then, the overriding principle has not.

“We bring them in with one common goal: Develop,” Ricketts said. “Develop under three areas: develop as an athlete, develop as a student, and develop as people. We want to develop and guide these gentlemen and women on our team to be good people.”

Miramar College men’s volleyball Coach John Landicho, who has been winning titles everywhere he has coached and who served as a technical advisor to the 1996 USA Men’s Olympic Team, doesn’t mince words when discussing his role.

“We place a lot of emphasis on character, and character development is fundamental for us at Miramar,” Landicho said. “I’m in the field of human development. I make better human beings through championship-level volleyball. We all like to win, but developing quality human beings is really our goal. And that means you have to be a good dude, you have to be doing well in the classroom, and you have to be a good teammate if you want to play on our squad.”

He pointed to one former Miramar College player whom Landicho worked with and paired with a counselor after the athlete’s grades and focus failed to improve. The student not only played on the 2017 championship squad, but also transferred to an Iowa university, where he became an assistant coach. He recently earned his bachelor’s

degree and is now working as an engineer for Carlsbad-based Viasat.

STUDENT ATHLETES

Numbers reflect the 2019-2020 season

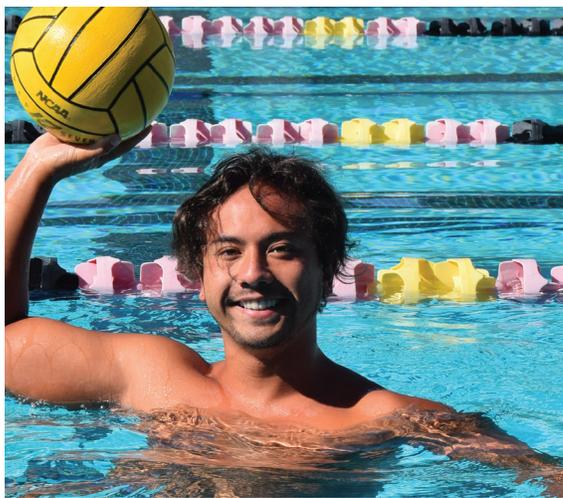
City: 171 athletes;
13 sports

Mesa: 440 athletes;
21 sports

Miramar: 93 athletes;
6 sports

Members of the Mesa College men’s cross country team were recognized during a SDCCD Board of Trustees meeting.





Top: Mesa College basketball forward Cameron Hill (24) takes the ball to the hoop during a game against Grossmont College.

Above: Men's water polo is one of three men's sports programs at Miramar College, along with basketball and volleyball.

Right: Members and coaches of the City College women's cross country team pose with President Ricky Shabazz (far right) in celebration of a great season.



In fact, a 2010 study commissioned by the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) that included the entire population of California community college student-athletes from 2004 to 2010 showed that student-athletes consistently earned higher GPAs and had higher transfer rates than their non-student-athlete peers — findings similar to previous studies of community college athletics.

Mesa College President Pamela Luster, who is a past chair of the CCCAA's Board of Directors, said access to equitable outcomes is a critical component of community college sports. A large number of, if not most, community college athletes come from disadvantaged communities, and many may not have attended college had it not been for the opportunity to compete at the collegiate level. Being part of a cohort with access to a solid support system means disproportionately impacted populations are accessing opportunities they may not otherwise have had.

Athletes, of which there are nearly 800 participating in 40 teams throughout the District, must be full-time students who maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and satisfy various transfer requirements, and several colleges assign full-time counselors to sports teams. Coaches hold high academic expectations of their students, and it is common for teammates to study together, whether it is on a bus en route to a competition or at a campus library.

“If you believe in equity, if you believe in equitable outcomes, then you believe in the transformative power of community college athletics,” President Luster said. “This is a group for which equity would not exist if they were not allowed to compete.”

City College basketball Coach Mitch Charlens, who guided the Knights to a 2017 state championship, recalled a former gang member who came to the college and stayed in school because of the basketball program. The basketball player became an Honor Roll student who transferred to a Division II school

in Oklahoma, and then earned a master's degree in counseling. Indeed, Charlens says what makes him as proud as anything is that 90% of his basketball players have earned scholarships to four-year colleges.

“There are a lot of people who wonder why we invest in sports at the community college level,” Landicho said. “We do it because it helps our students develop into upstanding citizens

who know about teamwork and who know about setting and reaching a goal.”

Hopkins, the City College volleyball star, agrees.

“It was a very good decision to come here,” she said. “The past two years have helped me learn more about myself not only as an athlete, but as a person. Coming to City has helped me develop skills needed to succeed not only as a setter, but as an individual who knows what I want to do in life and is confident about doing it.” **we**

“I make better human beings through championship-level volleyball. We all like to win, but developing quality human beings is really our goal.”

— Miramar College men's volleyball Coach
John Landicho



TIME OUT

- Due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic, the California Community College Athletic Association (CCCAA) made the decision to play all sports in the 2020-21 academic year during the spring semester.



SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE

FINDING STUDENTS A PLACE TO LIVE



Regular farmers markets on campus are just one of the ways City College helps students in need.

San Diego City College has been awarded a state grant for \$600,000 annually over three years to help homeless and housing insecure students find a stable place to live.

City College was among the 14 California community college campuses selected to take part in the new College Homeless and Housing Insecure Pilot Program in which funds are targeted for rental subsidies, housing navigation assistance, and case management services to students in need.

The program is modeled after The College Success Initiative operated by Jovenes, Inc., a Los Angeles-based nonprofit dedicated to helping homeless and displaced young adults in that city.

A 2019 Hope Center #RealCollege survey found that, 21% of students at San Diego City College said they did not have a stable place to live and 69% of students reported been housing insecure within the past month.

City College was the only grant recipient in San Diego County. At least one campus was selected from each of the California Community Colleges' seven regions, and factors determining what colleges were awarded grants included the percentage of students receiving Pell

Grants, the percentage of foster or former foster youth students on campus, the percentage of student veterans, the percentage of students living with a disability, and the availability of low-income housing in the area. Campuses also were rewarded if they have a working relationship with community-based housing organizations.

City College is a recognized leader in meeting the basic needs of struggling students. In doing this, the campus launched "Hunger Action Days" in partnership with Feeding San Diego and the San Diego Food Bank. In the first month alone, more than 1,500 students received shopping bags full of fresh fruits and vegetables. The Fantastique thrift store provides new and gently used clothing to students at little or no cost, and the campus Student Health Center offers medical and mental health care.

"Students today are finding it really hard to get by," said health clinic Director Dotti Cordell. "They are struggling to find a place to live and food to eat. They need access to health care. We're doing everything we can to help them with basic needs. Our future depends on us getting this right."



#WEAREMESA: SEEKING EQUITY DURING COVID-19

Even during these unprecedented times, San Diego Mesa College continues to strive to achieve equitable outcomes, protect its community, provide basic support, and maintain educational continuity for all students.

What does equity in the time of COVID-19 look like?

Mesa College jumped into action as stay-at-home orders were issued by the District starting March 16. Faculty quickly and willingly transitioned all learning to online formats. The Mesa College COVID-19 webpage was introduced in order to provide students with the latest updates, resources and support to meet students' basic needs. Additionally, Mesa College introduced an Online Student Services webpage, where students can get information and access services remote-

ly, including tutoring, admissions, assessment, counseling, Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS), financial aid, health services, and outreach.

To combat preexisting achievement gaps, Mesa College's Learning Resource Center, in conjunction with Information Technology and Student Services, has distributed more than 200 laptops since March. Several departments in exercise science, as well as animal health, biology, chemistry, and architecture, are contributing to regionally coordinated efforts to support personal protection equipment (PPE) needs at local hospitals. The architecture department is utilizing its 3-D printers to create face shields for medical workers and the fashion department is putting its talents toward making masks.

Within a matter of days of launching, the Mesa College COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund had nearly 2,500 applications from students needing aid. As of May, Mesa College raised nearly \$60,000 to assist students, with \$5,000 dedicated for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students. Additionally, Mesa College was able to provide \$2,800 worth of meal vouchers to 115 students. Similarly, Annual Scholarship donors provided Mesa scholarship winners with awards totaling more than \$163,000 in advance of the standard timeline in order to lend crucial aid during difficult times.

For Mesa College students, the change to online instruction has led to certain losses — canceled sports events, theatrical performanc-

es, and end-of-year ceremonies, to name a few. Faculty, classified professionals, and administrators sympathize with the disappointment that students are feeling and remain encouraged by their resilience and ability to adapt.

Mesa College's ability to still celebrate the successes and accomplishments of students and mentors despite the gravity of a global pandemic speaks to the community's great perseverance and enduring hopefulness. While it is uncertain when in-person engagement might resume, the Mesa College community is working toward the day when its campus can once again bustle with activity. Until then, faculty, classified professionals, and administrators remain committed to the health and educational well-being of the community.

Volunteers at Mesa College help load fresh food into the trunk of a car during a drive-up food distribution event on campus.





SIGNING DAY CEREMONY CONNECTS HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS WITH WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Every year, thousands of athletes all across the United States sign letters of intent to continue their athletic careers in college. It's a rite of passage that has drawn national attention for the better part of three decades.

This year, on February 20, well out of the national spotlight, San Diego Miramar College added a new twist to the concept by hosting a Career Education Signing Day for San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) seniors wishing to pursue an educational career in high-wage, in demand fields. The Miramar College Career Education Day is part of the larger NC3 National Signing Day established back in 2013.

For the second consecutive year, Miramar College hosted nearly 100 soon-to-be high school graduates. In addition to students pledging their commitment to study at Miramar College, there were student panels, demonstrations, and hands-on activities in the areas of child development, diesel technology, automotive technology, biotechnology, exercise science, entrepreneurship, emergency medical services, and fire technology.

Those interested in entrepreneurship and child development spent a session taking part in a hack-a-thon under the watchful eye of business Professor Tanya Hertz.

"The event was designed to give students a hands-on experience, to think creatively, to solve society's problems through business, and to prepare students for the rewards and challenges they might face becoming entrepreneurs in the childcare industry," Hertz said.

Diverse teams were created with four to six students from different high school campuses, and then given just a few minutes to solve a significant problem that segments the population in today's society. Students were provided with prompts, parameters, and

guidance, then asked to deliver a 1-minute pitch based on their business idea.

By late morning, students had the opportunity to sit in front of a Miramar College-logoed back drop and sign letters of intent, much like how athletes have done over the years.

"It has actually inspired me to go out and take a look at what's out there," said Danielle, a senior at Twain Mesa High School in Mira Mesa. "I'm going to go look at child development because I find it interesting."

Providing the keynote speech was Tom Nguyen, a Miramar College biotechnology program graduate who is currently employed at San Diego Zoo Global as a Research Associate in Conservation Genetics as a part of the northern white rhinoceros conservation efforts.

"National Career Education Signing Day celebrates the life-changing moment when students choose and commit to their future careers," said Ben Gamboa, Associate Dean, Strong Workforce Programs of the Miramar College event. "These workers of tomorrow will choose an industry-aligned certification program with the potential of financial and employment security earlier in life than their fellow classmates."

Andreanna Murphy, Head Counselor in the Office of College & Career for Technical Education at SDUSD, believes the SDCCD career exploration program aligns perfectly with that of the school district.

"Many students know they need to do something after high school," said Murphy. "We are providing them opportunities in high school to shorten the wait time (to employment) and we are allowing for them to find a career, plan their lives, provide a clear path of what they can and can't do when the graduate high school, and this event helps set the tone for their future."



During Career Education Signing Day, high school students got to participate in hands-on activities of Miramar College programs that interested them, including fire technology.



FOUNDATION RAISES FUNDS TO BUILD A STRONGER WORKFORCE



San Diego is leading the charge toward higher levels of education and skilled workers for California's growing workforce. As the state's largest noncredit adult education institution, San Diego Continuing Education is helping residents earn higher wages and find greater job security with free career education training in middle-skills industries.

Career training programs at Continuing Education are industry-recognized and state-approved. Additionally, Continuing Education specializes in offering support and guidance beyond the classroom to help San Diego's most vulnerable populations succeed in higher education and in the workforce.

At Continuing Education, students enroll in a course of study that lasts between six months and three years. Students complete high school equivalencies, study and improve basic skills such as English or math, and attend free career training classes that lead to certificates of completion in more than 70 industry areas, including healthcare careers, welding, and business.

"Traditionally when we used to think of student success, we only thought about what happened inside the classroom, the instruction portion," said Star Rivera-Lacey, Continuing Education's Vice President of Student Services. "We started to recognize that some of the biggest barriers our students were having actually occurred outside of school."

In 2015, President Carlos O. Turner Cortez first established the Seven Pillars of Student Success. The Pillars address the most critical barriers that adult learners face: employment security, food security, housing security, transportation security, financial literacy, textbook and course material affordability,

and intellectual and emotional security.

The San Diego Continuing Education Foundation is a charitable nonprofit organization established to ensure that students of all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to a quality career and college education. Each year the foundation awards more than a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships and barrier grants to competitively selected students. Scholarships are both need- and merit-based, while barrier grants are intentional for students experiencing unforeseen financial difficulties that are beyond their control.

Keely Harris dropped out of high school at 17 and five years later enrolled at Continuing Education to complete a diploma. She was eligible to receive resources from the San Diego Gateway to College and Career program, which provided pathways to reliable transportation and healthcare.

"In order for me to evolve in life, I knew I needed to get my diploma so I could do something," Harris said. "Gateway made a whole plan for me to keep up with my classes. They helped me accomplish goals I never thought I could accomplish." After Continuing Education, Harris will study psychology at San Diego Mesa College to become a counselor.

Continuing Education serves approximately 40,000 students, many of whom transition to San Diego City, Mesa, or Miramar colleges for associate degrees. Community organizations and industry partners can contribute directly toward a student's journey of educational achievement by contacting Laurie Coskey, Ed.D., San Diego Continuing Education Foundation Executive Director, at lcoskey@sdccd.edu.

Ian Gordon (left), San Diego Continuing Education Foundation Advisory Committee member, Reginald Jones, President and CEO of Jacobs Center, and Carlos O. Turner Cortez, Ph.D., Continuing Education President, host "Stars on the Rise" Scholarship and Awards.

BARRIER GRANTS AWARDED

- \$23,000**
2010 to 2015
- \$24,000**
2016
- \$25,000**
2017
- \$200,000**
2018
- \$250,000**
2019
- \$280,000**
2020

Designing Her Future at Continuing Education

Chong Mi Land came to San Diego Continuing Education for its fashion design program shortly after moving to Bankers Hill because she was frustrated with the dearth of clothing options available for her young daughter. "It seems the only thing off the shelf is nuclear pink with frills," quipped Land, whose knowledge about sewing and design previously had been limited to what she learned on her own. Today, less than two years after she began taking classes at the West City Campus, Land's daughter is a 6-year-old fashionista and Land has done work for both Comic-Con and the Cygnet Theatre in Old Town. She also runs a small clothing business called Land of Moon and sells items through an Etsy online shop.

WE recently asked Land about her experiences at Continuing Education.

Q How did you hear about Continuing Education?

A I learned about SDCE because I received a course catalog in the mail.

Q How has Continuing Education helped you?

A SDCE has enabled me to refine my skills and opened up doors to new opportunities, such as meeting some of my very skilled and knowledgeable instructors like Shirley Pierson, who is an amazing costume designer with a wealth of experience and talent. She enabled me to work at the Cygnet Theatre and gave me sound technical advice when I began my first big solo job for a design company. This program has given me access to new tools and wonderful like-minded people.

Q Now that you have become more skilled as a designer and seamstress, how have the clothes you're making for your daughter changed?

A The clothing I make for my daughter, myself, and others has become more complex and detailed. I am more willing and better able to execute what I could not before. In some instances, rather than using a pattern, I will

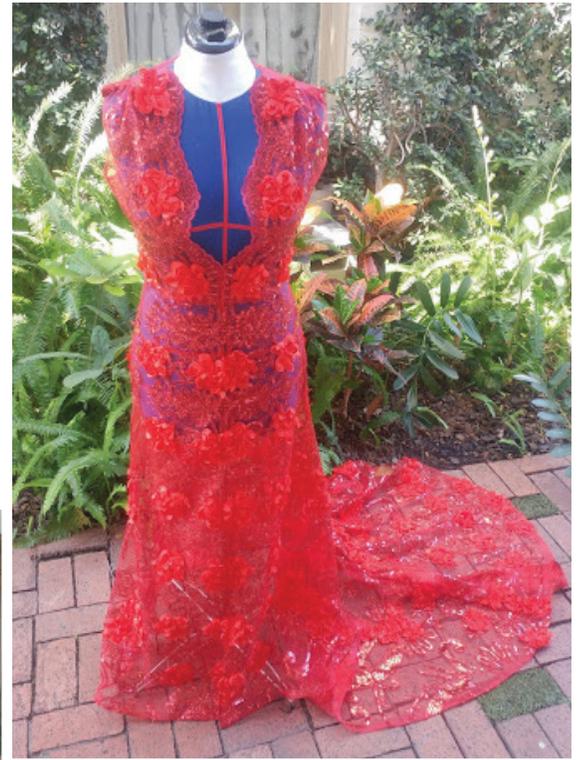


Continuing Education student Chong Mi Land (pictured with her husband) has put her fashion design skills to work to create pieces for Comic-Con clients, Cygnet Theatre, and the above dress she designed for a Red Dress Party to benefit the San Diego HIV community. *File photo provided by Chong Mid Land*

make my own or modify an existing pattern to suit my needs. I can better replicate a favorite piece of clothing that I can no longer find for purchase. Additionally, the cost is often cheaper for me to make rather than buy.

Q When and why did you decide it was time to start your own business?

A Over the years, I have had a career and different jobs that paid the bills, but didn't drive me the way designing and creating



a reality and what better way than to create my own company and be my own creative team and boss? After working in the theater, taking custom clothing orders, and successfully completing two jobs, (The Amazon Prime Experience for Comic-Con and a pop-up Hulu NY Ad Week) for a design company, I had the confidence to start my own business.

Q What should people know about Continuing Education?

A I think that SDCE and the San Diego Community College District are more accessible and affordable than people realize or know. There is a wide range of programs from the technical to the creative that residents can access for free, as well as degrees that can be attained, again, at a low cost. And the certificate that I am earning at SDCE can be transferred for some credit at one of the district's community colleges.

does. I had my hand in many different things, but making costumes, clothing and set pieces, working with my hands, and creativity brings me joy and inspiration. So the obvious path for me was to try and make this

HEROES ARE MADE HERE



**SAN DIEGO
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DISTRICT**

City College • Mesa College
Miramar College • Continuing Education



The District is proud to have trained the majority of the region's first responders, many of our front-line healthcare professionals, and others providing essential services. For everyone keeping our community safe, we say,

"THANK YOU!"

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